

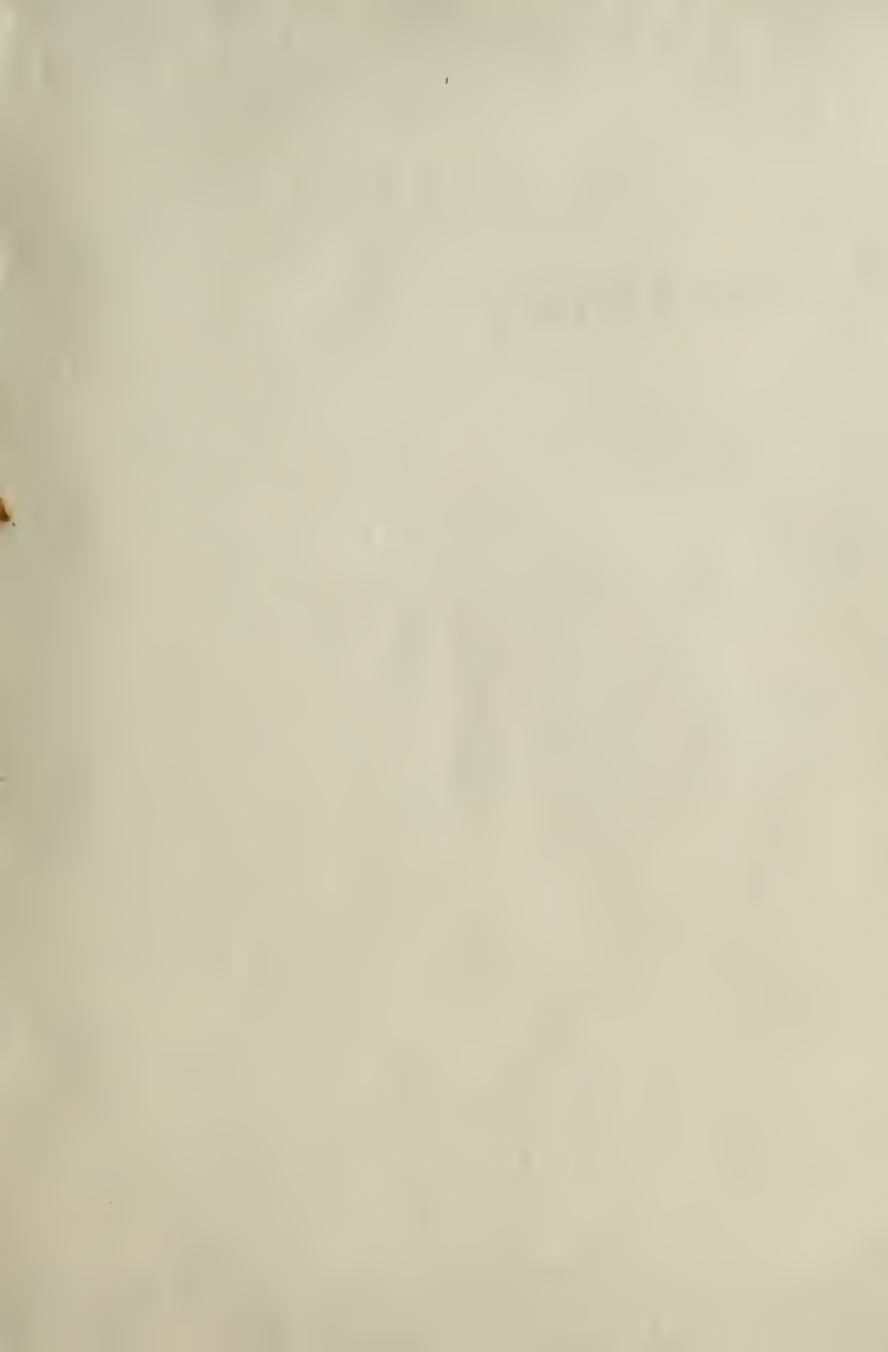
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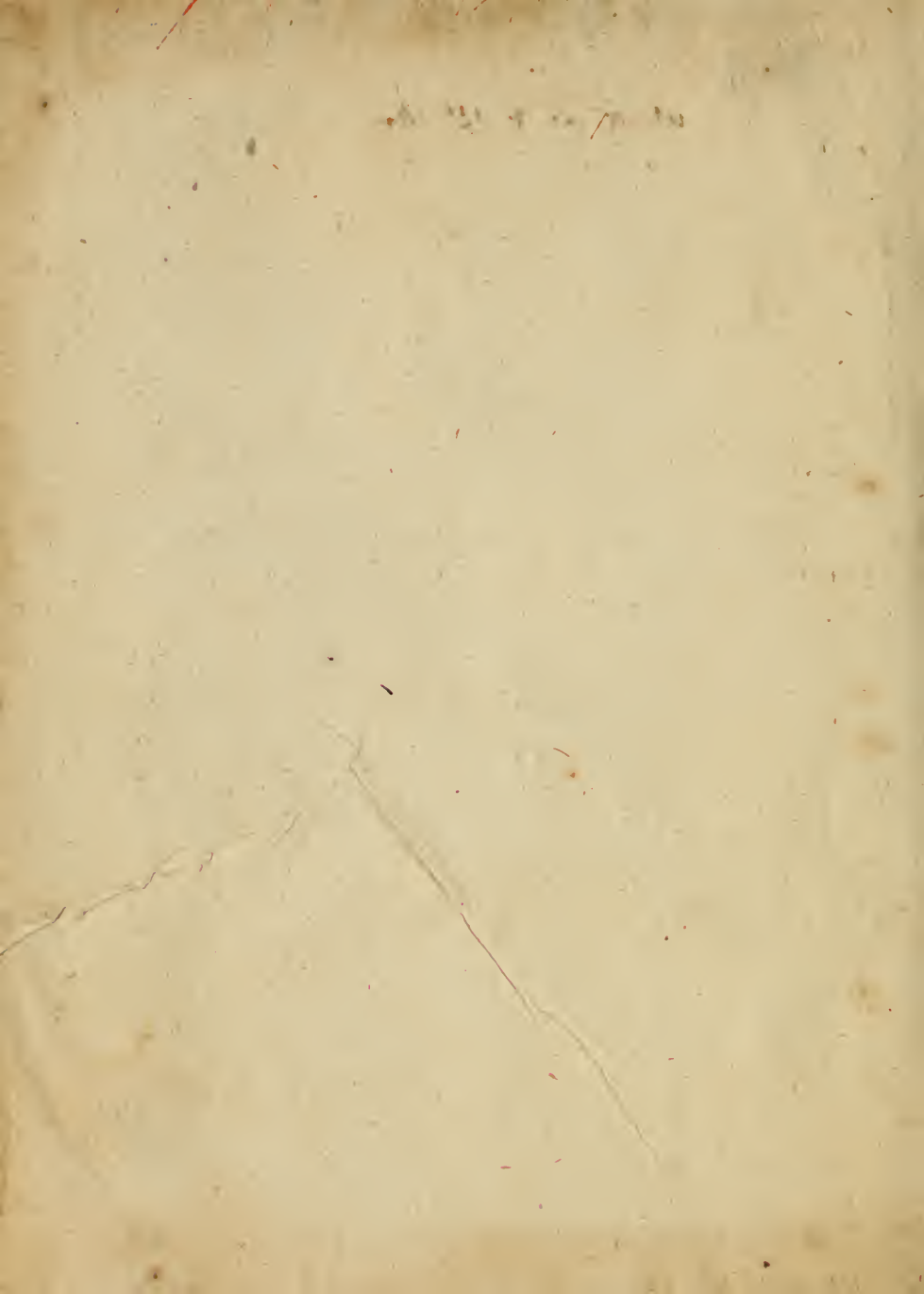
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The Divine Life:
IN THREE
TREATISES;

THE FIRST,
Of the Knowledge of God.

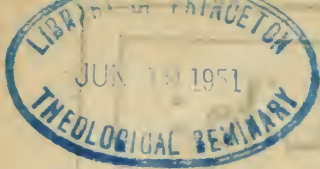
THE SECOND,
Of Walking with God.

THE THIRD;
Of Coverſing with God
IN SOLITUDE.

By RICHARD BAXTER.

LONDON,

Printed for *Francis Tyton* at the three Daggers in *Fleet-
street*, and *Nevil Simmons* Bookſeller in *Ke-
dermiſter*. 1664.



The Divine

IN THREE

TREATISES:

THE FIRST,

OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

THE SECOND,

OF HIS UNION WITH MAN,

THE THIRD,

OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

IN SOLICITING

BY WILLIAM BAKER

LONDON,

Printed by W. Clowes & Sons, Limited, 1, Abchurch Lane, London, E.C. 4.
1851

A
T R E A T I S E
OF THE
K N O W L E D G E
OF
G O D :

AND THE
Impression which it must
make upon the Heart; and its ne-
cessary Effects upon our Lives.

Upon *John* 17. 3.

By RICHARD BAXTER.

L O N D O N ,

Printed for *Francis Tyton* at the three Daggers in *Fleet-
street*, and *Nevil Simmons* Bookseller in *Ke-
derminster*. 1664.

TREATISE
OF THE
KNOWLEDGE
OF
GOD

AND THE

Impartation which it must
make upon the heart; and in no
certainly fitted upon our lives.

Lyon 1703.

By ROBERT BARRIE.

AND ONLY

Printed by J. BARRIE, at the
Printers Office, in the Strand.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
AND
Exemplary Lady
ANN COUNTESS
OF
BALCARRRES.

MADAM,



IN hope of the fuller pardon of my delay, I now present you with two other Treatises besides the Sermon (enlarged) which at your desire I preached at your departure hence. I knew of many and great afflictions, which you had undergone in the removal of your dearest friends, which made this subject seem so suitable and seasonable to you at that time:

The Epistle Dedicatory.

But I knew not that God was about to make so great an addition to your tryals in the same kind, by taking to himself * the principal branch of your Noble Family, (by a rare disease; the embleme of the mortal malady now raigning.) I hope this loss also shall promote your gain, by keeping you nearer to your Heavenly Lord, who is so jealous of your affections, and resolved to have them entirely to himself: And then you will still find, that you *are not alone*, nor deprived of your dearest or most necessary friend, while the Father, the Son, the sanctifying and comforting Spirit is with you. And it should not be hard to reconcile us to the disposals of so sure a friend. Nothing but good can come from God; however the blind may miscall it, who know no Good or Evil, but what is measured by the private standard of their selfish interest, and that as judged of by sense. Eternal Love engaged by Covenant to make us happy, will do nothing but what we shall find at last, will terminate in that blessed end. He envyed you not your Son, as too good for you, or too

grea

* Charles Earl of Balcarres who dyed of a stone in his heart, of a very strange magnitude.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

great a mercy, who hath given you his own Son, and with him the mercy of eternal life. Corporal sufferings with Spiritual blessings, are the ordinary lot of Believers here on earth: As corporal prosperity with spiritual calamity is the lot of the ungodly: And I beseech you consider, that God knoweth better than you or I, what an Ocean your son was ready to lanch out into, and how tempestuous and terrible it might have proved, and whether the world that he is saved from, would have afforded him more of safety or seduction, of comfort or calamity? whether the protraction of the life of your Noble husband, to have seen our sins and their effects and consequents, would have afforded him greater joy or sorrow? Undoubtedly as God had a better title to your Husband, and Children, and Friends than you had, so it is much better to be with him, than to be with you, or with the best or greatest upon earth. The heavenly inhabitants fear not our fears, and feel not our afflictions. They are past our dangers, and out of the reach of all our enemies, and delivered from our pains and cares, and have the full possession of all those mercies which we
pray

The Epistle Dedicatory.

pray and labour for. Can you think your Children and Friends that are with Christ, are not safer and better than those that yet remain with you? Do you think that earth is better than heaven for you your self? I take it for granted you cannot think so, and will not say so; And if it be worse for you, its worse for them. The providence which by hastening their Glorification, doth promote your Sanctification; which helpeth them to the *End*, and helpeth you in the *Way*, must needs be good to them and you, however it appear to flesh and unbelief. O Madam, when our Lord hath shewed us (as he will shortly do) what a state it is to which he bringeth the spirits of the just, and how he doth there entertain and use them, we shall then be more competent judges of all those acts of Providence, to which we are now so hardly reconciled! Then we shall censure our censurings of these works of God, and be offended with our offences at them, and *call our selves* blind unthankful sinners, for *calling them* so bad as we did in our misjudging unbelief and passion. We shall not wish our selves or friends again on earth, among temptations
and

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and pains, and among uncharitable men, malicious enemies, deceitful flatterers, and untrusty friends! When we see that face which we now long to see, and know the things which we long to know, and feel the Love which we long to feel, and are full of the joyes which now we can scarce attain a taste of, and have reacht the End which now we seek, and for which we suffer, we shall no more take it for a judgement to be taken from ungodly men, and from a world of sin, and fear, and sorrow; nor shall we envy the wicked, nor ever desire to be partakers of their pleasures. Till then, let us congratulate our departed friends the felicity which they have attained, and which we desire; and let us rejoyce with them that rejoyce with Christ, and let us prefer the least believing thought of the everlasting joyes, before all the defiled transitory pleasures of the deluded, dreaming, miserable world. And let us prefer such converse as we can here attain, with God in Christ, and with the Heavenly Society, before all the pomp and friendship of the world. We have no friend that is so able to supply all our wants, so sufficient to

The Epistle Dedicatory.

content us, so ready to relieve us, so willing to entertain us, so unwearied in hearing us, and conversing with us, as our blessed Lord. This is a friend that will never prove untrusty; nor be changed by any change of interest, opinion or fortune; nor give us cause to suspect his Love: A friend that we are sure will not forsake us, nor turn our enemy, nor abuse us for his own advantage, nor will ever dye or be separated from us, but we shall be alwaies with him, and see his Glory, and be filled and transported with his Love, and sing his praise to all Eternity. With whom then should we so delightfully converse on Earth? and till we can reach that sweet delightful converse, whom should we seek with more ambition, or observe with greater devotedness and respect? O that we were less carnal, and more spiritual, and lived less by Sense, and more by Faith; that we knew better the difference between God and Man, between visible Temporals, and invisible Eternals! we should then have other thoughts, and desires, and resolutions, and converse, and employments and pleasures than too many have!

Madam,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Madam, it displeaseth me that it is no more elaborate a Treatise, to which the present opportunity inviteth me to prefix your Name; but your own Desire of the Third must be my excuse for all: But pardon the *Manner*, and I dare commend the *Matter* to you, as more worthy your serious contemplation, and your daily most delightful practice, than any other that was ever proposed unto mortal man. This is the man-like noble life: The life which the Rational soul was made for: To which if our faculties be not by sanctifying Grace restored, they fall below their proper dignity and use, and are worse than lost; like a Prince or Learned man that is employed only in sweeping Dog-kennels, or tending Swine. *To walk in Holiness with the most Holy God*, is the improvement and advancement of the nature of man, towards its designed equality with Angels: When Earthliness and Sensuality degrade humanity into (a voluntary, and therefore sinful) brutishness: This is the Life which affordeth the soul a solid and durable pleasure and content: When carnal minds evaporate into Air, and bubble into froth and vanity, wasted in a dream, and

The Epistle Dedicatory.

the violent busie pursuit of a shadow; deceiving themselves with a mixture of some counterfeit Religion; playing with God, and working for the world; living in jeast, and dying, and despairing, and suffering in earnest; with unwearied labour building on the Sand, and sinking at death for want of a foundation; hating the serious practice of their own profest Religion, because it is not the profession, but the serious practice which hath the greatest enmity to their sensual delights; yet wishing to be numbred with those hereafter, whom they hated here: This *Holy Walking with the most Holy God*, is the only life which is best at last, and sweet in the review; which the Godly Live in, and most of the ungodly could wish to dye in; like him that wished to be *Cesar* in life, and *Socrates* at death: Yea this is the Life which hath no end; which we are *here* but *learning*, and beginning to practise, and which we must hereafter live (in another *manner* and *degree*) with God for ever: O wondrous Mercy! which thus ennobleth even the state of mortality! and honoureth *Earth* with so much participation of, and communion with Heaven! That by

God,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

God, and *with God*, we may walk in holy peace and safety *unto God*, and there be blessed in his perfect *Sight* and *Love* for ever! Madam, the greatest service I can do you for all your favours, is, to pray that God will more acquaint you with himself, and lead you by this blessed way to that more blessed end; that when you see all worldly glory in the dust, you may bless him for ever, who taught you to make a wiser choice: Which are the prayers of

MADAM,

Your very much obliged Servant,

Dec. 24.
1663.

RICHARD BAXTER.



TO THE R E A D E R.

Reader,

TH*E* Embryo of this Book was but one Sermon, preached a little before the ending of my publick Ministry, upon the Text of the third Treatise, (upon the occasion intimated in the Epistle to that truly Honourable Lady) Being obliged to communicate the Notes, and unavoidably guilty of some delays, I made a compensation by enlargement; and (having reasons for the publication of them, with which I shall not trouble you) to make them more suitable to the designed end, I prefixed the two former Treatises: The first I had preached to my ancient flock: Of the second I had preached but one Sermon. If many of the materials in the second be the same as in the first, you must understand that my design required that it should be so: They being the same Attributes of God, which the first Part endeavoureth to imprint upon the mind; and which the second and third endeavour to improve into a constant course of holy affection and conversation: As it is the same food which the first concoction chyl: flesh, which the perfecting concoctions do work over again, and turn into blood and spirits and flesh: so far am I in such points from gratifying thy sickly desire of variety, and avoiding the displeasing of thee by the rehearsals of the same, that it
is

To the Reader.

is my very business with thee to persuade thee, to live continually upon these same Attributes and Relations of God, as upon thy daily air and bread; and to forsake that lean consuming company, who feed on the shels of hard and barren controversies, or on the froth of complements and affected shew, and run after novelty instead of substantial solid nutriment: And to tell thee, that the primitive, pure, simple Christianity, consisted in the daily serious use of the great materials of the Creed, Lords Prayer, and ten Commandements, contracted in the words of our Baptifimal Covenant. Do thus, and thou wilt be like those examples of the succeeding Church, in uprightnes, purity, simplicity, charity, peaceableneß and holy communion with God, when the pretended subtilties and sublimities of wanton, uncharitable, contentious wits, will serve but to strangle or delude their souls. I have purposely been very brief on the severall Attributes and Relations of God, in the first Treatise, because the copious handling of them would have made a very great volume of it self, and because it is my great design in that first part, to give you a sight of all Gods Attributes and Relations conjunct, and in their order, that looking on them, not one by one, but all together in their proper places, the whole Image of God, may by them, be rightly imprinted on your minds; The Method being the first thing, and the necessary Impressions on the soul the second, which I there desire you to observe and employ your minds about, if you desire to profit, and receive what I intend you.

Decem. 24.

1663.

THE



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J H O N



JOHN 17. 3.

And this is Life Eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

CHAP. I.



OD is the *Principal Efficient*, the *Supream Directive*, and the *Ultimate final Cause* of man: For *OF him*, and *THROUGH him*, and *TO him* are all things, and to him shall be the *Glory* for ever, *Rom. 11. 36.* The *New life*, or *Nature* in the Saints is his *Image*, *Col. 3. 10.* The *Principle* of it is called *The Divine Nature*, *2 Pet. 1. 4.* The exercise of that principle (including the principle it self) is called *The life of God*, *Eph. 4. 18.* from which the Gentiles are said to be *alienated by their ignorance.* Therefore it is called *Holiness*, which is a *separation to God* from common use: and [*Gods dwelling in us,*] and [*ours in him*] *1 John 4. 12, 13.* of whom we are said to be [*born and regenerate*] *1 John 4. 7.* *John 3. 5.* And our *perfection in Glory*, is our living with God, and enjoying him

him for ever. **GODLINES** then is the comprehensive name of all true Religion. Jesus Christ himself came but to restore corrupted man to the *Love*, and *Obedience*, and *Fruition* of his *Creator*, and at last will *give up the Kingdom to the Father*, that *God may be All, and in all*: and the *Son himself shall be subject* to this end, 1 Cor. 15. 24, 28. The End of Christ's *Sacrifice* and *Intercession* is to Reconcile God and man: The End of his *Doctrine* is to teach us to *know God*: The end of his *Government* is to reduce us to the perfect obedience of our Maker. It is therefore the greatest *Duty* of a Christian to *know God* as revealed by his Son; and it is such a *Duty* about our *Ultimate End* as is also our greatest *Mercy* and *Felicity*. Therefore doth the Lord Jesus here in the Text describe that *Life Eternal* which he was to give to those whom the Father had given him, to consist in *Knowing the only true God*, and *Jesus Christ whom he had sent*. My purpose is in this Treatise to speak only of the first part of the Text, (*The Knowledge of God*) And first I shall very briefly explain the Text.

[THIS] That is, This which I am describing.

[LIFE] Life is taken sometime for the *Souls abode in the Body*, which is the *Natural Life of man*: or the *souls continuation in its separated state*, which is the *Natural life of the soul*: and sometimes for the *Perfections of Natural life*: And that either its *Natural Perfection*, that is, Its *Health* and *Vivacity*; or its *moral perfection* or *Rectitude*; and that is either in the *Cause*, and so *God is our Life*; *Christ is our Life*; the *Holy Spirit is our Life*: or in *it self*: and so *Holiness is our Life in the Principle, Seed or Habit*. Sometime *Life* is taken for the *Work, Employment and Exercise of Life*; and so a *Holy Conversation*, is our *Moral, Spiritual, or holy life*. And sometime it is taken for the *Felicity* of the living: And so it containeth all the former in their highest perfection, that is, both *Natural Life*, and *Moral-Spiritual Life*, and the *holy exercise thereof*, together with the full attainment and fruition of God in *Glory*, the End of all.

[ETERNAL] That is, *simply eternal, objectively*, as to God the principal object: and *Eternal ex parte post, subjectively*; that is, *Everlasting*.

[THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL] Not *Natural life*

in it self considered, as the Devils and wicked men shall have it. But 1. It is the same *Moral-Spiritual Life* which shall have no *End*, but endure to Eternity: It is a Living to God in Love; But only *initial*, and very *imperfect* here, in comparison of what it will be in Heaven. 2. It is the *Eternal felicity*, 1. *Seminally*; for Grace is as it were a seed of Glory; 2. As it is the *Necessary way* or *means* of attaining it; and that preparation which infallibly procureth it. The *Perfect Holiness* of the Saints in Heaven will be *one part* of their *perfect happiness*: And this *Holiness imperfect* they have here in this life: It is the *same God* that we *know* and *love* here and there, and with a *Knowledge* and *Love* that is of the same nature *seminally*: As the egg is of the nature of the Bird: (Whether it may be properly said to be *formally* and *specifically* the same *quoad actum*, as well as *quoad objectum*; yea whether the *Objectum clare visum*, and the *objectum in speculo vel anigmate visum* make not the *act* *specifically* differ, I shall not trouble you to dispute.) And this *imperfect Holiness* hath the promise of *Perfect Holiness* and *Happiness* in the full fruition of God hereafter. So it is the *Seed*, and *Prognostick* of Life Eternal.

[TO KNOW] *Non semper & ubiq; eodem modo vel gradu*: Not to know God here and hereafter in the same manner or degree. But to know him here as in a glass, and hereafter in his *Glory*, as face to face. To know him by an *Affective Practical knowledge*: There is no Text of Scripture of which the rule is more clearly true and necessary than of this, that *Words of Knowledge do imply affection*. It is the closure of the whole soul with God, which is here called the *knowing of God*: And because it is not meet to name every particular act of the soul, when ever this duty is mentioned, it is all denominated from *Knowledge*, as the *first Act*, which inferreth all the rest. 1. *Knowledge of God in the Habit*, is *Spiritual Life* as a *Principle*. 2. *Knowledge of God in the exercise*, is *Spiritual Life*, as an *employment*. 3. *The Knowledge of God in perfection with its effects*, is *Life Eternal* as it signifieth *full felicity*. What it containeth I shall further shew anon.

[THEE] That is, *The Father*, called by some Divines,

Fons vel fundamentum Trinitatis: the fountain, or foundation of the Trinity: and oft used in the same *sense* as the word [GOD,] to signify the *pure Deity*.

[THE ONLY] He that believeth that there is more *Gods* than *One*, believeth not in *any*. For though he may give many the *Name*, yet the *description* of the *true God* can agree to *none* of them. He is not *God indeed*, if he be not *One only*.

This doth not at all exclude *Jesus Christ*, as the second person in Trinity: but only distinguisheth the *pure Deity*, or the *Only true God as such*, from *Jesus Christ as Mediator* between God and man.

[TRUE] There are many that *falsly* and *Metaphorically* are called *Gods*: If we think of *God* but as one of these, it is not to *know him*, but *deny him*.

[GOD] The word *GO D* doth not only signify the *Divine perfections* in himself, but also his *Relation* to the *Creatures*. To be a *God* to us, is to be one to whom we must ascribe all that we *are* or *have*; and one whom we must *Love* and *obey*, and *honour* with all the *powers* of soul and body: and one on whom we totally *depend*, and from whom we expect our *judgement* and *reward*, in whom alone we can be *perfectly* blessed.

[AND JESUS CHRIST] That is, As *Mediator*, in his *Natures*, (*God and man*) and in his *Office* and *Grace*.

[WHOM THOU HAST SENT;] That is, whom thy *Love* and *Wisdom* designed and *commissioned* to this *undertaking* and *performance*.

The *Knowledge* of the *Holy Ghost* seemeth here left out, as if it were no part of *life Eternal*: But 1. At that time the *Holy Ghost* in that *Eminent sort*, as sent by the *Father* and *Son* on the *Apostles* after the *Resurrection* and *Ascension* of *Christ*, was not yet so manifested as *afterwards*, and therefore not so necessarily to be distinctly *known* and believed in as after: The *having* of the *Spirit* being of more necessity than the *distinct knowledge* of him. Certain it is that the *Disciples* were at first very dark in this article of faith: And *Scripture* more fully revealeth the *necessity*, to *salvation*, of believing in the

the Father and Son, than in the Holy Ghost distinctly; yet telling us, that if any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, Rom. 8. 9. 2. But presently after, when the Spirit was to be sent, the necessity of believing in him is expressed; especially in the Apostles Commission to Baptize all Nations (that were made Disciples) in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Doct. **T**He Knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ the Mediator, is the Life of Grace, and the necessary way to the life of Glory.

As James distinguisheth between such a dead faith as Devils and wicked men had, and such a living and working faith as was proper to the justified; so must we here of the Knowledge of God. Many profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate, Tit. 1. 16. There is a form of knowledge which the unbelievers had, Rom. 2. 22. and a knowledge which puffeth up, and is void of Love, which hypocrites have, 1 Cor. 8. 1. & 13. But no man (spiritually) knoweth the things of God, but by the spirit. And they that rightly know his name, will put their trust in him, Psal. 9. 10. Thus he giveth the regenerate a heart to know him, Jer. 24. 7. and the new creature is renewed in knowledge, Col. 3. 10. And vengeance shall be poured out on them that know not God, 2 Thes. 1. 8.

This saving Knowledge of God which is Eternal Life, containeth and implyeth in it all these acts. 1. The understandings apprehension of God according to the necessary articles of faith. 2. A Belief of the truth of these articles: that God is, and is such as he is therein described. 3. An high estimation of God accordingly. 4. A Volition, complacency or Love to him as God, the chiefest Good. 5. A Desiring after him. 6. A Choosing him, with the rejection of all competitors. 7. A Consent that he be our God, and a giving up our selves to him as his people. 8. An intending him as our Ultimate End in the use of means, in the course of our Conversations. 9. A seeking him in the choice and use of means. 10. An obeying him as our Sovereign Governour.

Governour. 11. An *honouring*, and *praising* him as God.
 12. And an *enjoying* him and *delighting* in him (in some small
foretastes here, as he is seen by *faith*; but perfectly hereafter,
 as beheld in *Glory*.) The *affective practical* Knowing of God,
 which is *Life eternal*, containeth or implyeth all these parts.

And every Christian that hath any of *this Knowledge* desireth
 more: It is his great desire to *Know more of God*, and to know
 him with a more *affecting powerful knowledge*. He that *grow-
 eth* in *grace*, doth accordingly grow in this *knowledge of God*
 and of *Jesus Christ*. The *vigour and alacrity* of our souls lie
 in it: The *rectitude* of our actions, and the *holiness* of them
 floweth from it: *God* is the excellency of our *Hearts and
 lives*: Our *advancement* and our *joy* is here only to be found.
 All other *knowledge* is so far desirable, as it conduceth to the
knowledge of God, or to the several *duties* which that know-
 ledge doth require. All knowledge of *words or things*, of
causes and effects, of any creatures, actions, customes, *Laws*,
 or whatsoever may be known, is so far *valuable* as it is *useful*;
 and so far *useful* as it is *Holy*, subserving the knowledge of
God, in *Christ*. What the sun is to all mens eyes, that *God*
 is to their souls, and more: It is to *Know him* that we have
understandings given us; And our *understandings* enjoy him
 but so far as they *know* him; as the eye enjoyeth the *Light* of
 the sun, by *seeing* it. The *ignorance* of *God*, is the *blindness*
 and part of the *atheism* of the soul, and inferreth the rest.
 They that *know* him not, *desire not* heartily to *know* him; nor
 can they *Love* him, *Trust* him, *fear* him, *serve* him, or call up-
 on him, whom they do not *Know*. How shall they call upon him
 in whom they have not believed, Rom. 10. 14. The *hearts* of the
Ungodly saith to *God*, *Depart from us*: for we desire not the
knowledge of thy wayes; what is the *Almighty* that we should
serve him? and what profit shall we have if we pray unto him?
 Job. 21. 14, 15. & 22. 17. All wickedness hath admission in-
 to that *heart or land*, where the *knowledge of God* is not the
 watch to keep it out: *Abraham* inferred that the men of *Gerar*
 would *kill* him for his wife, when he saw that the *fear of God*
 was not in that place: Gen. 20. 11. It was *Gods* *controversie*
 with *Israel*, because there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge
 of *God* in the land; but by *swearing*, and *lying*, and *killing* and
stealing,

stealing, they brake out, and blood touched blood, Hof. 4. 1, 2. They are called by God, a foolish people, sottish children, of no understanding, that knew not God; though they were wise to do evil, Jer. 4. 22. He will pour out his fury upon the heathen that know him not, and the families that call not on his name, Jer. 10. 25. As the day differeth from the night by the light of the sun, so the Church differeth from the world by the Knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. Psal. 76. 1, 2. In Judah is God known; his name is great in Israel: In Salem also is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Sion. The Love, and Unity, and peace which shall succeed persecution and malice in the blessed times, shall be because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, Isa. 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. Hypocrites shall know him superficially and uneffectually: and his holy ones shall know him so as to Love him, fear him, trust him, and obey him; with a knowledge effectual upon heart and life: And he will continue his loving kindness to them that know him, Psal. 36. 10.

He is the best Christian that hath the fullest impression made upon his soul by the Knowledge of God in all his Attributes. Thus it is our Life eternal to Know God in Christ. It is to reveal the Father that the Son was sent; and it is to reveal the Father and the Son, that the Holy Spirit is sent; God is the light and the life, and felicity of the soul. The work of its salvation is but the restoring it to him, and putting it in possession of him. The beginning of this is Regeneration and Reconciliation: the perfection of it is Glorification, beatifical Vision, and Fruition. The Mind that hath least of God is the darkest and most deluded Mind: And the mind that hath most of him, is the most lucide, pure, and serene. And how is God in the Mind, but as the Light and other visible objects are in the eye; and as pleasant melodie is in the ear; and as delightful meats and drinks are in the tast? But that God maketh a more deep and durable impress on the soul, and such as is suitable to its spiritual immaterial nature.

As your seal is to make a full impression on the wax, of the whole figure that is upon it self, so hath God been pleased in divers seals to engrave his Image, and these must make their Impress upon us. 1. There is the seal of the Creation; for the

the world hath much of the Image of God : It is engraven also on the seal of *Providential disposals* (though there we are uncapable of reading it yet, so fully as in the rest) 2. It is engraven on the seal of the *holy Scriptures*. 3. And on the Person of *Jesus Christ*, who is the purest clearest Image of the Father, as also on the holy example of his life. 4. And by the means of all these applyed to the soul, in our sober *consideration*, by the working of the *Holy Ghost*, the Image of God is made upon us.

Here note, 1. That *All* the revealed Image of God must be made on the soul, and not *a part only* : and *all* is wrought where *any* is truly wrought. 2. That to the *compleatness* of his Image on us, it is necessary that each part of Gods Description be *orderly* made, and *orderly* make the *Impress* on us, and that each part keep its *proper place* : For it is a monster that hath feet where the head should be, or the backside forward, or where there is any gross misplacing of the parts. 3. Note also that all the three forementioned *seals* contain *all Gods Image* on them ; but yet not *all alike* ; but the *first part* is more clearly engraven upon the *first* of them, and the *second part* upon the *second* of them, and the *third part* most clearly on the *third* and *last*.

To open this more plainly to you ; *Unity in Trinity*, and *Trinity in Unity*, is the sum of our holy faith. In the Deity there is revealed to us, *One God in three persons*, the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* ; The *Essence* is but *one* ; the *subsistences* are *three*. And as we must conceive and speak of the Divine Nature according to its *Image*, while we see it but in a *glass* ; so we must say, that in this Blessed Deity in the *Unity* of *Essence*, there is a *Trinity* of *Essential properties* and *Attributes*, that is, *Power*, *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, *Life*, *Light* and *Love* ; The measure of which is to have no measure, but to be Infinite. And therefore this *Being* is *Eternal*, and not measured by *Time*, being without *Beginning* or *end* : He is *Immense*, as being not measured by *Place*, but containeth all places, and is contained in none. He is *Perfect*, as not Measured by *Parts* or by *Degrees*, but quite above *Degrees* and *Parts*. This *Infiniteness* of his *Being* doth communicate it self, or also consist in the *Infiniteness* of his *Essential properties*. His *Power* is *Omnipotency*, that
is,

is, *Infinite Power*; His *Knowledge* or wisdom is *Omniscience*, that is, *Infinite Wisdom*: His *Goodness* is *Felicity* it self, or *Infinite Goodness*.

The first seal (to our Cognifance) on which he engraved this his Image, was the *Creation*, that is 1. The whole *world* in General. 2. The *Intellectual Nature*, or *Man* in special.

In the *Being* of the *Creation* and every particular *Creature*, his *Infinite Being* is revealed; so wretched a *Fool* is the *Atheist*, that by denying *God*, he denyeth *all things*! Could he prove that there is *no God*, I would quickly prove that there is *no world*, no man, no creature: If he know that *he is himself*, or that the *world* or any *Creature* is, he may know that *God is*: For *God* is the *Original Being*; And all *Being* that is not *Eternal*, must have some *Original*: And that which hath no *Original* is *God*, being *Eternal*, *Infinite*, and without cause.

The *Power* of *God* is revealed in the *Being* and *Powers* of the *Creation*. His *Wisdom* is revealed in their *Nature*, *Order*, *Offices*, *Effects*, &c. His *Goodness* is revealed in the *Creatures Goodness*, its beauty, usefulness and accomplishments. But though *all his Image* thus appear upon the *Creation*, yet is it his *Omnipotency* that *principally* there appears. The beholding and consideration of the wonderful greatness, activity and excellency of the *Sun*, the *Moon*, the *Stars*, the *fire*, and other creatures, doth first and chiefly possess us with apprehensions of the *Infinite Greatness* or *Power* of the *Creator*.

In the *Holy Word* or *Laws* of *God*, which is the *second glass* or *seal* (more clear and legible to us than the former) there appeareth also *all his Image*; His *power* in the narratives, predictions, &c. His *Wisdom* in the prophecies, precepts, and in all: His *Goodness* in the promises, and institutions in a special manner. But yet it is his second property, his *Wisdom*, that *most eminently* appeareth on this *second seal*, and is seen in the glass of the holy Law. The discovery of such mysteries; the revelation of so many Truths; the suitableness of all the instituted means; and the admirable fitness of all the holy contrivances of *God*, and all his precepts, promises and threatenings, for the Government of Mankind, and carrying him on for the attainment of his end, in a way agreeable to his nature;

ture, these shew that *wisdom* that is most *Eminently* here revealed, though *Power* and *Goodness* be revealed with it; so in the face of *Jesus Christ*, who is the third and most perfect *seal* and *glass*, there is the Image of the *Power*, and *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of the Godhead: But yet it is the *Love* or *Goodness* of the Father that is most *Eminently* revealed in the son: His *Power* appeared in the incarnation, the conquests over Satan and the world, the Miracles, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ. His *wisdom* appeareth in the admirable mysterie of Redemption, and in all the parts of the office, works, and laws of Christ, and in the means appointed in subordination to him; But *Love* and *Goodness* shineth most clearly and amiably through the whole; it being the *very end* of Christ in this blessed work, to reveal God to man in the *Riches* of his *Love*, as giving us the greatest mercies, by the most precious means, in the meetest season and manner for our good; Reconciling us to himself, and treating us as Children, with Fatherly compassions, and bringing us nearer him, and opening to us the everlasting treasure, having brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel.

God being thus revealed to man from without, in the three *Glasses* or *Seals* of the *Creation*, *Law*, and *Son* himself, he is also revealed to us in *our selves*, man being, as it were, a little world.

In the Nature of *man* is revealed as in a *Seal* or *Glass* the nature of the *blessed God* in some measure. In *Unity* of *Essence*, we have a *Trinity* of *Faculties* of *soul*, even the *Vegetative*, *Sensitive* and *Rational*, as our bodies have both parts and spirits, *Natural*, *Vital*, and *Animal*; the *Rational Power* in *Unity*, hath also its *Trinity* of *faculties*, even *Power* for *Execution*, *Understanding* for *Direction*, and *Will* for *Command*: The measure of *Power* is *Naturally* sufficient to its use and end; the understanding is a faculty to *reason*, *discern*, and *discourse*; The will hath that *Freedom* which becometh an undetermined, self-determining creature here in the way.

Besides this *Physical Image* of *God* that is inseparable from our *Nature*, we have also his *Law* written in our hearts, and are *our selves* objectively part of the *Law* of *nature*, that is, the *signifiers* of the *will* of *God*. Had we not by sin obliterated somewhat

somewhat of *this Image*, it would have shewed it self more clearly, and we should have been more capable of understanding it.

And then when we are *Regenerate and Renewed by the Grace and Spirit of Christ*, and planted into him, as living members of his body, we have then the *third impression* upon our souls, and are made like our Head in *Wisdom, Holiness* and in *effectual strength*.

Considered as *Creatures* endued with *Power, understanding and will*, we have the Impress of all the foresaid Attributes of God; But *Eminently* of his *Power*.

Considered as we were at first possessed with the *light and law* of works or *Nature*, (of which we yet retain some part) so we have the Impress of *all* these Attributes of God; But most *Eminently* of his *Wisdom*.

Considered as *Regenerate* by the *Spirit*, and planted into Christ, so we have the impress of *all* his said Attributes; But most *eminently* of his *Love and Goodness*, shining in the Moral accomplishments or graces of the soul.

Man being thus made at first the *Natural and Sapiential image of God*, (with *much* of the *Image* of his *Love*) the *Lord* did presently by *necessary Resultancy* and *voluntary consent*, stand *Related* to us in such *variety* of *Relations*, as answer the foresaid *Properties* and *Attributes*. And these *Relations* of *God* to us, are next to be known, as flowing from his *Attributes* and *Works*.

As we have our *derived Being* from *God* who is the *Primitive Eternal Being*; so from our *Being* given by *Creation*, *God* is *Related* to us as our *Maker*; From this *Relation* of a *Creator* in *Unity*, there ariseth a *Trinity* of *Relations*: This *Trinity* is in that *Unity*, and that *Unity* in this *Trinity*. First *God* having made us of *nothing*, is necessarily *Related* to us as our *Lord*; By a *Lord* we mean strictly, a *Proprietary* or *Owner*, as you are the *Owner* of your goods or any thing that is your *Own*.

Secondly, He is *Related* to us as our *Ruler*, our *Governour* or *King*. This riseth from our *nature*, made to be *Ruled* in order to our *End*; being *Rational Voluntary Agents*; and also from the *Dominion* and blessed *nature* of *God*, who only hath *Right*

to the Government of the world, and only is *fit* and *capable* of Ruling it.

Thirdly, He is *Related* also to us as our *Benefactor* or *Father*; freely and of his bounty giving us all the good that we do receive.

His *first Relation* in this *Trinity*, answereth his first *Property* in the *Trinity*: He is our *Almighty Creator*, and therefore is our *Owner* or our *Lord*.

The *second* of these *Relations* answereth the *second Property* of God. He is *most Wise*, and made an *Impress* of his *Wisdom* on the *Rational Creature*, and therefore is our *Governour*.

The third *Relation* answereth the *third property* of God. As he is *most Good*, so he is our *Benefactor*; Psal. 119. 68. *Thou art Good, and dost Good*. Mans nature and disposition is known by his Works, though he be a *free agent*; For the *Tree is known by its fruit*, Mat. 7. 17. And so *Gods nature* is known by his works (as far as is fit for us here to know) though he be a *free agent*.

In each of these *Relations*, God hath *other special Attributes*, which are denominated from his *Relations*, or his *following works*.

As he is our *Lord* or *Owner*, his proper Attribute is to be *Absolute*, having so full a title to us, that he may do with us what he list, *Mat. 20. 15. Rom. 9. 21*.

As he is our *Ruler*, his proper Attribute is to be our *Sovereign* or *Supream*; there being none above him, nor co.ordinate with him, nor any Power of Government but what is derived from him.

As he is our *Benefactor*, it is his prerogative to be our *Chief*, or *All*: the *Alpha* and *Omaga*; the *Fountain* or first *Efficient* cause of all that we receive or hope for; and the *End* or ultimate final cause that can make us *Happy* by fruition, and that we must still intend.

As these are the Attributes of *God* in these his *great Relations*, so in Respect to the *Works* of these *Relations*, he hath other *subordinate Attributes*. As he is our *Owner*, it is his *Work* to *Dispose* of us; and his proper Attribute to be *most Free*. As he is our *Ruler*, it is his *work* to *Govern* us; which is first, by *making Laws* for us, and then by *teaching* and *perswading*

swading us to keep them, and lastly by *executing* them; which is by *Judging*, *Rewarding*, and *Punishing*. In respect to all these, his principal Attribute is, to be *Just* or *Righteous*; In which is comprehended his *Truth* or *Faithfulness*, his *Holiness*, his *Mercy*, and his *terrible dreadfulness*. As his Attributes appear in the Assertions of his word, he is *True* (his *Veracity* being nothing but his *Power*, *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, expressing themselves in his *Word* or Revelations.) For he that is *Able* to do what he will, and so wise as to *Know* all things, and so *Good* as to *Will* nothing but what is *Good*, cannot possibly lye; For every lie is either for want of *Power*, or *Knowledge*, or *Goodness*; He that is most *Able* and *Knowing*, need not deceive by *Lying*; And he that is most *Good*, will not do it without need. As his first properties appear in the word of Promise, he is called *Faithful*, which is his *Truth* in making good a word of grace. As he *Commandeth* Holy duties, and condemneth sin as the most detestable thing, by a pure, righteous Law, so he is called *Holy*; and also as the *fountain* of this Law, and the *Grace* that sanctifieth his people. As he *fulfilleth* his promises, and rewardeth, and defendeth men according to his word, so he is called *Merciful* and *Gracious* as a *Governour*, (where his *Mercy* is considered as limited or ordinate by his laws.) As he *fulfilleth* his *Threatnings*, he is called, *Angry*, *wrathful*, *terrible*, *dreadful*, *holy*, *jealous*, &c. But he is *Just* in all.

And as these are his Attributes as our *Sovereign Ruler*; so as our *Benefactor*, his special Attribute is to be *Gracious*, or *Bountiful* or *Benign*; or to be *Loving*, and inclined to do good. These are the Attributes of God resulting from his Nature as appearing in his Image in the *Creation*, *Laws*, and the *person of his Son*; and resulting from his *Relations* and the *works* of those Relations; even as he is our *Creator*, in *Unity*; and our *Lord* or *Owner*, our *Ruler*, and *Benefactor*, in *Trinity*.

Were it not my purpose to confine my self to this short discovery of the nature, attributes, and works of God, but to run deeper into the rest of the body of Divinity, I should come down to the fall, and work of Redemption, and shew you in the *Gospel* and all the *ordinances*, &c. the footsteps of

this Method of *Trinity in Unity*, which I have here begun; but that were to digress.

Besides what is said, we might name you many Attributes of God that are commonly called *Negative*, and do but distinguish him from the Imperfect Creature, by setting him above us Infinitely in his perfections. *Man* hath a *Body*; but *God* is not a *Body*, but a *spirit*; *Man* is *mutable*, but *God* *Immutable*; *Man* is *Mortal*, but *God* *Immortal*, &c. And now as I have shewed you these Properties, Relations, and Attributes of *God*, so I must next tell you that *we* also stand in answerable *counter-relations* unto *him*; and must *have* the *qualities*, and *do* the *works* that answer those Relations.

1. As *God* is our *Almighty Creator*, so we are his *Creatures*, impotent and insufficient for our selves. We owe him therefore all that a Creature can owe his Maker, that hath but our receivings. 2. In this Relation is contained a *Trinity* of Relations. 1. We are his *Own*, as he is our *Lord*. 2. We are his *subjects* as he is our *Ruler*. 3. We are his *Children* as he is our *Father*; or his obliged *Beneficiaries* as he is our *Benefactor*. And now having opened to your observation the *Image* of *God*, and the extrinseck seals, I have ripened the discourse so far, that I may fitly shew you, How the *Impression* of this *Image* of *God* is to be made upon the soul of the Believer.

CHAP. II.

Of the Knowledge of Gods Being.

1. **H**E that cometh to *God*, must believe that *God* is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. 11. 6. The first thing to be imprinted on the soul is, that there is a *God*: that he is a *real* most *Transcendent Being*. As sure as the *Sun* that shineth hath a *Being*, and the *Earth* that beareth us hath a *being*, so sure hath *God* that made them a *Being* infinitely more excellent then theirs. As sure as the streams come from the fountain, and as sure as *Earth* and *Stones*, and *Beasts*, and *Men* did never make themselves, nor do uphold themselves, or continue the course of nature in themselves and others, nor govern the world, so sure is there

an Infinite eternal Being that doth this. Every Atheist that is not mad must confess that *there is an Eternal Being*, that had *no beginning* or *cause*; The question is only, *which this is!* which ever it is, it is this that is *the true God*. What now would the Atheist have it to be? Certainly it is that *Being* that hath *being* it self from none that is the first cause of all other *Beings*: And if it *caused* them, it must necessarily be every way *more excellent* than *they*, and contain all the good that it hath *caused*; For none can *give* that which it *hath not* to give; nor *make* that which is *better* than it self; that *Being* that hath made so glorious a creature as the *Sun*, must needs it self be much *more glorious*. It could not have put *strength* and *power* into the *Creatures*, if it had not it self *more strength* and *power*. It could not have put *Wisdom* and *Goodness* into the *Creature*, if it had not *more Wisdom* and *Goodness* than all they. Whatever it is therefore that hath *more Power*, *Wisdom* and *Goodness* than all the world besides, that is it which we call *God*. That *cause* that hath communicated to all things else, the *Being*, *Power*, and *all perfections* which they have, is the *God* whom we acknowledge and adore; If Democritists will ascribe all this to *Atomes*, and think that the *Motes* did make the *Sun*; or if others will think that the *Sun* is *God* because it participateth of so much of his *excellency*, let them be mad a while till judgement shall convince them. So clear beyond all question to *my soul* is the *Being* of the *Godhead*; that the Devil hath much lost the rest of his more subtil temptations, when he hath foolishly and maliciously adjoyned this, to draw me to question the *Being of my God*; which is more then to question Whether there be a *Sun* in the *Firmament*.

But what is the *Impress* that the *Being* of *God* must make upon the *Soul*?

I answer From hence the holy soul discerneth that the *Beginning* and the *End* of his Religion, the *substance* of his Hope is the *Being of Beings*, and not a shadow; and that his faith is not a fanisie. The *Object* is as it were the *matter* of the act. If our faith and hope and Love and Fear be exercised about the most *Real Being*, it shews, that there is a *Reality* in our *faith*, and that we be not exercised in a delusory work;

God

God is to the Atheist but an empty name ; He feels no *life* or *Being* in him ; And accordingly he offereth him a *shadow* of *devotion*, and a *nominal service*. But to the holy soul there is nothing that hath *life* and *Being* but **God**, and that which doth receive a *Being* from him, and leadeth to him. This *Real* object putteth a *Reality* into all the devotions of a holy soul. They look upon the vanities of the world as *Nothing* ; and therefore they look on worldly men as on idle dreamers that are *doing nothing*. This puts a *seriousness* and *Life* into the faith and holy affections of the believer. He *knows* whom he *trusteth*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. he *knows* whom he *Loveth*, and in whom he *Hopeth*. Atheists and all ungodly men, do *practically* judge of *God*, as the true Believer judgeth of the *world*. The *Atheist* takes the pleasures of the world to be the only *substance* ; and *God* to be but as a *shadow*, a *notion*, or a *dream*. The godly take the world to be *as nothing*, and *know* it is but a *fancy* and *dream*, and *shadow* of pleasures, and honour, and profit, and felicity, that men talk of and seek so eargerly below ; but that *God* is the substantial object and portion of the soul. If you put into the mouth of a hungry man, a little froth, or breath, or aire, and bid him eat it, and feed upon it, he will tell you, he finds no *substance* in it ; so judgeth the graceless soul of *God*, and so judgeth the gracious soul of the creature as separate from *God*.

Let this be the *Impression* on thy soul, from the consideration of *Gods transcendent Being* ! O look upon thy self and all things as *nothing without him* ! and as *Nothing* in *comparison of him* ! And therefore let thy *Love* to them be *as nothing*, and thy *desires* after them and care for them *as nothing* ! But let the *Being* of thy *Love*, *desire*, and *endeavours*, be let out upon the *transcendent Being*. The creature hath its *kind of being* ; but if it would be to us instead of *God*, it will be *as nothing*. The *Aire* hath its *Being*, but we cannot *dwell* in it, nor *rest* upon it to support us as the *earth* doth. The *water* hath its *Being*, but it will not *bear* us, if we would walk upon it. The name of the great *Jehovah* is [*I am*] Exod. 3. 14. Try any Creature in thy need, and it will say, as *Jacob* to *Rachel*, Gen. 30. 2. *Am I in Gods stead that hath withheld thy desire from thee ?* send to it, and it will say as *John Baptist*,
that

that *confessed* [*I am not the Christ*] Joh. 1. 20. Let none of all the affections of thy soul, have so much *Life* and *Being* in them, as those that are exercised upon God. *Worms* and *motes* are not regarded in comparison of *mountains*: a *drop* is not regarded in comparison of the *Ocean*. Let the *Being* of God take up thy soul and draw off thy observation from deluding vanities, as if there were no such things before thee. When thou remembrest that *there is a God*, Kings and Nobles, Riches and Honours, and all the world should be forgotten in comparison of him; And thou shouldst live as if there were *no such things*, if God appear not to thee in them. See them as if thou didst not see them, as thou seest a *candle* before the *sun*; or a pile of grass or single dust in comparison with the Earth. Hear them as if thou didst not hear them; as thou hearest the leaves of the shaken tree, at the same time with a clap of thunder. As *greatest* things obscure the *least*, so let the *Being* of the *Infinite God* so take up all the powers of thy soul, as if there were nothing else but he, when any thing would draw thee from him. O if the *Being* of this *God* were *seen* by thee, thy seducing friend would scarce be *seen*, thy tempting baits would scarce be *seen*, thy riches and honours would be forgotten; all things would be as *nothing* to thee in comparison of him.

CHAPTER III.

2. **A**S the *Being* of God should make this Impression on thee, so the *Attributes* that speak the *perfection* of that *Being*, must each one have their work; as his *unity* or *indivisibility*, his *Immensity*, and *Eternity*.

And first, the thought of *Gods* unity should contract and *unite* thy stragling affections, and call them home from *multifarious* vanity. It should possess thy mind with deep apprehensions of the excellency of holy *Unity* in the *soul*, and in the *Church*; and of the evil of *Division*, and misery of distracting multiplicity. *The Lord our God is One God*, 1 Cor. 8. 6. *Perfection* hath *unity* and *simplicity*. We fell into *Divisions* and miserable distraction when we departed from *God* unto

the *Creature*; For the *Creatures* are *Many* and of *contrary qualities*, dispositions, and affections; And the heart that is set on such an object, must needs be a *Divided heart*; And the heart that is *Divided* among *so many* and *contrary* or discordant objects, must needs be a *distracted heart*. The confusions of the world confound the heart that is set upon the world. He that maketh the world his God, hath *so many* Gods, and so discordant, that he will never please them all, and all of them together will never fully content and please *him*. And who would have a God that can neither please us, nor be pleased? He that maketh *Himself* his God, hath a *compounded* God (and now *corrupted*) of *multifarious*, and now of *contrary* desires, as hard to please as any *without* us. There is no *Rest* or *Happiness* but in *Unity*. And therefore none in *our selves* or any other creature; but in *God* the only center of the soul. The further from the *Center*, the further from *Unity*. It is only *in God* that differing minds can be *well united*. Therefore is the world so *divided*, because it is departed so far from *God*. Therefore have we so many minds and wayes, and such diversity of opinions, and contrariety of affections, because men forsake the *Center of Unity*. There's no *Uniting* in any worldly, carnal, self-devised principles, or practises. When *Holiness* brings these distracted, scatterd souls to *God*, in him they will be *one*. While they bark at *Holiness*, and cry up *Unity*, they shew themselves distracted men. For *Holiness* is the only way to *Unity*, because it is the closure of the soul with *God*. All countreys, and persons cannot meet in any one interest or *Creature*, but each hath a several interest of his own; But they might all meet *in God*. If the *Pope* were *God* and had *his* *perfections*, he would be *fit* for all the *Church* to *Center* in; But being *man*, and yet pretending to this *Prerogative of God*, he is the *grand divider* and *distracter* of the *Church*. The Proverb is too true; [*So many men, so many minds*] because that every man will be a *God* to himself, having a *self mind*, and *self will*, and all men will not yield to be *one in God*. *God* is the *common interest* of the *Saints*; and therefore all that are *truly Saints*, are *truly united in him*. And if all the *Visible Church*, and all the *world*, would heartily make him their *Common Interest*, we should quickly have

have a *Common Unity and Peace*, and the Temple of double faced *Janus* would be shut up. They that sincerely have *One God*, have also *one Lord* (and Saviour) *one Spirit*, *one faith*, *one Baptism* (or holy Covenant with God) even because they have *one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all*. And therefore they must keep the *unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. Though yet they have *different degrees of gifts* (vers. 7.) and therefore differences in opinion about abundance of inferior things. The further we go from the trunk or *stock*, the more *numerous and small* we shall find the *branches*. They are *one in God*, that are *divided in many doubtful controversies*. The *weakest* therefore in the *faith* must be received into this *Union and Communion* of the Church; but not to *doubtful disputations*, Rom. 14. 1. As the *antient Baptism*, contained no more but our *Engagement to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, so the *antient Profession* of saving faith, was of the same extent. *God* is sufficient for the Church to *Unite* in. A *Union* in other *Articles of faith* is so far necessary to the *Unity of the Church*, as it is necessary to *prove our faith and Unity in God*, and the sincerity of this antient simple belief in *God the Father Son, and Spirit*.

The *Unity of God* is the *Attribute* to be first handled and imprinted on the mind, even next unto his *Essence*; Deut. 6. 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord*. And the *unity of the Church* is its excellency and attribute, that's *first and most* to be esteemed and preserved next unto its *Essence*. If it be not a *Church*, it cannot be *One Church*; and if we be not *Saints*, we cannot be *united Saints*. If we be not *Members*, we cannot make *One Body*. But when once we have the *Essence of Saints* and of a *Church*, we must next be solicitous for its *Unity*; Nothing below an *essential point of faith* will allow us to depart from the *Catholike Unity, love, and peace* that is due to *Saints*; And because such *essentials* are never wanting in the *Catholich Church*, or any *true member* of it, therefore we are never allowed to divide from the *Cathelike Church*, or any *true and visible member*. It is first necessary that the Church be a *Church*, that is, a *People separated from the world to Christ*; and that the *Christian* be a *Christian* in *Covenant* with the

Lord. But the *next* point of Necessity is it that the Church be *One*, and Christians be *One*. And he that for the sake of *lower* points, how *True* soever, will break this holy bond of *Unity* shall find at last to his shame and sorrow, that he understood not the *excellency* or *necessity* of *unity*. The prayer of Christ for the perfection of his Saints is, [*that they all may be One, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me : And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be One, even as we are One : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in One, that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me*] Here it appeareth that the *Unity* of the Church or Saints is necessary, to convince the world of the truth of Christianity, and of the Love of God to his people, and necessary to the glory and perfection of the Saints. The nearer any Churches, or members are to the *divine* *perfections*, and the more strictly conformable to the mind of God, the more they are *One*, and replenished with *Catholick Love* to all *Saints*, and desirous of *Unity* and *Communion* with them. It is a most lamentable delusion of some Christians that think their ascending to higher degrees of Holiness, do in part consist in their *withdrawing* from the *Catholike Church*, or from the *Communion* of most of the *Saints on Earth*, upon the account of some smaller differing opinions ; And they think that they should become more loose, and leave their strictness, if they should hold a *Catholike Communion*, and leave their *state of separation*, and *division* ! Is there *any strictness* amiable or desirable, except a *strict Conformity to God* ? Surely a strict way of sin and wickedness is not desirable to a Saint. And is not *God One*, and his *Church One*, and hath he not commanded all his servants to be *One*, and is not *Love* the *new* and *great commandment*, by which they must be *known to all men to be his Disciples* ? Which then is the *stricter* servant of the Lord ? he that *Loveth much*, or he that *Loveth little* ? he that *Loveth all Christians*, or he that *Loveth but a few*, with the *special Love* ? He that *Loveth a Christian as a Christian* ; or he that *Loveth him but as one of his party or opinion* ? He that is *One in the Catholike Body* ; Or he that *disowneth Communion with the*

far greatest part of the body? Will you say that *Christ* was *loose*, and *Pharises strict*, because *Christ* eat and drank with *Publicans* and *Sinners*, and the *Pharises* condemned him for it? It was *Christ* that was *stricter* in *holiness* then they; for he abounded more in *Love* and *Good works*; but they were *stricter* then he in a *proud, self-conceited morosity* and *separation*. Certainly he that is highest in *Love*, is highest in *Grace*, and not he that confineth his *Love* to few. Was it not the *weak Christian* that was the *stricter*, in point of *meats* and *drinks* and *dayes*? Rom. 14. & 15. But the *stronger* that were censured by them, did more *strictly* keep the *commandment of God*.

Christian Reader, let the *Unity of God* have this effect upon thy soul, 1. To draw thee from the distracting multitude of *Creatures*, and make thee long to be all in *God*. That thy soul may be still working toward him, till thou find nothing but *God* alone within thee. In the *multitude* of thy *thoughts* within thee, let *his comforts* delight thy soul, *Plal. 94. 19. The multitude* distracteth thee; Retire into *Unity* that thy soul may be composed, quieted, and delighted.

2. And let it make thee long for the *Unity of the Saints*, and endeavour it to the utmost of thy power, that the *Church in Unity* may be more like the *Head*.

3. And let it cause thee to admire the *Happiness* of the *Saints*, that are freed from the bondage of the distracting *Creature*, and have but *One* to *Love*, and *Fear*, and *Trust*, and *Serve*, and *Seek*, and *Know*; *One thing is needful*, which should be chosen, but its *many* that we are troubled about, *Luk. 11. 42.*

CHAP. IV.

3. **T**HE *Immensity* of *God* (which is the next *Attribute* to be considered) must have this *Effect* upon thy soul: 1. The *Infinite* *God* that is *everywhere* comprehending all places and things, and comprehended by none, must raise *admiring reverent* thoughts in the soul of the believer.

We wonder at the *Magnitude* of the *Sun* and the *Heavens*, and of the *whole Creation*; But when we begin to think what is *beyond* the *Heavens*, and all created Being, we are at a kind of loss. Why it is *God* that is *in* all, and *above* all, and *beyond* all, and *beneath* all: and where there is *no place* because *no Creature*, there is *God*; And if thy thoughts should imagine millions of millions of miles beyond all place and measure, all is *but God*, and go as far as thou canst in thy thoughts and thou canst not go *beyond him*. Reverently admire the *Immensity* of *God*. The world and all the *Creatures* in it, are not to *God* so much as a *sand* or *atome* is to all the *world*. The point of a needle is more to all the world, then the world to *God*. For between that which is *Finite*, and that which is *Infinite*, there is no comparison. Isa. 40. 12, 15, 17. *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? and meted out Heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a ballance? — Behold the Nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the ballance: behold he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing, — All Nations before him are as nothing: and they are counted to him less then Nothing and Vanity.]*

2. From this *Greatness* and *Immensity* of *God* also thy soul must reverently stay all its busie, bold enquiries, and know that *God* is to us and to every creature *Imcomprehensible*. If thou couldst fathome or measure him, and know his *Greatness* by a *comprehensive knowledge*, he were not *God*. A *Creature* can *comprehend* nothing but a *Creature*. You may know *God*, but not *comprehend* him; As your foot treadeth on the earth, but doth not *cover* all the earth. The Sea is not the Sea, if you can hold it in a spoon. Thou canst not *comprehend* the *Sun* which thou *seest*, and by which thou *seest* all things else, nor the sea, or earth, no nor a worm or pile of grass: Thy understanding knoweth not *all* that *God* hath put into any the least of these; Thou art a stranger to thy *self*, and to somewhat in every part of thy *self*, both body and soul. And thinkest thou to *comprehend* *God*, that perfectly *comprehendest* *nothing*? Stop then thy overbold enquiries, and remember that thou art a shallow finite worm, and *God* is *Infinite*. First,
reach

reach to comprehend the *Heaven* and *Earth* and whole *Creation*, before thou think of Comprehending him, to whom the world is nothing, or vanity, or so small a dust, or drop, or point. [*Job. 37. 1, 5.* saith *Elibu*, *At this my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place: Hear attentively the Noise of his Voice, — God thundereth marvelously with his Voice; great things doth he which we cannot comprehend*] How then should we comprehend himself? When God pleadeth his cause with *Job* himself, what doth he but convince him of his *Infiniteness* and *absoluteness*, even from the greatness of his works, which are beyond our reach and yet are as *nothing* to himself! Should he take the busie enquirer in hand, but as he did begin with *Job*, 38. 1, 2. &c. [*Who is this that darkeneth Counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me, &c.*] alas, how soon would he non-plus and confound us? and make us say as *Job. 40. 4.* [*Behold I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth: Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea twice, but I will proceed no further.*] Indeed there is mentioned *Eph. 3. 11.* *The Saints comprehending the dimensions of the Love of Christ*; but as the next verse saith, *it passeth knowledge*; so comprehending there signifieth no more, but a *knowing according to our Measure*; an attainment of what we are capable to attain; nay nor all that neither, but such a prevalent knowledge of the Love of Christ as is common to all the Saints; As there is nothing *more visible* then the *Sun*, and yet *no visible* being *less comprehended* by the sight; so is there nothing *more Intelligible* then God (for he is All in all things) and yet nothing so *Incomprehensible* to the mind that knoweth him. It satisfieth me not to be *Ignorant of God*, nor to know so *little* as I know, nor to be short of the measure that I am capable of; but it satisfieth me to be *uncapable of comprehending him*; or else I must be unsatisfied because I am not God. O the presumptuous arrogance of those men, if I may call them men, that dare prate about the Infinite God such things as never were revealed to them, in his works or word? and dare pretend to measure him by their shallow understandings, and question, if not deny and censure, that of God which they cannot reach! and sooner
suspect

suspect the word that doth reveal him, then their muddy brains that should better conceive of him ! Saith *Elihu* Job 36. 26. [*Behold God is Great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.*] Though the Knowledge of him be our *Life Eternal*, yet we know him not by any full and adequate conception. We know an *Infinite God*, and therefore with an *Excellent Knowledge* objectively considered ; but with a poor degree and kind of Knowledge next to none, as to the act ; and it is a thousand thousandfold more that we know not of him, then that we know : For ineed there is no comparison to be here made.

3. The immensity of God as it proveth him incomprehensible, so it containeth his *Omnipresence* ; And therefore should continually affect us as men that believe that God stands by them. As we would compose our thoughts, and minds and passions, if we saw (were it possible) the Lord stand over us, so should we now labour to compose them. As we would restrain and use our tongues, and order our behaviour if we saw his Majesty, so should we do now when we know that he is with us. An eye servant will work hard in his masters presence, what ever he doth behind his back. Bestir thee then Christian, for God stands by ; In him we live and move and have our Being, Act. 17. 28. Loyter not till thou canst truly say that God is gone or absent from thee ; sin not by wilfulness or negligence till thou canst say, thou art behind his back. Alas that we should have no more awakened serious souls and no more fervent lively prayers, and no more serious holy speech, and no more careful heavenly lives, when we stand before the living God, and do all in his sight, and speak all in his hearing ? O why should sense so much affect us, and faith, and Knowledge work no more ? we can be awed with the presence of a man, and would not do before a Prince, what most men do before the Lord. Yea other things affect us when we see them not ; and shall not God ? But of this more anon.

4. The Immensity of God assureth us much of his *Altnfficiency*. He that is everywhere, is easily able to bear all prayers, to help us in all straits, to supply all wants, to punish all sins. A Blasphemous conceit of God as *Finite*. and as absent from us, is one of the causes of our distrust. He that doth distrust

an absent friend, as thinking he may forget him, or neglect him, will trust him when he is *with him* ; cannot he hear thee, and pity thee and help thee that is still with thee ? O what an *awe* is this to the *careless* ! what a *support* to *faith* ! what a *quicken*er to *duty* ! what a *comfort* to the afflicted *troubled* soul ! God is in thy poor cottage, Christian, and well acquainted with thy wants. God is at thy bedside when thou art sick, and nearer thee than the nearest of thy friends. What wouldst thou do in want or pain if God stood by ? wouldst thou not *Pray* and *Trust* him if thou *sawest* him ? so do though thou *see him not*, for he is surely there.

5. The *Immensity* and Infinite Greatness of God assureth us of his *Particular Providence*. Some blasphemous Infidels imagine that he hath only a *General Providence*, and hath left all to some inferiour powers, and medleth not with particular things himself : They think that as he hath left it to the Sun to illuminate the world, so hath he left all other inferiour things and events to nature or inferior causes ; and that he doth not himself regard, observe, reward or punish the thoughts, and words, and wayes of men. And all this is because they consider not the *Immensity* or Infinite Greatness of the Lord. Its true, that God hath framed the Nature of all things, and delighteth to maintain and use the frame of second causes which he hath made ; and will not easily and ordinarily work against or without this order of causes : But it is as true and certain both that *sometimes* he maketh use of *Miracles*, and that in the very *course* of *natural causes* he is able to exercise a *particular Providence*, as well as *without them* by himself alone. The *Creature* doth nothing but *by him*. All things move as he first moveth them, in their natural agency. His *wisdom* guideth, his *will* intendeth, and commandeth ; his *Power* moveth and disposeth all. The *Sun* would not shine, if he were not the *light* of it ; and he is no less *himself* the Light of the world, then if he did illuminate it *without a Sun*. God is never the *further off*, because the *Creatures* are near us ; nor never the *less* in the *effect*, because he useth a *second cause*, then if there were *no* second cause at all. What influence second causes have upon the souls of men, he hath for the most part kept unknown to us ; But that *himself* disposeth of us and all things

things after the counsel of his own will, is beyond all question. Can he that is most *nearly present* with thy thoughts, be *regardless* of them? can he be *regardless* of thy *words* and *ways* that is *with* thee and seeth and heareth all? If thou believe not that he is as verily with thee as thou art there thy self, thou art then an Atheist. If thou believe him not to be *Infinite*, thou believest him not to be God. It is not *God* that can be *absent*, *limited* or *finite*. And if thou be not such a senseless Atheist, but knowest that God is *everywhere*, how is it possible thou shouldst doubt of his care or observance or particular providence about every thing? No child is scarce so foolish that will think his Father cares not what he saith or doth, when he stands before him. Wouldst thou doubt of Gods particular providence, whether he *regard* thy *heart*, and *talke* and *practice*, if thou didst *see him* with thee? sure it is scarce possible. Why then dost thou question it when thou *knowest* that he is with thee? If thou be an Atheist and knowest *not*, look about thee on the world, and bethink thee whether stones, and trees, and earth, whether beasts, or birds or men do make themselves; If they do, thou were best *uphold thy self*, and be not sick, and do not *die*. If thou *madest thy self*, thou canst sure *preserve* thy self; But if any thing else made thee and all these lower things, either it was somewhat *greater* or *less* then they; either something *better* or *worse* then they. If *less*, or *worse*, how couldit make them *Greater* or *Better* then it self? Can any thing *give* that which it *hath* not? If it must needs be *Greater* and *Better* then the Creatures, then as it must be *Wiser* than they, and more *Holy*, *Gracious* and *Just* then they, so must it be more *comprehensive* then all they. Whoever made *this earth*, is certainly *greater* then the *earth*, or else he should give it more than he had to give. And if he be *Greater*, he must be *present*: If thou shouldst be so vain as to account *any other* higher thing the Maker of this world, that is not *God*, thou must ascribe also a *sufficiency* to that maker, to exercise a particular providence, and moreover be put to consider who did *make that Maker*. Nothing therefore is more certain even to Reason it self, then that the Maker of the world must be *Greater* then the *world*, and therefore *present* with all the world; and therefore must *observe* and *regard* all the world. When thou canst find

out a *thought*, or *word*, or *deed* that was not done in the *presence* of *God*, or any creature that is not in his presence, then believe and spare not that he seeth it not, or regardeth it not; yea and that it hath no being. O blind Atheists! you see the Sun before your eyes, which enlighteneth all the upper part of the earth at once; even millions of millions see all by its light; and yet do you doubt whether God beholds and regards and provides for all at once! Tell me, if God had never a Creature to look to in all the world but *thee*, wouldst thou believe that he would regard thy heart, and words, and wayes, or not? If he would, why not *now*, as well as then! Is he not as *sufficient* for *thee*, and as really present with thee, as if he had no other creature else? If all men in the world were dead save one, would the *Sun* any more illuminate that one then now it doth? Maist thou not see as well by the light of it now, as if it had never another to enlighten? And dost thou see a *Creature* do so much, and wilt thou not believe as much of the *Creator*? If thou think us worms too low for God so exactly to *observe*, thou maist as well think that we are too low for him to *Create*, or *preserve*; and then who made us and preserveth us? Doth not the *sun* enlighten the smallest bird, and crawling vermine, as well as the greatest prince on earth? Doth it withhold its light from any Creature that can see, and say, I will not shine on things so base? And wilt thou more restrain the Infinite God that is the Maker, Light, and Life of all? It is he that filleth *all in all*. Eph. 1. 23. *The Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*, 1 King. 8. 27. and is he absent from *thee*? *He doth beset thee before and behind, and layeth his hand upon thee; Whither wilt thou go from his spirit, or whither wilt thou fly from his presence? If thou ascend up into Heaven, he is there; If thou make thy bed in Hell, thou wilt feel him there; If thou take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shalt thou find him to be to thee as thou art*, Psal. 139. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10. Thou maist think with sinful *Adam* and *Eve*, Gen. 3. 8. to hide thy self from the presence of the Lord: But thou wilt quickly find that he observeth thee; and *be sure thy sin will find thee out*, Numb. 32. 23. Thou maist with *Cain* be turned out of the *Gracious presence* of *God*, Gen. 4. 16. and cast out of his *Church* and *Mercy*;

and with the damned thou maist be turned out of the presence of his *blessedness* and *glory* : but thou shalt never be out of his *essential presence*, nor so escape the *presence* of his *Justice*, Job 1. 12. & 2. 7. It is the *presence* of his *Grace* where the *up-right* are promised here to *dwell*, Psal. 140. 13. and out of which they fear lest they be cast, Psal. 51. 11. [*Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me*] And it is the *presence where is fulness of Joy*, which they aspire after, *Psal.* 16. 11. But there is also a *presence* that the *earth shall tremble at*, Psal. 114. 7. and that the *wicked shall perish at*, Psal. 68. 2. so that a particular Providence must be remembered by them that believe and remember the Immensity of God.

C H A P. V.

4. **T**HE *Eternity* of God is the next Attribute to be Known, which also must have its work upon the soul. And 1. This also sheweth us that God is *Incomprehensible* ; For man cannot comprehend *Eternity*. When we go about to think of that which hath *no Beginning* nor *End*, it is to our *mind*, as a place a thousand miles off is to our *eye* ; even beyond our reach ; we cannot say *there is no such place*, yea we know *there is* ; but *we cannot see it* : so we know *there is an Eternal Being* ; but our *Knowledge* of his *Eternity* is not *intuitive*, or *comprehensive*. *Eternity* therefore is the object of our *faith*, and *reverence*, and *admiration*, but forbids our *bold enquiries* , O the *arrogancy* of those *ignorantly-learned*, and *foolishly-wise* disputing men, that have so long perplexed, if not torn in pieces the Church, about the *priority* and *posteriority* of the *knowledge* and *decrees* of God, when they confess them all to be *Eternal* ! As if they knew not that terms of *priority*, *presentiality*, and *posteriority*, have not that *significancy* in or about *Eternity* as they have with us !

2. The *Eternity* of God must draw the soul from *Transitory*, to *Eternal things*. It is an *Everlasting blessedness*, even the *Eternal God*, that our souls are made for, the *Bruits* are made

made for a *mortal* happiness; The *Immortal* soul cannot be fully content with any thing that will have an end. As a *capacity* of this *endless* blessedness doth difference *man* from the *beasts* that perish; so the *Disposition* to it doth difference *Saints* from the *ungodly*; and the *Fruition* of it doth difference the *Glorified* from the *dammned*. Alas what a silly thing were *man* if he were capable of nothing but these *transitory* things! What were our *Lives* worth, and what were our *time* worth, and what were all our *mercies* worth, or what were all the *world* worth to us, or what were we worth, our selves? I would not undervalue the works of God; but truly if man had no other life to live but this, I should esteem him a very contemptible creature. If you say that there's some excellency in the *Bruits*, I answer, True; but their *usefulness* is their chiefest excellency; And what is their *use* but to be a glass in which we may see the Lord, and to be serviceable to *man* in his passage to *Eternity*? They are not capable of *Knowing*, or *Loving*, or *enjoying* God themselves: but they are *useful* to *man* that is capable of this; and so they have an *everlasting* end, and this is their Excellency. And therefore the *Atheist* that denyeth an *everlasting* life to *man*, doth bring himself into a far baser state then the *bruits* are in. For the *bruits* have an *everlasting* end, in promoting the *happiness* of *man*: But if *man* have no *everlasting* end himself, there is no other whose *everlasting* happiness he can promote. The *unbeliever* therefore doth debase his *own* soul and the *whole* creation: And faith and holiness advance the *soul* and *all* things with it, that are useful to our advancement. The true *Believer* honoureth his *horse*, his *dog*, his *food* and *rayment*, and the *earth* he treadeth on, and *every* creature, incomparably more than the *Infidel* doth honour his *own* or any others *soul*, or then he honoureth the *greatest* prince on earth. For the *Believer* useth all things, even the *vilest* in reference to *Eternity*; but the *Infidel* useth his *life* and *soul* but to a *transitory* end; and takes the *greatest* Prince on earth to be but for a *transitory* use. And as *Eternity* is unvaluable in comparison of *time*, so the *use* and *excellency* that a *Believer* doth ascribe to a *bit of bread* or the *basest* creature in the sanctified improvement of it, is ten thousand times, even unspeakably above the

use and excellency that an *Unbeliever* ascribeth to his *soul* or to his *Prince*. He that stampeth the *Image* of a *Dog* or a *Toad* upon gold instead of the *Image* of the *Prince*, and would have ten thousand pounds-worth goe but for a farthing, doth not by a thousand degrees so much debase the *gold* as the *Infidel* doth debase his *soul* and *all things*. *Infidelity* is guilty of the destruction of *all souls*, and the destruction of *all mercies*, and the destruction of *all Divine Revelations*, of *all graces*, of *all ordinances*, and *means*, and of the destruction of the *whole creation* that was made for man: For he that destroyeth the *End*, destroyeth all the *means*: But the *Infidel* destroyeth and denyeth the *end* of every one of these, and *Holiness* only doth give them up and use them to their ends.

1. He is guilty of the destruction of *all souls*: For as much as in him lies they are destroyed, while they are all made useless to the *End* for which they were created. If there be no other *life and happiness Everlasting*, what are *souls* good for? what is the *Reasonable creature* good for? Is it to be *Happy here*? In what? Here is *no happiness*. Is it in eating and drinking and sleeping? why these are to strengthen us for our service which *tendeth* to our *end*, and therefore cannot be themselves our end. Is it not better be *without* either *meat* or *drink* or *sleep* in point of *Happiness*, so be it we also were without the *need* of them, then to *need them* and *have them* for our need, especially with the care and trouble which they cost us? I had an hundred times rather for my part, if it were lawful to desire it, never have meat, or drink, or sleep, and be without the need of them, as I had rather be without a sore, then to have a plaister that will ease it, and be every day at the pains to dress it. Brutes have some advantage in these above men, in that they have not the care, and fear, and sorrow of mind as we have, in the getting or keeping what they have or need. If you go *downward*, and say that *men* are made to *govern brutes*, then what are *brutes* made for, unless to dung the earth? and so the basest shall be the end of the noblest, and *God* may be as wisely said to be for *man*, because he is to *govern him*. Truly if there were *no Everlasting life*, but man were a meer terrestrial animal, I had rather never have been born, or should wish I had never been a man: I

knew not what to do with my self, nor how to imploy the faculties of my soul or body, but they would all seem to me as useles things. What should I do with my *Reason*, if I had no higher an *end* then *beasts*? what should I do with a *mind* that *knoweth* that there is a God, and another world, and that is capable of desiring him, seeking and enjoying him, if it must be frustrated of all? what should I do with a *heart* thats *capable* of the *Love* of God and *delighting* in his *Love*, if I have no God to Love and delight in when this life is ended? why have I a heart that so desireth him, in fuller vision and fruition, if I be capable of no such thing? what then should I do with my time and life? verily I know not, if I were fully of this sad opinion, whether I should turn brute in my life agreeably to my judgement, or whether I should make an end of my life to be eased of a useles burden; but confident I am I should not know what to do with my self; I should be like a poor cashiered Souldier, or like one turned out of his Service, that knew not where to have work and wages: And if you found me standing all day idle, I must give you the reason, because no man hath hired me. What do those wretches do with their lives, that think they have no God to serve and seek, or future happiness to attain? As men use to say of *naughty Ministers*, so may I say of all *mankind* according to the Doctrine of the *Infidels*: A sorry *Taylor* may make a *Botcher*, or a bad *Shoomaker* may make a *Cobler*, and a broken *Mercer* may be a *Pedler*; but a *naughty Priest* is good for *nothing* (And its true of him as such) and as Christ himself saith, *Matth. 5. 13, 14. Yee are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men: yee are the light of the world: men do not light a candle to put it under a bushel.* So I say of the *Reasonable Creature*: The *grass* is useful for the *beasts*: The *beasts* are serviceable unto *man*: A *swine* that cannot serve you *living*, is useful being *dead*. But if there were *no God* to seek and serve, and *no life* but *this* for us to hope for, *for ought* I know man were good for nothing: What were *Light* good for if there were *no eyes*? or *eyes* if there were *no light* to see by? what is a *Watch* good for but to tell the *hour* of the *day*? All the curious parts and work-

manship of it, is worth no more then the *mettal* is worth, if it be not useful to its proper end. And what *Reason*, and *will*, and *affections* in man are good for, I know not, if not to *seek*, to *please* and to *enjoy* the Lord! Take off this poise, and all the wheels of *my soul* must stand still, or else do worse.

2. The *Infidel* and *ungodly* man that looks not after an *Etern. end*, destroyeth all the *mercies of God*, and makes them as *no mercies* at all: *Creation* and our *Being* is a *mercy*: but it is in order to our *Eternal end*. *Redemption* by *Christ* is an unspeakable *mercy*; but its *denyed* by the *Infidel*, and *rejected* by the *Ungodly*: what is *Christ* worth, and all his *mediation*, if there be *no life* for man but *this*? *Peace* and *Liberty*, *health* and *life*, *friends* and *neighbours*, *food* and *rayment*, are all *mercies* to us, as a *ship* and *sails* are to the *Mariner*, or a *fair way*, or *Horse*, or *Inn* to a *Traveller*: But if by denying our *Eternal end*, you make our *voyage* or our *journey* vain, these *mercies* then are little worth: no more then a *ship* on the *land*, or a *plow* in the *sea*, or a *horse* to him that hath no use for him. And O what an ungrateful wretch is that who will deny *all the mercies of God* to himself, and to all others! For once deny the *use* and the *Eternal end*, and you deny the *mercy*.

3. He that believeth not, or seeks not after an *Eternal end*, destroyeth all the *Doctrine*, *Law* and *Government of God*: For all is but to lead us to *this end*. All the holy *Scriptures*, the precepts of *Christ* and his holy example, the *Covenant of Grace*, the gifts and miracles of the Holy Ghost, the light and law of *Nature* it self, are all to bring us to our *Eternal end*: And therefore he that denyeth that end, doth cancel them all, and cast them by as useles things.

4. And he denyeth all the *Graces of the Spirit*: For what use is there for *Faith*, if the *object* of it be a *falsehood*? what use for *Hope*, if there be *no life* to be *Hoped for*? what use for holy *desires* and *love*, if *God* be not to be *enjoyed*? *Grace* is but the *delusion* and *deformity* of the soul, if the *Infidel* and *ungodly* be in the right.

5. They destroy also *All the means* of our *Salvation*, if they deny *Salvation* which is the *End*. To what purpose should men *study*, or *read*, or *hear*, or *pray*, or use either *Sacraments* or any other *means*, for an *End* that is not to be had?

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To what end should men *obey* or *suffer*, for any such *end* that is not attainable?

6. Yea they do *let loose the soul to sin*, and take off all effectual restraint. If there be *no Eternal end*, and *no Reward* or *Punishment* but *here*, what can effectually hinder the men of this opinion from stealing, whoredome, or any villany when it may be done with secrecy? what should hinder the revengeful man from poisoning or secret murdering his enemy, or setting his house on fire in the night? If I know a man or woman that believes no life to come, I take it for granted they are revengeful, thieves, deceivers, fornicators, or any thing that is bad, if they have but temptation and secret opportunity. For what hath he to seek but the *pleasing* of his *flesh*, that thinks he hath *no God* to *seek* or *please*, or no future reward or punishment to expect? He that confesseth himself an *Infidel*, to me, doth confess himself to be in all things else as bad as ever he *can* or *dare*. *Honesty* is renounced by that man or woman that profess themselves to be *Atheists* or *Infidels*: Methinks in congruency with their profession they should take it for a wrong to be called or reputed *honest*! If you tell me that *Heathens* had a kind of *Honesty*; I must tell you again that most *Heathens* believed the *Immortality of the soul*, and that kind of *seeming Honesty* which they had was only in those of them that thus expected *a life to come*. But those that believe not *another life* where man is to have his punishment and reward, have nothing like to *Honesty* in them, but live like greedy ravenous beasts, where they are from under the *Laws* and *Government* of them that look for another life. The *Cannibals* that eat mens flesh, and some such savages as they, are the *Nations* that expect no life but this. It is believed so commonly by all the civil *Infidels* and *Turks*, as shews it to be a principle that nature doth reveal.

7. Yea the whole *Creation* that is within the sight of man is *destroyed* opinionatively by the *Infidels* that look for no *Immortal life*: For all things were made to further our *Salvation*: the *Heavens* to declare the *Glory of God*, and the *firmament* to shew his handy work, and all *Creatures* to be our *Glass* in which we must behold the *Lord*, and our *Book* in which we must read and learn his nature and his will. The *sun*

is to *light us*, and maintain our *Life*, and the *Life* of other lower Creatures, while we prepare for *Immortality*: The earth is to bear us, and to bear fruit for us; and the Trees and plants and every Creature to accommodate and serve us, while we serve the Lord and pass on to *Eternity*. And therefore the Atheist that denyeth us our *Eternity*, denyeth the *usefulness* of all the world; what were all the Creatures here good for, if there were no *men*? the earth would be a wilderness, and the beasts would for the most part perish, for want of sustenance, and all would be like a forsaken Cottage that no man dwelleth in, and doth no good; And if man be not the Heir of *Immortality*, they can do *him* no good. All Creatures are but our provision in the way to this *Eternity*: And therefore if there were no *Eternity*, what should we do with them? what should we do with *wages*, and *pavements*, or with *Inns* for Travellers, or with *horses* or other provision for our journey, if there were no travelling that way? And who will travel to a place that *is not*, or a City that is nowhere but in his brains, besides a mad man? Its evident therefore that as all the *tools* in a workmans shop, are made *useless* to him if he be forbidden to use his *trade*, and all the books in my Library are useless, if I may not *read them* to get knowledge; so all *Creatures* under Heaven are made *useless* and destroyed doctrinally by the Atheist, that thinks there is no *Eternal life* for which they should be used. I must seriously profess if I believed this (being in other things of the mind I am) I knew not what to do with any thing. What should I do with my *Books*, but to learn the way to *this Eternity*? what should I do with my *money*, if there be *no treasure* to be laid up in Heaven, nor friends to be made with the *Mammon*-abused commonly to unrighteousness? what should I do with my *Tongue*, my *Hands*, my *Time*, my *Life*, my *Self*, or *anything*, if there were *no Eternity*? I think I should dig my grave, and lay me down in it and die and perish, to scape the sorrows of a longer life that must be my companions.

Remember then Christians, and *still* remember it, that *Eternity* is the matter of your *Faith* and *Hope*! *Eternity* is your *portion* and *felicity*! *Eternity* is the *End* of all your desires, and labours, and distresses! *Eternity* is your *Religion*;
and

and the *Life* of all your holy motions; and as without the *Capacity* of it, you would be but *beasts*, so without the *Love* and *Desire* of it, and *title* to it, you would be but *wicked miserable men*. Set not your hearts on transitory things, while you stand near unto *Eternity*. How can you have room for so many thoughts on fading things, when you have an *Eternity* to think on? what light can you see in the *Candles* or *Glow-worms* of this world, in the *Sunshine* of *Eternity*? Oh remember when you are tempted to please your eyes, your taste, and sensual desires, that these are not *Eternal* pleasures! Remember when you are tempted for wealth or honour to wrong your souls, that these are not the *Eternal* riches! Houses and Lands are not *Eternal*! meats and drinks are not *Eternal*! sports and pastimes, and jocund sinful company are not *Eternal*! Alas, how short! how soon do they vanish into nothing! But it is *God*, and our dear *Redeemer* that are *Eternal*! The flower of *beauty* withereth with *age*, or by the nipping blast of a short disease; the *honours* of the world are but a *dream*; your graves will bury a' l' its glory. Down comes the Prince, the Lord, the gallant, and suddenly takes his lodgings in the dust. The corps that was pampered and adorned yesterday, is a clod to day. The body that was bowed to, attended and applauded but the other day, is now interred in the vault of darkness, with worms and moles. To day it is *corruption* and a most loathsome thing, that lately was dreaming of an earthly happiness. *One day* he is striving for riches and preeminences, or glorying and rejoicing in them, that the *next day* may be snatcht away to hell. O fix not your minds on fading things, that perish in the using, and by their vanishing mock you that set your hearts upon them. You will not fix your eye and mind upon every *bird* that flyeth by you, as you will on the houses that you must dwell in: nor will you mind every *passenger*, as you will do your friends that still live with you. And shall transitory vanity be minded by you above *Eternity*?

3. It is *Eternity* that must direct you in your estimate of all things. It is this that sheweth you the excellency of man above the *beasts*: It is this that tells you the worth of *Grace*, and the weight of *sin*, the preciousness of holy Ordinances and helps,

and the evil of hinderances and temptations ; the wisdom of the choice and diligence of the Saints, and the folly of the choice, and negligent, sinful lives of the ungodly ; the worth of *Gods favour*, and the vanity of *mans* ; and the difference between the godly and the un sanctified world, in point of *Happiness*.

Were not *Grace* the egg, the seed, the earnest of an *Eternal glory*, it were not so glorious a thing. But O how precious are all those *thoughts, desires, delights* and *breathings* of the soul, that bring us on to sweet *Eternity* ! Even those sorrows, and groans, and tears are precious that lead to an *Eternal joy* ! Who would not willingly obey the holy motions of the holy Spirit, that is but hatching and preparing us for *Eternity* ! This is it that makes a *Bible*, a *Sermon*, a *holy Book*, to be of greater value then *Lands* and *Lordships*. It is *Eternity* that makes the illuminated soul so fearful of sinning, so diligent in holy duties, so chearful and resolved in suffering, because he believeth it is all for an *Eternity*. A Christian in the holy Assemblies, and in his reading, learning, prayer, conference, is laying up for Everlasting, when the worldling in the Market, in the field or shop, is making provision for a few dayes or hours : Thou gloriest in thy Riches and preheminance now, but *how long* wilt thou do so ? *Today* that house, that land is thine ; but canst thou say, it shall be thine to *morrow* ? Thou canst not : But the *Believer* can truly say, *My God, my Christ*, is mine to day, and will be mine to *all Eternity* ! O Death ! thou canst take my friends from me, and my worldly riches from me, and my *time*, and *strength*, and *life* from me ! but take *my God, my Christ, my Heaven, my Portion* from me, if thou canst ! My sin is all thy sting and strength ! But where is thy sting when sin is gone ? and where is thy strength when Christ hath conquered thee ? Is it a great matter that thou deprivest me of my sinful weak and *troubulous friends*, when against thy will thou bringest me to my *perfect blessed friends* with whom I must abide for ever ! Thou dost indeed bereave me of *these Riches* ; but it is that I may possess the unvaluable *Eternal riches* ! Thou endest my *Time*, that I may have *Eternity* ! Thou castest me down that I may be exalted ! Thou takest away my strength of life, that I may enter into *Life Eternal* !

Eternal! And is this the *worst* that Death can do? And shall I be afraid of *this*? I willingly lay by my cloaths at night, that I may take my rest, and I am not loth to put off the *old* when I must put on *new*. The bird that is hatcht is not grieved because he must leave the broken shell. Nor is it the grief of man or beast that he hath left the womb! Death doth but open the *womb* of *Time*, and let us into *Eternity*, and is the *second birth day* of the soul. *Regeneration* brings us into the Kingdom of *Grace*; and *Death* into the Kingdom of *Glory*. Blessed are they that have their part in the New birth of *Grace* and the first Resurrection from the death of sin; for to such the *Natural Death* will be *Gain*; and they shall have their part in the *second Resurrection*, and on them the *everlasting Death* shall have no power. O sirs, it is *Eternity* that telleth you what you should *wish*, and *be*, and *do!* and that turneth the scales in all things where it is concerned. Can you *sleep* in sin so neer *Eternity!* Can you *play* and *laugh* before you are *prepared* for *Eternity!* Can you think him wise that selleth his *eternal Joy* for the *ease*, the *mirth*, the *pleasure* of a *moment!* and triflcth away the time in which he must win or lose *Eternity!* If *these* men be *wise*, there are *no fools!* nor any but *wise men* in *Bedlam!* Dare thy tongue report, or thy heart imagine, that any holy work is needles, or a heavenly life too much adoe, or any suffering too dear, that is for an *Eternity!* O happy sou's that win *Eternity* with the loss of all the world! O blefs that Christ, that spirit, that light, that word, that messenger of God, that drew thy heart to *choose Eternity* before all transitory things! *That* was the *day* when thou beganst to be *wise*, and indeed to shew thy self a man! Thy wealth, thy honour, thy pleasure will be thine when the sensual world hath nothing to shew, but *sin* and *Hell*, of all they laboured for. Their pleasures, honours, and all die, when *they* die; But thine will then begin their perfection! The *Hopes* of the *ungodly* are like an *addle egge* that when it is broken sends forth nothing but an *odious stink*, when another sends forth the *living bird*; O all you worldlings, rich and poor, you dream, you play, you trifle, because you *labour* not for *Eternity!* Even worldly Princes, and Nobles of the earth, your glory is but a *squib*, a *flash*, a *nothing*, in comparison of the *Eternal glory*

glory which you lose; you are *doing Nothing* when you are striving for the world; you are trifling and bes fooling your Immortal souls while you are grasping a shadow, the uncertain Riches: It is the *Believer* whom you despise, that seeks for *something*, that loseth not his labour, that shews himself a man of reason, who is caring, and studying, and labouring, and praying, and watching, and suffering for *Eternity*; why is a day in the courts of God, so much better then a thousand in the tents or palaces of wickedness, but because it is the *Exchange* where we have News of *Heaven*, and trade for an *Eternity*? And why is it better to be a door keeper in the house of God, then to flourish in the prosperity of sinners, but because *Gods house* is the porch or entrance of an *Eternity of delights*, and the *lowest room* among the *saints* affords us a better prospect into *Heaven*, then the *Highest state* of worldly dignity! The ungodly are neer to cutting down when they flourish in their greatest glory, *Psal. 37. 2, 20.* Stay but a little, and *he that flourisheth will be withered* and cast into the fire, and the *Righteous shall see it when he is cut off*, and shall seek him, but he is not to be found, *vers. 34, 35, 36, 38.* For the *enemies of God*, and *all that are far from him shall perish*, *Psal. 92. 9. & 13. 27.* their *desire shall perish*, *Psal. 112. 10.* their *hope shall perish*, *Prov. 11. 7. Job 8. 13.* their *way shall perish*, *Psal. 1. 6.* and *himself and all that they sought, and loved, and delighted in*, shall perish, *Job 20. 7. 2 Pet. 2. 12. Rom. 2. 12. Heb. 1. 11.* Even the visible *Heavens* and *Earth*, which they abused, shall be *consumed with fire.* Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking towards and waiting for the coming and appearance of our Lord! *2 Pet. 3. 11.* Shall any man be accounted wise, that is not wise for *Eternal happiness*? shall any man be counted *Happy* that must be most miserable to *Eternity*? In the name of God, Christian, I charge thee to hold on, and look to thy soul, thy words, thy ways, for it is for *Eternity.* O play not, loyter not, do nothing by the halves in the way to *Eternity*! Let the careless world do what they will; they despise, and know not what they do despise; they neglect, and know not what they do neglect; but thou that *seekest, and labourest, and waitest, knowest what*
 thou

thou *seekest*, and *labourest* and *waitest* for. They *sin* and and know not what they do. They know not what they are *treasuring up for an Eternity*. But *thou knowest* why thou *hatest*, and *avoidest* sin.

Sinners, be awakened by the Call of God; Do you know where you are, and what you do? You are every man of you *stepping into Eternity*? Will you *sin away*, will you *loyter away*, will you *sell* for nothing, an *Eternal Glory*? Is thy *sinful lust*, and *gain*, and *mirth*, and *gluttony* and *excess* of *drink*, a price to set upon *Eternity*? If *Heaven* be no more worth to thee, art thou not as bad as *Judas*, that for thirty pieces of silver would sell his *Lord*? O *Eternity, Eternity*, what hearts have they that can so forget thee, neglect thee, and *disesteem* thee, when they stand *so neer* thee! O *sleepy souls!* do you never use to rub your eyes, and look before you towards *Eternity*? And doth it not amaze you to see whither it is that you are going? Merrily you run down the Hill; but where's the *bottom*! If you look but down from the top of a *steeple*, it may occasion an amazing fear; what then should it cause in you to look down *into Hell*, which is *your Eternity*? No *good* can possibly be *small* that is *Eternal*; And no *hurt* or *pain* can be called *little* that is *Eternal*: An *Eternal tooth-ake*, or an *Eternal gowt*, or *stone*, or *feaver*, were a misery unspeakable; But O what are these to an *Eternal loss of Heaven*, and to an *Eternal sense of the burning wrath of God Almighty*! To be *out of Heaven* a day, and *in Hell* that day, is a misery now unknown to sinners; But if it were as many thousand years as the earth hath sands, it were a *greater Misery*; But to be there for *Ever*, doth make the *Misery* pass all *Hope*, and all *conceiving*. O me thinks the very *name* of *Eternity*, should frighten the drunkard out of the Alehouse, and the *free* sinner out of his security, and the *lustful*, *sportful*, *voluptuous* sinner out of his sensual delights! Methinks the very *name* of *Eternity*, should call off the worldling to seek betime a more enduring treasure, and should take down the gallants pride, and bring men to look after other matters then the most do look after. Me thinks to hear the *name* of *Eternity* should with men of any faith and reason, even blast all the beauty, and blurre the glory, and sadden the delights, and weaken the temptations.

temptations of the world, and make all its pleasure, pomp and splendour, to be to our apprehensions as a smoak, a shadow, as the dirt that we tread upon. Methinks to hear the name of Eternity, should lay so odious a reproach on sin, and so nakedly open the folly, and shame and misery of the ungodly, and so lively shew the *need*, and *worth* of *faith* and *Holiness*, that need men should be soon resolved in their choice, and soon be at the end of an ungodly course, and need no more words to make them the resolved servants of the Lord, before to morrow. O me thinks, that a *thought* of *Eternity*, should with a *Believer*, answer all *temptations*, and *put life* into all his prayers and endeavours! If we were never so cold, or dull, or sleepy, one would think a serious thought of *Eternity* should warm us, quicken us, and awake us! O Christians, shall we *hear* carelessly or *speak* carelessly of *Eternity*? shall we *pray* coldly, or labour negligently for *Eternity*? O what an Ocean of Joy will *Eternity* be unto the sanctified! It hath neither banks nor bottom. O what a gulf of misery, and woe, will *Eternity* be to the ungodly! wonderful! that on their dying beds they quake not with the horrour, and that they cry not out with greatest lamentation, to think what a bottomless gulf of misery their departing souls must be cast into! To be for *Ever, Ever, Ever*, under the most heavy wrath of God! *This* is the appointed wages of ungodliness; *This* is the end of wicked wayes; *This* is it that sinners chose, because they would not live to God! *This* they preferred, or ventured on, before a holy heavenly life! And *this* is it that Believers are labouring to escape in all their holy care and diligence! It is an Infinite value that is put upon the blood of Christ, the promises of God, the ordinances and means of Grace, and grace it self, and the poorest duties of the poorest Saints, because they are for an *Infinite, Eternal glory*. No *Mercy* is *small* that *tasts* of *Heaven* (as all doth or should do to the Believer.) No *action* is *low* that *aims* at *Heaven*. And O how *lively* should the Resolutions and courage of those men be, that are travelling, fighting, and watching for *Eternity*! How full should be their *Comforts*, that are fetcht from the foresight of *Infinite Eternal Comforts*! As all things will presently be swallowed up in *Eternity*, so methinks the present apprehension

prehension of *Eternity* should now swallow up all things else in the soul.

Object. *But (saith the Unbeliever) if God have made man for Eternity, it is a wonder that there are no more lively Impressions of so Infinite a thing upon the souls of all! Our sense of it is so small, that it makes me doubt whether we are made for it.*

Ans. Consider, 1. That benumbedness, and sleep and death, is the very state of an unholy soul! Hast thou cast thy self into a sleepy senseless disease, and wilt thou argue thence against *Eternity*? This is as if the blind should conclude that there is no Sun, or that the eye of man was not made to see it, because he hath no sight himself! Or as if you should think that man hath not any life or feeling, because your palsie limbs do not feel! Or that the stomach was not made for meat, because the stomachs of the sick abhor it!

2. And for believers, 1. You may see by their lives that they have some apprehensions of *Eternity*: why else do they differ from you, and deny themselves, and displease the world and the flesh it self? why do they set their hearts above, if they have not lively thoughts of an *Eternity*!

2. But if you aske me, *Why their apprehensions are not a thousand times more lively about so Infinite a thing*; I answer, 1. Their Apprehensions must be suitable to their *State*. Our *state* here is a state of *Imperfection*; and so will our apprehensions be; But a perfect state will have perfect apprehensions. It is no proof that the Infant in the womb is not made to come into this world, and see the Sun, and converse with men, because he hath *no apprehensions* of it. Our state here is a conjunction of the soul to a frail distempered body; and so near a conjunction, that the actions of the soul must have great dependance on the *Body*; And therefore our Apprehensions are limited by *its frailty*; and the soul can go no higher then the capacity of the *Body* will allow; 2. And our Apprehensions now are fitted to our *Use and benefit*; We are now *Believers*, and must *live by faith*: And therefore must not be *Beholders*, and *live by sense*. If *Eternity* were open to mens *Natural sight*, or we had here as *clear and lively* apprehensions of it, as those have that are *there*, then it were no thanks, no praise

to us to be *believers*, or to *obey*, and live as Saints ! And then God should not Govern man as man here in the way by a Law, but as a beast by *sense*, or as the glorified that have *possession*. Where there are perfect Apprehensions of God and Glory, there will be also perfect Love, and Joy, and Praise, and consequently perfect Happiness ; and this were to make *Earth* and *Heaven*, the way and the end to be all one. Perfect apprehensions are kept for a perfect state of Happiness. But here it is well if we have such Apprehensions as are fitted to the use of *travellers* and *soldiers* as will carry us on, and prevail against the difficulties of our course. If you had never been at *London*, you could not have any such *clear Apprehensions* of the place, as those that see it have ; And yet your *imperfect Apprehensions* might be sufficient to make you take a *journey thither*, and you may come as *safely* and *certainly* to it, as if you had *seen* it. Moreover, the body, the brain, which the soul in Apprehending now makes use of, *cannot bear* such Apprehensions as are suitable to the thousandth part of the greatness of the object, without distraction. The *smallest eye* may see the *sun*, but the *greatest* cannot endure to gaze upon its *Glory* ; much less if it were at the *nearest* approach. Its a mercy of mercies to give us such Apprehensions of Eternity, as are meet for passengers to bring us thither ; and it is part of our Mercy that those Apprehensions are *not so great* as to *distract* and *overwhelm* us.

4. Lastly, The *Eternity of God* must teach the soul *contentedness and patience* under all labours, changes, sufferings and dangers that are here below. Believing Soul, draw near ; look seriously on *Eternity*, and try whether it will not make such Impressions as these upon thee. Art thou *weary of Labours*, either of the mind or body ? Is not *Eternity long enough* for thy *Rest* ? Canst thou not afford to *work out* the day light of this life, when thou must *Rest with Christ* to all *Eternity* ? Canst thou not *run with patience* so short a race, when thou lookest to so long a *Rest* ? Canst thou not *watch one hour* with Christ, that must *Reign with him* to all *Eternity* ? Dost thou begin to shrink at *sufferings* for Christ, when thou must be in *Glory* with him *for ever* ? How *short* is the *suffering* ? how *long* is the *Reward* ? Dost thou begin to think hatdly of the

the dealing of the Lord, because his people are here afflicted, and made the scorn and by-word of the world? why is not *Eternity* long enough for God to shew his Love and bounty to his people in? Is not the day at hand, when *Lazarus* and the *Rich worldling* both must hear [*But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*] Luk. 16. 25. Did not that [*Now*] come time enough which was the entrance of *Eternity*? Even *Jesus* the Author and perfecter of our faith, for the *Trial* that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God! consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds] Heb. 12. 2, 3. Dost thou grudge at the prosperity of the wicked, and prevalency of the Churches Enemies! Look then unto *Eternity*, and bethink thee whether that be not long enough, for the Saints to Reign, and the wicked to be tormented. Wouldst thou have them in *Hell* before their time? Dost thou begin to doubt of the coming of *Christ*, or the truth of his promises, because he doth so long delay? O what is a thousand years to *Eternity*! Is there not yet time enough before thee, for *Christ* to make good all his promises in! Were not those Disciples sharply but justly rebuked as [*Fools and slow of heart to believe*] that when their Lord had been but two dayes dead, were unbelievably saying [*We hoped this had been he that should have redeemed Israel?*] O Remember, Christian, in all thy darkness and ignorance of the difficult passages of Scripture, or of Providence, that the things that are chained to *Eternity*, cannot be perfectly understood by him that standeth in an inch of time: but when *Eternity* comes, thou shalt understand them. Remember when things seems crooked in this world, and the best are lowest, and the worst are highest, that *Eternity* is long enough to set all straight. Remember when sinners crow and triumph, that *Eternity* is long enough for their complaints,! In thy poverty, and pain, and longest afflictions, remember that *Eternity* is long enough for thy relief. If thy sorrow be long, and thy comforts short, remember that *Eternity* is long enough for thy Joies. Cannot we be content to take up short in this life, when we believe *Eternity*? Dost thou stagger at the length or strength of thy temptations? and art thou ready

to draw back and venture upon sin? why what Temptation can there be, that should not be lighter then a feather, if Eternity be put against it in the scales? In a Word, if there be any man that escapeth the foolish seductions of this world, and useth it as not abusing it, and hath all his worldly accommodations as if he had none, it is he that fixeth his eye upon *Eternity*, and seeth that the *fashion* of these lower things *doth pass away*, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. No man can be ignorant of the Necessity and worth of a *Holy life*, that discerneth that the *Eternal God* is the *End* of it. The right Apprehensions of *Gods Eternity*, (supposing him *our End*, which is further to be manifested in its place) is a most powerful antidote against all sin, and a most powerful composer of a distempered mind, and a most powerful means to keep up all the powers of the soul in a resolute, vigorous, cheerful motion to the Eternal God for whom and by whom it was Created.

C H A P. V I.

5. **T**He next Attribute of God, that is to make its *Impress* on us, is, that *He is a Spirit*. In this *One* are these *three* especially comprehended: 1. That he is *Simple*, and not material or *compounded* as bodies are; 2. That he is *Invisible*, and not to be *seen* as *Bodies* are: 3. That he is *Immortal* and *Incorruptible*, and not subject to death or change, as *Bodies* are.

1. As *simplicity* signifieth *unity* in opposition to *Multiplicity* we have spoken of it before. As it is opposite to all materiality, *mixture* or *composition*, we are now to speak of it: And the believing thoughts of *Gods immateriality* and *simplicity*, should have these three effects upon the soul. 1. It should do much to win the heart to God, and cause it to close with him as its felicity: Because as he hath no matter or mixture, so he hath nothing but pure and perfect Goodness, and therefore there is nothing in him to discourage the soul. The *Creatures* have evil in them with their good, and by contrary qualities do hurt us when they help us, and displease us when they

they please us: But in *God* there is nothing but *Infinite goodness*. And should not the soul adhere to him, where it is sure to find nothing but simple, pure and unmixed good? The Creatures are all lyable to some exceptions: In one thing they help us, but in another they hinder us; in one thing they are suitable to us, and in another thing unsuitable! But *God* is lyable to no exceptions. This will for ever confound the ungodly that gave not up themselves unto him: They did even for a thing of nought forsake that *God* that was *purely* and *simply* good, and against whom they had *no exceptions*. Had there been *any thing* in *God* to discourage the soul, or which his most malicious enemy could blame, the ungodly soul had some excuse. But this will stop all the mouths of the condemned, that they had *nothing* to say against the Lord, and yet they had no mind to him, no hearts for him, in comparison of the vain vexatious Creatures.

2. The simplicity of *God* should make us know the imperfection and vanity of all the Creatures that are compounded things; and so should help to alienate us from them. Our friends have in them perhaps *much holyness*, but mixed with *much sin*. They may have *much knowledge*; but mixed with *much ignorance*. Their *humility* is mixt with *Pride*; their *meeckness* with some *Passions*, their *love* with *selfishness*, and a small matter will caute them to distast us: They may be much for *God*; but withall they may *do much* against him. They help the Church; but through their weakness they may lamentably *detract* or *wrong* it: They are *able* to help us but *in part*; and *willing* but *in part*; and they have usually *interests* of their *own*, that are inconsistent with *ours*. We have no *Commodity*, but hath its *discommodity*: Our houses, our families, our neighbours, our callings, our cattle, our land, our Countries, Churches, Ministers, Magistrates, Laws and Judgements, yea even health, and plenty, and peace it self, all have their *Mixtures* of *bitterness* or *danger*, and those the *most dangerous* commonly that have *least bitterness*. But in *God* there is none of all this *Mixture*, but *Pure un compounded Good*. *He is light*, and with him is *no darkness*, 1 Joh. 1. 5. Indeed there is somewhat in *God* that an ungodly man distasteth, and that seemeth in the state that he is in to be against him

him and hurtful to him : as is his *Justice, Holiness, Truth, &c.* But *Justice* is not *evil*, because it doth condemn a *Thief* or *Murderer* : *Meat* is not *bad* because the *sick* distast it. It is the *cross position* of the sinful soul, or his *enmity* to the Lord, that makes the Lord to use him as an enemy. Let him but become a *subject fit* for sweeter dealing from God, and he is sure to find it. Leave then the compounded, self-contradicting Creature, and adhere to the Pure, simple Deity.

3. Gods *simplicity* must draw the *soul* to a *holy simplicity*, that it may be *like to God*. We that serve a Pure simple God, must do it with *simple Pure* affections, and not with *hypocrisie*, or a *double heart*. His *interest* in us should be maintained with a holy Jealousie, that *no other Interest* mix it self therewith. The soul should attain to a *holy simplicity* by closing with the simple infinite God, and suffering nothing to be a sharer with him in our *superlative affections*. All Creatures must keep *their places* in our hearts, and that is only in a *due subordination* and *subserviency* to the Lord : But nothing should take up the least of that estimation, affections or endeavours that are his own peculiar. God will not accept of *half a heart* : A *double minded*, double hearted, double faced, or double tongued person, is contrary to the *holy simplicity* of a Saint. As we would not *bow the knee* to any gods but one, so neither should we bow the *heart* or *life* to them. We should know what is Gods prerogative, and that we should keep entirely for him. A subordinate esteem, and love, and desire the Creature may have, as it revealeth God to us, or leadeth to him, or helpeth us in his work : But it should not have the least of *his part* in our esteem, or love, or desire. This is the Chastity, the Purity, the Integrity of the soul. It is the mixture, impurity, corruption and confusion of our souls, when any thing is taken in with God. See therefore Christian that *in thy heart* thou have no God but ONE, and that he have *all thy heart*, and *soul*, and *strength*, as far as thou canst attain it. And because there will be still in imperfect souls, some sinful mixture of the Creatures interest with Gods, let it be the work of thy life to be watching against it, and casting it out, and cleansing thy heart of it, as thou wouldst do thy
food

food if it fall into the dirt. For whatever is added to God in thy Affections, doth make no better an increase there, then the adding of earth unto thy gold, or of dung unto thy meat, or of corrupted humours and sickness to thy body. Mixture will make no better work.

It may be thy Rejoycing if thou have the testimony of a good conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, and not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, thou hast had thy conversation in the world, 2 Cor. 1. 12. It is the state of Hypocrisie, when One God is openly professed and worshipped, and yet the creaturelyeth deepest and nearest to the heart.

2. The Invisibilty of God also must have its due effects upon us. And, 1. It must warn us, that we picture not God to our eye sight, or in our fancies in any bodily shape. Saith the Prophet, Isa. 40. 18. *To Whom will you liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him? so 25. [No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosome of his Father, he hath declared him, Joh. 1. 18. and therefore we must conceive of him but as he is declared, Joh. 6. 46. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.]*

If you ask me, How then you should conceive of God, if not in any Bodily shape? I answer, Get all these Attributes, and Relations of God to make their proper Impress upon thy soul, as now I am teaching you, and then you will have the true Conceiving of God: This Question therefore is to be answered at the end of this Discourse, when you have seen all the Attributes of God together, and heard what impression they must make upon you.

2. This must teach us, to think most highly of the things that are Invisible, and meanlier of these visible things. Let it be the property of a Beast and not of a man, to know nothing but what he seeth or hath seen: Let it be the mark of the brutish Infidels, and not of Christians to doubt of the invisible things because they are invisible; or to think that things visible are more excellent or sure. As the senses are more ignoble then the Intellect, (a beast having as perfect senses as a man, and yet no reasonable understanding) so the objects of sense must proportionably be below the Objects of the understanding,

standing, as such. The *grossest* and most *palpable* objects are the *basest*. It is the *subtle* part that's called the *Spirits*, which being drawn out of plants or other vegetables is most *powerful* and *excellent*, and valued, when the *earthly dregs* are cast away as little worth. It is that *subtle* part in our *blood* that's called the *Spirits*, that hath more of the *virtue of life*, and doth more of the *works* than the *feculent, gross* and *earthly* part. The *air* and *wind* have as true a *Being* as the *Earth*, and a more *excellent* nature, though it be more *gross*, and *they invisible*. The *Body* is not so excellent as the *invisible soul*. *Invisible* things are as *real* as *visible*, and as *suitable* to our more noble *invisible* part, as *visible* things to our *fleshy baser* part.

3. The *invisibility* of God must teach us to *Live a life of Faith*, and to get above a *sensual life*: And it must teach us to value the *faith* of the *Saints*, as knowing its excellency and necessity. *Invisible* objects have the most perfect excellent Reality; and therefore *Faith* hath the preheminance above *sense*. *Natural Reason* can live upon things *not seen* if they *have been seen*, or can be *known* by *natural evidence* (subjects obey a Prince that they *see not*: and fear a punishment which they *see not*: and the nature of man is afraid of the *Devils* though we *see them not*.) But *Faith* liveth upon *such invisible* things, as *mortal eye* did *never see*, nor *natural ordinary evidence* demonstrate, but are revealed only by the *Word of God*: though about many of its *invisible objects*, *Faith* hath the consent of *Reason* for its encouragement. Value not *sight* and *sense* too much. Think not all to be meer *uncertainties* and *notions* that are not the objects of *sense*. We should not have heard that *God is a Spirit*, if *Corporal substances* had not a *baser* kind of *Being* than *Spirits*: *Intellection* is a more noble operation than *sense*. If there be any thing properly called *sense* in *Heaven*, it will be as far below the pure *Intellective Intuition* of the Lord, as the *glorified Body* will be below the *glorified soul*. But what that difference will be, we cannot now understand. Fix not your minds on *sensible* things. Remember that your *God*, your *home*, your *portion* are *unseen*: And therefore live in hearty Affections to them, and serious prosecution of them as if you *saw* them. Pray as if you *saw God*, and *Heaven*, and *Hell*: Hear as if you *saw him* that sends his
 Messenger

Messenger to speak to you. Resist all the Temptations to lust, and sensuality, and every sin, as you would do if you saw God stand by. Love him, and Fear him, and Trust him, and Serve him, as you would do if you beheld him. *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. 11. 1 *Believing* must be to you in stead of *seeing*; and make you as serious about things unseen, as sensual men are about things sensible. In every thing that you see, remember it is *he that is unseen* that appeareth in them. He lighteth you by the sun; he warmeth you by the fire; he beareth you by the earth. See *him* in all these by the eye of Faith.

3. The *Immortality, Incorruptibility* and *Immutability* of God, must 1. Teach the soul to rise up from these *Mortal, Corruptible, Mutable* things, and to fix upon that God who is the immortal, incorruptible portion of his Saints.

2. It must comfort and encourage all Believers in the consideration of their felicity; and support them under the failings of all mortal, corruptible things. Our Parents, and Children, and Friends are mortal: They are ours to day, and dead to morrow: They are our delight to day, and our sorrow or horrour to morrow: But our God is *Immortal*. Our *houses* may be *burned*: Our *goods* may be consumed or stolne; our *cloaths* will be worn out; our *treasure* here may be corrupted. But our God is *unchangeable*, the same for ever. Our *Laws* and *Customes* may be changed; our *Governours* and *Priviledges* changed; our company, and employments, and habitation changed: but *our God* is never changed. Our estates may change from Riches to poverty; and our names that were honoured may incur disgrace. Our health may quickly turn to sickness, and our ease to pain: But still *our God* is *unchangeable* for ever. Our *friends* are unconstant and may turn our enemies: Our Peace may be changed into war; and our liberty into slavery: but *our God* doth never change. Time will change customes, families and all things here: but it changeth not our God. The *Creatures* are all but earthen mettal, and quickly dashed in peices: our *comforts* are changeable; *our selves* are changeable and mortal: but so is not *our God*.

3. And it should teach us to draw as *near to God* as we are capable,

capable, by *unchangeable fixed Resolutions*, and *constancy* of endeavours; and to be still the same as we are at the best.

4. It should move us also to be more desirous of passing into the state of *immortality*, and to long for our *unchangeable* habitation, and our *immortal, incorruptible* Bodies, and to possess the *Kingdom that cannot be moved*, Heb. 12. 28. And let not the *mutability* of things below much trouble us, while our *Rock*, our *Portion* is unmoveable. *God waxeth not old*: Heaven doth not decay by duration: the *Glory of the blessed* shall not wither, nor their sun set upon them, nor their *day* have any *night*; nor any mutations or commotions disturb their quiet possessions. O Love and Long for Immortality and Incorruption!

C H A P. VII.

6. **H**AVING spoken of the effects of the Attributes of *Gods* *Essence* as such, we must next speak of the Effects of his three great Attributes which some call *Substantial*, that is his *Omnipotency, Understanding* and *Will*; or his *Infinite Power, Wisdom* and *Goodness*: By which it hath been the way of the Schoolmen and other Divines to denominate the three *Persons*, not without some countenance from Scripture Phrase. The Father they call the *Infinite Power* of the Godhead; and the Son, the *Wisdom and Word of God*, and of the *Father*: and the Holy Ghost, *the Love and Goodness of God, of the Father and Son*. But that these Attributes, of *Power, Understanding* and *Will*, or *Power, Wisdom* and *Goodness*, are of the same importance with the termes of *Personality, Father, Son* and *Holy Ghost*, we presume not to affirm. It sufficeth us, 1. That *God* hath assumed these Attributes to himself in Scripture. 2. And that *man* who beareth the *Natural Image* of *God*, hath *Power, Understanding* and *Will*; and as he beareth the *Holy Moral Image* of *God*, he hath a *Power* to execute that which is *Good*, and *Wisdom* to direct, and *Goodness* of *Will* to determine for the execution: And so while *God* is seen of us in this *Glass of Man*, we must conceive of him after the *Image* that

that in man appeareth to us, and speak of him in the language of man, as he doth of himself.

And first, The *Almightiness of God* must make these impressions on our souls. 1. It must possess the soul with very *awful Reverent thoughts of God*; and fill us continually with his *holy Fear*. *Infinite Greatness and Power*, must have no common careles thoughts, lest we *Blaspheme* him in our *Minds*, and be guilty of *Contempt*. The *Dread of the Heavenly Majesty* should be still upon us; and we must *be in his fear all the day long*, Prov. 23. 17. Not under that *slavish Fear* that is void of *Love*, as men fear an *Enemy*, or hurtful *Creature*, or that which is *Evil*: For we have not such a *Spirit from the Lord*, nor stand in a *Relation of enmity and bondage* to him: But *Reverence* is necessary; and from thence a *Fear of sinning and displeasing* is Great a God. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, Prov. 1. 7. and 9. 10. Psal. 111. 10. *By it men depart from evil*, Prov. 16. 6. Sin is for want of the *Fear of God*, Luk. 23. 40. Pro. 3. 7. Jer. 5. 24. Lev. 25. 36. The *Fear of God* is often put for the whole *new man*, or all the work of *Grace* within us, even the *Principle of new life*; Jer. 2. 19. and 32. 40. And it is often put for the whole work of *Religion or Service of God*, Psal. 34. 11. Pro. 1. 29. Psal. 130. 4. and 34. 9. And therefore the *Godly* are usually denominated, such as *Fear God*, Psal. 15. 4. and 22. 23. and 115. 11, 13. and 135. 20. and 34. 7, 9. &c. The *godly* are *devoted to the Fear of God*, Psal. 119. 38. It is our *Sanctifying the Lord in our hearts, that he be our fear and dread*, Isa. 8. 13. If we *Fear him* not, we take him not for our *Master*, Mal. 1. 6. *Evangelical Grace* excludeth not this *Fear*, Luk. 12. 5. *Though we receive a Kingdom that cannot be moved, yet must our acceptable service of God, be with Reverence and godly fear*, Heb. 12. 28. *With fear and trembling we must work out our salvation*, Phil. 2. 12. *In fear we must pass the time of sojourning here*, 1 Pet. 1. 17. In it we must converse together, Eph. 5. 4. *Yea Holiness is to be perfected in the fear of God*, 2 Cor. 7. 1. and that *because we have the Promises*. The most prosperous Churches *walk in this fear*, Acts 9. 31. Its a necessary means of *preventing destruction*, Heb. 11. 7. and of *attaining salvation when we have the promises*, Heb. 4. 1. God

puts this fear in the hearts of those that shall not depart from him, Jer. 32. 40. See therefore that the *Greatness* of the *Almighty God* possess thy soul continually with his *Fear*.

2. *Gods Almightyness* should also possess us with holy *Admiration* of him, and cause us in heart and voice to *Magnifie* him. Oh what a *Power* is that which made the world of nothing? which upholdeth the *earth* without any foundation but his *Will*? which placed and maintaineth all things in their *Order* in Heaven and Earth! which causeth so great and glorious a creature as the *Sun*, that is so much bigger then all the earth, to move so many thousand miles in a few moments, and constantly to keep its time and course! that giveth its instinct to every brute, and causeth every part of nature, to do its office! By his *Power* it is that every motion of the Creature is performed, and that order is kept in the Kingdoms of the world, Jer. 32. 17, 18, 19. [He made the Heaven and the Earth by his Great Power and stretched out arm, and nothing is too hard for him: The Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his Name; great in counsel, and mighty in works] Neh. 9. 32. The Great, the Mighty, the terrible God,] Psal. 136. 4. To him therefore that alone doth Great wonders we must give the *Greatest Praise*] O how Great are his works, and his thoughts are very deep, Psal. 92. 5. [Great is our Lord and of Great Power, Psal. 147. 5.] And therefore in *Zion* must he be Great] Psalm 99. 2. And his Great and terrible Name must be Praised.

3. In the Church where he is known, must his Name be Great, Psal. 76. 1. For we know that the Lord is Great, and our God is above all Gods, Psal. 135. 5. His Saints delight to praise his *Greatness*: Psal. 104. 1, 2, 3, 4. [Bless the Lord O my soul! O Lord my God thou art very Great: thou art cloathed with honour and Majesty, who coverest thy self with Light as with a garment, who stretchest out the Heavens like a Curtain, who layeth the beams of his Chambers in the waters, who maketh the clouds his Chariot, who walketh upon the wings of the wind, who maketh his Angels Spirits, his Ministers a flame of fire, &c.] From *Almightyness* all things have their being, and therefore must honour the *Almighty*, Rev. 1. 8. [I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty] Rev. 15. 3.

They

They that magnifie the Lord with the *ſong* of Moſes and of the *Lamb*, ſay [*Great and Marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty ; Juſt and True are thy wayes thou King of Saints.*]

3. The *Almightineſs* of God muſt imprint upon our ſouls a *ſtrong and ſtedfaſt confidence* in him, according to the tenour of his Covenant and promiſes. Nothing more certain than that *Impotency and Inſufficiency* will never cauſe him to fail us or to break his word. O what an encouragement is it to the Saints, that they are built on ſuch an impregnable Rock, and that *Omnipotency* is engaged for them ! And O what a ſhame is this to our *unbelief*, that ever we ſhould diſtruſt *omnipotency* !

If God be *Almighty*, 1. Remember in thy *greateſt wants*, that there is no want but he can eaſily and abundantly ſupply.

2. Remember in thy *greateſt ſufferings, pains, or dangers*, that no *pain* is ſo great which he cannot mitigate and remove, and no *danger* ſo great from which he is not able to deliver thee. The ſervants of Chriſt dare venture on the flames, becauſe they truſt upon the *Almighty*, Dan. 3. 16, 17, 18. In confidence on *Omnipotency* they dare ſtand againſt the threatnings of the greateſt upon earth. [*We are not careful* (ſaid thoſe three Believers to the King) *to answer thee in this matter : If it be ſo, our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us, &c.*] He that is afraid to ſtand upon a ſlender bow, or upon the unſtable waters, is not afraid to ſtand upon the *earth* ; And he that is afraid of robbers when he is *alone*, is bolder in a conquering Army ; what will man *Truſt*, if he *diſtruſt Omnipotency* ? Where can we be *ſafe*, if not in the *Love, the Covenant, the hands of the Almighty God* ? When ſtorms and winds had ſeared the Diſciples, leſt they ſhould be drowned when Chriſt was in the ſhip, their ſin was aggravated by the preſence of their *Powerful Lord*, whoſe mighty works they had oſten ſeen [*Why fear ye* (ſaith he) *O ye of little faith !* Mat. 8. 26.] Cannot he rebuke our winds and waves ! and will not all obey the rebukes of the *Almighty* ? when thou haſt a *want* that God cannot ſupply, or a *ſickneſs* that he cannot cure, or a *danger* that he cannot prevent, then be thou *Fearful*, and *diſtruſt* him and ſpare not.

3. Remember also in thy lowest state, and in the Churches greatest sufferings or dangers, that the Almighty is able to raise up his Church or thee even in a moment.

If you say, that *Its true God can do it, but we know not whether he will*; I answer 1. I shall shew you in due place, how far he hath revealed his *Will* for such deliverances. In sum, we have his promise, that *all things shall work together for our good*, Rom. 8. 28. and what would we have more? Would you have that which is evil for you?

2. At present, see that *Omnipotency* do establish thy confidence so far as it is concerned in the cause. As 1. Be sure that *no work is too hard for the Almighty*; Do not so much as in the thoughts of thy heart, make question of his *Power*, and say with those unbelievers, Psal. 78. 19, 20. [*Can God furnish a Table in the wilderness? Can he give Bread also? Can he provide Flesh?*] If really thou distrust not the Power of God, believe then the most *difficult* or *improbable* things, as well as the *easiest* and most *probable*, if God reveal or promise them. The *Resurrection* seemeth improbable to impotent man; But God hath promised it; And nothing is difficult to *Omnipotency*. The *calling of the Jews*; the *ruine of the Turk*; the *downfall of the Pope*; the *unity of Christians*, do all seem to us unlikely things; But all things to God are not only possible, but *easy*. He is at no more labour to make a world, then to make a straw, or make fly, [*Whatsoever pleased the Lord, that did he in heaven and earth, in the sea and in the depths*] Psal. 135. 6. Dost thou think it improbable that ever all thy sins should be conquered? and that ever thy soul should live with Christ among the holy Saints and Angels, and that ever thy Body that must first be dust, should shine as the stars in the firmament of God? And why doth it seem thee improbable? Is it not as *easy to God* as to cause the earth to stand on nothing, and the sun to run its daily course, If God had promised thee to live a *day longer*, or any *small and common things*, thou couldst then believe him; And is it not as *easy to him* to advance thee to *Everlasting Glory*, as to cause thee to live another hour, or to keep a haire of thy head from perishing? *sin* is too strong for thee to overcome, but not for God. *Death* is too strong for thee to conquer; but not

not for *Christ*. Heaven is too high for thee to reach by thy own strength; but he that is there, and prepared it for thee can take thee thither. *Trust God* or *trust nothing*: He that cannot *Trust in him*, shall *despair* for ever; for all other confidence will deceive him. Psal. 9. 10. [*They that know his Name, will put their Trust in him; for the Lord hath not forsaken them that seek him.*] All those that *Trust in him* shall *Rejoyce*, and ever *sport* for joy, because he defendeth them, Psal. 5. 11. [*Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord, his Trust, and respecteth not the Proud, nor such as turn aside to lies,* Psal. 40. 4.] [*Who so putteth his Trust in the Lord shall be safe,* Prov. 29. 25.] O what hath *Almightiness* done in the world? and what for the Church? and what for thee? and yet wilt thou distrust him? [*O how great is the goodness that he hath laid up for them that fear him? which he hath wrought for them that Trust in him before the sons of men?* Psal. 31. 19.] [*The Lord redeemeth the souls of his servants, and none of them that Trust in him shall be desolate,* Psal. 34. 22. Are thy straits too great? thy work too hard? [*Commit thy way unto the Lord; Trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass,* Psal. 37. 5.] In thy lowest state look up to the *Almighty*, and say [*What time I am afraid I will Trust in thee: In God have I put my Trust; I will not fear, what man can do unto me,* Psal. 56. 3, 4.] [*The Lord is my Rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my God; my strength; in whom I will put my Trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower,* Psal. 18. 2.] [*He is a buckler to all that Trust in him*] [*Some Trust in Chariots, and some in Horses; but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God,* Psal. 20. 7.] Trust not in the *Creature*; that is, in *vanity* and *infirmity*. There is not *Almightiness* in man, or any *Creature*. [*It is better therefore to Trust in the Lord, then to put confidence in man: It is better to Trust in the Lord, then to put confidence in Princes,* Psal. 118. 7, 8.] what a working passage is that, Jer. 17. 5, 6, 7. [*Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be man that Trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord! For he shall be like the heath in the deserts, and shall not see when good cometh. Blessed is the man that Trusteth in the Lord, whose Hope the Lord is; For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that*
spreadeth

spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh —]

2. Trust also in God as one that is assured, that *no Enemy is too strong for the Almighty*; Alas, what is an *Army of Dust to Omnipotency*? If the Lord do but arise, his *Enemies will be scattered*, and they that hate him will flee before him; as *smoak is driven away*, and as *wax melteth before the fire*, the *wicked shall perish at the presence of the Lord*, Psal. 68. 1, 2.] while the Lord of Hosts is for us, we need not fear if hosts come against us; At worst they can but *Kill our bodies*; And *Greater is he that is in us, then he that is in the world*, 1 Joh. 4. 4.] Oh what a match have the miserable Enemies of the Church? what a work do they undertake? what a desperate attempt do they enterprise? to strive against Heaven, and overcome *Omnipotency*?

3. Trust in the Lord, as one that believeth that *no Means or Instruments are too small or weak for Almightyness successfully to use*. No matter who the Instrument be, how mean, and weak, and despicable, if it be but an *Almighty* hand that uses it. A few poor fishermen and despised people shall pull down Satans Kingdom in the world, and conquer the greatest, and bring in the Nations to the faith if Omnipotency be with them.

4. The *Almightiness* of God must fill our hearts, with *Courage and Resolueion in his Cause*, and make us go on with *greatest alacrity in his work*. Though we must be *Doves and Lambs for innocency and meekness*, yet must we be *souldiers for valour and stability*. Shall we fling or shrink that have *Omnipotency* on our side? who ever scorneth thee, hateth thee, threatneth thee, imprisoneth thee, is not the *Almighty* enough to set against them all for thy encouragement?

5. The *Almightiness* of God must be the *Comfort* of all that have *Interest* in him. O did the blind world but see him that is *Omnipotent*, or know the strength that is engaged for the weakest Saint, they would soon see which is the stronger side, and which to cleave to for their security. O Blessed people that have the *Almighty* on their side, and engaged with them against their enemies, and to do their works, and answer their desires? How can any of them perish, when the *Almighty*

mighty is engaged for their salvation ? *The Father is Greater then all, and none shall take them out of his hands, Joh. 10. 29.*] How glad would men be in the beginning of a war to know which side will prove the stronger, that they may joyn with that ? Can the side that *God* is on be conquered ? If you are wise, observe what cause is his, and let that be yours. *Its hard to Kick against the Pricks* ; Woe to those souls that the Almighty is against, and that dash themselves on the Rock that they should build on.

C H A P. VIII.

7. **T**He next Attribute that must work upon us, is the *Infinite Wisdom, or Omniscience* of God. *Psal. 147. 5. His understandig is Infinite*] And the Impressions that this should make upon our souls are these.

1. *Delight in Wisdom*, that you may in your places be *like to God*. The *New man is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that Created him*, Col. 3. 10. If God be *infinitely Wise*, those then are the most excellent that are the *Wiseest*. *Ignorance* is the souls *blindness*, and the privation of the Image of God on the understanding. [*Wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness*, Eccles. 2. 13] To desire as *Adam* did any of that Knowledge that God hath reserved to himself, or is unnecessary for us, is not indeed to be *Wise* in our desires : *Unnecessary Knowledge* is but a trouble. But to Know the Lord, and his revealed Will ; and the way of life, is the light and glory of our minds. He that hath lost his eye sight, hath lost his principal natural delight, and is as out of the world while he is in it. And the ignorant souls that are void of the *heavenly Illumination*, must needs be void of the delights of Grace : and though they live in the visible Church, where the beauty of Holiness is the excellency of the Saints, yet they do not see this beauty, but are like the Infidels that are out of the Church while they are in it. The *Blind* are in continual danger ; They know not where they set their feet. And they know not when to be confident, nor

when to fear; sometimes they are afraid where there is no cause, because there *may be* cause for ought they know; And sometime they are fearless at the very brink of death, and little think of the evil that they are near. Why do our poor deluded people so boldly live in an unconverted state, but because they know not where they are? Why do they so carelessly lie down and rise in an unsanctified condition, unpardoned, unready for death and judgement, and under the condemnation of the Law, but because they *know not* the misery or danger in which they stand? Why do they go on so carelessly and wilfully in sin, and despise the counsel of their Teachers and of the Lord, and take a holy life as needless, but because they *know not* what they do? Men *could not* go so quietly or merrily to Hell, with their *eyes open*, as they do when they are *shut* by Ignorance. Whence is it that such Multitudes are still ungodly under all the Teachings and warnings of the Lord? but because [*they have their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God by the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: and therefore many being past feeling have given them over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, Eph. 4. 18, 19.*] Sin is the fruit of folly, and the greatest folly; They are *fools that make a jest of it*, Prov. 14. 9. And it is for *want of wisdom that they die*, Prov. 10. 21. & 1. 32. The ignorant are prisoners to the *Prince of darkness*, Eph. 6. 12. & 5. 8. *Knowledge is despised by none but fools*, Prov. 1. 7, 22. The conquest of so many subtil enemies, the performance of so many spiritual duties, which we must go through if we will be saved, are works too hard for *fools* to do. The saving of a mans soul, is a work that requireth the greatest wisdom. And therefore the *Illumination* of the mind is Gods first work in the Conversion of a sinner, *Act. 26. 18. Eph. 1. 18.* If *Infinite wisdom* communicate to you but the smallest beam of heavenly light, it will change your minds, and make you other men then before, and set you on another course; *Wisdom* will be your guide, and keep you in safe paths; It will cause you to refuse the evil, and to choose the good: It will shew you true Happiness, and the way to obtain it: It will cause you to *foresee the evil*, and escape it, *when fools go on and are destroyed, Prov. 22. 3. Wisdom will teach you*

you to know the season, and *Redeem your Time*, and *walk exactly*, when folly will leave you to too late repentance, *Eph. 5. 15*. There is not a soul in Hell but was brought thither by *sinful folly*; Nor is there a soul in Heaven (of them at age) but by *heavenly wisdom* was conducted thither. In worldly matters the wicked may seem wisest; and many a Saint may be very ignorant: But when you see the end, you will all confess that those were the wise men that had wisdom to repell temptations, and to refuse the enticing baits of sin, and to make sure of everlasting Joies.

O therefore apply your hearts to Wisdom! Go to Christ for it, who is *the Wisdom of God*, *1 Cor. 1. 24.* and is appointed by him to be *our Wisdom*, *1 Cor. 1. 30.* He will teach it you, who is the best Master in the world, so you will but keep in his School, that is his Church, and will humbly learn as little Children, and apply your selves submissively to his Spirit, word and Ministers: *Ask Wisdom of God, that giveth liberally, and upbraideth not* with former ignorance, *Jam. 1. 5.* Think not any pains in holy means too much to get it, *Prov. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* [*If thou wilt receive the words of God, and hide his Commandments with thee, and encline thy heart to wisdom, and apply it to understanding; yea if thou cryest after Knowledge, and listest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God; For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth is Knowledge and understanding.*] And fear not being a loser by thy cost or labour. For [*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding: For the merchandise of it is better then silver, and the gain thereof then of fine gold: she is more precious then Rubies, and all the things thou canst desire, are not to be compared to her; Her wayes are wayes of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace* —] *Prov. 3. 13. to 18.*

2. The *Infinite Wisdom* of God, must resolve you, to take him for your *principal Teacher, Counsellor and director* in all your undertakings. Who would go seek the advice of a *fool*, when he may have *Infalible wisdom* to direct him? In a work of so great *difficulty* and concernment, a work that Hell and

Earth and Flesh opposeth; a work that our Everlasting state dependeth on, I think it behoveth us to take the best advice that we can get. And who knoweth the *will of God* like God? or who knoweth the certain *means* of salvation like him that is the author and giver of salvation? would you know whether it be best to live a mortified holy life? Who shall be your counsellor? If you advise with your *Flesh*, you know that it would be *Pleased*. If you advise with the *World* of wicked men, you know, that *they* would be *imitated*, and judge *as they are*; and are not like to be wise *for you*, that are so foolish *for themselves*, as to part with Heaven for a merry dream. If you advise with the *Devil*, you know he would be *obeyed*, and have company in his misery. You can advise with none but *God*, but such as are your *Enemies*; And will you ask *an enemy*, a *deadly* enemy, what course you should take to make you happy? Will you ask the *Devil* how you may be *saved*? Or will you ask the blind ungodly *world*, what course you should take to *please* the *Lord*? Or will you ask the *Flesh*, by what means you may *subdue* it and become *spiritual*? If you take advice of *Scripture*, of the *spirit*, of a *holy* well informed *Minister*, or *Christian*, or of a renewed well informed *Conscience*, I take this for your advising with the *Lord*; But besides *these* that are *his mouth*, you can ask advice of none but *enemies*. But if they were never so much your *friends*, and wanted *wisdom*, they could but ignorantly seduce you. And do you think that any of them all, is *as wise as God*? It is the constant course of a *worldly man* to advise with the *world*, and of *carnal men* to advise with the *flesh*; and therefore it is that they are hurried to perdition. The *flesh* is *brutish*, and will lead you to a *brutish* life, and *if you live after it*, undoubtedly *you shall die*, Rom. 8. 13. and *if you sow to it*, *you shall but reap Corruption*, Gal. 6. 6, 7. If you are tempted to *Lust*, will you ask the *flesh* that tempteth you whether you should yield? If the cup of excess be offered to you, or *flesh-pleasing* feasts prepared for you, will you ask the *flesh* whether you should take them or refuse them? You may easily know what counsel it will give you. The Counsel of *God*, and of your *flesh* are contrary, and therefore the *lives* of the *carnal* and *spiritual* man are contrary. And will you venture on the advice of a *brutish* appetite, and refuse

refuse the counsel of the *all knowing God*? such as is your *Guide*, and Counsellor, such will be your *End*. Never man miscarried by obeying God: and never man sped well by obeying the flesh: God leadeth no man to *perdition*, and the flesh leadeth no man to his *Salvation*. Gods motions are all for our *Eternal good*, though they seem to be for our *temporal hurt*: The motions of the flesh are for our *Eternal hurt*, though at present they seem to be for our *Corporal* benefit. If at any time you be at a loss; and your carnal friends, or your commodity, or pleasure adviseth you one way, and the Word of God, and his faithful Ministers advise you another way, use but your Reason well, and consider whether God or those that contradict him be the wiser, and accordingly suit your practice. Alas man, thy friend is *ignorant* and knows not what is good for *himself*. Thy flesh is *ignorant*, and knows not what is good for thy *soul*! But God knoweth all things. Your flesh and friends do *feel* what pleaseth them at present, and judge accordingly: but what *will be hereafter* they understand not, or consider not: But God knoweth as well what *will be* as *what is*: He counselleth you as one that knoweth how your actions will appear at *last*, and what it is that will save you or undo you to all eternity. If you be but sick, its too to one but the Counsel of your *Physition* and of your *Appetite* will differ. And if you will obey your *Physition* before your *Appetite*, for your *health* or *life*, should you not obey God before it for your *Salvation*? Do you think in your Consciences that any that perswade you to a carelets worldly fleshly life, are as *Wise* as God that perswadeth you to the contrary? you dare not say so with your tongues? and yet the most dare say so with their lives. O how justly do the ungodly perish, that deliberately choose a *brutish appetite*, a *malignant world*, and a *malicious Devil*, as a *wiser* or *fitter* conductor then the *Lord*! But *blissed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, but his delight is in the Law of the Lord*, Psal. 1. 1, 2. And wo to the ungodly that *reject* and *set at nought the counsel of the Lord*, Prov. 1. 25, 30. Luke 7. 30. *and will have none of it! that wait not for his counsel*, Psal. 106. 13. *that rebell against the words of God, and contemn the counsel of the most High*, Psal. 107. 11. And wo to them

them that take counsel against the Lord and his Christ, that they may break asunder his bond, and cast away his obligations, Psal. 2. 1, 2, 3. And wo to them that are given up to the lusts of their own hearts, and to walk in their own counsels, Psal. 81. 12. For by their own counsels shall they fall, Psal. 5. 10. But had they harkened to the Lord, and walked in his way, with the fulness of his blessings would he have satisfied them, Psal. 81. 13, 16. Resolve therefore what ever the flesh or the world say, that the Testimonies of God shall be your Counsellors, Psal. 119. 24. and bless the Lord that giveth thee counsel, Psal. 16. 7. For his counsel is infallible; having guided thee by his counsel he will bring thee to his glory, Psal. 73. 24.

3. The Infinite Wisdome of God, must resolve the soul to Rest in his determinations. We are most certain that God is not deceived. Though all men seem Lyers to you, let God be true: for it is impossible for him to lye, Heb. 6. 18. If our Reason be to seek, so is not God. When we are saying with Nicodemus, How can these things be? God knoweth how: and it is enough for us to know that they are so. If Infinite wisdome say the word, Believe it, though all the world contradict it. Though proud unbelievers say, that the words of God are improbable, let them know that God is not at a loss when ever mens dark understandings are at a loss: The Sun is not taken out of the firmament, when ever a man closeth or loseth his eyes. What? will those cavillers puzzle the Almighty! will they pose Omniscience? Doth it follow that the course of the Planets, and the Heavens, and all the Creatures are out of order, if these silly Moles understand not the order of them? No more will it follow that any word of God is false, or any Rule of God is crooked, because they see not its truth and rectitude. Shall dust and ashes judge the Lord? who hath been his Counsellor? and with whom hath he advised for the making, redeeming or governing of the world? There is no Rest to an inquisitive soul but in the Infinite wisdome of the Lord. Find once that it is his word, and enquire no further. Its madness to demand a further proof. As all Goodness is comprized in his Will and Love; so all Truth is comprized in his Wisdom and Revelations. There are no Arguments but what are lower and subordinate to this. And therefore if thy Reason be at a loss

loss, as to the *cause* or *manner*, yet hast thou the greatest Reason to believe that all is *just* and *true* that proceedeth from the *Wisdom* of the Lord. If flesh and blood and all the world gainsay it, yet *Rest in the Word of God*.

4. And thats the next effect that Gods *Omniscience* should have upon our minds. *Take all the sayings of men as folly that are against the Lord*. Let them be high or low, learned or unlearned if they contradict the God of *Infinite wisdom*, take it but as the words of a distracted man. Did you ever meet with any man of them, that durst say he was *wiser than God himself*? *Herod* that was eaten to death with vermine, was applauded by the flattering crowd, but with this acclamation, *It is the voice of a God, and not of a man*, Act. 12. 22. And will you say of any man that he is *wiser than God*? If you dare not say so, how dare you hear them and believe them against the Word of God? How dare you be drawn from a holy life, or from a selfdenying duty, or from the truth of God, by the words of a man, yea perhaps of a very sot, that speaks against the Word of God! *To the Law, and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to these, it is because there is no Light in them*, Isa. 8. 20.]

5. The *Infinite wisdom* of God, should establish our confidence concerning the fulfilling of all his Word. He will not fail for want of *Knowledge*: when he spoke that *Propheisie*, that *Promise* or that *Threatning*, he perfectly knew all things that would come to pass, to all eternity. He knew therefore what he said when he gave out his Word, and therefore will fulfill it. *Heaven and earth may pass away, but one Iota or tittle of his Word shall not pass away till all be accomplished*, Mat. 5. 18.

6. And from the *Infinite wisdom* of God, the Church must be encouraged in its greatest straits, and against all the *cunning subtilty* of their enemies. Are we ever in such straits, that God knows not how to bring us out? when we see no way for our deliverance, doth it follow that he sees none? If cunning Serpents are too subtle for us, do we think that they can *overwit the Lord*? what had become of us long ago, if God had not known what ever is plotted at *Rome*, or *Spain*, or *Hell* against us? If he knoweth not of all the consultations of the conclave, and of all the contrivances of Jesuits and Fryers; and of all the

the jugglings of the masked Emissaries; If God had not known of *Vaux* and his Powder mine, it might have blown up all our hopes. But while we know that God is in their Councils, and heareth every word they say, and knoweth every secret of their hearts, and every mischief which they enterprize, let us do our duty, and rest in the *wisdom* of our great Protector, who will prove all his adversaries to have plaid the fools: For as sure as his *Omnipotency* shall be glorified by overtopping all *opposing powers*, so sure shall his *Infinite wisdom* be glorified, by conquering and befooling the *wisdom* that is against him.

7. Lastly, if God be *Infinite in Knowledge*, it must resolve us all to *live accordingly*. O Remember what ever thou *Thinkest*, that God is acquainted with all thy *Thoughts*. And wilt thou feed on lustful, or covetous, or malicious, or unbelieving Thoughts, in the eye of God? Remember in thy prayers and every duty, that he knows the very frame of all thy affections, and the *manner* as well as the *matter* of thy services. And wilt thou be cold and careless in the sight of God? O Remember in thy *secretst sins*, and thy works of darkness, that nothing is *unknown* to God; and that before him thou art in the open light. And fearest thou not the face of the Almighty? Wilt thou do that when *he knoweth it*, that thou wouldst not do if *man* did know? *He knows* whether thou deceive thy neighbour, or deal uprightly! *Defraud* not therefore; for *the Lord is the avenger*, 1 Thes. 4. 6. Do nothing that thou wouldst not have *God to know*. For certainly *he knoweth* all things. Shall *he* not see that made and illuminateth the eye? and shall *he* not hear that made both tongue and ears? and shall *he* not know that giveth us understanding, and by whom we know? *Psal.* 94. 8, 9, 10.

And let this be thy *comfort* in thy *secret duties*. He that *knoweth* thy *Heart*, will not overlook the *desires* of thy *Heart*, though thou hadst not words as thou desirest to express them. And he that *knoweth* thy *uprightness*, will justify thee, if all the world condemn thee. He that *seeth* thee in thy *secret Alms*, or *Prayers*, or *Tears*, will *openly reward thee*, Mat. 6. 4. 6. Let this also comfort thee under all the slanders of malicious or misinformed men. He that must be thy *judge* and *theirs*, is ac-
quainted

quainted with the truth: who will certainly bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgement as the noone day, Plal. 37. 6. O how many souls are justified with the Omniscient God that are condemned by the malignant world! And how many blots will be wiped off before the world at the day of Judgement, that here did lie upon the names of faithful upright men! O how many Hypocrites shall be then-disclosed! And what a cutting thought should it be to the dissembler, that his secret falshood is known to God! And when he hath the Reputation that he sought with men, he hath his reward! Mat. 6. 2. For its a sadder reward that God will give him.

C H A P. I X.

8. **T**HE next of Gods Attributes that must make its Impress on the soul, is *His Infinite Goodness*. The Denomination of *Goodness* (as all other his Attributes) is fetcht from, and suited to the capacity or affections of the soul of man. That which is truly *Amiable* is called *Good*. Not as if there were no *Goodness*, but what is a means to mans felicity, as some most sottishly have affirmed: For our End and Felicity it self, and God as he is Perfect and Excellent in himself, is more amiable then all means.

In three respects therefore it is that God is called *Good*, or *Amiable* to man. 1. In that he is *Ininitely Excellent and perfect in Himself*. For the *Love of Friendship* is a higher *Love* then that of *Desire*. And the most perfect sort of *Love*, is that which wholly carrieth the Lover from himself to the perfect object of his *Love*. The soul *Delighteth* to contemplate excellency, when the excellency it self and not the delight, is the ultimate end of that desire and contemplation.

2. God is called *Good* as he is the *Pattern and Fountain of all Moral Good*. As he maketh us *Righteous Holy Laws*, commanding *Moral Good*, and forbidding and condemning evil. And thus his *Goodness* is his *Holiness* and *Righteousness*, his *Faithfulness* and *Truth*.

3. God is called *Good*, as he is the *Fountain of all the Creatures happiness*,

happinefs, and as he is *bountiful and gracious* and ready to do good, and as he is the *felicitating end and object* of the soul.

And this Infinite goodness must have these effects upon us.

1. It must possess us with a *superlative Love to God*. This blessed Attribute is it that makes us *Saints indeed*, and maketh that *Impression* on us, which is as the *Heart of the New Creature*. It is *Goodness* that produceth *Love*. And *Love* is that *Grace* that closeth with God as *our Happiness and End*, and is the *felicitating enjoying Grace*. Without it we are but *as sounding brass, or tinkling Cymbals*, whatever our gifts and parts may be, *1 Cor. 13*. *Love* is the very *excellency* of the soul; as it closeth with the *infinite excellency* of God. It is the very *felicity* of the soul, as it *enjoyeth him* that is our *felicity*. Most certainly the *prevailing Love of God*, is the *surest evidence* of true sanctification. He that hath *most Love*, hath *most Grace*; and is the *best and strongest Christian*: and he that hath *least Love*, is the *worst or weakest*. *Knowledge* and *faith* are but to work our hearts to *Love*; and when *Love* is perfect they have done their work, *1 Cor. 12. 31.* and *13. 8, 9, 10, 13*. *Teaching* and distant *Revelations* will not be for ever; and therefore such *Knowledge* and *Faith* as we have now, will not be for ever. But *God* will be for ever *Amiable to us*, and therefore *Love* will endure for ever. The *goodness* of God is called *Love*, and as *God is Love*, so he that dwelleth in *Love* doth dwell in *God*, and *God in him*, *1 Joh. 4. 16*. The knowledge of *Divine goodness* makes us *good*, because it maketh us *Love him* that is *good*. It is *Love* that acteth most *purely* for God. *Fear* is *selfish*, and hath somewhat of *aversation*. Though there be no *evil* in God for us to *fear*, yet is there *such good* in him that will bring the *evil of punishment* upon the *evil*; and *this* they fear. But *Love* doth resign the soul to God; and that in the most congruous acceptable manner. Make it therefore your daily work to possess your souls with the *Love of God*. *Love him* once, and all that he saith and doth will be more *acceptable to you*: and all that you say or do in *Love*, will be more *acceptable unto him*. *Love him* and you will be loth to offend him: you will be desirous to please him: you will be satisfied in his *Love*. *Love him* and you may be sure that he *Loveth you*. *Love is the fulfilling of his Law*, *Rom. 13. 10*. And that you may

may Love him, this must be your work to *Believe* and *Con-
temple his goodness*. Consider daily of the *Infinite goodness*
or *Amiability* of his *Nature*, and of his *excellency* appear-
ing in his *Works*, and of the perfect *Holiness* of his *Laws*. But
especially see him in the face of *Christ*, and behold his *Love* in
the design of our *Redemption*, in the *person* of the *Redeemer*,
and in the *promises* of *Grace*, and in all the *benefits* of *Redem-
ption*. Yea look by *Faith* to *Heaven* it self, and think how
you must for ever live in the perfect blessed *Love* of infinite
enjoyed goodness. As it is the *knowledge* and *sight* of *gold*, or
beauty, or any other earthly vanity that kindleth the *Love* of
them in the minds of men; so is it the *knowledge* and serious
contemplation of the *goodness* of *God* that must make us *Love*
him, if ever we will *Love him*.

2. The *goodness* of *God* must also encourage the soul to *trust*
him. For *Infinite good* will not deceive us. Nor can we fear
any *hurt* from him, but what we wilfully bring upon our selves.
If I knew but which were the *best* and *most Loving* man in the
world, I could *trust* him above *all men*; and I should not fear
any *injury* from him. How many friends have I that I *dare*
trust with my *estate* and *life*, because I *know* that they have
Love and *goodness* in their low degree! And shall I not *trust*
the *Blessed God*, that is *Love* it self and *Ininitely good*? what
ever he will be in *Justice* to the *ungodly*, I am sure he *delight-
eth* not in the death of *sinners*, but rather that they *turn* and *live*;
and that he will not cast off the soul that *Loveth him*, and
would fain be fully conformed to his will. It cannot be that
he should spurn at them that are humbled at his feet, and long,
and pray, and seek, and mourn after nothing more then his
grace and *love*! Think not of *God* as if he were scant of
love and *goodness*, then the *Creature* is: If you have high and
confident thoughts of the *goodness* and *fidelity* of any man on
earth, and dare quietly *trust him* with your life and all; see
that you have much higher thoughts of *God*, and *trust him* with
greater confidence, lest you set him below the silly creature in
the *Attributes* of his *goodness*, which his *Glory* and your *Hap-
piness* require you to know.

3. The *Infinite goodness* of *God*, must call off our hearts from
the inordinate *Love* of all created good whatever. Who would

floop so low as *earth*, that may converse with God? And who would feed on such poor delights that hath tasted the graciousness of the Lord? Nothing more sure then that the *Love of God* doth not reign in that soul, where the *Love of the world*, or of *fleshly lust*, or pleasure reigneth, 1 *John* 2. 15. Had worldlings, or sensual, or ambitious men, but truly *known* the *goodness* of the Lord, they could never have so fallen in *Love* with those deceitful vanities. If we could but open their eyes to see the *Loveliness* of their Redeemer, they would soon be weaned from *other Loves*. Would you conquer the *Love of Riches*, or *Honour*, or any thing else that corrupteth your affections? O try this sure and powerful way! Draw nigh to *God*, and take the fullest view thou canst, in thy most serious Meditation of *his Infinite goodness*, and all things else will be *vile* in thy esteem, and thy heart will soon contemn them and forget them, and thou wilt never dote upon them more.

4. The *Infinite goodness* of God, should *increase Repentance*, and win the soul to a more resolute chearful service of the Lord. O what a heart is that which can offend, and wilfully offend so good a God! This is the *odiousness of sin*, that it is an abuse of an *Infinite good*. This is the most hainous damning aggravation of it, that *Infinite goodness* could not prevail with wretched souls against the empty flattering world! but that they suffered a dream and shadow, to weigh down *Infinite goodness* in their esteem. And is it possible for worse then this to be found in man? He that had rather the *sun* were out of the firmament, then a hair were taken off his head, were unworthy to see the light of the Sun. And surely he that will turn away from *God himself* to enjoy the *pleasures* of his *flesh*, is unworthy to enjoy the Lord. Its bad enough that *Augustine* in one of his Epistles saith of sottish worldly men, that they had rather there were two stars fewer in the firmament, then one Cow fewer in their Pastures, or one tree fewer in their woods or grounds. But it is ten thousand times a greater evil that every wicked man is guilty of, that will rather forsake the *Living God*, and lose his part in *Infinite goodness*, then he will let go his filthy and unprofitable sins: O Sinners, as you love your souls, despise not the riches of the goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering of the Lord; but know that his goodness should lead you

to Repentance, Rom. 2. 4. Would you spit at the Sun ? Would you revile the stars ? Would you curse the holy Angels ? If not, O do not ten thousand fold worse, by your wilful sinning against the Infinite Goodness it self.

But for you Christians that have seen the *Amiability* of the Lord, and tasted of his *perfect Goodness*, let this be enough to melt your hearts, that ever you have wilfully sin'd against him, O what a Good did you contemn in the dayes of your unregeneracy, and in the hour of your sin ! Be not so ingratul and disingenuous as to do so again. Remember when ever 'a Temptation comes, that it would entice you from the *Infinite Good* ; Ask the tempter, man or Devil, Whether he hath more then an *Infinite Good* to offer you ; and whether he can outbid the Lord for your affection.

And now for the time that is before you, how cheerfully should you address your selves unto his service ! and how delightfully should you follow it on from day to day ! What manner of persons should the servants of *this God* be, that are called to nothing but what is *Good* ! How *Good* a Master ! how *good* a work ! and how *good* company, encouragements and helps ! and how *good* an End ! All is *good*, because it is the *Infinite Good*, that we serve and seek. And shall we be loitering unprofitable servants !

5. Moreover this *Infinite Goodness* should be the matter of our *daily Praises*. He that cannot cheerfully magnifie *this* Attribute of God, so *suitable* to the nature of the *Will*, is surely a stranger to the Praises of the Lord. The *Goodness of God* should be a *daily feast* to a gracious soul, and should continually feed our cheerful Praises, as the spring or cistern fills the Pipes. I know no sweeter work on earth, nay I am sure *there is* no sweeter, then for faithful sanctified souls, rejoicingly to magnifie the *Goodness of the Lord*, and joyn together in his cheerful Praises. O Christians, if you would tast the Joys of Saints, and live like the redeemed of the Lord indeed, be much in the exercise of this Heavenly work, and with holy *David*, make it your employment, and say [*O how great is thy Goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee ! Psal. 31. 19.] The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord, Psal. 33. 5.] What then are the Heavens ? [Thy Congregation hath*

dwelt therein: thou O Lord hast prepared thy Goodness for the poor. [O that men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness, Psal. 107. 8, 9.] *The goodness of God endureth continually* [Psal. 52. 1. *Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart, P. al. 73. 1.*] [O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him, Psal. 34. 8.] [The Lord is good, his mercy is Everlasting, his truth endureth from generation to generation, Psal. 100. 5.] [The Lord is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his works, Psal. 145. 9.] O Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good, sing Praises to his name, for it is pleasant, Psal. 135. 3.] Call him as David [My goodness, and my fortress, my high tower, and my deliverer, and my shield, and he in whom I trust, Psal. 144. 2.] Let men therefore speak of the glorious honour of his Majesty and of his wondrous works: Let them abundantly utter the memory of his great goodness, and sing of his Righteousness, Psal. 145. 5, 7.] If there be a thought that is truly sweet to the soul, it is the Thought of the Infinite Goodness of the Lord. If there be a pleasant word for man to speak, it is the mention of the Infinite goodness of the Lord! And if there be a pleasant hour for man on earth to spend, and a delightful work for man to do, it is to meditate on, and with the Saints to Praise the Infinite goodness of the Lord. What was the glory that God shewed unto Moses, and the tast of Heaven that he gave him upon Earth? but this [I will make all my Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be gracious on whom I will be gracious, and will shew Mercy on whom I will shew Mercy, Exod. 33. 19] And his proclaimed Name was [The Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth —] Exod. 34. 6. These were the holy Praises that Solomon did consecrate the Temple with, 2 Chron. 6. 41. [Arise O Lord God into thy resting place, thou and the Ark of thy strength: let thy Priests O Lord God be clothed with salvation, and let thy Saints rejoyce in Goodness.] See Isai. 63. O Christians, if you would have joy indeed let this be your employment! Draw neer to God, and have no low undervaluing thoughts of his Infinite Goodness; For [How
great

great is his Goodness and how great is his Beauty? Zach. 9 17.] Why is it that Divine Consolations are so strange to us, but because Divine Goodness is so lightly thought upon? As those that think little of God at all, have little of God upon their hearts; so they that think but little of his Goodness in particular, have little Love, or Joy, or Praise.

6. Moreover, the Goodness of God, must possess us with desire to be conformed to his goodness in our measure. The Holy perfection of his Will, must make us desire to have our Wills conformed to the will of God; We are not called to Imitate him in his works of Power, nor so much in the paths of his Omniscience, as we are in his goodness, which as manifested in his work, and word, is the Pattern and standard of Moral Goodness in the sons of men. The Impress of his goodness within us, is the chief part of his Image on us; and the fruits of it in our Lives is their Holiness and Vertue. As he is Good and doth Good, Psal. 119. 68. so must it be our greatest care to be as good and do as much good as possibly we can. Any thing within us that is sinful and contrary to the Goodness of God, should be to our souls as griping poyson to our bodies, which nature is excited to strive against with all its strength, and can have no safety or rest till it be cast out. And for Doing Good, it must be the very study and trade of our lives. As worldlings study and labour for the world, and the Pleasing of their flesh; so must the Christian study and labour to improve his masters talents to his use, and to do as much good as he is able, and to please the Lord. Prov. 11. 23. [The desire of the Righteous (as such) is only Good] To depart from evil and do good, is the care of the just, Psal. 34. 14. We must please our neighbours for Good to their Edification, Rom. 15. 2. While we have time we must do good to all men (as we are able) but especially to them of the household of faith, Gal. 6. 10] Not only to them that do good to us, but to our enemies, Luk. 6 32, 33, 34. Mat. 5. 44. This is it that we must not forget, Heb. 13. 16. and which by Ministers we must be put in mind of 1 Tim. 6. 18. which all that love life and would inherit the blessing must devote themselves to. 1 Pet. 3. 10, 11, 12. In this we must be like our heavenly Father, and approve our selves his Children, Mat. 5. 45, 46.

7. From the perfect *Infinite goodness of God*, we must learn to judge of *Good and Evil*, and in all the *Creatures*. To this must all be reduced as the standard, and by this must they be tryed. It is a most wretched absurdity of sensual men, to try the *will*, or *word*, or *wayes of God*, by *themselves*, and by *their own interests or wills*; and to judge all to be *Evil* in God that is *against them*. And yet, alas, how common is this case! Every man is naturally loth to be miserable: suffering he abhors; and therefore that which causeth *his suffering* he calleth *evil*. And so when he hath deserved it himself by his sin, he thinks that the *Law* is *Evil* for threatenng it, and that *God himself* is *Evil* for inflicting it, so that *Infinite Goodness* must be tryed and judged by the vicious creature, and the Rule and standard must be reduced to the crooked line of humane actions or dispositions; and if God will please the *worldling*, the *sensualist*, the *proud*, the *negligent*, who should please *him*, then he shall be *good*, and he shall be *God*; if not, say these judges, he shall be *evil*, and *unmerciful*, and *no God*. They will not believe that he is *Good* that punisheth them. And thus if the *Thief* or *Murderer* had the choise of *Kings* and *Judges*, you may know what persons he would choose; No one should be a *Judge*, or accounted a *good man*, that would condemn and hang him.

But I beseech you consider, what is fit to be the Rule and standard, if not *perfection of Goodness* it self. Do you think that the *Will* of ignorant, fleshly, sinful man, is fitter to be the *Rule of Goodness*, then the *Will of God*? We are *sure that God* is not deceived, and *sure that there is no iniquity with him*; but we know that all *men* are lyable to deceit, and have private interests, and corrupted minds, and wills that have some vicious inclinations. O what Blasphemany is in the heart of that man, that will sooner condemn the holy Will and Law of God, then his own Will, or the Wills of any men, be they never so seemingly wise or great! The will of God is revealed in his Laws, concerning the necessity of a holy life; and the will of foolish wicked men is by their scornful speeches and sinful lives revealed to be against it. And which of these do you follow? which is it that prescribeth you the better course? the will of God that is *infinitely good*, or the will of man that

that is miserably evil? If thou know any *Better* then God, follow him before God. But if none be *Greater* and more *Powerful* then he, if none be *Wiser* or of more *Knowledge*, it is as sure that none is *Better*. Much less are *those ignorant wicked men*, that despise the Scripture and a holy life, and would persuade you that they can tell you of a *Better* way. Let me speak it to the terrour of the ungodly soul, that by the deceits or scorns of any sort of men, is drawn away from Christ and holiness; It shall stand on record against thee until judgement, and it shall stick everlastingly as a dagger in thy heart, that thou didst prefer the *Reasons* and the *Will* of *man*, yea perhaps of a *sottish drunkard* or a *worldling*, before the *word* or *Will* of *God*: And though thy tongue durst not speak it, thy life did speak it, that thou thoughtest the word and will of man to be *Better* then the word and will of *God*: Yea more, that thou tookest the way of the *Devil*, to be *better* then *Gods* wayes, who is *infinitely good*: For surely thou chooseth that which thou takest to be *best* for thee. And therefore if that man deserve damnation, that sets up a *man*, or a *horse*, or an *image*, and saith [*This is greater and wiser then God, and therefore this shall be my God*] then dost thou deserve the same damnation, that settest up the *words* or *Will* of *man*, even of *wicked men*, and sayest by thy practice [*These are Better then God, and his word, or will, and therefore I will choose or follow them*] For God is full as jealous of the honour of his *Goodness*, as of his *Power* or *Wisdom*.

Well Christians, let flesh and blood say what it will, and let all the world say what they will, judge that *Best* that is most agreeable to the *Will* of *God*; for *Good* and *Evil* must be measured by *this will*. That Event is *best* which he determineth of, and that Action is *best* which he Commandeth. And all is naught and will prove so in the end, that is against this will of *God*, what policy or good soever may be pretended for it.

8. And if the *will* of *God* be *Infinitely Good*, we must all labour both to *understand* it, and *perform* it. Many say, *Who will shew us any Good*, Psal. 4. 6. Would you not know what is *Best*, that you may *choose* and *seek* it? As the inordinate desire of *Knowing natural Good* and *Evil* did cause our misery,

so the holy rectified desires of *Knowing spiritual Good*, must recover us ; search the Scriptures then, and study and enquire ; for it more concerns you to know the *Will of God*, then to know the will of your *Princes* or *benefactors*, or to know of any treasures of the world ; The *Riches of Grace* are given to us, by Gods *making known the mystery of his will, according to his Good pleasure which he purposed in himself*, Eph. 1. 7, 9. And our desire to know the Good will of God, must be that we may *Do it*. For this must we pray, Col. 1. 9, 10. *That we may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we may walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work*] that we may [*be made perfect in every good work to do his will, and have that wrought in us which is pleasing in his sight*, Heb. 13. 21.] that we may not only *know his will and approve the things that are excellent*, Rom. 2. 18. but may *prepare our selves to do according to his Will*, lest we be punished the more ; Luk. 12. 47. See that the will of no man be preferred before Gods will ; seek not your *own Wills*, nor set them up against the Lords : If Christ whose will was pure and holy, professes that he sought not *his own will, but his Fathers*, Joh. 5. 30. and that he *came not to do his own will, but his that sent him*, Joh. 6. 38. should it not be our resolution, whose wills are so misguided and corrupt ?

9. If Gods will be *Ininitely Good*, we must *Rest in his Will* ; when his ways are dark, or grievous to our flesh : when his word seems difficult ; when we know not what he is doing with us, remember it is the *Will* that is *Ininitely Good*, that is disposing of us. Only let us see that we stand not cross to the *greater Good* of his Church, and honour ; and then we may be sure that he will not be against *our Good*. We that can *Rest* in the will of a dear and faithful friend, should much more *Rest* in the *Will of God* ; Do your *duty*, and be *not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is* for you to do, Eph. 5. 17. and then distract not your minds with distrustful fears about his will that is infinitely Good, but say, *The Will of the Lord be done*, Act. 21. 14.

10. The *Infinite Goodness* of God, should draw out our hearts to *desire communion with him*, and to long after the
blessed

bleſſed fruition of him in the life to come. O how glad ſhould we be to tread his courts ! to draw neer him in his holy worſhip, to meditate on him, and ſecretly open our hearts before him, and to converſe with thoſe gracious ſouls that love to be ſpeaking honourably of his name ! What will draw the heart of man if *Goodneſs* and infinite *Goodneſs* will not ? When the drunkard ſaith in the Alehouſe [*It is Good to be here*] and the covetous man among his gains, and the ſenſual man among his recreations and merry companions, [*It is good to be here*] the Chriſtian that can get nigh to God, or have any proſpect of his Love in his ordinances, concludeth that of all places upon earth [*It is good to be here*] and that *a day in his Courts is better than a thouſand*, *Pſal.* 84. 10. But O to depart and be with Chriſt, is far better, *Phil.* 1. 23. With *Infinite goodneſs* we ſhall find no evil, no emptineſs, or defect ; when we perfectly enjoy the perfect Good, what more can be added, but for ever to enjoy it ! O therefore think on this Chriſtians when death is dreadful to you, and you would fain ſtay here, as being afraid to come before the Lord, or loth to leave the things which you here poſſeſs, ſhall *Goodneſs* it ſelf be diſtruded by you, or ſeem no more deſirable to you ? Are you afraid of *Goodneſs* ? even of your *Father*, of your *Happineſs* it ſelf ? Are you better here, then you ſhall be with God ? Are your houſes, or lands, or friends, or pleaſures, or any thing better then *Infinite Goodneſs* ? O meditate on this bleſſed Attribute of God, till you diſtaſt the world, till you are angry with your withdrawing murmuring fleſh, till you are aſhamed of your unwillingneſs to be with God, and till you can calmly look in the face of death, and contentedly hear the meſſage that is poſting towards you, that you muſt preſently come away to God. Your *Natural birth day* brought you into a *Better* place then the *womb* ; and your *gracious Birth day* brought you into a far *Better* ſtate then your former ſinful miſerable captivity ; And will not your *Glorious birth day* put you into a *better* habitation then this world ? O know, and chooſe, and ſeek, and live to the *Infinite Good*, and then it may be your *greateſt joy* when you are called to him.

C H A P. X.

9. **H**AVING spoken of these three great *Attributes* of God, I must needs speak of those *three great Relations* of God to man, and of these *three works* in which they are founded, which have flowed from these *Attributes*.

This *one God in three Persons*, hath *Created* man and all things which before were not ; hath *Redeemed* man when he was lost by sin ; and *sanctifieth* those that shall be saved by *Redemption*. Though the external works of the *Trinity* are *undivided*, yet not *indistinct* as to the order of working, and a special interest that each person hath in each of these works. The *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* did create the world ; and they also did *Redeem* us, and do *Sanctifie* us. But so as that *Creation* is in a special sort ascribed to the *Father*, *Redemption* to the *Son*, and *Sanctification* to the *Holy Spirit* ; Not only because of the *order of operation*, agreeable to the *order of subsisting* ; for then the *Father* would be as properly said to be *incarnate* or to *die* for us, or *mediate*, as the *Son* to *create* us ; (which is not to be said ;) For he created the world by his *Word*, or *Son* and *Spirit* (*Joh. 1. 3. Psal. 33. 6.*) and he *Redeemed* it by his *Son*, and *Sanctifieth* it by his *Spirit*. But *Scripture* assureth us that the *Son alone* was *incarnate* for us, and *died* and *Rose* again, and not the *Father*, or the *Spirit* ; and so that the humane nature is peculiarly united to the second person, in glory ; and so that each person hath a peculiar interest in these several works, the Reason of which is much above our reach.

The first of these *Relations* of God to man, which we are to consider of, is, that he is our *Creator* ; It is he that *giveth Being* to us and all things ; and that *giveth* us all our *faculties* or *Powers*. Under this, for brevity, we shall speak of him also as he is our *Preserver* ; because *preservation*, is but a kind of continued *Creation*, or a continuance of the *Beings* which God hath caused. God then is the *first efficient cause* of all the *creatures* from the greatest to the least, *Gen. 1.* And easily did

did he make them, for *he spake but the word, and they were created*: They are the Products of his Power, Wisdome and Goodness. Psal. 33. 6. Joh. 1. 3. Psal. 148. 5. *He commanded and they were created*] He still produceth all things that in the course of nature are brought forth [Psal. 104. 30. *Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: thou renewest the face of the earth*] And from hence these following impressions must be made upon the considering soul.

I. If *All things be from God as the Creator and Preserver*, then we must be deeply possessed with this truth, that *All things are for God as their ultimate end*. For he that is the *Beginning and first cause of all things*, must needs be the *End of all*. His *Will* produced them, and the *Pleasure of his Will* is the *End* for which he did produce them. Isa. 43. 7. *I have created him for my glory*] Prov. 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea even the wicked for the day of evil*] I think the Chaldee Paraphrase, the Syriack and Arabick give us the true meaning of this, who concordantly translate it, [*The wicked is kept for the day of evil*] as Job hath it, 21. 30. *The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath*. And 2 Pet. 2. 9. [*To reserve the unjust to the day of judgement to be punished*] *God made not the wicked as wicked, or to be wicked*; but he that gave them their *Being* and continueth it, will not be a loser by his Creation or preservation, but will have the glory of his Justice by them in the day of wrath or evil, for which he *keeps them*, and till which he beareth with them, because they would not obediently give him the glory of his *Holiness and mercy*. So it is said of Christ, Col. 16, 17. *For by him were all things created that are in Heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible — all things were created By him and For him*. If they are *By him*, they must needs be *For him*. So Rev. 4. 11. *Thou art worthy O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*] This *Pleasure of Gods will* is the *End* of all things: and therefore it is certain that he will see that all things shall accomplish *that end*, and *his will shall be pleased*. Rom. 11. 36. we have all in few words [*For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, and to whom be glory for ever,*
Amen.]

Amen.] Of him as the first efficient that giveth them their Beings : and Through him as the Preserver, disposer and conductor of them to their end : and To him as the Ultimate end.

If you say, *But how is the pleasure of Gods will attained from the wicked that break his Laws, and displease his Will?*

I answer; Understand but how his will is crossed or accomplished, pleased or displeased, and you will see, that his will is alwayes done and pleased, even by them that displease him in violating his will. For Gods will hath two sorts of Objects or Products, which must be still distinguished: 1. He willeth what shall be *Due from us to him, and from him to us.* 2. He willeth *Entities and Events*, or what shall *actually Be, or come to pass.* Strictly both these acts of Gods will, perform the things willed, and so are not without their proper effect. God as the *Cause* and disposer of all things, attaineth his will concerning *Events*: All things shall *Come to pass* which he absolutely willeth shall come to pass. He is not frustrated of his will herein, being neither *unwise* nor *impotent*, nor *unhappy*. *Whatsoever pleased the Lord, that did he in Heaven and in Earth, in the Sea and in the depths,* Psal. 135. 6. *Our God is in Heaven, he hath done whatsoever he pleased,* Psal. 115. 3. And as God as our *Governour* doth by his *Laws* oblige man to his *Duty*, his will hath its effect: A *Command* doth but make the thing commanded to be *our Duty*; and *our Duty* it is: and so *this act* of the *Will of God* is not in vain. *Thus far* he hath his will. By his *Promises* he maketh the *Reward to be Due* to all on condition they perform the *Duty*, on which he hath suspended it, and to be *Actually Due* to those only that perform the condition: And all this is accomplished. Heaven is *Conditionally* given to *all*, and *Actually* to the *Faithful only*. So that what God willeth to be *Due* as a *Lawgiver*, is accordingly *Due*; and what he *actually willeth* shall *come to pass*, shall *come to pass* according to his will.

But perhaps you will say, *He doth not will that all men shall Eventually obey his Laws, but only that it shall be their Duty.*

I answer, Our speeches of God being borrowed from man, (who is one of the *Glasses* in which he is here seen by us; especially the *manhood of Jesus Christ*) We must accordingly conceive

ceive and say (acknowledging still the improprieties and imperfections of our conceptions and expressions) that as *man* doth *simply* and most properly will the *Event* of *some* things which he absolutely desireth should come to pass, and doth *not simply* will some other things, but only *in tantum*; he *so far willeth* them, that he *willeth* and resolveth to do such and such things as have a tendency thereto, and to go no farther, and do no more for the attaining of them, though he could; so God doth *simply* and *properly* will some things, that is, the things which he *Decreeeth* shall come to pass: but we must after our manner conceive and say, that there are *other things* which he *willeth* but *in tantum*, *so far* as to make it *mans Duty* to perform it, and *perswade* him to the doing of that duty, and give him such a *measure of help* as leaveth him without any just excuse, if he do it not; and *so far* he willeth the salvation of such, as to *Promise* or *offer* it them on such terms: and *no further* doth he *will* the obedience or salvation which *never comes to pass*, but leaveth it here to the *will of man*. For if he *simply willed* that every *Duty* should be *Eventually done*, it *would be done*: and if he *simply willed* that all men should be *actually saved*, they *would be saved*. And that he *simply willeth* their *Duty* or *Obligation*, and *in tantum*, *so far*, doth *will* the *event* of their obedience and salvation, *as this comes to*, as aforesaid, is certain, and in this we are all agreed; and I am not so well *skild in dividing* as to understand where the *real difference* lyeth between the parties that here most contend: But about the bare *Name* I know they differ, some thinking that *this last* is not to be *Named* an Act of *Gods will*, or a *willing* of mans obedience or salvation, and some thinking that *it is* so to be *named*: who doubtless are in the *right*; nor is thererom for controversies, while we confess the *impropriety* of this and all our speeches of God, as speaking after the manner of men, and while Scripture that must teach us how to speak of God, doth frequently so speak before us.

2. God being the *Maker* and *first Cause* of all things, that is of all *substantial Beings*, commonly called *Creatures*, we must conclude that *Sin* is no *such Being*, because it is most certain that he is not the *Creator* or the *cause* of it. Scripture assureth us, and all Christians are agreed that *God* is not the

Cause

Cause or Author of sin. How odious then should that be to us, that is so bad as not to come from God? If God disclaim it, let us disclaim it. Let us abhor that it should come from us, seeing God abhorreth that it should come from him. Own not that which hath nothing of God upon it.

If you say, *that it is an Accident though not a substance, and therefore it must needs come from God; because even Accidents have their Being.*

I answer, That among the subtlest Disputers it is granted, that it hath no *Created Being*, or no *Being that is caused by God*; of this they are agreed. Its granted by all Christians that sin hath no other kind of *Being*, but what the *will of man* can cause. And if that be so, the *Philosophical* trifling controverſie, *whether it be only a Privation, or a Relation, or Modus Entis*, which the will thus causeth, must be handled as *Philosophical*, and valued but as it deserveth: For this is all the controverſie that here remains. If the *form* be *Relative*, and the *Foundation* be but a meer *Prevation*, (the *Disconformity* being founded in a *defect*) then the case is soon resolved, as to the rest. He that *erreth, understandeth amiss*: that he *understandeth*, is of *God*: that he *erreth*, that is, *is defective*, and so *false* in his understanding, is of *himself*: that he *willeth* when he chooseth sin, is of *God* the *Universal cause*: But that he *willeth a forbidden object* rather than the *contrary*, and *faileth* in his understanding and his will, this is *not of God*, but of *himself*. If others say, that the very *Fundamentum* of that *Disconformity* which is the *Form of sin*, is sometime an *Act*, they must also say that it is not an *Act as such*, but *This Act comparatively* considered, or as *circumstantiated*, or as *exercised on the forbidden object rather than another*, or a *Volition* instead of a *No-lition*, and choosing that which should be refused, or a refusing that which should be chosen: And whether this *compare* specifying foundation, be a *Privation*, or a *Mode*, is a *Philosophical controverſie*; and in *Philosophy*, and not in *Theology* is the difficulty; Divines being agreed as aforesaid, that what ever you Name it, *Being*, or *Privation*, or *Mode*, it is but such as must be resolved ultimately into the *will of man* as its *Original*, or *first cause*, supposing *God* to be the *Creator* and *Conserver* of that *free Power* that is able to choose or to refuse,
and

and as an *universal Cause* to concur with the agent to the *Act as such*. But Philosophers indeed are at a loss, and are fain to tell us of *Privations, Modes, Relations, Denominations, Entia Rationis* and I know not what, that they say are neither *Beings* nor *Nothing*, but between both they know not what! the nature of things, in the utmost extremities of the branches being so capillar, and spun with so fine a thred, that the understanding is not subtil enough to discern them. And shall this disturb us in *Divinity*, or be imputed to it?

If you say, *That the Will of God is the Cause of all things, and therefore of sin.*

I answer, If you call sin *Nothing*, as a *shadow, darkness, death, &c.* are *nothing* (for all that we abhor them) then you answer your selves; If you call it *something*, we are all agreed, that its but *such a something as man can cause* without Gods first causing it; It sufficeth that God do the part of a *Creatour* in giving man the *free Power of choosing or refusing*; and the part of a *preserver*, in maintaining that power, and as an *universal cause* concurring to all acts in genere, as the sun doth shine on the *dunghill* and the *flowers*: and that he also do the part of a *just Governour* in prohibiting, and dissuading, and threatening sinners.

Object. *But how can sin Eventually be, if God decree it not, seeing all Events are from his Will?*

I answer 1. We are agreed that he *Causeth it not*. 2. And that he doth not so much as *Will the Event of sin as sin*. 3. And that he *willingly permitteth* what is by him permitted. 4. And that sin is such a thing as *may Evenire*, be brought forth by a *bare permission*, if there be no *Positive Decree* for the *Event*. As a *Negative* in the effects, requireth not a *Positive Cause*, so neither a *Positive Will* for its production. There are millions of millions of worlds, and individual creatures, and species *Possible*, that shall *never be*: And it is audaciousness to assert, that there must be millions of millions of *Positive Decrees*, that such worlds or creatures shall *not be*. 5. Nor is it any dishonour to God, if he have not a *Positive Decree* or *Will* about every *Negation* (as that all the men in the world shall not be called by a thousand *possible names* rather than their own, &c.)

These things being all certain, I add 1. Let them dispute that dare, that yet *de facto* God doth *Positively Will* the *Events* of all Privations, or Negations of acts. 2. But when men are once *habitually wicked*, and *bent* to evil, it is just with him, if he *permit* them to follow their own lusts, and if he leave before them such Mercies as he foreknoweth they will wilfully make occasions of their sin; and if he resolve to make use of the sin which he knoweth they will commit, for his Churches Good, and for his Glory.

Object. *But doth not God Will that sin Eventually shall not be?*

Ans. Even as I before said, he willeth that obedience *eventually shall be*. If sin come to pass, it is certain that God did not *simply Will* that it should *not come to pass*: For then he must be conquered and unhappy by every sin: But he *willeth simply* that it shall be the *Duty* of man to avoid it; And he may be said to *Null* the *Event in tantum*, so far as that he *will forbid it*, and *threaten* and *disswade* the sinner, and give him the *helps*, that shall leave him unexcusable if he sin, and so leave it to his Will. *Thus far* he may be said to *Will that sin Eventually shall not be*; but not *simply*.

Though these things are not obvious to vulgar capacities, yet they are such, as the subject in hand, *viz.* Gods *first causation* and *Creation*, together with the weight of them, and the contentions of the world about them, have made needfull.

3. If God be the *Creator and the cause of all*, then we must remember that *all his works are Good*: and therefore nothing must be *hated* by us that hath he made, considered in its native Goodness. God *hateth sin*, and so must *we*: for that he *made* it not, *Rev. 2. 6.* *Psal. 45. 7.* *Isa. 1. 14.* And he *hateth all the works of iniquity* as such, *Psal. 5. 5.* and so must *we*; but we must *Love* all of God that is in them, and *Love* them for it. There is somewhat Good and Amiable in every creature; yea all of it, that is of God. Though Toads and Serpents are odious to us, because they are hurtful and seem deformed in themselves, yet are they *Good in themselves*, and not deformed as *parts of the universe*, but *Good unto the common end*. The wants in the wheels of your watch are as useful

ful to the motion as the *nicks* or solid parts. The *night* is part of the useful order of the creation, as well as the *day*. The vacant interspace in your writing, is needful as well as the words: Every letter should not be a *vowel*, nor every character a Capital; Every *member* should not be a *heart* or *head* or *eye*: Nor should every one in a Commonwealth be a *King*, or *Lord*: So in the Creation the parts that seem base, are useful in their places, and good unto their Ends. Let us not therefore vilifie or detest the works of God, but study the excellencies of them, and see, and admire, and Love them as they are of God. It is one of the hardest practical points before us, to know how to esteem of all the Creatures, and to use them without running into one extream. At the same time to *Love the world*, and *not to Love* it; to *honour* it, and *despise* it: to *exalt* it, and to tread it under our feet; to *mind* it, and use it with delight, and yet to be *weaned* from it as those that mind it not. And yet a great part of our Christian duty lieth in the doing of this difficult work. As the world is the Devils bait, and the fleshes Idol, set up against God, and would tice us from him, or hinder us in his service, and either be our Carnal end and happiness, or a means thereto, so we must make it the care of our hearts to hate it, despise it, neglect it, and tread it under foot; and the labour of our lives to conquer it. But the same creatures must be admired, studied, loved, honoured, delighted in, and daily used, as they are the excellent work of the Almighty God and reveal to us his Attributes or will, being the Glas in which we must see him while we are in the flesh; and as they lead us to God, and strengthen, furnish or help us in his service. But to Love them *for God*, and *not for themselves*, O how hard is it! To keep *pure affections* towards them and a *spiritual* delight in in them that shall *not degenerate into a carnal delight*, is a task for the holiest Saint on Earth, to labour in with all his care and power, as long as he here liveth. Yet this must be done; and the soul that hath obtained true self denial, and is dead to the world, and devoted and alive to God, is able in some good measure to perform it. To love the world *for it self*, and make the creature our *chief delight*, and *live to it as our End* and *Idol*, this is the common damning course. To cast away

our possessions, and put our talents into our fellow servants hands, and to withdraw our selves as it were out of the world into solitude as Monks or Hermets do, this is too like the *hiding of our talents*, and a dangerous course of unfaithfulness and unprofitableness, unless in some extraordinary case; and is at best the too easie way of weaklings, that will be souldiers only *out of the Army*, or where there is but little danger of the *Enemy*; But to keep our Stations, and take Honours, and Riches as our Masters talents, as a *burden* that we must honour him by bearing, and the *instruments* by which we must laboriously do him service, and to see and Love *him* in every creature, and study *him* in it, and sanctifie it to *his* use; and to see that our lust get no advantage by it, and feed not on it, but that we *tame our Bodies*, and have all that we have *for God*, and not *for our flesh*, this is the hard, but the excellent, most acceptable course of living in this world.

And it is not only *other creatures*, but *our selves* also that we must thus admire, and love, and use *for God*, while we abase our selves as *to our selves*, and *deny our selves*, and use not our selves for *our selves*, but as we stand in due subordination to him. Abase your selves as *sinful*, and abhor that which is your *own*, and not the Lords; But vilifie not your nature in it self, nor any thing in you that is the work of God. Pretend not *humility* for the dishonouring of your *Maker*. Reason and *Natural freedom of the Will*, are *Gods work*, and not *yours*, and therefore must be honoured, and not scorned and reviled; But the *blindness* and *error* of your Reason, and the *bad inclinations* and *actions* of your free-wills, these are your *own*, and therefore vilifie them and hate them and spare not. And when you lament the *smallness* of your *Graces*, *deny* them not, and sleight not, but magnifie the preciousness of *that little* that you have, while you mourn for the imperfection. And when men offend you, or prove your enemies, forget not to value and love that of God that yet is in them. *All is Good that is of God.*

4. If all things *be of God* as the *Creator* and *Conserver*, we must hence *remember on whom it is that our selves and all things else depend*. In him we live and move and have our being, Act. 17. 28. He upholdeth all things by the word of his power, Heb. 1. 3. The earth standeth upon his will and word. The

Nations are in his hands, so are the *lives* of our *friends* and *enemies*, and so are *our selves*. And therefore our eye must be upon him; and our care must be to please him; and our trust and quietness must be in him; and blessed is he that maketh sure of an Interest in his special Love.

5. Hence also we must observe the *vanity* of all *Creature confidence*, and our hearts must be withdrawn from resting in any means or instruments. They are *nothing* to us, and can do *nothing* for us, but what they have or do from him that *made* and *preserveth* us.

6. And lastly hence also we may see the *patience* and *goodness* of the *Lord*, that as he refused not to *make* those men that he *foreknew* would live ungodlily, so he denyeth not to *uphold* their *Being*, even while they sin against him. All the while that they are abusing his creatures, they are *sustained* by him, and have *those Creatures* from him. From *him* the *drunkard* hath his drink, and the *glutton* his meat, and the *voluptuous* youth their abused health and strength; and *all men* have from him the *Powers* or faculties of soul and Body by which they sin. And shall any be so ungrateful as to say therefore that *God doth cause their sin*? Its true, he *can easily* stop thy breath while thou art swearing, and lying, and speaking against the service of God that made thee: And wouldst *thou* have *him* do so? He *can easily* take away the meat, and drink, and riches, and health, and life which thou abusest; And wouldst thou *have* him do it? He *can easily* keep thee from sinning any more on earth, by cutting off thy life and sending thee to pay for what thou hast done: And art thou *content* with this? Must he be taken to be a partaker in thy sin, because he doth not strike thee dead, or lame, or speechless, or *disable* thee from sinning? Provoke him not by thy *Blasphemies*, lest he clear himself in a way that thou desirest not. But O wonder at his *patience*, that holds thee in his hand, and keepeth thee from falling into the grave and Hell while thou art sinning against him. While a curse or oath is in thy mouth, he could let thee fall into utter misery. How oft hast thou provoked him to take thee in thy lust, in thy rage, or in thy neglect of God, and give thee thy desert! Would any of *you* support your enemy, as God doth you?

C H A P. X I.

10. **A**S we must know God as our *Creatour*, so also as our *Redeemer*; Of which I shall say but little now, because I have mentioned it more fully in the *Directions for sound Conversion*. It is *life Eternal* to know the *Father*, and *Jesus Christ* whom he hath sent, Joh. 17. 3. The *Father* Redeemeth us by the *Son*, whom he sent, and whose *Sacrifice* he accepted, and in whom he is well pleased. And this must have these effects upon our souls.

1. We must be hence convinced, that we are not now in a state of *innocency*, nor to be saved as innocents, or on the terms of the *Law of our Creation*: But *Salvation* is now by a *Redeemer*: and therefore consisteth in our *recovery and restauration*. The objects of it are only *lapsed sinful miserable men*. Name the *Creature* if you can since *Adam*, that stood before God here in the flesh, in a state of *personal perfect innocency*, except the *immaculate Lamb of God*. If God as *Creator* should now save any, without respect to a *Redemption*, it must be on the terms of the *Law of Creation*, upon which it is certain that no man hath or shall be saved; that is, upon *perfect personal persevering obedience*. You cannot exempt *Infants* themselves from sin and misery, without exempting them from *Christ the Redeemer*, and the *remedy*, Rom. 3. 10, 19, 20, 22, 23. [There is none *Righteous* (in himself without a *Redeemer*) no not one — They are all gone out of the way — That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. (And if all the world be guilty, none are innocent:) therefore by the deeds of the *Law* there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the *Redemption* that is in *Jesus Christ*] Isa. 53. 6. All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.] Rom. 5. 15. [Through the offence of one, many are dead] 16. And the judgement was by One to condemnation] 17. By the offence of one death reigned by one.] 18. By the offence of one, judgement came on all men to con-

condemnation.] 19. *By one mans disobedience many were made sinners*] Psal. 51. 4. [*We were shapen in iniquity, and in sin did our mothers conceive us*] Eph. 2. 1, 3. *We were by nature the Children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sin*] 1 Cor. 15. 22. [*In Adam all die*] 2 Cor. 5. 14. [*We thus judge, that if one dyed for all, then were all dead*] Eph 5. 23. *Christ is the Saviour of the Body*] & v. 25, 26, 27. [*Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church* —] If Infants have no sin and misery, then they are none of the *Body, the Church*, which Christ loved and gave himself for that he might cleanse it. But what need we further proof when we have the common experience of all the world? Would every man that is born of a woman without exception, so early manifest sin in the life, if there were no corrupt disposition at the heart? And should all mankind without exception, tast of the punishment of sin, if they had no participation of the guilt? *Death is the wages of sin*; and by sin death entred into the world, and it passeth upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. 5. 12. Infants have sickness, and torments, and death, which are the fruits of sin. And were they not presented to Christ as a Saviour, when he took them in his arms and blessed them, and said, *Of such is the Kingdom of God*? Certainly, none that never were guilty or miserable, are capable of a place in the *Kingdom of the Mediator*. For to what end should he mediate for them? or how can he Redeem them that need not a Redemption? or how should he reconcile them to God that never were at enmity with him? Or how can he wash them that were never unclean? Or how can he be a Physician to them that never were sick? when the whole have no need of the Physician, Mat. 9. 12. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, Luk. 19. 10. and to save his people from their sins, Mat. 1. 21. They are none of his saved people therefore that had no sin. He came to redeem those that were under the Law, Gal. 4. 5. But it is most certain that Infants were under the Law as well as the adult: And they were a part of his people Israel whom he visited and Redeemed Luk. 1. 68. If ever they be admitted into Glory, they must praise him that Redeemed them by his blood, Rev. 5. 9.

God doth first *justifie* those whom he *Glorifieth*, Rom. 8. 30. And they must *be born again* that will enter into his Kingdom, Joh. 3. 3, 5. And there is *no Regeneration* or renovation but from *sin*, Col. 3. 10. Eph. 4. 22. Nor any *Justification* but from *sin*, and from what we could not be *Justified* from by the Law of Moses, Act. 13. 30. Nor any *Justification* but what containeth a *Remission of sin*, Rom. 3. 25. And where there is *no sin*, there is none to be Remitted. Nor is there any *Justification* but what is *through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and his propitiation*, Rom. 3. 24, 25. He is made of God *Redemption to us*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. And the *Redemption* that we have by him, is *Remission of sins by his blood*, Col. 1. 14. Eph. 1. 7. *By his own blood entered he once into the holy place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us: The eternal inheritance is received by means of death for the Redemption of transgressions*, Heb. 9. 12, 15.] so that all Scripture speaks this truth aloud to us, that there is now no *salvation* promised but to the *Church*, the *Justified*, the *Regenerate*, the *Redeemed*; and that none can be capable of *these* but *sinners*, and such as are *lost* and miserable in themselves. And till *our necessity* be understood, *Redemption* cannot be well understood. They that believe that Christ dyed not only for this or that man in particular, but for *the world*, methinks should believe that *the world* are *sinners* and need his death. He is called *the Saviour of the world*, Joh. 4. 42. and the *Saviour of all men*, especially of *believers*, 1 Tim. 4. 10: 1 Joh. 4. 14. *We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*] And from what doth he save them? *From their sins*, Mat. 1. 21. and *from the wrath to come*, 1 Thes. 1. 10. [For this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners] *Infants* then are *sinners*, or none of those that he came to save. Christ hath made no man *Righteous* by his *Obedience*, but such as *Adam* made *sinners* by his *disobedience*, Rom. 5. 19. [For as by one mans disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many shall be made Righteous.] *Infants* are not made *Righteous* by Christ, if they were not *sinners*: And *sinners* they cannot be by any but *Original sin*, Rom. 5. 8, 9, 10. [God commended his Love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ dyed for us: Much more being

being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him: When we were enemies we were Reconciled to God by the death of his Son] so that it is sinners that Christ dyed for, and sinners that are justified by his blood, and sinners that are reconciled to God. Infants therefore are sinners, or they are none of the Redeemed, justified or reconciled. And when Jesus Christ [by the grace of God did taste death for every man] Heb. 2. 9. Infants are sure included. [There is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all, 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6.] therefore all had sin and misery and needed that ransome. [He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.] And is it not plain then that the whole world are sinners?

I speak all this for the evincing of Original sin only, because that only is denied by such as yet pretend to Christianity; For actual sin is commonly confessed, and shews it self. And truly so doth Original sin in our proneness to actual; and in the earliness and commonness of such evil inclinations; and in the remnants of it which the sanctified feel, though they are such as were sanctified never so early, before actual sin had time to breed those evil habits, which therefore certainly were born with us.

And if the Image of God, consisting in true holiness, be not natural, or born in every Infant in the world, then Original sin must needs be born with them: for that sin is either only or chiefly the Privation of that Image or Holiness. He that will say that this Image is not requisite to Infants, and so that the absence of it is a meer negation, doth make them bruits, and not of the race of man, whom God created after his Image, and leaves them uncapable of Heaven or Hell, or any other life then beasts have. And he that thinks so of Infants to day, may think so of himself to morrow. And he that will affirm that this Image or Holiness is born with every Infant into the world, so wilfully contradicteth common evidence which appeareth in the contrary effects, that he is not worthy to be further talkt with.

One thing more I will proponnd yet to the contrary-minded; Can they say that any Infants are saved or not? If not, either they perish as bruits (which is a brutish opinion) or they live in misery; and then they had sin that did deserve it; yea if they think that any of them perish in the wrath to come,

it must be *for sin*. If they think that *any* of them are *saved*, it is either *by covenant* or *without*; there is *some promise* for it; or there is *none*. If *none*, then no man can say that *any* of them are *saved*. For who hath known the mind of the Lord without his Revelation? It is arrogancy to tell the world of the saving of any that God did no way reveal that he will save. But if they plead a *Revelation* or *promise*, it is either the *Covenant* of *Nature* or of *Grace*; a *promise* contained in *Nature*, *Law* or *Gospel*. The *former* cannot be affirmed, (not only because the dissenters themselves deny any such *Covenant* to have been in nature or any way made to *Adam*, but) because there is no such *Covenant* or *promise* in *Nature* to be found, for the *Salvation* of *all Infants* (and if not *for all*, then *for none*;) and because it is contrary to abundance of plain passages in the Scriptures, that assure us there is but *One Covenant* of *Salvation* now in force: and that all the world shall become *guilty before God*, and *every mouth be stopped*, Rom. 3. 19. and that *by the deeds of the Law no flesh shall be justified in his sight*, v. 20. Gal. 2. 16. And if *righteousness come by the Law*, then *Christ is dead in vain*, Gal. 2. 21. For as many as are of the *works of the Law*, are *under the Curse*, Gal. 3. 10. And that *no man is justified by the Law in the sight of God*, is evident; for *the just shall live by faith*; and *the Law is not of faith*; but, *The man that doth them shall live in them* } And certainly the *Law of nature* requireth not less than *Moses Law*, to a mans justification, if not more. And [*if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law*. But the Scripture hath concluded *All under sin*, that the *promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe*] Gal. 3. 21, 22.

By the fulness of this evidence, it is easie to see, that *Infants* and all mankind are *sinners*, and therefore have need of the *Redeemer*.

2. To know God as our *Redeemer*, containeth the knowledge of the *great ends* of our *Redemption*, and of the manifestation of God to man thereby. Having treated of these in the Book fore-cited, I shall now say but this in brief. It is beyond dispute, that God could have made man capable of *Glory*, and kept him from falling by confirming grace, and without a *Redeem-*

er settled him in felicity, as he did the Angels. He that foresaw mans fall and necessity of a Saviour, could easily have prevented that sin and necessity: But he *would* not; he *did* not: but chose rather to permit it, and save man by the way of a Redeemer. In which his *Infinite wisdom* is exceedingly manifested. And in Christ who is the *Power and Wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. among others these excellent effects are declared to us, which the *way of Redemption* attaineth above what the saving us on the terms of *Nature* would have attained.

1. *God* is now wonderfully *admired* and *magnified* in the *person* of the Redeemer. Angels themselves desire to pry into this mysterie, 1 Pet. 1. 12. As the frame of *Nature* is set us to see *God in*, where we daily as in a *glass* behold him and admire him; so the *person of the Redeemer*, and work of *Incar-nation* and *Redemption*, is set the Angels for their contemplation and admiration, as well as us: Eph. 3. 10. [To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.] And in the glorious perfection and dignity of the Redeemer will God be everlastingly glorified; For his greatest works do greatest honour him: And as the sun doth now to us more honour him than a star, so the glorified person of the Redeemer, doth more honour God than man or Angels. 1 Pet. 3. 23. [He is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made subject to him.] Eph. 1. 20, 21, 22. Being raised from the dead, God hath set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.] Heb. 1. 3. [Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better then the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name then they.]

And here a very great truth appeareth, which very many overlook, that the exaltation of the person of the Redeemer, and

the glory that God will have in him, is a higher and more principal part of Gods intent in the sending of him to be Incarnate and Redeem us, then the glorifying of man, and of God by us. Christ will be more glorious then men or Angels, and therefore will more glorifie God; and God will eternally take more complacency in him then in men or Angels; And therefore (though in several respects) He is for us, and the means of our felicity; and we are for him, and the means of his glory (as the Head is for the Body, and the Body for the Head) yet we are more for Christ as a means to his glory, then he for us: I mean he is the more excellent principal end. [For to this end Christ both dyed, rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living] Rom. 14. 9. [who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, both of things in heaven and things in earth and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father] Phil. 2. 6. to 12. Rev. 5. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. [And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many Angels round about the Throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing: And every creature which is in Heaven, and on Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, honour, glory and power be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.] So Rev. 15. 3, 4. & 20. 6. Rev. 21. 23. [The City had no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof] Rev. 22. 3, 4. [The Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.] These and many other Scriptures shew us, that God will be for ever Glorified in
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the person of the Redeemer, more then in either men or Angels: and consequently that it was the principal part of his Intention in the design of mans Redemption.

2. (I will be briefer in the rest) In the way of Redemption man will be saved with greater humiliation and self-denyal then he should have been in the way of Creation. If we had been saved in a way of Innocency, we should have had more to ascribe to our selves. And it is meet that all Creatures be humbled and abased, and nothing in themselves, before the Lord.

3. By the way of Redemption, sin will be more dishonoured, and Holiness more advanced, then if sin had never been known in the world. Contraries illustrate one another. Health would not be so much valued if there were no sickness: nor Life if there were no Death: nor Day if there were no Night: nor Knowledge if there were no Ignorance: nor Good if man had not known Evil. The Holiness of God would never have appeared in execution of vindictive Justice against sin, if there had never been any sin: and therefore he hath permitted it, and will recover us from it, when he could have prevented our falling into it.

4. By this way also, Holiness and Recovering Grace shall be more triumphant against the Devil and all its enemies: By the many conquests that Christ will make over Satan, the World and the Flesh, and Death, there will very much of God be seen to us, that innocency would not thus have manifested.

5. Redemption brings God nearer unto man: The mysterie of Incarnation giveth us wonderful advantages to have more familiar thoughts of God, and to see him in a clearer glass, then ever we should else have seen him in on earth, and to have access with boldness to the throne of grace. The pure Deity is at so vast a distance from us, while we are here in flesh, that if it had not appeared in the flesh unto us, we should have been at a greater loss. But now without controversie great is the mysterie of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of Angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory, 1 Tim. 3. 16.

6. In the way of Redemption, man is brought to more earnest and frequent addresses unto God, and dependance on him: Ne-

cessity driveth him: And he hath use for more of God, or for God-in more of the wayes of his mercy, then else he would have had.

7. Principally in this way of saving miserable man by a Redeemer, there is opportunity for the more abundant exercise of Gods mercy, and consequently for the more glorious discovery of his Love and Goodness to the sons of men, then if they had fallen into no such Necessities. Misery prepareth men for the sense of mercy. In the Redeemer there is so wonderful a discovery of Love and Mercy, as is the astonishment of men and Angels. 1 Joh. 3. 1. [*Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!*] Eph. 2. 4, 5. [*God who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace yee are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us by Christ Jesus: for by grace yee are saved through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast*] Tit. 3 3, 4. [*For we our selves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, &c. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost*] Never was there such a discovery of God as he is Love, in a way of Mercy to man on earth, as in the Redeemer, and his benefits.

8. In the way of Redemption the soul of man is formed to the most sweet and excellent temper, and his obedience cast into the happiest mold. The glorious demonstration of Love, doth animate us with Love to God; and the shedding abroad of his Love in our hearts by the spirit of the Redeemer, doth draw out our hearts in Love to him again: And the sense of his wonderful Love and Mercy filleth us with Thankfulness: so that Love is hereby made the nature of the new man; and Thankfulness is the life of all our obedience: For all floweth from these principles, and expresseth them: so that Love is the compendium of all Holiness in one word; and Thankfulness of all

all *Evangelical obedience*. And it is a more sweet and excellent state of life, to be the *Spouse of Christ*, and his *members*, and serve God as *friends and children*, with *Love and Thankfulness*, then to serve him meerly as the most *loyal subjects*, or with an obedience that hath less of Love.

9. In the way of *Redemption*, *Holiness* is more admirably exemplified in *Christ*, then it was, or would have been in *Adam*. *Adam* would never have declared it in that eminency of *Charity to others*, submission to *God*, contempt of the world, self-denial, and conquest of *Satan*, as *Christ* hath done.

10. And in the way of *Redemption*, there is a double obligation laid upon man for every duty. To the obligations of *Creation*, all the obligations of *Redemption* and the *new Creation* are superadded: And this threefold cord should not so easily be broken. Here are *moral means* more powerfully to hold the soul to *God*.

11. And in this way there is a clearer discovery of the everlasting state of man, and life and immortality are more fully brought to light by the *Gospel* (2 Tim. 1. 10) then for ought we find in *Scripture*, they were to *innocent man* himself [No man hath seen *God* at any time: the only begotten *Son* that is in the bosome of the *Father*, he hath declared him, Joh. 1. 18.] For no man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man, which is in heaven, Joh 3. 13.

12. Man will be advanced, to the judging of the ungodly and of the conquered *Angels*: even by the good will of the *Father*, and a participation in the honour of *Christ* our head, and by a participation in his *Victories*, and by our own *Victories* in his strength, by the right of *Conquest*, we shall judge with *Christ*, both *Devils* and men, that were enemies to him, and our salvation: as you may see 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3. And there is more in that promise then we yet well understand, Rev. 2. 26, 27. [He that overcometh, and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the *Nations*, and he shall rule them with a rod of *Iron*, as the vessels of a *Potter* shall they be broken to shivers, even as I received of my *Father*.]

13. And that which *Augustine* so much insisteth on, I think is also plain in *Scripture*, that the *Salvation of the Elect* is bet-

ter secured in the hands of Christ, then his own or any of his posterities was in the hands of Adam. We know that Adam lost that which was committed to him: But [we know whom we have believed, and are persuaded, that he is able to keep that which we commit to him, against that day] 1 Tim. 1. 12. Force not these Scriptures against our own Consolation, and the glory of our Redeemer, and then judge. [Joh. 7. 2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as thou hast given him] Joh. 6. 3. [All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out] Ver. 39. And this is the Fathers will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day] Joh. 10. 26, 27, 28, 29. [But yee believe not, because yee are not of my sheep, as I said unto you: 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, and none shall take them out of my hands: My Father which gave them me is greater then all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hands] Eph. 1. 3, 4. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in Love: Having predestinated us to the adoption of his children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved] [Being predestinated according to the purpose of him that worketh all things after the counsel of his own will] Ver. 11.

And if Faith, and Repentance, and the right disposition of the will it self, be his resolved gift to his Elect, and not things left meerly to our uncertain wills, then the case is past all question. 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. [In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil] Eph. 2. 8. [By grace yee are saved through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God] Gal. 5. 22. The fruit of the Spirit is Love, Faith —] Phil. 1. 29. To you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe

lieve on him —] Act. 13. 48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed*] Jer. 24. 7. *And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God ; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart*] Ezek. 11. 19, 20. *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you : and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my ordinances and do them, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God*] Ezek. 36. 26, 27. [*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes*] — See also Heb. 8. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. where this is called the *new and better Covenant* [*I will put my Laws in their minds and write them in their hearts —*] Jer. 31. 33. And Jer. 32. 39, 40. *And I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me for ever. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me*] 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who makes thee to differ ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive ?*] Much more may be produced, from which it is evident that *Christ is the Author and finisher of our Faith* ; and that the *certainty of the salvation of his Elect*, doth lie more on *his undertaking and resolution* infallibly to accomplish their salvation, then upon *our wisdom*, or the *stability of our mutable free-wills* : and that thus we are *better in the hands of the second Adam*, then we were in the hands of the *first*.

14. To conclude ; *Vindictive Justice will be doubly honoured upon them that are final rejecters of this grace*. Though conscience would have had matter enough to work upon for the torment of the sinner, and the justifying of God, upon the meer violation of the *Law of nature* or works, yet nothing to what it *now* will have on them that are the despisers of this great salvation. *For of how much sorer punishment suppose yee shall be thought worthy that hath trodden under foot the Son of God?*] when it is *willful impenitency*, against most excellent means and mercies, that is to be charged upon sinners, and

when they perish because they *would not* be sav'd, Justice will be most fully glorified before all, and in the conscience of the sinner himself. All this considered you may see that (besides what reasons of the counsel of God are unknown to us) there is abundant reason open to our sight, from the great advantages of this way, why God would rather save us by a Redeemer, than in a way of *Innocency* as our meer Creator.

But, for the answering of all objections against this, I must desire you to observe these two things following. 1. That we here suppose man a terrestrial inhabitant cloathed with flesh : otherwise it is confessed that if he were *perfect in heaven*, where he had the *Beatifical Vision* to confirm him, many of these forementioned advantages to him would be none.

And it is supposed that God will work on man by *Moral means* ; and where he never so infallibly produceth the good of man, he doth it in a way agreeable to his nature and present state ; and that his work of Grace is *Sapiential*, magnifying the contrivance and conduct of his *Wisdom*, as well as his *Power* : otherwise indeed God might have done all without these or any other means.

3. The knowledge of God *in Christ as our Redeemer*, must imprint upon the soul those *Holy Affections* which the *designs* and *nature* of our *Redemption* do bespeak, and which answer these forementioned ends. As 1. It must keep the soul in a sense of the *odiousness of sin*, that must have such a remedy to pardon and destroy it.

2. It must raise us to most high and honourable thoughts of our Redeemer, the Captain of our Salvation, that bringeth back lost sinners unto God : and we must study to advance the Glory of our Lord, whom the Father hath advanced and set over all.

3. It must drive us out of our selves and bring us to be nothing in our own eyes, and cause us to have humble, penitent, self-condemning thoughts, as men that have been our own undoers, and deserved so ill of God and man.

4. It must drive us to a full and constant dependance on *Christ our Redeemer*, and on the Father by him : As *our life* is now in the *Son* as its *root* and *fountain*, so in him must be our faith and confidence, and to him we must daily have recourse,

and

and seek to him, and to the Father in his Name for all that we need, for daily pardon, strength, protection, provision and consolation.

5. It must cause us the more to admire the Holiness of God, which is so admirably declared in our Redemption; and still be sensible how he hateth sin and loveth Purity.

6. It must invite and encourage us to *draw near to God*, who hath condescended to come so near to us; and as sons we must cry *Abba Father*, and though with *reverence*, yet with *holy confidence* must set our selves continually before him.

7. It must cause us to make it our daily employment to study the Riches of the Love of God, and his abundant mercy manifested in Christ; so that above all books in the world, we should most diligently and delightfully peruse the *Son of God incarnate*, and in him behold the *Power*, and *Wisdom*, and *Goodness* of the Father: And with *Paul* we should desire to *know nothing but Christ crucified*; and all things should be counted but *loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord*, Phil. 3. 8. *That we may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the Love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.*]

8. Above all, if we know God as our Redeemer, we must Live in the Power of holy *Love and Gratitude*. His *Manifested Love* must prevail with us so far, that *unfeigned Love to him* may be the *predominant affection* of our souls. And being free from the *Spirit of bondage* and slavish fear, we must make *Love and Thankfulness* the sum of our Religion: and think not any thing will prove us Christians without *prevailing Love to Christ*, nor that any duty is accepted that proceedeth not from it.

9. Redemption must teach us to apply our selves to the holy Laws and Example of our Redeemer for the forming and ordering of our hearts and lives.

10. And it must quicken us to Love the Lord with a *redoubled vigour*, and to obey with *double resolution* and diligence, because we are under a *double obligation*. What should a people so Redeemed esteem too much or too dear for God?

11. Redemption must make us a more *Heavenly* people, as being *Redeemed* to the *incorruptible inheritance* in Heaven: [*The blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*] 1 Pet. 1. 3.

12. Lastly *Redemption* must cause us to walk the more carefully, and with a greater care to avoid all sin, and to avoid the threatned wrath of God, because sin against such unspeakable Mercy is unspeakably great, and condemnation by a Redeemer for despising his grace will be a *double condemnation*, Joh. 3. 19. 36.

CHAP. XII.

11. **T**HE third Relation in which God is to be Known by us, is as he is our *Sanctifier* and *Comforter*, which is specially ascribed to the *Holy Ghost*. And doubtless as the *Dispensation* of the *Holy Ghost* is the *Perfecting dispensation*, without which *Creation* and *Redemption* would not attain their ends; and as the *sin against the Holy Ghost*, is the great and dangerous sin; so our *Belief* in the *Holy Ghost*, and Knowledge of God as our *Sanctifier by the Spirit*, is not the *least* or *lowest* act of our faith or Knowledge. And it implieth or containeth these things following.

1. We must hence take notice of the certainty of our *common original sin*. The *necessity* of *sanctification* proveth the *corruption*, as the *necessity* of a *Redeemer* proveth the *guilt*: It is not *one* but *all* that are *Baptized*, that must be *Baptized* into the *Name of the Son and Holy Ghost*, as well as of the *Father*: which is an entering into *Covenant* with the *Son* as our *Redeemer*, and with the *Holy Ghost* as our *Sanctifier*. So that *Infants* themselves must be *Sanctified* or be none of the *Church of Christ*, which consisteth of *Baptized Sanctified persons*. [*Except a man be born again* (even of the *Spirit*, as well as

Water

water) he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.] For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, Joh. 3. 3, 5, 6. and therefore the fleshly birth producing not a *Spiritual creature*, will not save without the *Spiritual birth*: The words are most plain; not only against them that deny *Original sin*, but against them that misunderstanding the nature of Redemption, do think that all *Infants* are merely by the *price paid*, put into a state of Salvation, and have the pardon of their *Original sin* in common, attending their natural Birth. But these men should consider, 1. That this text and constant experience tell us that the *new Birth* doth not thus commonly to all accompany the *natural birth*: and yet without the *new birth* none can be saved, nor without *Holiness any see God*. 2. That Pardon of sin is *no mans* upon the *bare suffering* of Jesus Christ; but must be theirs by some *Covenant or Promise* conveying to them a *Right* to the benefits of his suffering. And therefore no man can be said to be pardoned or saved (without great arrogancy in the affirmer) that hath not from God a *promise* of such mercy. But no man can shew any Promise that giveth *Remission of Original sin* to all *Infants*. Produce it, or presume not to affirm it, lest you fall under the heavy doom of those that add to his holy Word. The *Promise* is to the *faithful and their seed*. The rest are not the *children of the promise*, but are under the commination of the violated Law; which indeed is *dispensable*; and therefore we cannot say that *God will pardon none of them*; but withal, we cannot say that *he will*, unless he had told us so. All the world are in a necessity of a *Sanctifier*: and therefore most certainly (even since Christs death) they are naturally corrupted.

2. And as our Belief in the *Holy Ghost* as *Sanctifier*, engageth us to acknowledge our *Original sin* and *miser*y, so doth it engage us to *magnifie* his *renewing work* of grace, and be convinced of the *necessity* of it, and to confess the insufficiency of corrupted nature to its own renovation. As no man must dishonour the work of our *Creator*; and therefore our faculties of *Reason* and *natural Freewill* are not to be *denied* or *reproached*: so must we be as careful that we dishonour not the works of our Redeemer or Sanctifier; and therefore the

viciousness and *ill disposedness* of these faculties, and the *thraldom* of our *wills* to their *own misinclinations*, and to *concupiscence*, must be confessed; and the *need of Grace* to work the cure. It is not ingenuous for us, when God made it so admirable a part of his work in the world, to *Redeem* us, and save us from our sin and misery, that we should *hide* or *deny* our diseases, and make our selves believe that we have but *little need* of the *Physician*, and so that the cure is *no great matter*, and consequently deserveth *no great praise*. I know the Church is troubled by men of dark yet self-conceited minds, that in these points are running all into extreams. One side denying the *Sapiential method*, and the other the *Omnipotent way* of God in our recovery. One plainly casting our *sin* and *misery* principally on God; and the other as plainly robbing the *Redeemer* and *holy Spirit* of the honour of our recovery. But it is the latter that my subject leadeth me now to speak to. I beseech you take heed of any conceit that would draw you to extenuate the honour of our *Sanctifier*. Dare you contend against the *Holy Ghost* for the integrity of *your natures*, or the honour of your cure? surely he that hath *felt the power* of this *renewing grace*, and found how little of it was from himself, nay how much he was an enemy to it, will be less inclined to extenuate the praise of grace than *unexperienced men* will be. Because the case is very weighty, give me leave by way of Question to propound these considerations to you.

Quest. 1. Why is it think you that all must be *Baptized* into the Name of the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* as well as of the *Father*? Doth it not imply that *all* have need of a *Sanctifier*, and must be engaged to that end in *Covenant* with the *Sanctifier*? I suppose you know that it is not to a bare Profession of our belief of the *Trinity* of persons that we are baptized. It is our *Covenant entrance* into our happy Relation to *God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*, that is then celebrated. And therefore as *Infants* and *all* must be thus engaged to the *Sanctifier*, so all must acknowledge their necessity of this mercy, and the excellency of it. It is *essential* to our *Christianity*, that we value it, desire it and receive it. And therefore an error inconsistent with it proveth us indeed *no Christians*. Mat. 28. 19.

Quest. 2.

Quest. 2. Why is it think you that the *Holy Ghost* and this *renewing work*, are so much magnified in the Scripture? Is not the glory of it answerable to those high expressions? undoubtedly it is. I have already told you elsewhere of the *Elogies* of this work. It is that by which *Christ dwelleth in them*, and they are made a *habitation of God by the Spirit*, Eph. 3. 17. and 2. 22. They are made by it *the Temples of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. It is the *Divine Power* (which is no other then *Omnipotency*) that giveth us all things pertaining unto *Life and Godliness*, 2 Pet. 1. 3. Think not I beseech you any lower of this work then is consistent with these expressions. It is the *opening of the blind eyes of our understanding*, and *turning us from darkness to light*, and from the power of *Satan unto God*, and bringing us into his *marvellous light*, Act 26. 18. Eph. 1. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 9. It is an *inward teaching of us by God*, Joh. 6. 45. 1 Thes. 4. 9. an *effectual teaching and anointing*, 1 Joh. 2. 27. and a *writing the Laws in our hearts and putting them in our inward parts*, Heb. 8. 10, 11. I purposely forbear any exposition of these texts, lest I seem to distort them; and because I would only lay the naked Word of God before your own impartial considerations. It is *Gods work* by the *Spirit*, and not *our own as ours* that is here so much magnified. And can all this signifie no more but a common *bare proposal* of truth and good to the *intellect* and *will*; even such as ignorant and wicked men have? Doth God do as much to illuminate, teach, and sanctifie them that *never are* illuminated, or taught, and sanctified, as them that *are*? This work of the *Holy Ghost* is called a *quickning*, or making men that were dead, alive, Eph. 2. 1, 2. Rom. 6. 11, 13. It is called a *new begetting* or *new birth*, without which none can enter into heaven, Joh. 3. 3, 5, 6. A *renewing us*, and making us new men, and *new creatures*, so far as that *old things are past away*, and all become new, Eph. 4. 23, 24. Col. 3. 10. 2 Cor. 5. 17. It is a *new creating us after the Image of God*, Eph. 4. 24. It maketh us *Holy as God is Holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. yea it maketh us *partakers of the Divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. It giveth us *repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*, that we may recover our selves out of the *snare of the Devil*, who were taken captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. It giveth us that *Love by which*

God

God dwelleth in us, and we in God, 1 Joh. 4. 16. We are redeemed by Christ from all iniquity, and therefore it is that he gave himself for us, to purifie to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14. It is an abundant shedding of the Holy Ghost on us for our renovation, Tit. 3. 5, 6. and by it a shedding the Love of God abroad in our hearts, Rom. 5. 5. It is this Holy Spirit given to believers by which they pray, and by which they mortifie the flesh, Jud. 20. Rom. 8. 26. 13. By this Spirit we live, and walk, and rejoyce, Rom. 8. 1. and 14. 17. Our joy, and peace, and hope is through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom 15. 13. It giveth us a spiritual mind, and taketh away the carnal mind that is enmity against God, and neither is nor can be subject to his law, Rom. 8. 7. By this Spirit that is given to us, we must know that we are Gods children, 1 Joh. 3. 24. & 4. 13. For if any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, Rom. 8, 9. All holy graces are the fruits of the spirit, Gal. 5. 22, 23. It would be too long to number the severall excellent effects of the sanctifying work of the spirit upon the soul, and to recite the Elogies of it in the Scripture. Surely it is no low or needless thing which all these expressions do intend.

Quest. 3. If you think it a most hainous sin to vilifie the Creator and his work, and the Redeemer and his work, why should not you think so of the vilifying of the sanctifier and his work, when God hath so magnified it, and will be glorified in it? and when it is the applying perfecting work, that maketh the purchased benefits of Redemption to be ours, and formeth our Fathers Image on us.

Quest. 4. Do we not Doctrinally commit too much of that sin (if we undervalue the Spirits sanctifying work, as a common thing) which the ungodly world do manifest in practice, when they speak and live in a contempt or low esteem of grace? And which is more injurious to God? for a prophane person to jest at the Spirits work, or for a Christian or Minister deliberately to extennate it? especially when the preaching of grace is a Ministers chief work, sure we should much fear partaking in so great a sin.

Quest. 5. Why is it that the Scripture speaks so much to take men off from boasting or ascribing any thing to themselves?

Rom. 3. 19. *That every mouth may be stopped; and why doth not the Law of works exclude boasting but only the Law of faith?* Rom. 3. 27. Surely the actions of nature (except so far as it is corrupt) are as truly of God, as the acts of grace. And yet God will not take it well to deny him the glory of Redemption, or Sanctification, and tell him that we paid it him in another kind, and ascribed all to him as the author of our free will by natural production. For as Nature shall honour the Creatour, so Grace shall also honour the Redeemer and Sanctifier. And God designeth the humbling of the sinner, and teaching him to deny himself; and to honour God in such a way as may stand with self abasement, leaving it to God to honour those by way of reward, that honour him in way of duty, and deny their own honour.

Quest. 6. Why is the Blaspheming, and sinning against the Holy Ghost made so hainous and dangerous a sin, if the works of the Holy Ghost were not most excellent, and such as God will be most honoured by?

Quest. 7. Is it not exceeding ingratitude for the soul that hath been illuminated, converted, renewed, quickened and saved by the Holy Ghost, to extenuate the mercy, and ascribe it most to his natural Will? O what a change was it that Sanctification made? what a blessed birth-day was that to our souls when we entered here upon Life Eternal! *Job. 17. 3.* And is this the thanks we give the Lord for so great a Mercy!

Quest. 8. What mean those texts, if they confute not this unthankful opinion? *Phil. 2. 13.* [*It is God that worketh in you to Will and to do of his good pleasure*] *Eph. 2. 7, 8, 9, 10.* God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus: For by Grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God; Not of works lest any man should boast; For we are his workmanship Created to Good works in Christ Jesus] The like is in *Tit. 3. 5, 6. 7.* *Job. 15. 16.* Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain] *1 Job. 4. 10.* Herein is

Love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us —] 1 Cor. 4. 7. For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast that thou that thou didst not receive] Joh. 6. 44. No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him] 1 Cor. 2. 14. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.] Joh. 3. 6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit] that is, plainly, the fleshly birth produceth but flesh and not spirit; if any man will have the spirit (and so be saved) it must be by a spiritual begetting and birth by the Holy Ghost, Act. 16. 14. The Lord opened Lydia's heart that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul, &c.] Was the Conversion of Paul a murdering persecuter his own work rather than the Lords, when the means and manner were such as we read of? Act. 22. 14. [The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee that thou shouldst know his will, and see that just one, and hear the voice of his mouth, &c.] He was chosen to the Means and to faith, and not only in faith to salvation. When Christ called his Disciples to come and follow him, was there no prevailing inward power that made them leave all and follow him? And was it not the power of the Holy Ghost that Converted three thousand Jewes at a Sermon, of them that by wicked hands had Crucified and slain the Lord Jesus? Act. 2. 23, 41. When the Preaching and Miracles of Christ Converted so few; his Brethren, and they that saw his Miracles believed not on him, Joh. 12. 37. & 5. 38. & 6. 36. & 7. 5. but when the Holy Ghost was given after his Ascension in that plenty which answered the Gospel and promise, his words were fulfilled, Joh. 12. 32. [And I if I belisted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.] I pass by abundance more such evidence.

Quest. 9. Doth it not tend to bring sin into credit which holiness is contrary to, and to bring the love of God into discredit, and to hinder mens Conversion, and keep them from a holy life, when holiness is taken for so low and natural or common a thing?

Quest. 10. And consequently doth it not tend to the vilifying of the Attribute of Holiness in God, when the

Image and effect of it is so extenuated ?

Quest. 11. And doth it not tend to the contempt of *Heaven* it self, whose state of felicity consisteth much in *perfect Holiness* ? And if Sanctification be but some *common motion*, which *Cain* and *Judas* had as well as *Paul*, sure it is *less Divine* and more *inconsiderable* then we thought.

Quest. 12. Doth it not speak very dangerous suspicion of a soul that never felt the special work of grace, that can make light of it, and ascribe it most to his own will ? And would not *sound Humiliation* do more then *Arguments* to cure this great mistake ? I never yet came neer a throughly-humbled soul, but I found them too low and vile in their own eyes, to have such undervaluing thoughts of grace, or to think it best for them to leave all the efficacy of grace to their own wills ! A broken heart abhors such thoughts.

Quest. 13. Dare any wise and sober man *desire* such a thing of God, or dare you say that you will *expect no other Grace*, but what shall leave it to your selves to make it effectual or frustrate it ? I think he is no friend to his soul that would *take up* with this.

Quest. 14. Do not the constant *Prayers* of all that have but a shew of godliness contradict the doctrine which I am contradicting ? Do you not beg of God to *melt* and *soften* and *bow* your hearts, and to make them more holy, and fill them with light, and faith, and Love, and hold you close to God and duty ! In a word, do you not daily pray for effectual grace, that shall infallibly procure your desired ends ? I scarce ever heard a *prayer* from a sober man but was orthodox in such points, though their speeches would be heterodox.

Quest. 15. Do you not know that there is *an enmity in every unrenewed heart against sanctification* till God remove it ? Are we not greater enemies to our selves, and greater resisters of the Holy Ghost, and of our own conversion and sanctification and salvation, then all the world besides is ? woe to him that feelth not this by himself. And is it likely that we that are enemies to holiness should do more to our own Sanctification, then the Holy Ghost ? Woe to us if *he* conquer not our enmity.

Quest. 16. Is it *probable* that *so great a work* as the destroying

ng of our dearest sins, the setting our hearts and all our hopes on an Invisible glory, and delighting in the Lord, and forsaking all for him, &c. should come rather from the choice of a will that *loveth* those sins, and *hateth* that holy heavenly life, then from the spirit of Christ? sure this is much above us.

Quest. 17. Whence is it that so often one man that hath been a notorious sinner is Converted by a Sermon, when a civiler man, of better nature and life, is never changed though he have that and ten times more persuasions?

Quest. 18. Doth not experience tell impartial observers, that the high esteemers of the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost, are ordinarily of *more holy heavenly lives*, then they that use to ascribe the differencing work to their free wills? In my observation it is so.

Quest. 19. Should not every gracious *bumble* soul, be more inclined to magnifie God then himself? and to give him the Glory, then to give it to our selves, especially in a case where Scripture and experience telleth us that we are more unlikely then God to deserve the praise? Our destruction is of our selves, but in him is our help, *Hos. 13. 9.* When we see an effect and know it, and the causes that are in question, it is easie to conjecture from the quality which is the true cause. If I see a Serpent brought forth, I will sooner think that it was generated by a Serpent then a Dove. If I see sin in the world, I shall easily believe it is the spawn of this corrupted will, that is so prone to it. But if I find a divine nature in me, or see a holy heavenly life in any, I must needs think that this is liker to be the work of the blessed God, then of such a naughty heart as mans, that hath already been a self-destroyer.

Quest. 20. What *motive* hath any man to exalt himself, and sin again the Holy Ghost by such an extenuation of his saving grace? It is a *causeless, fruitless sin*. The only reason that ever I could hear for it, was lest the doctrine of differencing grace should make God a respecter of persons, or the author of sin, of which there is no reason of a suspicion. We all agree that no man perisheth or is denyed Grace, but such as deserve it: And when all deserve it, it is no more respect of persons in God to sanctifie some only of those ill deservers, then it is that he makes not all men Kings, nor every dog or toad a man,

a man, nor every star a Sun, or every man or Angel. To clear all objections concerning this would be but to digress.

3. Lastly, Our knowledge of the Holy Ghost must raise us to an high estimation of his works, and a ready reception of his graces and cheerful obedience to his motions. He Sanctified our Head, that had no sin, by preventing sin in his conception, and he annointed him to his office, and came upon him at his Baptism: He Sanctified and anointed the Prophets and Apostles to their offices, and by them endited the holy Scripture. He illuminateth, converteth, sanctifieth and guideth all that are to be the heirs of life. This is his work. Honour that part of it that is done on Christ, on the Prophets, Apostles, and the Scriptures; and value and seek after that which belongeth to your selves. Think not to be Holy without the Sanctifier, nor to do any thing well without the spirit of Jesus Christ, who is Christs internal invisible Agent here on earth (as *Tertullian* in the Churches Creed speaks, *misit vicariam vim spiritus sancti qui credentes agat.*) O that men knew how much of their well-fare dependeth on a faithful obeying of the Holy Ghost!

C H A P. XIII.

12. **T**He next part of our Knowledge of God is to know him in those great consequent Relations, to which he is entitled by Creation and Redemption, viz. as he is *Our Absolute Lord, or Owner, our most Righteous Governour, and our most Bountiful or Gracious Father or Benefactor.*

1. God both as our *Creator and Redeemer* hath *Jus Domini*, an *Absolute Dominion* of the world; that is, He is *our Owner or Proprietary*, and we are *his Own*; For we take not the term [*Lordship or Dominion*] here in the *looser* sense as it signifieth a *Ruler*, but in the *stricter* sense as it signifieth an *Owner*. Of this Relation I have already spoken in a Sermon of [*Christs Dominion* :] and therefore shall say the less in this place.

The Knowledge of *Gods Dominion or Propriety* must com-

prehend, 1. The certain truth of this his right ; 2. The fulness of it. 3. The effects that it must have on us.

I. And the Truth of it is beyond dispute, even among *Infidels* that know there is a *God*. He that *made us* of his own materials, or of *nothing*, must needs be the *Owner* of us ; And so must he that *Bought us* from destruction. Ezek. 18. 4. *Behold all souls are Mine :*] Rom. 14. 9. *To this end Christ both dyed, rose and revived that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*] Joh. 16. 14, 15. *All things that the Father hath are Mine*] The *Father* then hath this *Propriety* by *Creation*, and the *son* by *Redemption* : and the *Father* also by *communication* with the *Son* in *Redemption* ; and the *Son* by *communication* with the *Father* in *Creation*.

II. And it must be the *most Absolute Plenary* Dominion, because the very *Being* of all the *Creatures* is from *God*, and therefore no one can be co-ordinate with him, or his corrival, nor any thing limit his Interest in us.

III. And the effects that this must have upon us, are these following.

1. Hence we must conclude and reverently and willingly confess that further then he voluntarily doth oblige himself to us, it is *impossible* that *God* should be *our Debtor* ; and consequently that upon terms of *commutative Justice* we should *Merit* any thing of *God*. For what can we render to him but *his Own* ? And how should he (properly and Antecedently) be indebted to and for *his Own* ?

2. And we must conclude, that (antecedently to his *Laws* and *promise*) it is *impossible* that *God* can do us any wrong, or any thing that he can do can be *guilty* of *injustice* : For *Justice* giveth to all *their Own* ; and therefore it giveth *Nothing* to us from *God*, but what he voluntarily giveth us himself, which therefore is *first* a *gift of Bounty*, and but secondarily a *Due in Justice*.

3. And therefore we must hence learn, that *God* may do with *his own* as he list. And therefore we must take heed that we repine not at any of his *Decrees* or *Providences*, or any passages concerning them in his word. Much may be *above us*, because our blindness cannot reach the reasons of his wayes ; but nothing is *unreasonable* or *evil* ; For all proceedeth from

Infinite

Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, as well as from *Omnipotency*; As no man must feign any thing of God, and say [*This is his Decree, or Word or Providence*; and therefore it is good,] when there is no such thing revealed to us; so when we find that it is indeed Revealed, our Reason must presently submit, and undoubtedly conclude it reasonable and good. Yet is there no cause from hence to fear, lest God should condemn the innocent, or break his promises, and deny us the reward; nor is there any hope to wicked men that he should violate his peremptory threatnings, or (as they call it in their selfish language) be better then his word: Because though God have an *Absolute Propriety*, and therefore in regard of his interest or Power, may do what he Will, yet he is essentially also most *Wise* and *Good*, and accordingly hath fitted all things to their use, and taken upon him the Relation of *our Governour*, and as it were obliged himself by his *Laws and Covenants*, and declared himself to be most *Just*; and shewed us hereby that he Will do nothing contrary to these. As there is no contradiction, but most perfect *Unity* in *Gods Omnipotency, Wisdom and Goodness*; his *Dominion or Propriety*, his *Kingdom*, and *Paternity*; so shall there be no contradiction, but a perfect Concord of all these in the exercise. He therefore that as *our King or Governour*, hath undertaken to advance the *Godly*, and destroy the wicked, will not by the exercise of his *Absolute Dominion*, deny himself, nor be unfaithful to his people or to his rules of Government.

If you ask me, in what cases then this *Dominion* is exercised? I answer, 1. In laying the *Foundations of laws*, and *Right*. 2. In the *Disposal of the unreasonable Creatures*. 3. In abundance of things about his *Rational Creatures*, wherein as *Rector* he is not engaged, nor hath in his *Laws* declared his will; (As about the various constitutions and complexions of men, their ranks and dignities in the world, their riches or poverty, their health, or sickness, their gifts and parts both natural and acquired; the first giving of the Gospel, and of special Grace, to such as had forfeited them, and had no promise of them: the degrees of outward means and mercies; the degrees of inward grace, more then what is promised, &c.)

From hence also we must learn, not to repine at the *providences*

dences of God about his *Church*, which are strange to us, and past our reach, and seem to make against it wellfare. Remember that as he may do with his own as he list, so we have no reason to think that he will be lavish or disregardful of his own. The Church is not *ours* but *Gods* : and therefore he is fitter then we to be trusted with it.

And so in our *own* distresses by affliction ; when flesh re-pineth, let us remember, that we are his *Own*, and he may do with us as he please. If we be poor, despised, sick and miserable in the world, let us remember that as it is no injury to the *beasts* that they are not *men*, or to the *worms* that they are not *beasts*, or to the *plants* that they have not *sense*, or to the *stars* that they are not *suns* ; so it is no *wrong* to the *subjects* that they are not *Princes*, or to the *poor* that they are not *rich*, or to the *sick* that they are not *healthful*. May not God do with *his own*, as he list ? shall a *Beggar* grudge that you give not *all* that he desireth, when you are not bound to give him *anything* ?

4. Yea hence we must learn to be the *more Thankful* for all our *mercies*, because they proceed from the *Absolute Lord*, that was not *obliged* to us. He might have made us *Idiots*, or *madmen* ; he might have us *beasts* or *toads*, without any injury to us ; And the *Mercies* which are *consequently* from his *Promise*, are *Antecedently* from his *Propriety and Dominion* : For he might have put us into other capacities, and have chosen not to have *made* those promises. And his *promises* bind us not to be *less thankful* but *more*. As his *mercies* are not the *less mercies* but the *greater* for being promised ; because we have now the comfort and use of them in the promise, before we have them.

5. Hence also we must learn, that there can be *no simple absolute Propriety in any Creature*. No creature gave all the *Being* and *well being* to another that it hath, and this originally as of its *Own*. We being not our *Own* but *God's*, cannot have any thing that is *Absolutely our Own*. *Human Propriety* is but *derived, limited, and respective*. Our *Goods*, and *Lands*, and *Lives* are *Ours* ; that is, they are *Ours* to *Use for God*, as the *Instruments* of a workman to do his work ; but not *ours* to use as we think meet. They are so *ours* as that *men* may not take

take them from us, but *God* may take them from us at his pleasure. And therefore think not you may mispend a penny if you were never so rich, because it is *your own*; but know that you must mispend nothing, because it is *not your own*, but *Gods*.

6. Principally we must hence learn to *Deny our selves as being not our own, and having nothing in the world that is our Own, in respect to God, the absolute Owner*. And therefore above all the sins of your souls, still watch against this *selfishness*: lest you should grow to look at your *Time*, your *Strength*, your *Wealth*, your *Interests* as *your own*, and forget that you are *meer stewards*; and say as the ungodly, *Psal.* 12. 4. [*Our lips are our own: Who is Lord over us!*] O take heed that you use not your strength, or interest, or any thing for *your selves*: no not so much as your food and rayment, *I Cor.* 10. 31. that is, for *your selves ultimately*, or not in *subordination to the Lord*. For self as *subject unto God*, or as closed with him in the bond of *Love*, is no longer *self in enmity* and *opposition*, nor that which we are forbidden to seek or serve.

7. And this Knowledge of the *Dominion of God* must prevail with us effectually to *Resign our selves absolutely to him*. Our *consent* doth give him *no title* to us, but it is necessary to our *well-fare* that we confess his title. *All men*, even the *wicked* are his *Own*: but that is *against their wills*: but the *godly* are *willingly his Own*, and disclaim all interest in themselves but what is *duely subordinate* to his: The name of *God* is put upon them, as you put your names on your goods or sheep. *Ezek.* 16. 8. [*I swear unto thee, and entered into a Covenant with thee, saith the Lord, and thou becamest mine*] *Mal.* 3. 17. [*And they shall be mine saith the Lord in that day when I make up my jewels*] To be *entirely his by Covenant* is proper to a *Saint*: For *sanctification* hath these parts; one is the *habitual devotion of the soul to God*, and the other is the *actual dedication*, and a third is the *relation of the person as thus dedicated*, and the fourth is the *actual using of our selves for God*. These four are the parts of *Sanctification*; so that all is but our *Giving up our selves to God*. But to be his in *Right* is common to the *Devils* and most ungodly. The hearts of the

sanctified do resolutely and delightfully say [*Cant. 2. 16. My beloved is mine, and I am his*] and 6. 3. [*I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*] See then that you keep not any thing back, but resign up your selves entirely to God, as those that know they are *wholly his*.

8. And with our selves we must resign up *all to God that we have*. For if we are *not our own* but *His*, then our *children*, our *wealth*, our *wits*, our *time*, our *abilities* and all that we have are *his*. All is not to be *used one way* for God: not *all* to the *poor*, nor *all* to the *Commonwealth*, nor *all* to the direct promoting of his *worship*: but *all* must be *his*, and used for *him*, in one way or other, and in those wayes which he requireth. Possess not any thing *meerly for your selves*.

9. And especially see to it in the *use and improvement*, that you *use your selves* and all that you have for God. Let this be your *intention*, *trade* and *study*. See that you be alwayes *at his work*; that if a man come in upon you any hour of the day, and ask you what you are doing, and *whose work* it is that you are upon, you may truly be able to say, *the Lords*. If you be asked, who you are now speaking for, or spending your time for, or for whom you do expend your wealth?] you may truly say of every hour, and every penny, and every word, [*It is for the Lord.*] Even that which you give your children or friends, and that which you receive for your support or comfort, may all be principally and ultimately for God: [Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorifie God in your body, and in your spirit, which are Gods] 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. [*Christ dyed for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him that dyed for them, and rose again,* 2 Cor. 5. 15.

10. Lastly, *This must be a stay to the souls of true believers, and cause them with comfort to trust themselves and all their affairs in the hands of God*. When we have first made it our care to give to God the things that are God's, Mat. 22. 21. and heartily consecrated *our selves* and *all that we have* to him as his *own*; we have no reason to doubt of his *acceptance*, nor of his *care* and *protection* and *merciful disposal* of us. This is a wonderful comfort to poor Christians, to think that they have such an *Owner*. Whoever is against you Christians, be sure

of it God will look to you, as *his own* ! And if you do but promise another that you will be as careful of *his child, his horse, his goods*, as if they were *your own*, he will think you say as much as can be expected. If you be poor, or sick, or desolate, you may be sure that yet God will look to you as *his own*. And why should you think he will be careless of *his own* ? Ground your prayers and confidence on this, as *David* doth, *Psal.* 119. 94. *I am thine, save me.*] And in all our labours and the affairs of our lives, when our consciences can say that we *live to God*, and study to do all we do *for him*, and to improve all our time and parts and other talents to *his use*, it may very much quiet us in all his disposals of us. If he keep us in the lowest case, if we be *his*, we must rest in his wisdom, that knows best how to *use his own*. If he take our *friends* from us, he taketh but *his own*. If he deny his saving grace to our ungodly children (a heavy judgement of which we must be sensible) yet when we have devoted them to God, and done our own part, we must be silent as *Aaron* was when his sons were destroyed, *Lev.* 10. 3. and confess that the *Potter hath power over his own clay*, to make of the same lump a vessel to honour and another to dishonour, *Rom.* 9. 21. All his disposals shall work to that end which is the most *universal perfect good*, and most denominateth all the means. But those that are *his own* by consent and Covenant may be sure that all shall work to their *own good*. Let us die with Christ, and be buried to the world, and know *no Lord or Owner* but our great *Creatour and Redeemer* (except in a limited subservient sense) and then we may boldly argue with him to the quiet of our souls from this Relation [*I am thine, help me*] *Psal.* 35. 23. *Stir up thy self and awake to my judgement, even to my cause, my Lord and my God*]. *when faith and love have first said as Thomas [my Lord and my God]* *Joh.* 20. 28.

 CHAP. XIV.

13. **T**HE next Relation to be spoken of, is *Gods sovereignty*: both by *Creation and Redemption*, he hath the *Right of Governing* us as our *Sovereign King*, and we are *obliged* to be

his willing subjects, and as such to obey his holy laws. He is the Lord or Owner of all the World; even of Brutes as properly as of Man: But he is the Sovereign King or Governour only of the Reasonable Creature; because no other are capable of that proper Moral Government which now we speak of. Vulgarly indeed his Physical motions and dispositions are called his Rule or Government: and so God is said to Govern Brutes and inanimate creatures: but that is but a Metaphorical expression: as an Artificer Metaphorically Governeth his clock or engine, or a Shepherd his sheep. But we now speak of proper moral Government. God having made man a Rational and free agent having an immortal soul, and capable of everlasting happiness, his very nature and the end of his creation required, that he should be conducted to that end and happiness by means agreeable to his nature: that is, by the Revelation of the Reward before he seeth it, that he may seek it and be fitted for it: and by prescribed duties that are necessary to obtain it, and to his living here according to his nature: and by threaten'd penalties to quicken him to his duty: so that he is naturally a creature to be Governed, both as sociable, and as one to be conducted to his end. He therefore that created him having alone both sufficiency and Right, doth by this very Creation become his Governour. His Government hath two parts (the world being thus constituted the Kingdom of God) The first is by Legislation, or making Laws and Officers for execution. The second is by the procuring the execution of these Laws: To which end he doth exhort and perswade the subjects to obedience, and judge them according to their works, and execute his judgement. His first Law was to Adam, the Law of Nature, obliging him to adhere to his Creator, and to love him, trust him, fear him, honour him, and obey him with all his might, in order to the pleasing of his Creator and the attainment of everlasting life: To which was added a positive Law, against the eating of the tree of Knowledge: and Death was the penalty due to the sinner: This Law was quickly broken by man; and God delayed not his judgement, but sentenced the Tempter, the Woman and the Man: but not according to their merits: but mercifully providing a Redeemer, he presently stop't the execution of the far greatest part of the penalty, the Son of God

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undertaking as our surety to become a *sacrifice* and *ransome* for us. Hereupon the *Covenant of Grace* was made, and the *Law of Grace* enacted with mankind: but more obscurely in the beginning; being cleared up by degrees in the several Promises to the Fathers, the types of the Law, and the Prophecies of the Prophets of several ages, the Law being interposed because of transgression: In the fulness of time the Messiah was incarnate, and the first promises concerning him fulfilled, and after his holy life, and preachings, and conquests of the Tempter and the world, he gave himself a Ransome for us, and conquering Death he Rose again, ascended into Heaven, being possessed in his manhood of the fulness of his power, and all things being delivered into his hands; so that he was made the *General Administrator*, and *Lord of all*. And thus he more clearly revealing his *Covenant of Grace*, and bringing *life and immortality to light*, commissioned his *Ministers* to *preach this Gospel to all the world*. And thus the *Primitive Sovereign* is God, and the *Sovereign by Derivation* is *Jesus the Mediator* in his manhood united to the second person in the Godhead; and the Laws that we are governed by, are the *Law of Nature* with the superadded *Covenant of Grace*; the subordinate officers are Angels, Magistrates, and Pastors of the Church (having works distinct) the society it self is called the Church and Kingdom of God; the *Reward* is *everlasting glory*, with the mercies of this life in order to it: and the *Punishment* is *everlasting misery* with the preparatory judgments, especially on the soul, which are here inflicted. *Subjection* is due upon our *first being*; and is consented to or vowed in *Baptisme*, and is to be manifested in *holy obedience* to the death. This is the *Sovereignty and Government* of God. And now let us see how God as our Sovereign must be known.

1. The Princes, and all the Rulers of the world, must understand their *Place* and *Duty*: They are *first Gods subjects*, and then *his officers*, and can have *no power but from God*, Rom. 13. 3, 4. nor hold any but in *dependance* on him, and subordination to him. Their *power* extendeth no further then the *Heavenly Sovereign* hath signified his *pleasure*, and by *commission to them*, or *command to us*, conferred it on them. As they have *no strength* (or *natural power*) but from the *Omnipotent*

potent God, so can they have no Authority (or Governing Power or Right) but from the Absolute King of all the world. They can less pretend to a Right of Governing not derived from God, than a Justice or Constable may to such Power not derived from the earthly sovereigns.

Princes and States also must hence understand their End and Work. God who is the Beginning, must be the End also of their Government: Their Laws must be but by Laws subservient to his Laws, to further mens obedience to them. The Common Good, which is their lower nearer End, must be measured by his Interest in the Nations, and mens Relations unto him. The Common possession of his favour, blessing and protection, is the greatest Common Good. His Interest in us, and ours in him, must therefore be principally maintained.

2. The Knowledge of God as our Sovereign King, must bring the whole man in subjection to him. Our Understandings must be subject to his Doctrine; and resigned to him, as teachable and tractable: When we know what is his Law and Will, we must rest in it, though we know not the Reasons of it. We take not on us to be competent Judges of all the Reasons of the Laws of men, but must obey them without disputing the Reasons (with the limitations after to be mentioned.) How much more must we submit to the wisdom of the Infalible Lawgiver, that cannot deceive, or be deceived! Our Wills also must be fully subject to his Will, revealed by his Precepts. We must desire no more to move us, or to stop us, but to know what God would have us do. As the first wheels in a watch or other engine moveth all the rest, so the Will of God must move all our Wills, and Rule our Lives. We must take heed above all things in the world, lest our Wills (which are the lower Wheels) should have any such defects, distempers, reserves, any carnal byas, interest, or inclination, that makes them unfit to receive the Law of God, or be Ruled by his Will. We must imitate our Lord (*Heb.* 10. 7.) and learn of the Prophet, *Psal.* 40. 8. [*I delight to do thy Will, O God.*] With chearful readiness to obey, we must stand waiting for the word of his Command; and say as *Psal.* 143. 10. *Teach mee to do thy Will, for thou art my God:*] And as *Samuel,* (*1 Sam.* 3. 9.) *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth.*] When a
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mans *selfish carnal Will* is mortified, and his Will lies flat before the Lord, and wholly applieth it self to *his Will*, and it is enough to a man to move him in the greatest matters, to know that it is the *Will of God*, this is a state of true subjection. Thus must we be *in subjection to the Father of Spirits*, submitting even to his sharpest dispensations, *Heb. 12. 9.* And all the Church is *subject unto Christ*, *Ephes. 5. 24.* And this is *essential* to our holy *Covenant and Christianity* it self. When God is taken to be *our God*, and we *give up our selves* to be *his People*; when Christ is taken to be *our Saviour*, and we *give up our selves to him* as his members, and redeemed ones, it essentially containeth our *taking him for our chief Governour*, and *giving up our selves to him as his subjects*. Take heed of that *wisdom* that would overtop the *Wisdom of God*, and be your Guide it self, without depending on *his Wisdom*. This is the foolish damning *Wisdom of the World*. Take heed of that *Concupiscence or Will* that would be *your Ruler*, and overtop the *Will of God*. For this is the *grand Rebel*, and greatest Enemy of God and Us.

3. And *Subjection* must produce *Obedience*; *Subjection* is the *Consent of the Will to be Subjects*, and to *Obe*: *Obedience* is the *actual performance of Commanded duties*. *Subjection* is the root of *Obedience*, and *Virtually* containeth it: *Obedience* is the fruit of *subjection*, and *supposeth* it. If God be your *Master*, shew it by his fear, or service: *Mal. 1. 6.* It is not calling *Christ our King*, but *obeying him before all*, that will prove us *subjects*. *Mat. 7. 21.* [Not every one that saith unto mee, *Lord, Lord*, shall enter into the *Kingdome of Heaven*: but he that doth the *Will of my Father* which is in *Heaven*.] *Rom. 12. 1, 2.* [I beseech you therefore *Brethren*, by the mercies of *God*, that you present your *bodies a living sacrifice*, holy, acceptable to *God*, your *Reasonable service*: and be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed (or turned into other men) by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, that acceptable and perfect *Will of God*.] [And this is the *Will of God*, even your *sanctification*] *1 Thes. 4. 3.* *1 Per 4. 1, 2.* [Forasmuch then as *Christ* hath suffered for us in the *flesh*, arm your selves likewise with the same mind: For he that hath suffered in the *flesh*, hath ceased from sin: that he no longer should live the rest of his

his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the Will of God] Yea we should [stand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God, Col. 4. 12.] And by the power of the Word of God, every thought should be brought in obedience unto [Christ] 2 Cor. 10. 5. Our obedience should be publick and exemplary, Rom. 16. 19. [For so is the Will of God, that with well doing we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men] 1 Pet. 2. 15. Obedience is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam. 15. 22. Whatever you do, therefore keep close to the Law of God.

4. To this end we must labour to know the Law, and be acquainted with Gods Will. The book of Nature must be studied: the holy Scripture must be searched, Joh 5. 39. and meditated in both day and night, Psal. 1. 2. Princes must have this Book continually in their hands, Deut. 17. 18, 19, 20. Josh. 1. 8, 9. Rich and poor must learn it, that they may Obey it, Dent. 6. 6, 7.

5. And our subjection to God obligeth us to a subjection to the Officers that he sets over us. If any man say to Judges, Justices and Constables [I will obey the King, but you are not Kings, therefore I will not obey you] he shall suffer as disobeying the King in his Officers. Contempt of Magistrates and Ministers reflects on God.

6. Yea hence we must practically understand, in what respect to obey our Governours: Not meerly as the Officers of men: not only as chosen by the people; but as the Officers of God, that from him have their Authority. The Atheistical Politicians that derive Authority no higher than the Sword, or the Peoples choice, or natural strength, do teach men to obey their Governours, but as a little Dog submits unto a Mastiff, or so far as their Commodity perswadeth them, but not for conscience in obedience to God. And they teach men to look to no higher end than common preservation and liberties, and not to expect protection or reward from the absolute Sovereign. In a word, they entice all Princes and people into damnable rebellion against the Lord; as much as if they should entice all Constables and Justices to hold their places without dependence on the Prince. But God teacheth us that [there is no Power but of God: the Powers that be are ordained of God: Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that

that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation; For he is the Minister of God to us for good; even the Minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil.] Rom. 13. 1, 2, 4. [Wherefore we must needs be subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake — [For they are Gods Ministers, continually attending upon this very thing: and for this cause we must pay them tribute] vers. 5, 6. [Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lords sake, — For so is the Will of God — 1 Pet. 2. 13, 15. Deut. 1. 16, 17. [Judge righteously between every man and his brother — ye shall not respect persons in judgement, but shall hear the small as well as the great, you shall not be afraid of the face of man: for the judgement is Gods.] 2 Chron. 19 5, 6, 7. [And he said to the Judges, Take heed what ye do; for you judge not for man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the judgement; wherefore let the fear of the Lord be upon you] But our Atheistical Politicians would teach Rulers that they are none of the Ministers of God, and that they judge for man only and not for him. The nature of all true obedience is such as Paul describeth in children and servants, Eph. 6. 1, 6, 7, 8. that fetcheth its rise and motives from the Lord [Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right — Servants be obedient to them that are your Masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ: not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God, from the heart; with good-will doing service as to the Lord and not to men] So Colos. 3. 22, 23.

7. Hence also you must learn, that Gods authority is the highest authority, and there is indeed no such thing in the world as true authority that is against him, or not subordinate unto him: And therefore if men command us to disobey God, by neglecting that which is *hic & nunc* a duty, or by sinning against him, their commands are from a disobedient will of their own, but from no Authority: and it is better in such cases to obey God than man, Act. 5. 29. so many Prophets, Apostles and other Martyrs, would not have been sacrificed by the fury of Persecutors, if they had thought it just to obey them before God. God never gave any man Authority against him.] Nor to nullifie his laws. The acts of a Justice or Constable against the King,

or beyond their power, are private or rebellious acts, and not *Authoritative*. And so are the Laws of men that are *against God*. Yet note well, that though we must rather *disobey men*, then *God*, yet we may not forcibly *Resist*, when we may not *obey them*. And in some cases (as if a *King* would ravish a woman, or the like) when it is *lawful to Resist his fact*, it is not lawful to *Resist his State*, and disturb the Government of the Commonwealth: Obey men cheerfully when God forbids it not: but see that God be your *Absolute Sovereign*, whose Laws can be *dispensed with* by none.

If Parents or Masters command you to break the Laws of God, obey them not. *Despise them not*, but humbly deprecate their displeasure, and obey them in *all other things*; but in the *unlawful thing* obey them not: no not if they were the greatest Princes upon earth. But say as the three witnesses of God, *Dan. 3. 16, 17.* [*We are not careful to answer thee in this matter: If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hands O King: But if not, be it known unto thee O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship thy golden Image which thou hast set up.*]

What I have said of Magistrates, in the two last cases, I mean also of *Pastours of the Church*. They must be *obeyed in and for the Lord*; but not *against the Lord*. Saith *Paul* of the Churches of *Macedonia*, *2 Cor. 8. 5.* [*They gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us, by the will of God*] See *Act. 20. 28.* *1 Thes. 5. 12.* *Luk. 10. 16.* *He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me.*] And yet the *leaven of the Pharisees* must be avoided: and an *Angel from Heaven* be held as *accursed* if he should *preach another Gospel*, *Gal. 1. 8.* And I would not have flatterers to set either *Princes* or *Pastours* above the *Angels of Heaven*. Though yet in *other respects* we may be still obliged, as I said before, to hear and to obey them.

8. And the Knowledge of Gods *soverainity*, must teach us to *fear his righteous Threatnings*, and *reverence his Justice*, and *prepare our selves to be judged by him*. He ruleth by his *Laws*, and so by *Threatnings and Promises*, which he will make good. It is not a painted fire that he *Threatneth*. *Judgement* is a part of *Government*. *Laws* are but shadows if there be no *execution*

[O worship]

[O worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness; fear before him all the earth. Say among the Heathen that the Lord reigneth—] Psal. 96. 9, 10, As his promises, so his peremptory threatenings shall be fulfilled. He will not revoke his stablished Laws for fear of hurting willful sinners, that will not fear his judgements till they feel them, [Psal. 33. 8. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him: for he spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.] Mark also the present judgements of the Lord, and rush not on his indignation. For the Lord is known by the judgements which he executeth: the wicked is (oft) snared in the work of his own hands] Psal. 9. 16. Though [the wicked contemn God, and say in his heart, Thou wilt not require it] Psal. 10. 13.) yet they shall find that [he beholdeth mischief to requite it with his hand; and that he is the helper of the fatherless and poor that commit themselves unto him, ver. 14. [The Lords throne is in heaven: his eyes behold, his eyelids try the children of men: the Lord tryeth the Righteous, but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth, Psal. 11. 4, 5.

9. The Sovereignty of God is a comfort to his loyal subjects. They may be sure that he will protect them, and make good his word. Behold he cometh, and his reward is with him, Rev. 22. 12. The righteous Judge at his appearing will give the Crown of Righteousness to all them that love his appearing, 2 Tim. 4. 18, 7, 8. [O let the Nations be glad and sing for joy, for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the Nations upon earth] Psal. 67. 4. [Let the Heavens rejoyce, and the earth be glad — before the Lord, for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the world with righteousness and the people with his truth,] Psal. 69. 11. 13.

10. Lastly, the Knowledge of God as our Sovereign King, must cause us to desire and pray for and promote the glory of his Kingdom, and the obedience of his subjects in the world, that his Name may be hallowed, by the coming of his Kingdom, and the doing of his will on earth as it is in Heaven, must be the matter of our daily requests to God. It must be the grief of every subject of the Lord, to think of the Heathen and Infidel parts of the world; and to see the Rebellion of the Prophane among us; and that the Laws of God are unknown or despised by the

most of men. Alas what abundance are ruled by their lusts, and self-conceitedness, and corrupted wills, and the customs of the world, or the wills of men! but how few are Ruled by the Laws of God! O how should it grieve an honest heart, to see *Gods Kingdom* hindered by *Infidelity*, and weakned, divided and disturbed by *Popery*, and *Heresie*, and dishonoured by scandal and impiety, as it is! And to see the multitude, and the violence and industry of corrupters, dividers and destroyers: and the sewness, the coldness, and remissness of the builders, the healers and restorers! All you that are loyal Subjects to your Lord, lament these waies of Rebellion and Disobedience, and the diminutions and distempers of the subjects of his Kingdom, and the unfaithfulness and negligence of his Ministers: and bend your cares, desires and prayers to the promoting of Gods Kingdom in you, and in the world; and befriend not any thing that hindereth its prosperity.

C H A P. X V.

14. **T**HE third of these *Relations*, and the next point in the Knowledge of God to be spoken of, is, that he is [*Our most Loving Father, or Bountiful Benefactor*] As he is *Good*, so he doth *Good*, *Psal. 119. 68.* And as he is *the chiefest Good*, so he bestoweth the *greatest Benefits*: and therefore is thence by a Necessary Resultancy, our *Most Bountiful Benefactor*. The term [*Father*] comprehendeth in it all his three great *Relations* to us. 1. A *Father* gives *Being* to his *Children*, and therefore hath some *Propriety* in them; and God is the *first cause* of our whole *Being*, and therefore we are *his Own*. 2. A *Father* is the *Governour* of his *Children*: and God is our *Chief Governour*. 3. A *Father* tenderly *Loveth* his *Children* that are *childlike*, loving and obedient to him; and seeketh their felicity: and so doth *God Love*, and will make *Happy* his loving and obedient children, who have not only their *Being* from him as their *Maker*, but their *New being* or *Holy nature* from him as their *Sanctifier*. And this last being the *end* and *perfection* of the rest, doth communicate its nature to the rest as the

Means.

Means. And so, 1. The *new nature* that God thus giveth us in our *Regeneration*, is not from his *common Love*, but is an act of *special Grace*, proceeding from his *special Fatherly Love*. 2. The *Government* that he exerciseth over them as his *Regenerate children*, is not a *Common Government*, such as is that of the meer Law of Nature or of works; but it is a *special Government* by a *Law of Grace*, a *Justifying, Remedying, Saving Law*, or *Covenant*; together with an internal illuminating, quickning, guiding spirit, with Church-state, and Officers and Ordinances. all suited to this way of Grace; Even as his *Dominion* or *Propriety* by *Redemption*, and our *Sanctification* and *Resignation*, is not a *Common Propriety*, but a gracious Relation to us as *Our Own Father*, who have the endeared Relation to him of being his *Own Children*. All is from *Love*, and in a *way of Love*, and for the exercise and demonstration of *Love*: so that when I call God [*Our Benefactor*] I precisely distinguish this last part of his Relations to us, from the rest: But when I call him [*a Father*] I mean the same thing, or Relation which a *Benefactor* signifieth; but with fuller aspect on the foregoing Relations, and connotation of them as they are *perfected all in this*.

And here I. I shall briefly name the *Benefits* on which this Relation of God is founded. And 1. Even in *Creating us*, he acted as a *Benefactor*, giving us the *Fundamental Good of Being*, and the excellency of *manhood*. 2. By setting us in a *well furnished world*, and putting all things *under our feet*, and giving us the use of *Creatures*. 3. By entering into the Relation of a *Governour* to us, and consequently engaging himself to terms of *Justice* in his dealing with us, and to protect us, and reward us, if we did obey; and making us capable of an everlasting happiness as our end, and appointing us sufficient means thereto. These *Benefits* denominated God the *Great Benefactor* or *Father* unto man, in the state of his *Creation*.

But then moreover he is a *Common Benefactor* also. 4. By so loving the world as to give his only begotten Son, to be their *Redeemer*; a sufficient sacrifice for sin. 5. By giving out his *Promise* or *Covenant of Grace*, and making a *Common Deed of Gift* of pardon, Reconciliation and Eternal Life, to all that will accept it in and with Christ, to Gospel ends. 6. By send-

sending forth the Messengers of this Grace, commanding them to *Preach to every creature the Gospel, or word of Reconciliation committed to them, and to beseech men in Christs stead, as his Embassadors, as if God himself did intreat by them, to be reconciled to God,* Matth. 28. 18, 19. Mar. 16. 16. 2 Cor 5. 19, 20. 7. By affording some *common mercies* without, and motions of his spirit within, to second these invitations. But though by this much God hath a *Title to their dearest Love*, yet they have *no Title to his highest Benefits*, nor are in the *nearest Relation of Children or Beneficiaries to him*.

But, 8. When he *begetteth us again to a lively Hope, by his incorruptible seed, and giveth us both to will and to do, and when the Father effectually draweth us to the Son, and reneweth us according to his Image, and taketh away our old and stony hearts, and giveth us new and tender hearts, and giveth us to Know him, and Love him as a Father; then is he our Father in the dearest and most comfortable sense, and we are his children that have interest in his dearest Love.* 9. And therefore we have his spirit, and pardon, Justification and Reconciliation with him. 10. And also we have special Communion with him in Prayer, Praises, Sacraments and all holy Ordinances and Conversation. 11. And we and our services are *pleasing to him, and so we are in the light of his countenance, and under a special promise of his protection and provision, and that all things shall work together for our good.* 12. And we have the promise of *perfection in everlasting Glory.*

II. And now as you see *how God is our Benefactor, or most Gracious and Loving Father*, let us next see what this must work on us.

And 1. *Goodness and Bounty* should shame men from their sin, and lead them to *Repentance*, Rom. 2. 4, 5. *Love* is not to be abused and requited with unkindness and provocation. He that can *turn grace into wantonness, and do evil* because grace hath abounded, or that it may abound, shall be forced to confess that his *damnation is just*. He that will not hate his sin, when he seeth such exceeding Benefits stand by, and heareth mercy, and wonderful mercy plead against it, and upbraid the sinner with ingratitude, is like to die a double death, and shall have *no more sacrifice for sin*.

2. The *Fatherly Love* and *Benefits* of God, do call for our best returns of *Love*. The *Benefits* of *Creation*, oblige all to Love him with all their Heart, and Soul, and Might: Much more the *Benefits* of *Redemption*; and especially (as *applied* by *sanctifying Grace* to them that shall be heirs of life, it obligeth them by multiplied strongest obligations: The *Worst* are obliged to *as much Love* of God, as the *Best* (for none can be obliged to more than to *Love him with all their Heart, &c.*) but they are not *as much obliged* to that Love: We have new and special obligations; and therefore must return a *Hearty Love*, or we are *doubly guilty*. *Mercies* are *Loves Messengers*, sent from Heaven to win up our Hearts to *Love again*, and entice us thither. All mercies therefore should be used to this end. That mercy that doth not encrease, or excite and help our *Love*, is abused and lost, as seed that is buried when it's sowed, and never more appeareth. Earthly *Mercies* point to Heaven, and tell us whence they come, and for what. Like the *Flowers* of the *Spring*, they tell us of the reviving approaches of the *Sun*: But like foolish children, because they are *near us*, we *Love the Flowers* better than the *Sun*; forgetting that the *Winter* is drawing on. But *Spiritual Mercies* are as the *Sunshine* that more *immediately* dependeth on, and floweth from the *Sun* it self. And he that will not see (and value) the *Sun* by its *Light*, will never see it! These beams come down to invite our Minds and Hearts to God; and if we shut the windows, or play till night, and they return without us, we shall be left to utter *darkness*.

The *Mercies* of God must imprint upon our minds the fullest and deepest conceptions of him, as the *most perfect, suitable, Lovely Objects* to the soul of man; when *all our Good* is *Originally in him*, and all flows *from him*, that hath the *Goodness* of a *Means*, and *finally* himself is *all*; not to *Love God* then, is not to *Love Goodness* it self; and there is nothing but *Good* that's suited to *our Love*. Night and day therefore should the Believer be drawing and deriving from God, by the views and tastes of his precious *Mercies*, a *sweetness* of nature, and increase of holy Love to God, as the Bee sucks Honey from the flowers. We should not now and then for a recreation light upon a flower, and meditate on some Mercy of the Lord, but
make

make this our work from day to day, and keep continually upon our souls, the lively tastes, and deep impressions of the *Infinite Goodness and Amiability* of God. When we *Love God most*, we are at the *best*, most pleasing to God; and our lives are sweetest to our selves: And when we steep our minds in the believing thoughts of the abundant *Fatherly Mercies of the Lord*, we shall most abundantly *Love him*. Every *Mercy* is a *Snare* to us from God! The contents of them all is this [*My Son, Give mee thy Heart*] [*Love him that thus loveth thee*] Love him, or you reject him. O wonderful Love! that God will *regard* the Love of man! that he will enter into a *Covenant of Love*! that he will be *Related* to us in a *Relation of Love*! and that he will deal with us on *terms of Love*! that he will give us *leave to Love him*, that are so base, and have so *Loved Earth and Sin*! yea and that he will be so earnest a *suiter* for our Love, as if he needed it, when it is only we that need! But the paths of Love are mysterious and incomprehensible.

3. As God is in *special a Benefactor and Father to us*, we must be the *readiest*, and most *diligent* in obedience to him. *Childlike duty* is the most *willing* and *unwearied* kind of duty. Where *Love* is the principle, we shall not be *eye-servants*; but *delight to do the Will of God*, and wish, O that I could please him more! It is a singular delight to a *Gracious soul* to be upon any acceptable duty; and the more he can do good, and please the Lord, the more he is pleased. As *Fatherly Love and Benefits* are the *fullest* and the *surest*, so will *filial duty* be. The Heart is no fit soil for *Mercies*, if they grow not up to holy fruits. The more you love, the more cheerfully will you obey.

4. From hence we must well learn, both *How God is mans End*, and what are the *chief Means that lead us to him*.

1. God is not the *End of Reason, nakedly considered*; but he is *Finis Amantis, the End which Love inclineth us to*, and which by *Love is attained*, and by *love enjoyed*: The understanding of which would resolve many great perplexing difficulties that *à natura finis* do step into our way in Theological studies. I will name no more now, but only that it teacheth us, *How both God and our own Felicity in the fruition of him, may be said to be*

our *Ultimate End*, without any contradiction, yet so that it be *Eminently* and *Chiefly* God. For it is a *Union* (such as our Natures are capable of) that is desired, in which the soul doth long to be swallowed up in God; Understand but what a *filial* or *friendly Love* is, and you may understand what a regular *Intention* is, and how *God must be the Christians End*.

2. And withall it shews us, that the most direct and excellent *means* of our felicity, and to our End, are those that are most suited to the *work of Love*. Others are *means* more *Remotely*, and necessary in their places; but *these directly*. And therefore the *Promises* and *Narratives* of the *Love and Mercy* of the Lord, are the most direct and powerful part of the *Gospel* conducing to our End: and the *Threatnings* the *re-moter* means. And therefore as *Grace* was advanced in the world, the *Promissory* part of Gods *Covenant* or *Law*, grew more *illustrious*, and the *Gospel* consisted so much of *Promises*, that it is called *Glad tydings of great joy*. And therefore the most full demonstration of Gods *Goodness and Loveliness* to our hearers, is the most *excellent part* of all our *Preaching*, though it is *not all*. And therefore the meditation of *Redemption*, is more powerful than the bare meditation of *Creation*, because it is *Redemption* that most eminently revealeth *Love*. And therefore *Christ* is the *Principal Means* of *Life*, because he is the *Principal Messenger* and *Demonstration* of the *Fathers Love*, and by the wonders of *Love* which he revealeth, and exhibiteth in his wondrous *Grace*, he wins the soul to the *Love of God*. For *God* will have *external objective means*, and *internal effective means* concur, because he will work on man agreeably to the nature of man. Though there was never given out such prevalent invincible measures of the *Spirit*, as *Christ* hath given for the *Renewing* of those that he will save, yet shall not that *Spirit* do it without *as excellent objective means*. And though *Christ*, and the *Riches* of his *Grace* revealed in the *Gospel*, be the most *wonderful objective means*, yet shall not *these* do it without the *internal effectual means*. But when *Love* doth shine to us so resplendently without us, in the face of the *Glorious Sun of Love*, and is also let into us by the *Spirits Illumination*, that sheds abroad this *Love* in our hearts, then will the *holy fire burn*, which comes from

Heaven, and leads to Heaven, and will never rest till it have reacht its center, and brought us to the face and arms of God.

5. And from the *Fatherly Relation and Love of God*, we must learn to *Trust him*, and *Rest our souls* in his *securing Love*. Shall we distrust a *Father*? an *Omnipotent Father*! Therefore is this Relation prefixed to the Petitions of the Lords Prayer, and we begin with [*Our Father which art in Heaven*] that when we remember *his Love*, and our *Interest* in him, and his *Alfufficiency*, we may be encouraged to *Trust him*, and make our addresses to him. If a *Father*, and *such a Father* smite mee, I will submit, and kiss the Rod: for I know it is the healing fruit of *Love*. If a *Father*, and *such a Father* afflict mee, wound mee, deal strangely with mee, and grieve my flesh, let mee not murmur or distrust him; for he well understandeth what he doth, and nothing that shall hurt mee finally can come from *Omnipotent Paternal Love*. If a *Father*, and *such a Father* kill mee, yet let mee *Trust in him*, and let not my soul repine at his proceedings, nor tremble at the separating stroak of death. A Beast knows not when we strive with him, what we intend, whether to *Cure*, or to *Kill him*: but a *Child* need not fear a *killing blow*, nor a *Loving soul* a *damning death*, from *such a Father*. If he be a *Father*, where is his *Love* and *Trust*?

6. If God be our *Father*, and so wonderful a *Benefactor* to us, then *Thanks and Praise* must be our most *constant work*, and must be studied above all the rest of *Duty*, and most diligently performed. If the tongue of man, which is called his *Glory*, be made for *anything*, and good for any thing, it is to give the *Lord his Glory*, in the *Thankful acknowledgement* of his *Love* and *Mercies*, and the daily chearful *Praises* of his *Name*. Let this then be the *Christians work*.

7. The *Children of such a Father*, should live a *contented chearfullife*. Diligence becometh them, but not contrivances for worldly greatness, nor carking cares for that which their *Father* hath promised them to care for. *Humility* and *Reverence* becometh them, but not *dejection* and *despondency* of mind, and a still complaining, fearful, troubled, disconsolate soul. If the *Children of such a Father* shall not be bold and confident,

fidest, and chearful, let joy and confidence then be banished from the earth, and be renounced by all the Sons of men.

CHAP. XVI.

15. **T**Here are yet divers subordinate Attributes of God, that being comprized in the forementioned, may be passed over with the briefer touch. And the next that I shall speak of, is, his *Freedom*. And God is *Free* in more senses than one; but for brevity, I shall speak of all together.

1. And first, God hath a *Natural Freedom of Will*, being Determined to Will by nothing without him, nor liable to any Necessity, but what is consistent with perfect Blessedness and Liberty. His own Being, and Blessedness, and Perfections, are not the objects of his *Election*; and therefore not of that which we call *Free Will*: But all his *Works without*, as Creation, Providence, Redemption, &c. are the effects of his *Free Will*: Not but that his Will concerning all these, hath a *Necessity of existence*: For God did *from Eternity Will the Creation*, and all that is done in time; and therefore *from Eternity* that will *existing*, had a *Necessity of existence*: But yet it was *Free*, because it proceedeth not *Necessarily* from the *very Nature of God*: *God was God* before he made the world, or Redeemed it, or did the things that are daily done. And therefore one part of the Schoolmen maintain, not only that there is *Contingency from God*, but that there could be no *Contingency* in the Creature, if it had not its *Original in God*: the Liberty of God being the fountain of Contingency.

2. There is also an Eminency both of *Dominion* and *Sovereignty* in God, according to which he may be called *Free*. His *Absoluteness of Propriety* freeth him from the restraint of any Obligation, but what floweth from his own *Free Will*, from Disposing of his own as he pleases. And his *Absolute Sovereignty* freeth him from the Obligation of his own Laws as Laws, though he will still be true to his Promises and Predictions. Let man therefore take heed how he questioneth his Maker, or censureth his Laws, or Works, or Waies.

CHAP. XVII.

16. **A**Nother Attribute of God is his *Justice*. With submission I conceive that this is not to be said to be from *Eternity*, any otherwise than all *Gods Relations* are (as *Creator, Redeemer, &c.*) because there is *no time* with God. For though the *Blessed Nature* denominated *Just* is from *Eternity*, yet not the *Formality* or *Denomination* of *Justice*. For *Justice* is an *Attribute* of *God*, as he is *Governour* only: And he was not *Governour*, till he had *Creatures to Govern*: And he could not be a *Just Governour* when he was *no Governour*. The *Denomination* did not arise till the *Creation* had laid the *Foundation*. Many *Questions* may be resolved hence, which I will not trouble you to recite.

Justice in God is the *Perfection* of his *Nature*, as it giveth every one his *due*, or *Governeth* the world in the most *perfect Orders* for the *Ends* of *Government*. Because he is *Just*, he will *Reward* the *Righteous*, and difference between the *Godly* and the *Wicked*: For that *Governour* that useth *all alike*, is not *Just*. The *Crown* of *Righteousness* is given by him as a *Righteous Judge*, 2 Tim 4. 8.

1. The *Justice* of *God* is *substantially* (in men we call it an *Inclination*) in his *Nature*, and so it is *Eternal*.

2. It is *founded formally* in his *Relation* of [*Governour.*]

3. It is *expressively first* in his *Laws*: For as a *Just Governour* he made them suited to the *Subjects*, *Objects*, and *Ends*.

4. It is *expressively secondarily* in his *Judgments* and *Executions*; which is when they are according to his *Law*; or in the *Cases* of *Penalty* where he may dispense at least according to the *state* of the *subject*, and fitted to the *Ends* of *Government*.

1. The *Justice* of *God* is the *Consolation* of the *Just*: He will *Justifie* them whom his *Gospel Justifieth*, because he is *Just*. The *Justice* of *God* in many places of *Scripture*, is taken for his *Fidelity* in vindicating his people, and his *Judging* for them, and procuring them the happy fruits of his *Government*, and so is taken in a *Consolatory* sense, *Psal.* 89. 14. *Justice and Judgement are the habitations of thy Throne; Mercy and Truth shall go before*

before thy face] 2 Thes. 1. 5. 6. *It is a Righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble us, and Rest to the troubled.*]

2. The *Justice* of God is the terrour of the ungodly. As he would not make unrighteous Laws, for the pleasure of unrighteous men, so neither will he pass unrighteous judgement. But look what a man soweth, that shall he also reap. All his *peremptory threatnings* shall be made good, and his wrath poured out for ever upon impenitent souls, because he is the Righteous God.

C H A P. XVIII.

17. **A**Nother of Gods Attributes is his *Holiness*. He is called *Holy*. 1. As he is *Transcendently above* and *separated from all the Creatures*, in comparison of whom the Heavens are not *clean*; and from whom all things stand at an *Infinite distance*. 2. As the *Perfection* of his nature is the *Fountain of all Moral Good*. 1. In the *Holiness* of his *Law*, the *Rule* of Holiness. 2. In the *Holiness* of the *soul*: and, 3. In his *holy Judgements*. And consequently as this *Perfect Nature* is contrary to all the *Moral Pollution* of the Creature, loathing iniquity, forbidding and condemning it. That *Perfect Goodness* of the *will* of God, from whence floweth holy Laws, and motions, and the *Holiness* of the soul of man, is it that Scripture meaneth usually by *Gods Holiness*; rather than the foresaid distance from the Creatures. And therefore his *Holiness* is usually given as the Reason of his *Laws* and *Judgements*, and of his *enmity to sin*: And our *Holiness* is called his *Image* (who imitate not his *Transcendency*) and we are commanded to be *Holy as he is Holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 16. The nature of the *Image* will best tell us what *Holiness* is in God. *Holiness* in us is called *The Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. and therefore is radically a *right inclination and disposition* of the soul; which hath its rise from a *Transcendent Holiness* in God, even as our *Wisdom* from his *Transcendent Wisdom*, and our *Being* from his *Being*. *Holiness* therefore being indeed the same

with the Transcendently Moral Goodness of God, which I have spoken of before, I shall say but little of it now. Thus must the Holiness of God be known.

1. It must cause us to have a most high and honourable esteem of *Holiness* in the Creature, because it is the *Image* of the *Holiness of God*. Three sorts of Creatures have a *Derivative Holiness*: The first is *The Law*; which is the meer signification of the Wise and Holy Will of God concerning mans Duty with Rewards and Penalties, for the Holy Governing of the world! This is the *nearest Image* of God, engraven upon that Seal which must be the Instrument of imprinting it on our souls. Now the *Holiness of the Word* is not the meer product of the *Will of God*, considered as a *Will*; but of the Will of God considered as *Holy*, that is, as the Infinite Transcendent Moral Goodness in the Archtype or Original. For all *events* that proceed from God, are the products of his *Will which is Holy*, but not *as Holy* (as the creating, preserving, disposing of every fly, or fish in the sea, or worm in the earth, &c.) There is somewhat therefore in the Nature of God, which is the *Perfection of his Will*, and is called *Holiness*, which the *Holiness of the Law* doth flow from and express.

This *Holy Word* is the *Immortal seed* that begetteth *Holiness* in the soul, which is the *second subject of derived Holiness*; And this *our Holiness* is a *conformity of the soul to the Law*, as the *Product of the Holy Will of God*, and not a meer conformity to his *predictions*, and *decreeing Will* as such. It is a *separation to God*, but not *every separation*: *Pharaoh* was set apart to be the *Passive monument* of the Honour of Gods Name: and *Cyrus* was his *servant* to restore his people, and yet not *thus Holy*: But it is a *separation from common and unclean uses*; and a *Purgation from polluting vice*, and a *renovation* by reception of the *Image of Gods Holiness*, whose Nature is to encline the soul to God, and devote it wholly to him; both in *Justice*, because we are *his own*, and in *Love*, because he is *most Holy* and perfectly *Good*.

The *third subject of Holiness* is those creatures that are but *separated to Holy uses*, and these have but a *Relative Holiness*, and *secundum quid*: As the *Temple*, the *holy utensils*, the *Bible* as to the materials, the *Minister*, as an *Officer*, the people as *visible members*, &c.

All these must be revered and honoured by us, according to the proportion of their *Holiness*. 1. Our *principal Reverence* must be to the *Holy Word of God*: For *Holiness* is more *perfect* there than in *our souls*. The *Holiness of the Word*, which is it that the ungodly hate or quarrel at, is the *Glory* of it in the eyes of *Holy men*. We may much discern a *Holy* and an *unholy soul*, by their *Loving* or *not loving* a *Holy Law*, especially as it is a *Rule* to themselves. A distast of the *Holiness of Scripture*, and of the *Holiness* of the writings of *Divines*, and of the *Holiness* of their *preaching* or *conference*, discovereth an *unholy soul*. A *Love* to *holy Doctrine* sheweth that there is somewhat suitable to it in the soul that Loveth it. It is the *elogy* of the *Scriptures*, the *Promises*, the *Covenant*, the *Prophets* and *Apostles*, that they are *all Holy*, Rom. 1. 2. Psal. 105. 42. Luk. 1. 70, 72. Rev. 18. 20. 2 Tim. 3. 15. Rom. 7. 12. The *Holiness* of the *Scripture* doth make it as suitable and favourable to a *Holy soul*, as *Light* is suitable to the *eye-sight*, and *sweetness* to the *tast*: and therefore it is to them as the *hony comb*. But to the *unholy* it is a *mystery*, and as *foolishness*, and that which is contrary to their disposition, and they have an *enmity* to it: which makes a wonderful difference in their judging of the *evidences of Scripture Verity*, and much facilitateth the work of *Faith* in one sort, and strengtheneth *unbelief* in the other. *Holy doctrine* is the *Glass* that sheweth us the *Holy face* of *God himself*, and therefore must needs be most excellent to the *Saints*.

2. And we must honour and love also the *Holiness of the Saints*: For they also bear the *Image of the Lord*. Their *Holy Affections*, *Prayers*, *Discourses*, and *Conversations* must be beautiful in our eyes: And we must take heed of those temptations, that either from *personal injuries* received from any, or from their *blots* or *imperfections*, or from their *meanness* in the world, or from the contempt and reproach and slanders of the ungodly, would draw us to think dishonourably of their *Holiness*. He that honoureth the *Holy God*, will honour his *Image* in his *Holy people*. In his eyes a *vile person* will be contemned, but he will honour them that fear the *Lord*, Psal. 15. 4. The *Saints on earth* are the *excellent* in his eyes, and his *delight* is in them, Psal. 16. 2, 3. The breathings of *Divine Love* in
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the holy Prayers, Praises and Speeches of the Saints, and their Reverent and Holy mention of his Name, are things that a holy soul doth sweetly relish, and take pleasure in, as we would do to hear an *Angel* speak of the Holy things of the invisible Glory.

3. And *Relative Holiness* it self, though the *lowest* must be *Honoured* by us. *Holy offices* and *persons* in them must be *Reverenced* for their *Relative Holiness*. *Holy dayes* must be *holily observed*. *Holy Ordinances* (which also participate of the holiness of the *Law*, as *significative*) must be *reverently used*. *Due reverence* must be given even to that which is *lawfully by men devoted* to a *Holy use*, as are *Temples*, and *Utensils* of worship, and the *maintenance* dedicated to the service of God. That which is *Holy*, must not be *devoured*, Prov. 20. 25. nor used as we do *things common and unclean*.

2. Gods *Holiness* must *make us Holy*: we must fall in *Love* with it, and wholly conform our selves unto it. Every part of *Sanctifying* grace must be entertained, and cherished, and excited, and used by us. *Sin* must be loathsome to us because it is contrary to the *Holiness* of God. No Toad or Snake should seem to us so ugly. A dead carcass is an unpleasant sight, because it sheweth us a privation of natural life: But an *unholy soul* is incomparably a more loathsome ghastly sight, because it sheweth us the privation of the *life of Holiness*. No man can well know the odiousness of sin, and the misery and loathsomeness of the unholy soul, that knoweth not the *Holiness* of God. [*Speak unto all the Congregation of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be Holy: for I the Lord your God am Holy*] Lev. 19. 2. [*Sanctifie your selves therefore and be ye Holy, for I am the Lord your God*] Lev. 20. 7, 8. [*As he that hath called us is Holy, so must we be holy in all manner of Conversation*, 1 Pet. 1. 25. It is [*an holy calling* wherewith we are called] 2 Tim. 1. 9 We are *sanctified* to be a peculiar people to Christ, Tit. 2. 14 [*That denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world*] ver. 12. We are made [*an Holy Priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ*] 1 Pet. 2. 5. Rom. 12. 1, 2. We must therefore present our bodies a living sacrifice, Holy, acceptable to God, our reasonable service]

vice] For we are [*chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be Holy, and without blame*] Ephes. 1. 4. and are *Redeemed and Sanctified by Christ, that we maybe presented Glorious, Holy, and without blemish*] Ephes. 5. 26, 27. See therefore that you follow *Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14. For *Blessed are the Pure in heart, for they shall see him*, Mat. 5. 8.

3. The *Holiness* of God, must be to us a standing *unanswerable Argument* to shun all *temptations* that would draw us to be *unholy*, and to confound all the words of wicked men that are spoken against *Holiness*. Remember but that *God is Holy*, and if thou like that which is spoken against *God*, thou art *his Enemy*. Think on the Prophecie of *Henoch*, Jude 14. 15. *Behold the Lord cometh with tenthousand of his Saints to execute Judgement upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*] *God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his holy Name in vain*; much less that *blasphemeth Holiness*, which is the perfect ion of his blessed nature.

4. The *Holiness* of God must possess us with a sense of our *Uncleanness*, and further our *Humiliation*. When *Isaiab* heard the Seraphims cry, [*Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*] Isa. 6.3. He said [*Woe is mee, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.*] v. 5.

5. The *Holiness* of God must cause us to walk continually in his *Fear*, and to take heed to all the affections of our souls, and even to the manner of our behaviour, when we come near to him in his Holy Worship. What suffered the *Bethshemites* for unreverent looking into the Holy Ark, 1 *Sam*, 6. 19. and *Uzzah* but for touching it? And what a dreadful example is that of the two Sons of *Aaron*, that were slain by a devouring fire from the Lord, for offering strange fire which he commanded not, *Lev*. 10. 1, 2. And *Aaron* was awed into silence by this account from God. [*I will be sanctified in them that come nigh mee, and before all the people I will be glorified*] v. 3. Take heed lest unreverence, or deadness, or customary heartless wordy

services, should be brought before a *Holy God*. Take heed of hypocritical carnal worship. The Holy God will not be mocked with complements and shews.

 CHAP. XIX.

18. **T**He next Attribute of God to be spoken of, is [*His Veracity, Truth, and Faithfulness.*] This is the result of his perfect *Wisdom, Goodness, and Omnipotency*: For because he is *most Wise and Powerful*, he cannot be *Necessitated to Lye*: And because he is *most Good, he will not Lye*. Though God speaketh by none but a *Created Voice*, and signify his Will to us by men, that in themselves considered are defectible, yet what he maketh *his Voice* shall speak *Truth*; and what he chooseth to signify *his Will*, shall *truly signify* it. He therefore condemneth *Lying* in man, because it is contrary to his *own Veracity*. For if any should say that God is under no Law, and therefore is not bound to speak Truth, or not deceive a Prophet or Apostle by his Inspirations; I answer, that he hateth *Lying* as contrary to his *Perfect Nature*, and is *himself* against it, and cannot possibly be guilty of it, because of his *own Perfection*; and not because he is *under a Law*. *Lying* comes from *some Imperfection*, either of *Knowledge, Power, or Goodness*, which can none of them befall the Lord. The *Goodness* of the *Creature* is a *Goodness of Conformity* to an *Obliging Law*; and the *Goodness* of the *Law* is a *Goodness of Conformity* to, and expression of the *Good Will of God*. But the *Goodness of God* is a *Perfection of Essence*, the *Primitive Goodness*, which is the *Fountain, and Standard, and End* of all other *Good*; and not a *Goodness of Conformity* to another.

And this Attribute of God is of very great use to his servants. 1. From hence we must be Resolved for Duty, and for a holy, heavenly life: because the Commands of God are serious, and his Promises and Threatnings *True*. If God were not *True*, that tells us of these great Eternal things, then might we excuse our selves from *Godliness*, and justify the worldling in his sensual way: There is nothing of common sense and reason that can be said against a Holy life, by a man that

that denieth not the *Truth of God*, or of his *Word*. And to deny *Gods Truth* is most unreasonable of all: O Sirs! when you read and hear of the wonderful weighty matters of the Scripture, of an *Endless Life*, and the way thereto; bethink you, if these things be *True*, what manner of persons you should be in all *Holy Conversation and Godliness!* 2 Pet. 3. 11. If the *Word be True*, that telleth us of *Death and Judgement*, and *Heaven and Hell*, is it time for us to *sin*, to *trifle* and live *unready!*

2. The *Truth of God* is the *Terror of his Enemies*. O happy men, if their *Unbelief* could make void the *Threatnings of God*, and doubting of them would make them false! and if their misery were as easily remedied as denied; and ended as easily as now *forgotten!* or *forgotten* hereafter as easily as now! But true and righteous is the Lord, and *from the beginning his Word is true*, Psal. 119. 16. Not a word shall fall to the ground, nor a jot or tittle pass unfulfilled.

3. The *Truth of God* is the *Ground of Faith*, and the stay of our souls, and the Rock of all our confidence and comfort. A Christian did not differ from another man (unless in being somewhat more deluded) if God were not *True*. But this is the foundation of all our hopes, and the life of our Religion, and all that we are as Christians, proceeds from this. *Faith* is animated by *Gods Veracity*, and from thence all other *Graces* flow, or are excited in us. O Christians, what a treasure is before your eyes, when you open the Blessed Book of God! what life should it put into your confidence and comforts, to think that all these words are *true!* All those descriptions of the Everlasting Kingdome, and all those exceeding precious Promises of this life, and that which is to come, and all the expressions of that exceeding Love of God unto his servants, all these are the *True sayings of God*. *A faithful witness will not Lye*, Prov. 14. 5. much less will the faithful God. *Eternal Life is promised by God that cannot Lye*, Tit. 1. 2. [Wherein God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of Promise, the immutability of his Counsels confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to Lye, we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us] Heb. 6. 17, 18. Let

Faith therefore live upon the Truth of God, and let us be strengthened, and rejoyce therein.

4. Abhor all doctrines which deny the *Truth* and *Faithfulness* of God: For they destroy the ground of *Christian Faith*, of all *Divine Faith*, and all *Religion*. The *Veracity* of God is the *formal Object* of all *Divine Faith*: We believe God, because he cannot Lye: If he can Lye, and do Lye, he is not credible. But you will say, Is there any that hold such odious doctrines? *Answ.* I like not the charging of *Persons* with the consequences of their opinions which they discern not, but disclaim: God will not charge them with such consequences, who do their best to know the truth, and why should we? All men have *some errors*, whose *consequences* contradict some *Articles of Faith*. It is not the *persons* that I perswade you to dislike, but the *Doctrine*. And the *Doctrine* is never the less to be abhorred, because a *wise* or *good* man may hold that which doth infer it.

I shall now instance only in the Dominicans *predetermination*. They that hold that it is *necessary to the being of every circumstantiated act natural and free, that God be the principal immediate Physical efficient predetermining cause of it*, do hold that he *so causeth* all the *false speeches* and *writings* (as well as other sins) that ever were spoken or written in the world: not only as they are *acts in genere*, but as these *words* in particular; as that he *so predetermined* the tongues of *Ananias* and *Saphira* to say those very words which they said, rather than others: Now seeing it is apparent 1. That *God hath not a voice* but speaketh to us by a *Created Voice*, even by *Prophets* and *Apostles*, and that the *Scripture* was written by *men*. 2. And that *Gods Veracity*, which is the *formal object* of our Faith, consisteth in his *not using lying instruments*, nor sending a lying messenger to us; (it is *Veracitas revelantis per alium*.) 3. And that no way of *Inspiration* can make God to be any more the cause of the words or writings of an *Apostle*, than his *Immediate Physical efficient specifying predetermination* doth (for it can do no more than irresistibly as the first cause, Physically to premove the agent to this *Thought*, *Will*, *Word*, or *Deed*, considered with all its circumstances;) It followeth that we have no certainty when God premoveth an *Apostle* or *Prophet* to speak true, and

and when to speak fallſly; and that no words or writings are o certain truth, upon any account of Gods inſpiration or premo- tion, becauſe God not only *can*, but *doth* cauſe all the untruths that are ſpoken or written in the world: Therefore no Faith in Gods Revelations hath any ſure foundation, nor any formal obje&t at all: And ſo all Religion is daſht out at a ſtroke. To ſay that God cauſeth not the *falſity* of the word, nor the *word as falſe*, but the *word which is falſe*, might well be the juſtifi- cation of them that affirm God to be but the *Universal Cauſe* of the *Word* or *Act* in *genere* as a *Word* or *Act*; and that the ſpecification is only from the ſinner. But in them that ſay he is the *particular Cauſe* of *this word* comparatively rather than another, it is but a contradiction: 1. For there is no other cauſe of the *falſity*, which is a *meer Relation*, but that which cauſeth the *Rule* and the *Word* or *Writing* which is *falſe*, and ſo layeth the foundation. 2. It overthroweth all certainty of Faith, if God ſpeak to us by his Inſtruments, *theſe words that are falſe*: The *Quod falſum*, as well as the *Qua falſum*, leaveth us no ground of certainty. The Dominicans therefore have but one task in which their hope is placed, to excuſe their opi- nion from plain obliterating all Divine Belief and Religion, and that is, to prove that there is ſo great a difference between *In- ſpiration*, and their *Physical Predetermination*, that God cannot by *Inſpiration* premove to an untruth, though by *Physical Predetermination* he may: This is their task; which I ſee not the leaſt poſſibility that ever they ſhould perform: If God *premove*, and *predetermine* every *Will*, and *Tongue*, and *Pen*, to every lye that is ſpoken or written, more potently and ir- reſiſtibly than I move my Pen in writing, it is paſt my power to underſtand what more he can do by inſpiration, to intereſt him in the Creatures *Act*: or at leaſt how the difference can be ſo great as that *one* of the waies he can *predetermine all men* to their falſities, and *none* the other way. But of this I have written a large Diſputation; yet think it not needleſs, even in a *practical Treatiſe* to ſay this much here.

5. The *Truth of God* muſt teach us to hate every *Motion* to *Unbelief* in our ſelves and others: It is a hainons ſin to give God the *Lye*, though he ſpeak to us but by his meſſengers: Every *honeſt man*, ſo far as he is *honeſt*, is to be believed: and

is God less true? A graceless Gallant will challenge you the field for the dishonour, if you give him the *Lye*. If you deny Gods *Veracity*, you do not only equal him with the *worst of men*, but with the *Devil*, who was a *Lyer* from the beginning. Yea you make him incapable of being the *Governour of the world*, or suppose him to Govern it by *Deceits and Lyes*. Abhor therefore the first motions of *Unbelief*. It makes men somewhat *worse than Devils*; for the *Devils* know that God cannot *lye*, and therefore they *believe and tremble*. *Unbelief* of the Truth of the Word of God, is the curse of the soul; the enemy and bane of all Grace and Religion, so far as it prevailleth: Let it be the principal care and labour of your souls, to settle the foundation of your Faith aright, and to discern the *Evidence of Divine Authority* in the holy Scriptures, and to extirpate the remnants of Infidelity in your hearts.

6. Let the *Truth and Faithfulness* of God engage you to be *True and Faithful* to him, and to each other. You have promised him to be his servants; be *faithful* in your promises: You are in Covenant with him: break not your Covenant. Many a particular promise of Reformation you have made to God: Prove not *false* to him that is *True* to you.

Be as good as your *word* to all men that you have to do with. Abhor a *Lye* as the off-spring of the Devil, who is the *father* of it: Remember you serve a *God of Truth*: and that it is the Rectitude and Glory of his servants to be conformable to him. They say the Turks are offended at Christianity, because of the *lies and falshood* of *Christians*. But sure they were but nominal Christians, and no true Christians that ever they found such: And its pitty that *Christianity* should be judged of through the world, by the lives of them that *never were Christians* but from the teeth outward, and the skin that was washt in Baptism. They that will *lye to God*, and covenant to be his holy Servants, when they hate his holy service, will *lye to man*, when their commodity requireth it. When they seem to Repent, and honour him with their tongues [*They flatter him with their mouth, and lye to him with their tongues; for their heart is not right with him, neither are they stedfast in his Covenant*] Psal. 78. 34, 35, 36, 37. God

Levit. 19. 11. Ye shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lye

one to another.] *A Righteous man hateth lying, Prov. 13. 5. The lying tongue is but for a moment, Prov. 12. 19. For God hateth it, and it is an abomination to him, Prov. 16. 16, 17. The lovers and makers of lyes are shut out of the Kingdom of Christ, Rev. 22. 15.*

But above all *false Teachers* that preach and prophesie lyes, and deceive the Rulers and people of the Earth, are abominable to God. See *Ier. 27. 10, 14, 15. 16. & 14. 14. & 23. 25, 26, 32. Ezek. 13. 9, 12. Isa. 54. 13.* When *Ahab* was to be destroyed, a *lying spirit in the mouth of his Prophets* deceived him. And if a *Ruler hearken to lyes, all his servants are wicked, Prov. 29. 2.*

7. Above all *false witness* and *perjury* should be most odious to the servants of the *God of Truth*, *Prov. 19. 9. A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lyes shall perish*] *Eccles. 5. 4, 5. When thou vowest a vow to God, defer not to pay it. Saith David [Thy Vows are upon mee, O God, Psal. 56. 12. And unto thee shall the Vow be performed, Psal. 65. 1. Perjury is a sin that seldome escapeth vengeance, even in this life. The instances of Saul the first, and Zedekiah the last of the Kings of Judah, before their desolation, are both very terrible. Sauls posterity must be hanged, to stay the Famine that came upon the people for his breaking a Vow that was made by Joshua, and not by him, though he did it in zeal for Israel, 2 Sam. 21. Zedekiah's case you may see, 2 Chron. 26. Ezek. 17. He that sweareth, appealeth to God as the searcher of hearts, and avenger of perjury. The perjured person chooseth the vengeance of God. He is unfit (till he repent) to be a member of any civil society. For he dissolveth the bond of all societies. He cannot well be supposed to make conscience of any sin or villany in the world, against God, his Country, his King, his Friend or Neighbour, that makes no conscience of an oath. It is not easie to name a greater wickedness out of Hell, than to approve of perjury by Laws or Doctrine. And whether the Church of Rome do so or not, I only desire them to consider that have read the third Canon of the Council at Lateran under P. Innocent the third, where an Approved General Council decreeth, that the Pope discharge vassals from their allegiance or fidelity to those Temporal Lords that exterminate not Hereticks*
(as

(as they call them) *out of their dominions*. What shall restrain men from killing Kings, or any villany, if once the *bond of oaths* be nullified? But Scripture saith [*Keep the Kings Commandment, and that in regard of the Oath of God, Eccle. 8 2.*] No man defendeth *Perjury by name*: But to say that men that swear to do that which God commandeth, or forbids not, are not bound to keep that oath; or that the Pope may absolve men, or disoblige them that swore fidelity to Temporal Lords, when once the Pope hath excommunicated them, doth seem to mee of the same importance.

C H A P. XX.

19. **T**HE next *Attribute* to be spoke of, is, his *Mercifulness*, and his *Long-suffering Patience*, which we may set together. This is implied in his *Goodness*, and the Relation of a *Father* before expressed. *Mercy is Gods Goodness inclining him to prevent or remove his creatures Misery*. It is not only the *Miserable* that are the *object* of it, but also those that *may be miserable*; it being as truly *Mercy* to *keep us* out of it foreseen, as to *deliver us* out of it when we are in it. Hence it is that he *taketh not Pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turn and Live*. And hence it is that he *Afflicts not willingly, nor grieves the children of men*, Lam. 3. 33. Not that his *Mercy* engageth him to do *all that he can do* for the salvation of every sinner, or absolutely to prevent or heal his misery; But it is his *Attribute chiefly* considered as *Governour of the Rational Creature*; and so his *Mercy* is so great to all, that he will destroy none but for their *wilful sin*, and shut none among us out of Heaven, but those that were guilty of *contemning it*. God doth not *prevent* the sinner with his *Judgement*, but with his *Grace* he often doth. He never punisheth before we are sinners, nor never *Decreed* so to do, as all will grant. He punisheth none, where his foregoing commands and warnings have had their due effect for the prevention: And therefore because the *Precept* is the first part of his *Law*, and the *Threatning* is but *subservient* to that, and the *first intent* of a *Governour* is to procure

cure *Obedience*, and *Punishing* is but upon supposition that he misseth of the *first*; therefore is God said *not to afflict willingly*; because he doth it not *ex voluntate antecedente*, but *ex voluntate consequente*, that is (for so the distinction is found) not as a *Law-giver*, and Ruler by those Laws considered *before the violation*; but only as a *Judge of the Law-breakers*. But yet Gods *Mercy* is no security to the *abusers of his Mercy*. Bot rather will sink them into deeper misery, as the aggravation of their sin: As God *Afflicts not willingly*, and yet we feel that *he afflicteth*: so if he do *not condemn you willingly*, you shall finde if you are impenitent, that *yet he will condemn you*.

If you say, *God can be forced to do nothing against his will*: I answer you, that it is not *simply against his will*; for then it should never come to pass: But it is against the *Principal act of his will*, which floweth from him as a *Law-giver*, or Ruler by Laws, in which respect it may be said that he had *rather that the wicked turn and live*: but yet if they *will not turn*, they *shall not live*. A *merciful Judge* had rather the Thief had saved his life by forbearing to steal; but yet he had not rather that *Thieves go unpunished* than he should *condemn* them.

But, you'l say, *If God had rather men did not sin, why doth he not hinder it?* I answer 1. He had not *absolutely and simply rather*; that is, so far as to do *all that he can* to prevent it, nor all that without which he foreknoweth it will not be prevented: But he doth *much against sin* as a *Law-giver*, and *nothing for it*; he causeth us not, but perswades us from it; and therefore *as a Ruler* he may be said to have rather that men did not sin, or rather that they would turn and live.

1. The Mercy of God, therefore should lead sinners to Repentance, and shame them from their sin, and lead them up to God in Love.

2. Mercy should *encourage* sinners to Repent, as well as *engage* them to it: For we have to do with a Merciful God, that hath not shut up any among us in despair, nor forbid them to come in, but continueth to invite when we have oft refused, and will undoubtedly pardon and welcome all that do return.

3. Mercy being specially the portion of the Saints, must keep them in *Thankfulness, Love and Comfort*: and all Mercies must be improved for their proper ends: When a Merciful God is

pleased to fill up his servants lives with such *Great and Various Mercies* as he doth, it should breed a continual *sweetness* upon their hearts, and cause them to study the most grateful retribution. He should *breath forth* nothing but *Thankfulness*, *Obedience* and *Praise*, who *breaths* nothing but *Mercies* from God. As the *food* that men live upon, will be seen in their *temperature, health and strength*; so they that live continually upon *Mercies*, should be wholly turned into *Love and Thankfulness*: It should become as it were their *nature, temperature and constitution*. O how unspeakable is the Love of God, that provideth so sweet a life for his servants, even in their warfare and pilgrimage in this world? that *Mercy* must be as it were the *Air* that they *breath* in, the *food* which they must live upon; and the remembrance, improvement, and thankful mention of it, must be the *business and imployment* of their lives? O with what sweet affections, meditations, and expressions should we live, if we lived but according to the rate of those Mercies upon which we live! *Love*, and *Joy*, and *Thanks*, and *Praise*, would be our *very lives*. What *sweet thoughts* would *Mercy* breed and feed in our minds when we are alone? what sweet apprehensions of the *Love of God*, and *Life Eternal* should we have in *Prayer, Reading, Saoraments*, and other holy ordinances! *Sickness and Health, Poverty and Wealth, Death* as well as *Life* would be comfortable to us: for all is full of *Mercy* to the *Vessels of Mercy*. O Christians, what a shame is it that God is so much wronged, and our selves so much defrauded of our peace and joy, by passing over such abundance of great unvaluable mercies, without tasting their sweetness, or well considering what we do receive? Had we *Dauids* heart, what songs of Praise would *Mercy* teach us to indite? How affectionately should we recount the mercies of our youth and riper age? of every place and state that we have lived in to the honour of our *Gracious Lord*, and the encouragement of those that know not how Good and Merciful he is.

But withall, see that you *contemn* not, or *abuse* not *Mercy*: Use it well; for it is *Mercy* that you must trust to in the hour of your distresses. O do not trample upon *Mercy* now, lest you be confounded when you should cry for *Mercy* in your extremity.

4. The *Mercifulness* of God, must cause his servants to imitate him in a *Love* of mercy: *Be merciful, for your heavenly Father is merciful. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy, Matth. 5. 7.* Be merciful in your *Censures*: Be merciful in your *retributions*: You are none of Gods Children, if you *Love not your Enemies, and pray not for them that curse you, and do not good to them that hate and persecute you* (according to your power) *Matth. 5. 44, 45.* If you *forgive not men their trespasses*, but take your Brother by the throat, *neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your Trespasses, Matth. 6. 14, 15.* Mark, that even while he is called [*your heavenly Father*] yet he will not *forgive, if you forgive not.* Unmerciful men are too unlike to God, to claim any interest in his saving mercy, in the hour of their extremest misery. Men of cruelty, blood and violence he abhorreth: And usually they do not *live out half their daies*: But they that *bite and devour one another, are devoured one of another, Gal. 5. 15.* The last judgement will pass much according to mens *works of mercy*, to the members of Christ, *Matth. 25.* *He shall have judgement without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy: and mercy rejoiceth against judgement, James 2. 13.* *Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widdows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted in the world, James 1. 27.* He that having this worlds goods, *seeth his Brother in need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* But above all cruelty, there is none more *devilish* than cruelty to souls. And in those that undertake the *place of Pastors*, cruelty to mens souls is a far *greater sin* than in any others. To *starve* those that they undertake to *feed*; and to *seduce* those whom they undertake to *Guide*, and be *Wolves* to those whose *Shepherds* they pretend to be, and to prefer their worldly honours; and commodity, and ease, before the souls of many thousands, to be so *cruel to souls*, when *Christ* hath been so *merciful* to them, as to come down on earth to *seek and save them*, and to give his life a ransom for them; this will one day be so heavy a charge, that the man that must stand as guilty under it, will a thousand times wish, that a *millstone*

had been hanged about his neck, and he had been cast into the bottom of the Sea, before he had betrayed or murdered souls, or offended one of the little ones of Christ. Be merciful to mens souls and bodies, as ever you would find mercy with a merciful God in the hour of your necessity and distress.

C H A P. XXI.

20. **T**HE last of Gods Attributes which I shall now mention, is, his *Dreadfulness* or *Terribleness*, to those that are the objects of his wrath. This is the result of his other Attributes, especially of his *Holiness*, and *Governing Justice*, and *Truth* in his comminations. He is a *Great and Dreadful God*, Dan. 9. 4. *A mighty God and terrible*, Deut. 7. 21. *A great and terrible God*, Nah. 1. 5. *With God is terrible Majesty*, Job 37. 22. *The Lord most high is terrible*, Psal. 47. 22.

1. His Children therefore must be kept in a *holy awe*; God is never to be approached or mentioned, but with the greatest reverence. We must *sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself*, and he must be our *fear and dread*, Isa. 8. 13. Even they that receive the *unmoveable Kingdom*, must have grace in their hearts to serve him acceptably with *Reverence and godly fear*, because our God is a *consuming fire*, Heb. 12. 28, 29. When we come to worship in the holy Assemblies, we should think, as *Jacob*, Gen. 28. 17. *How dreadful is this place? This is none other but the House of God, and this is the gate of Heaven*. Especially when God seemeth to *frown* upon the soul, his servants must *humble themselves* before him, and *deprecate his wrath*, as *Jeremiah* did, Jer. 17. 17. *Be not a terrour to mee*. It ill becometh the *best* of men, to make light of the frowns and threatenings of God. Also when he dealeth with us in *Judgement*, and we feel the smart of his chastisements, though we must remember that he is a *Father*, yet withall we must consider that he sheweth himself an *offended Father*: And therefore true and deep *Humiliation* hath ever been the course of afflicted Saints, to turn away the wrath of a *terrible God*.

2. But above all, what cause have the *Ungodly* to tremble at the *Dreadfulness* of that God, who is engaged in Justice, (except they be converted) to use them everlastingly as his unpardoned enemies. As there is no *felicity* like the favour of God; and no *joy* comparable to his childrens *joyes*; so is there no *miser*y like the sense of his *Displeasure*, nor any *terrors* to be compared to those, which his wrath inflicteth everlastingly on the ungodly. O wretched sinner! what hast thou done to make God thine enemy? what could hire thee to offend him by thy willful sin? and to do that which thou knewest he forbad and condemned in his Word? What madness caused thee to make a mock at sin and hell, and to play with the vengeance of the Almighty? what gain did hire thee to cast thy soul into the danger of damnation? canst thou save by the match, if thou win the world and lose thy soul? Didst thou not know who it was thou hadst to do with? It had been better for thee that all the world had been offended with thee, even men and Angels, great and small, than the most *Dreadful* God? Didst thou not *believe* him when he told thee how he was resolved to judge and punish the ungodly! Read it 2 *Thef.* 2. 7, 8, 9, 10. and 2. 10, 11. *Matth.* 25. *Jud.* 15. *Psal.* 1. &c. what caused thee to venture upon the consuming fire? Didst thou not know that as he is *Merciful*, so he is *jealous*, *Holy*, *Just* and *Terrible*? In the Name of God, I require and intreat thee, fly to his Mercy in Jesus Christ; and hearken speedily to his Grace, and turn at his reproof and warning; To day while it is called to day, harden not thy heart, but hear his voice, lest he resolve in his wrath, that thou shalt never enter into his rest; There is no *enduring*, there is no *overcoming*, there is no *contending* with an *angry*, *dreadful*, *holy* God: Repent therefore and turn to him, and *obey* the voice of *Mercy* that thy soul may live.

3. The *Dreadfulness* of God, doth tell both *good* and *bad* the great necessity of a *Mediator*. What an unspeakable mercy is it that God hath given us his Son! and that by Jesus Christ we may come with *boldness* and *confidence* into the presence of the *Dreadful* God, that else would have been to us a greater terror than all the world, yea than Satan himself. The more we are apprehensive of our *distance* from God, and

of his *Terrible Majesty*, and his more *Terrible justice* against such sinners as we have been, the more we shall understand the mysterie of Redemption, and highly value the Mediation of Christ.

4. Lastly, let the *Dreadfulness* of God, prevail with every believing soul, to pity the *ungodly* that pity not themselves. O pray for them, O warn them, exhort them, intreat them, as men that know the *Terrours* of the Lord, *2 Cor. 5. 11.* *They knew* as well as *you do* what sin is, and what it is to be children of wrath, and what it is to be unpardoned, unjustified and un sanctified, they would pity themselves, and cry for mercy, mercy, mercy, from day to day, till they were recovered into a state of life, and turned from the power of Satan unto God. Alas, they know not what it is to die, and to see the world to come, and to appear before a dreadful God: They know not what it is to be in Hell fire; nor what it is to be glorified in Heaven: They never *saw* or *tryed* these things, and they want the *Faith* by which they must be *foreseen* by those that are yet short of nearer knowledge: you therefore that *have Faith* to foreknow these things, and are enlightned by the Spirit of God, O pity and warn and help the miserable! Tell them how much easier it is to *escape Hell*, than to *endure* it: and how much easier a *Holy life* on earth is, than the endless wrath of the most *Dreadful* God. Tell them that unbelief, presumption and security, are the certain means to *bring their misery*, but will do nothing to *keep it off*; though they may keep off the present *knowledge* and *sense* of it, which would have droven them to seek a cure. Tell them that death and judgement are at hand, and that when they laugh, or sport, or scorn, and jeast at the Displeasure of the *Dreadful God*, it is posting toward them, and will be upon them before they are aware; and when they slumber, their damnation slumbereth not: but while unbelieving sinners say, Peace, Peace, sudden destruction will come upon them, as unexpected travail on a woman with child, and they shall not escape. O tell them how dreadful a thing it is, for a soul that is unregenerate and un sanctified, to go from that body which it pampered and sold its salvation to pleasure, and to appear at the tribunal of God; and how dreadful it is for such a soul,

to fall into the hands of the living God. At least save your own souls, by the faithful discharge of so great a duty; and if they will take no warning, let them at last remember when it is too late, that they were told in time, what they should see and feel at last, and what the later end would prove; and that God and man did warn them in compassion, though they perish because they would have no compassion or mercy upon themselves. Thus let the *Terribleness* of God provoke you, to do *your duty* with *speed* and *zeal*, for the converting and saving of miserable souls.

AND thus I have briefly set before you the Glass in which you may see the Lord, and told you how he must be known: and how he must be conceived of in our apprehensions; and how the knowledge of God must be improved, and what impressions it must make upon the heart, and what effect it must have upon our lives: Blessed and for ever blessed are those souls, that have the truly and lively Image of this God, and all these his Attributes imprinted on them, (as to the Creature they are communicable.) And O that the *veil* were taken from our hearts, that we all with open face beholding as in a glass the *Glory of the Lord*, may be changed into the same Image from *Glory to Glory*, as by the *spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. and may increase and live in the *knowledge of the true and only God*, and of *Jesus Christ*, which is *Eternal Life*. Amen.

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THE
DESCRIPTION,
Reasons & Reward,
OF THE
BELIEVERS
Walking with God.

On *Gen. 5. 24.*

By RICHARD BAXTER.

LONDON,

Printed for *Francis Tyton* at the three Daggers in
Fleet-street, and *Nevil Simmons* Bookseller
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OF
DESCRIPTION

Reasons & Rewards

OF THE

BELIEVERS

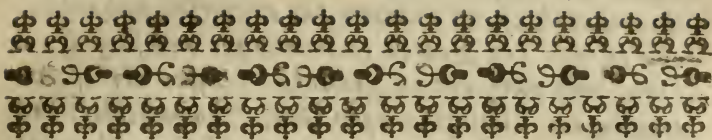
Who are with God

IN HEAVEN

By RICHARD BAXTER.

LONDON

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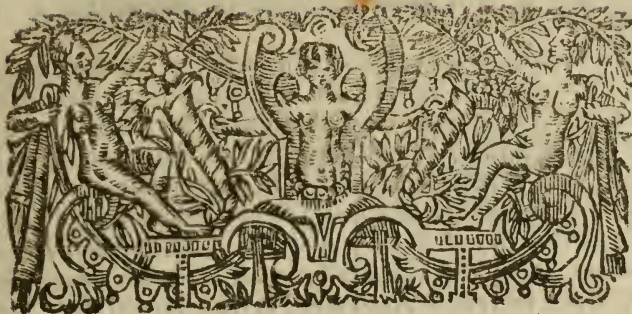
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CHAP. VII.

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CHAP. VII



CHAP. I.

Gen. 5. 24.

*And Henoeh walked with God, and he was not ;
for God took him.*

Being to speak of *our Converse with God in Solitude*, I think it will not be unsuitable, nor unserviceable to the Ends of that Discourse, if I here premise a short description of the *General Duty of practical godliness*, as it is called in Scripture a *Walking with God*. It is here commended to us in the example of *Holy Henoeh*, whose excellency is recorded in this signal character, that [*he walked*

walked with God:] and his *Special Reward* expressed in the words following [and he was not, for God took him.] I shall speak most of his *Character*, and then somewhat of his *Reward*.

The Samaritan and vulgar-Latine versions, do strictly translate the Hebrew as we read it: but the interpretation of the Septuagint, the Syriack, the Chaldee and the Arabick, are rather *good expositions* (all set together) of the meaning of the word, than *strict translations*. The Septuagint and Syriack read it [Henoah pleased God.] The Chaldee hath [Henoah walked in the fear of God:] And the Arabick [he walked in obedience to God.] And indeed to walk in the fear and obedience of God, and thereby to please him] is the principal thing in our [Walking with God.] The same Character is given of Noah in Gen. 6. 19. and the extraordinary Reward annexed; He and his family were saved in the Deluge. And the holy life which God commanded Abraham is called [a walking before God] Gen. 17. 1. [Walk before me, and be thou perfect.] And in the New Testament the Christian Conversion is ordinarily called by the name of [Walking.] Sometime a *Walking in Christ*: as Col. 2. 6. Sometime a *Walking in the spirit, in which we live*, Gal. 5. 25. And a *Walking after the spirit*, Rom. 8. 1. Sometime a *Walking in the Light, as God is in the Light*, 1 Joh. 1. 7. Those that abide in Christ must so walk even as he hath walked,] 1 Joh. 2. 6. These phrases set together tell us, what it is to Walk with God. But I think it not unprofitable somewhat more particularly to shew you what this *Walking with God* doth contain.

As *Atheism* is the sum of *wickedness*, so all true *Religiousness* is called by the name of *Godliness* or *Holiness*, which is nothing else but our *Devotedness to God*, and *Living to Him*, and our *Relation to Him* as thus *Devoted in Heart and Life*: *Practical Atheism* is a *Living as without God in the world*,] Ephes. 2. 12. *Godliness* is contrary to *practical Atheism*, and is a *Living as with and to God* in the world and in the Church, and is here called a *Walking with God*. And it containeth in it these particulars.

1. To *walk with God* includeth the *Practical* acknowledge-
ment (that is made by the *Will* as well as the *Understanding*)
of the *grand Attributes* of God, and his *Relations* to *Man*;
that he is Infinite in his Being, that is, *Immense* and *Eternal*;
as also in his *Power*, *Wisdom* and *Goodness*: that he is the *Cre-
ator*, *Redeemer* and *Sanctifier*: that he is our *Absolute Lord* (or
Owner) our most *Righteous Governour*, and most *bountiful Be-
nefactor* (or *Father*;) that *Of Him*, and *Through Him*, and
To Him are all things: that *in him* we *Live*, and *move*, and
have our being: that he is the fountain, or *first cause* from
which all (proper) *Being*, *Truth* and *Goodness* in the Creature
is but a derived stream. To have the soul unfeignedly *resign
it self* to Him, as his *Own*; and *subject it self* to Him as our
Governour, walking in the awe of his *sovereign Power*; sensible
of the strong obligation of his *Laws*, which *Reason*, *Justice*
and *Necessity* do all command us to obey. To live as in full
dependence on him; To have the first and greatest respect unto
him: A more *observant* respect to Him than to our *Rulers*:
A more *obedient* respect to Him than to our *Masters*: A
more *dependent* tender and honourable respect to Him than
to *Parents*, or our nearest friends. Thus *he that cometh to God*
(as God, and so as to be *accepted* of him) *must believe that He
is*, (his *Essential Attributes*) and (what he is in his *Relations*
to man; especially that as our *Governour* and *Benefactor*) *he
is the Rewarder of them that diligent seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. The
impress of a *Deity* in his *Essential* and *Relative Attributes* must
be upon the *Heart* of him that *walks with God*: Yea, the *Being*
of *God* must be much more remarkable to him, than the *Being*
of *all Creatures*; and his *presence* more regarded, than the
presence of the *Creature*; and all things must be to us in
comparison of God, as a *Candle* is in comparison of the
Sun: *His Greatness* and transcendent *Excellencies* must so
over-power them all, as to make them less observed and
regarded, by his taking up our chief observation and regard.

2. Our *walking with God* includeth our *Reconciliation* to
him, and that we are not in our natural state of *Enmity*, but
made his *Children* and friends in Christ. *Can two walk to-
gether unless they be agreed?* Amos 3. 3. *Enmity* is against
Unity; *Disaffection* causeth *Aversion*, and flying from

each other : Yea the *fears* of a *guilty Child* may make him flye from his *Fathers* presence, till there be a *particular Reconciliation* besides the *general state* of Reconciliation. A provoking faulty Child doth *Dwell* with God his Father, though under the continual terror of his frowns : But to *walk with him* (in the full sense) is more than to be *related* to him, and to *dwell with him* : In a *large* sense indeed all Gods Children may be said to *walk with him*, as it signifieth only a conversation ordered in godliness, sincerity and simplicity. But in this sublimer sense, as it signifieth a *lively exercise of Faith and Love, and heavenly-mindedness*, and a course of *complacential contemplation*, and holy converse with God, so it is proper only to *some* of the sounder and more vigilant industrious believers. And hereto it is necessary, not only that we be *Justified* and *Reconciled* to God from our *state of Enmity*, but also that we be *pardoned, justified* and *reconciled* from our *particular wounding falls*, which are more than the *ordinary infirmities* of Believers. And also it is necessary that we have *grateful friendly thoughts* of God : that we have so much sense of his excellency, goodness and kindness to our selves, as may give us a *complacency* in conversing with him, and may make the thoughts and mention of him to be desirable and pleasing to us. *Walking with God* doth import, though not the *full assurance* of his special Love and Grace to us, yet *such an apprehension* of his Love and Goodness, as may draw the heart to think of him with *desire*, if not with *delight*. A *lothness* to draw near him, to think of him, or to mention him, a *weariness* of his special service, are contrary to this special *walking with God*.

3. Our *Walking with God*, doth include our *esteeming* and *intending Him* as the *Ultimate End* and *felicity* of our souls. He is not to be sought, or loved, or conversed with, as a *means* to any *greater good* (for there is no greater) nor as *inferiour*, or meerly *equal* unto any : His *Goodness* must be the most powerful attractive of our *Love* : His *favour* must be valued as our *happiness*, and the *Pleasing* of him must be our most industrious imployment. To *walk with him*, is to live in the *warming reviving* sunshine of his *Goodness*,

ness, and to feel a *delighting satisfying* virtue in his *Love* and gracious presence. To live as those that are *not their own*, and that have their *lives*, and *faculties*, and *provisions*, and *helps* for their *Masters service*: As a Horse or Dog is of so much *worth*, as he is of *Use* to him that owneth him; and that is the *best* that is the *most serviceable* to his Master: Yet with this very great difference, that *man* being a more noble and capacious creature, is admitted not only into a state of *Service*, but of *Sonship*, and *Friendship*, and *Communion* with God; and is allowed and appointed to share more in the pleasure and fruits of his services, and to put in *his own felicity* and *delight* into his *End*; not only because *Self-love* is *natural* and *necessary* to the Creature, but also because he is under the *Promise* of a Reward; and (more than either) because he is a *Lover*, and not only a *Servant*, and his work is principally a work of *Love*, and therefore his *End* is *finis amantis*, the *end of a Lover*, which is *Mutual Complacency* in the exercises of Love.

He that *seeketh not first the Kingdome and Righteousness of God*, and referreth not other things to *Him*, but *seeks first the Creature*, and *God only for it*, doth but *deny God* in his *heart*, and basely subject him to the works of his own hands, and doth not *walk with God*, but *vilifie* and *reject* him. If you *Live not to God*, even to *obey*, and *please*, and *honour* him, you do not *walk with him*; but *walk contrary to him* (by living to his Enemies, the *Flesh*, the *World*, and the *Devil*) and therefore God will *walk contrary to you*, Levit. 26. 21, 23, 24, 27, 28. You were both *Created* and *Redeemed*, though for your *own felicity*, yet principally for the *Glory* and *Pleasure* of your *Creator* and *Redeemer*; and for no *felicity* of your own, but what consisteth in *Pleasing him*, *Glorifying him*, and *Enjoying him*: *Whether* therefore we eat or drink, or whatever we do, it should all be done to the *Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. He that *regardeth a day*, or *regardeth it not*; he that *eateth*, or that *eateth not*, must do it to the *Lord*: (And though a *Good Intention* will not sanctifie a *forbidden action*, yet sins of *Ignorance* and meer *Frailty* are forborn and pardoned of God, when it is his *Glory* and *Service* that is sincerely intended, though there be a mistake in

the choice of means.) *None of us liveth to himself, and no man dyeth to himself: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we dye, we dye unto the Lord: Whether we live therefore or dye, we are the Lords: For to this end Christ both dyed, rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.] Rom. 14. 6, 7, 8, 9. Our walking with God, is a serious Labouring, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him, 2 Cor. 5. 9. To this the Love of our Redeemer must constrain us: For he dyed for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that dyed for them, and rose again.] Vers. 14, 15. Religion therefore is called the seeking of God, because the soul doth press after him. and labour to enjoy him, as the Runner seeks to reach the prize; or as a Suiter seeketh the Love and fruition of the person beloved. And all the particular acts of Religion are oft denominated from this intention of the End, and following after it, and are all called a seeking the Lord. Conversion is called a seeking the Lord, Isa. 55. 6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found:] Hos. 3. 5. The Children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God] Hos. 7. 10. They do not return to the Lord their God, nor seek him:] Men that are called to Conversion, are called to seek God, Hos. 10. 12. Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain Righteousness upon you.] The converted Children of Israel and Judah shall go weeping together to seek the Lord their God, Jer. 50. 4. The wicked are described to be men that do not seek the Lord, Isa. 9. 13. & 31. 1. The holy Covenant, 2 Chron. 15. 12, 13. was to seek the Lord: If therefore you would Walk with God, let him be the mark, the prize, the treasure, the happiness, the Heaven it self which you aim at, and sincerely seek, 1 Chron. 22. 19. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God:] Psal. 105. 3, 4 [Glory ye in his Holy Name: Let the heart of them rejoyce that seek the Lord: Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face for evermore.] As the life of a Covetous man is a seeking of Riches, and the life of an ambitious man is a seeking of worldly honour and applause, so the life of a man that liveth to God, is a seeking Him; to please him, honour him, and enjoy him, And so much of this as he attaineth, so much doth he attain of satisfaction and content. If you*

live to God, and *seek him* as your *End* and *All*, the want of any thing will be tolerable to you, which is but consistent with the *fruition* of his *Love*. If he be pleased, *mans displeasure* may be borne: The loss of all things if Christ be won, will not undo us. *Mans condemnation* of us signifieth but little, if God the absolute Judge do *justifie* us. He walketh not with God, that *Liveth not to him* as his only *Happiness* and *End*.

4. Moreover our *Walking with God* includeth our *subjection* to his *Authority*, and our taking His *Wisdom* and *Will* to be our *Guide*, and his *Laws* in *Nature* and *Scripture* for our *Rule*: you must not walk with him as his *Equals*, but as his *Subjects*: nor give him the honour of an *ordinary superior*, but of the *universal King*: In our *doubts* he must *resolve* us; and in our *straits* we must ask *counsel* of the Lord: [*Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do*] is one of the *first* words of a *penitent soul*, *Act. 9. 6*. When *sensual worldlings* do *first* ask the *flesh*, or those that can *do it hurt* or *good*, *what they would have them be* or *do*. None of Christs true *Subjects*, do call any man *Father* or *Master* on earth, but in *subordination* to their *highest Lord*, *Matth. 23*. The *Authority* of God doth *aw* them and *govern* them more than the *fear* of the greatest upon earth. Indeed they know *no power* but *Gods*, and that which he *committeth* unto man. And therefore they can *obey no man against God*, what ever it cost them: but *under God* they are most *readily* and *faithfully* *subject* to their *Governours*, not meerly as to men that have power to *hurt them* if they *disobey*; but as to the *officers* of the Lord, whose *Authority* they *discern* and *reverence* in them: But when they have to do with the *enemies* of Christ, who *usurp* a power which he never gave them, against his *Kingdom* and the *souls* of men, they think it *easy* to *resolve* the question, *whether it be better to obey God or men?* As the *commands* of a *rebellious Constable* or other fellow-*subject* are of no *authority* against the *Kings Commands*; so the *commands* of all the men on earth, are of so *small authority* with them against the *Laws* of God, that they *fully* *approve* of the *ready* and *resolute* answer of those *Witnesses*, *Dan. 3. 16, 17, 18*. [*We are not careful to answer thee in this matter: If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us, &c. But if not, be it known unto thee*

O King that we will not serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.] Worldlings are ruled by their fleshly interest, and wisdom, and self-will, and by the will of man so far as it doth comports with these: By these you may handle them and lead them up and down the world: By these doth Satan hold them in captivity. But believers feel themselves in subjection to a higher Lord and better Law, which they faithfully though imperfectly observe: Therefore our walking with God is called *A walking in his Law*, *Exod. 16. 4.* *A walking in his statutes, and keeping and doing his commands*, *Lev. 26. 3.* *A walking in his paths*, *Mic. 4. 2.* It is our following the Lamb, which way soever he goeth: To be given up to our own hearts lusts, and to walk in our counsels, is contrary to this holy walk with God, *Psal. 81. 12.* and is the course of those that are departed from him: And they that are far from him shall perish: he destroyeth those that go a whoring from him: But it is good for us to draw near to God, *Psal. 73. 27, 28.*

5. Our walking with God doth imply that as we are ruled by his Will, so we fear no punishment like his threatened displeasure: and that the threats of death from mortal men, will not prevail with us so much as his threats of Hell, *Luk. 12. 4.* If God say, I will condemn thee to everlasting punishment if thou wilt not keep my Laws] And if men say, We will condemn thee to imprisonment or death if thou keep them] the believer more feareth God than man: The Law of the King doth condemn Daniel to the Lyons den, if he forbear not to pray for a certain time. But he more feareth God that will deny those that deny him, and forsake those that forsake him: Therefore the forementioned witnesses ventured on the fiery furnace, because God threatned a more dreadful fire. Therefore a true believer dare not live, when an unbeliever dare not die: He dare not save his life from God lest he lose it; but loseth it that he may save it. But unbelievers that walk not with God, but after the flesh, do most fear them that they observe most powerful in the world, and will more be moved with the penalty of some worldly loss or suffering, then with Gods most dreadful threats of Hell: For that which they see not, is to them as nothing, while they want that faith by which it is foreknown, and must be escaped.

6. More-

6. Moreover he that *walks with God*, doth *from God expect his full reward*. He ceaseth not his holy course, though no man observe him, or none commend him or approve him; though all about him hate him and condemn him; though he be so far from *gaining* by it with *men*, that it *cost him all that he hath or hoped for* in the world: For he knoweth that *Godliness is of it self great gain*, and that it *hath the promise of this life and that to come*, and none can make Gods promise void: He knoweth that his *Father which seeth in secret will reward him openly*, Matth. 6. and that he *shall have a treasure in heaven that parteth with all on earth for Christ*, Luk. 18. 22. And he hath such *respect to this promised recompence of reward*, that for it he can *suffer with the people of God*, and *account the very reproach of Christ a greater treasure* then Court or Country can afford him in a way of sin, Heb. 11. 26. He accounteth them *blessed that are persecuted for righteousness sake*, because the *Kingdom of Heaven is theirs*. He judgeth it a cause of *exceeding joy*, to be *reviled and persecuted*, and to *have all manner of evil falsely spoken of us for the sake of Christ*, because our *reward in Heaven is great*, Matth. 5. 10, 11, 12. For he verily believeth that as sure as these transitory pleasures will have an end, and everlastingly forsake those miserable souls that were deluded by them, so certainly is there a life of endless joyes, to be possessed in Heaven with God and all the Holy ones; and this he *will trust to* as that which will fully repair his losses and repay his cost, and not deceive him: Let others trust to what they will, it is this that he is resolved to trust to, and venture all to make it sure (when he is sure that *All is Nothing* which he ventureth, and that by the adventure he can never be a loser, nor never save by choosing that which it self must perish.) Thus he that truly walks with God expecteth his *Reward from God, and with God*, and thence is encouraged in all his duty, and thence is emboldned in all his conflicts, and thence is upheld and comforted in his sufferings: When *Man is the Rewarder* (as well as the chief Ruler) of the *Hypocrite*, and earthly things are the poise and motives to his earthly mind.

7. Our *walking with God* importeth that as we expect our *Reward from him*, so also *that we take his Promise for our security*.

curity for that Reward. Believing his Word and trusting his fidelity to the quieting and emboldening of the soul, is part of our holy walking with him. A promise of God is greater satisfaction and encouragement to a true believer, than all the visible things on earth: A promise of God can do more and prevail further with an upright soul, than all the sensible objects in the world. He will do more and go further upon such a promise, then he will for all that man can give him. Peruse the life of Christs Apostles and see what a promise of Christ can do; How it made them forsake all earthly pleasures, possessions and hopes, and part with friends, and houses, and Country, and travail up and down the world, in dangers and sufferings and unwearied labours, despised and abused by great and small: and all this to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom which they had never seen, and to attain that Everlasting Happiness, and help others to attain it, for which they had nothing but the promise of their Lord. See what a promise well believed will make a Christian do and suffer. Believers did those noble acts, and the Martyrs underwent those torments, which are mentioned Heb. 11. because they judged him faithful that had promised, Heb. 11. 11. They considered not difficulties and defect of means and improbabilities as to second causes, nor staggered at the promise of God through unbelief; but being strong in faith gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was also able to perform,] As it is said of Abraham, Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21.

8. To Walk with God, is to live as in his presence, and that with desire and delight. When we believe and apprehend that wherever we are, we are before the Lord, who seeth our hearts and all our waies; who knoweth every thought we think, and every word we speak, and every secret thing which we do: As verily to believe that God is here present and observeth all, as we do that we our selves are here: To compose our minds, our thoughts, our affections to that Holy reverence and seriousness as becometh man before his Maker: To order our words with that care and gravity as becometh those that speak in the hearing of the Lord. That no mans presence do seem more considerable to us then his presence: As we are not moved at the presence of a fly, or worm, or dog, when persons of honour and

and reverence are present, so should we not comparatively be *moved* at the *presence of man*, how great, or rich, or terrible soever, when we know that *God himself is present*, to whom the greatest of the sons of men, is more inconsiderable then a fly or worm is unto them. As the presence of the King makes ordinary standers by to be unobserved, and the *discourses of the learned* make us disregard the *babblings of children*, so the *presence of God* should make the greatest to be *scarce observed* or regarded in comparison of *him*: God who is *still with us* should so much take up our regard, that all others in his presence should be but as a *candle* in the presence of the *sun*. Therefore it is that a believer composeth himself to that behaviour which he knoweth *God doth most expect*, and beseemeth those that stand before him: when others accommodate themselves to the persons that are present, observing them, pleasing them, and shewing them respect, while they take no notice of God at all, as if they believed not that he is there. Hence it is that the men of God were wont to speak (though reverently yet) familiarly of God, as children of their Father with whom they *dwell*, as being indeed *fellow-citizens with the Saints*, who are his *household*: Abraham calleth him *Gen. 24. 40.* [*The Lord before whom I walk.*] And Jacob, *Gen. 48. 15.* *God before whom my Fathers Abraham and Isaac walked.*] And David resolveth, *Psal. 116. 9.* [*I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*] Yea God himself is pleased to use the terms of gracious condescending familiarity with them. *Christ dwelleth in them by faith*, *Eph. 3. 17.* *His spirit dwelleth in them as his house and temple*, *Rom. 8. 9.* Yea the Father himself is said to *dwell in them, and they in him*, *1 Joh. 3. 24.* *He that keepeth his Commandements dwelleth in Him, and He in him*] and *3. 12.* [*If we love one another, God dwelleth in us*] *13.* [*Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and He in us, because he hath given us of His spirit*] *15.* *Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God*] *16.* [*God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*] Yea God is said to *walk in them*, as they are said to *walk with Him*: *2 Cor. 6. 16.* [*For ye are the Temple of the living God; as God hath said I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people.*]

Our *walking With God* then is not only a sense of that *common presence* which he must needs afford to all; but it is also a believing apprehension of his *Gracious presence*, as *our God* and reconciled Father, with whom *we dwell*, being brought near unto Him by Christ; and who dwelleth in us by his *spirit*.

9. To *walk with God* (as here we are in flesh) includeth not only our *believing his presence*, but also that we *see him* (as the chief cause in the effects) in his creatures and his daily providence, that we look not on creatures as independent or separated from God; but see them as the *Glass*, and God as the represented face; and see them as the *letters and words*, and God as the sense of all the creatures that are the *first Book* which he appointed man to read. We must behold *his glory declared* by the *Heavens*, Psal. 19. 1. and see *Him shining in the Sun*; and see *his Power* in the Fabrick of the world, and *his wisdom* in the admirable order of the whole: we must taste the sweetness of *his Love* in the sweetness of our food, and in the comforts of our friends, and all our accommodations we must see, and *Love his Image* in his Holy ones; and we must hear *his Voice* in the Ministry of his Messengers. Thus every creature must become a *Preacher* to us, and we must see the *Name of God upon it*: and thus *all things will be sanctified to us*, while *Holiness to the Lord* is written upon all. Though we must not therefore make Idols of the creatures, because God appeareth to us in them, yet must we hear the *message* which they bring us, and reverence in them the *Name* of the Creatour which they bear. By *this way* of conversing with them, they will not ensnare us, or deceive, or poyson us, as they do the carnal unbelieving world: but as the Fish brought money to *Peter* to pay his tribute, so every creature would bring us a greater, even a spiritual gain. When we behold it, we should say with pleasant admiration [*This is the work of God, and it is wonderful in our eyes.*] This is the *true Divine Philosophy*, which seeketh, and findeth, and contemplateth, and admireth the *Great Creatour* in his works: When that which sticketh in the creature it self (whatever discovery it seem to make) is but a childish unprofitable trifling: like learning to shape all the letters aright, without learning to know their signification and

and sense. It is God appearing in the creatures, that is the life, and beauty, and use, and excellency of all the creatures; without him they are but carcasses, deformed, useles, vain, insignificant and very nothings.

10. Our *walking with God*, doth contain *our willing and sincere attendance on him in the use of those holy duties in which he hath appointed us to expect his grace*. He is everywhere in his *essential presence*, but he is not everywhere alike to be found in the communications of his grace. The *assemblies of his Saints* that worship him in *holy communion*, are places where he is likelier to be found; then in an Ale-house or a Play-house. You are likelier to have holy converse with him among the *holy*, that will speak of holy things to your edification, then among the senseless ignorant sensualists, and the scornful enemies of Holiness, that are the servants of the Devil, whom he useth in his daily work for the deceiving and perdition of the world. Therefore the conversation of the wicked doth *grieve*, and *vex a righteous soul* (as its said the Sodomites did by *Lot*, 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.) because all their conversation is ungodly, far from God, not favouring of any true knowledge of him, or love to him, but is *against him* by enmity and provocation. If God himself do *dwell* and *walk* in all his holy ones, then they that *dwell* and *walk* with them, have the best opportunity to *dwell* and *walk* with God. To converse with *those in whom God dwelleth*, is to converse with *him in his Image*, and to attend him at *his dwelling*: And willfully to run among the wicked, is to run far away from God. *In his Temple doth every man speak of his Glory*, Psal. 29. 9. when among his brutish enemies every man speaketh to the dishonour of him in his word and wayes. He is otherwise present with those that are congregated in his Name and for his worship, then he is with those that are assembled for wickedness or vanity, or live as brutes without God in the world. And we must *draw as near him* as we can, if we would be such as walk with God.

We must not be strange to him in *our Thoughts*, but make *him* the object of our most *serious meditations*: Its said of the wicked that *they are far from God*; and that *God is not in all their thoughts*, Ps. 73. 27. Ps. 10. 4. The *thoughts* are the

minds employment. It dwells on that which it frequently thinks of. It is a *walk* of the *Mind*, and not of the *Body* which we are treating of. To *mind* the *world*, and *fleshy things*, is contrary to this *walk with God*: we are far from him, when our *thoughts* are (ordinarily) far from him. I know that it is lawful and meet to think of the business of our callings, so far as is necessary to the prudent successful management of them: and that it is not requisite that our thoughts be alwaies *actually* upon *God*: but he that doth manage his calling in Holiness, doth all in obedience to Gods commands, and sees that his work be the work of God, and he intendeth all to the glory of God, or the pleasing of his blessed will: and he oft reneweth these actual intentions; and oft interposeth thoughts of the presence, or power, or love, or interest of him whom he is serving: He often listeth up his soul in some holy desire or ejaculatory request to God: He oft taketh occasion from what he seeth, or heareth, or is doing, for some more spiritual meditation or discourse: so that still it is *God* that his mind is principally employed *on* or *for*, even in his ordinary work, (while he liveth as a Christian.)

And it is not enough to *think of God*; but we must *think of him as God*, with such *respect*, and *reverence*, and *love*, and *trust*, and *submission* (in our measure) as is due from the Creature to his Creator. For as *some kind of speaking* of him is but a *taking his Name in vain*: so *some kind of thinking* of him is but a dishonouring of him, by contemptuous or false unworthy thoughts. Most of our walking with God consisteth in such affectionate apprehensions of him as are suitable to his blessed Attributes and Relations. All the day long our thoughts should be working either *on God*, or *for God*: either upon some work of obedience which he hath imposed on us, and in which we desire to please and honour him, or else directly upon himself. Our hearts must be taken up in contemplating and admiring him, in magnifying his Name, his Word and Works; and in pleasant contentful thoughts of his benignity, and of his Glory, and the Glory which he conferreth on his Saints. He that is unskilful or unable to manage his own thoughts with some activity, seriousness and order, will be a
stranger

stranger to much of the holy converse which believers have with God. They that have given up the Government of their thoughts, and turned them loose to go which way phantastie pleaseth, and present sensitive objects do invite them, and to run up and down the world as masterless unruly vagrants, can hardly expect to keep them in any constant attendance upon God, or readiness for any sacred work. And the *sudden thoughts* which they have of God, will be rude and stupid, favouring more of prophane contempt, than of holiness, when they should be reverent, serious, affectionate and practical, and such as conduce to a holy composure of their hearts and lives.

And as we must walk with God, 1. In our communion with his servants, 2. And in our affectionate Meditations; so also 3. In all the ordinances which he hath appointed for our Edification and his Worship.

1. The Reading of the Word of God, and the explication and application of it in good Books, is a means to possess the mind with sound, and orderly, and working apprehensions of God, and of his holy Truths: So that in such Reading our understandings are oft illustrated with a heavenly Light, and our hearts are touched with a special delightful relish of that truth, and they are secretly attracted and engaged unto God, and all the powers of our souls are excited and animated to a holy obedient life.

2. The same Word preached with a lively voice, with clearness and affection, hath a greater advantage for the same illumination and excitation of the soul. When a Minister of Christ that is truly a Divine, being filled with the Knowledge and Love of God, shall copiously and affectionately open to his hearers the excellencies which he hath seen, and the happiness which he hath foreseen and tasted of himself, it frequently (through the co-operation of the Spirit of Christ) doth wrap up the hearers hearts to God, and bring them into a more lively knowledge of him, actuating their graces, and enflaming their hearts with a heavenly Love, and such desires as God hath promised to satisfy. Christ doth not only send his Ministers furnished with Authority from him, but also furnished with his Spirit, to speak of spiritual things in a spiritual man-

ner; so that in both respects he might say [*He that heareth you heareth mee* :] and also by the same Spirit doth open and excite the hearts of the hearers: so that it is *God himself* that a serious Christian is principally employed with, in the hearing of his heavenly transforming Word: And therefore he is affected with reverence and holy fear, with some taste of heavenly delight, with obediential subjection and resignation of himself to God. The *Word of God is powerful*, not only in pulling down all high exalting thoughts, that rise up against God, but also in lifting up depressed souls, that are unable to rise unto heavenly knowledge, or communion with God. If some Christians could but alwaies finde as much of God upon their hearts at other times, as they finde sometimes under a spiritual powerful Ministry, they would not so complain that they seem forsaken, and strangers to all communion with God, as many of them do. While *God* (by his *Messengers* and *Spirit*) is speaking, and *man* is hearing him; while *God* is treating with *man* about his reconciliation and everlasting happiness, and *man* is seriously attending to the treaty and motions of his Lord, surely this is a very considerable part of our walking and converse with God.

3. Also in the *Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ*, we are called to a familiar converse with God: He there appeareth to us by a wonderful condescension in the representing, communicating signs of the flesh and blood of his Son, in which he hath most conspicuously revealed his Love and Goodness to Believers: There Christ himself with his Covenant-gifts are all delivered to us by these Investing signs of his own institution; even as *Knighthood* is given by a *sword*, and as a *House* is delivered by a *Key*, or *Land* by a *Twig and Turf*. Nowhere is *God* so near to man as in *Jesus Christ*: and nowhere is *Christ* so familiarly represented to us, as in this holy Sacrament. Here we are called to sit with him at his Table, as his invited welcome guests; to commemorate his sacrifice, to feed upon his very flesh and blood; that is, with our mouths upon his Representative flesh and blood, and with our applying Faith upon his real flesh and blood, by such a feeding as belongs to Faith. The Marriage-Covenant betwixt God incarnate, and his espoused ones, is there publicly sealed, celebrated

lebrated and solemnized. There we are entertained by God as *friends*, and not as servants only, and that at the most precious costly feast. If ever a believer may on earth expect his kindest entertainment, and near access, and a humble intimacy with his Lord, it is in the participation of this *sacrifice-feast*, which is called [*The Communion*] because it is appointed as well for our *special Communion* with *Christ* as with *one another*. It is here that we have the fullest *intimation, expression* and *communication* of the wondrous Love of God; and therefore it is here that we have the loudest call, and best assistance to make a large return of *Love*: And where there is the most of *this Love* between *God* and *man*, there is most *Communion*, and most of *Heaven*, that can be had on Earth.

But it much concerneth the members of Christ, that they deprive not themselves of this Communion with God in this *Holy Sacrament* through their miscarriage; which is too frequently done by one of these extreams. Either by rushing upon holy things with a presumptuous careless common frame of heart, as if they knew not that they go to feast with Christ, and discerned not his body: or else by an excess of fear, drawing back, and questioning the good will of God, and thinking diminutively of his love and mercy: By this means Satan depriveth many of the *comfortable part* of their communion with God, both in this Sacrament, and in other waies of grace; and maketh them avoid him as an enemy, and be loth to come into his special presence; and even to be afraid to think of him, to pray to him, or to have any holy converse with him: When the just belief and observation of his Love would stablish them, and revive their souls with joy, and give them experience of the sweet delights which are opened to them in the Gospel, and which believers finde in the Love of God, and the foretast of the everlasting pleasures.

4. In *holy, faithful, fervent Prayer* a Christian hath very much of his converse with God. For *Prayer* is our approach to God, and calling to mind his presence and his attributes, and exercising all his graces in a holy motion towards him, and an exciting all the powers of our souls to seek him, attend him, & reverently to worship him: It is our treating with him about the most important busineses in all the world: a begging of
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the greatest mercies, and a deprecating his most grievous judgments; and all this with the nearest familiarity that man in flesh can have with God. In prayer the Spirit of God is working up our hearts unto him, with desires express in sighs and groans: It is a work of *God* as well as of *man*: *He* bloweth the fire, though it be *our hearts* that burn and boil. In *Prayer* we lay hold on Jesus Christ, and plead his merits and intercession with the Father: He taketh us as it were by the hand, and leadeth us unto God, and hideth our sins, and procureth our acceptance, and presenteth us amiable to his Father, having justified and sanctified us, and cleansed us from those pollutions, which rendered us loathsome and abominable. To speak to God in serious prayer, is a work so high, and of so great moment, that it calleth off our minds from all things else, and giveth no creature room or leave to look into the soul, or once to be observed: The mind is so taken up with God, and employed with him, that creatures are forgotten, and we take no notice of them (unless when through the diversions of the flesh, our prayers are interrupted and corrupted, and so far degenerate, and are no prayer; so far I say as we thus turn away from God.) So that the soul that is most and best at Prayer, is most and best at walking with God, and hath most communion with him in the Spirit: And to withdraw from *Prayer*, is to withdraw from God: And to be *unwilling* to pray, is to be unwilling to draw near to God. *Meditation* or *Contemplation* is a duty in which God is much enjoyed: But *Prayer* hath *Meditation* in it, and much more. All that is upon the mind in *Meditation*, is upon the mind in *Prayer*, and that with great advantage, as being presented before God, and pleaded with him, and so animated by the apprehensions of his observing presence, and actuated by the desires and pleadings of the soul. When we are commanded to *Pray*, it includeth a command to *Repent* and *Believe*, and *Fear the Lord*, and *Desire* his Grace: For *Faith* and *Repentance*, and *Fear* and *Desire*, are altogether in action in a serious prayer; And, as it were, naturally each one takes his place, and there is a *holy order* in the acting of these graces in a Christians prayers, and a harmony which he doth seldom himself observe. He that in *Meditation* knoweth not how

how to be regular and methodical, when he is studiously contriving and endeavouring it, yet in *Prayer* before he is aware, hath *Repentance, and Faith, and Fear, and Desire*, and every grace fall in its proper place and order, and contribute its part to the performance of the work. The *new nature* of a Christian is more immediately and vigorously operative in *Prayer*, than in many other duties: And therefore every Infant in the family of God can pray (with groaning desires, and ordered graces, if not with well-ordered words:) When *Paul* began to live to Christ, he began (aright) to pray: *Behold he prayeth*, saith God to *Ananias*, Act. 9. 11. And *because they are Sons, God sends the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of his Elect, even the Spirit of Adoption, by which they cry Abba Father*, Gal. 4. 6. as children naturally cry to their Parents for relief. And *Nature* is more regular in its works than Art or humane contrivance is. *Necessity* teacheth many a beggar to pray better for relief to men, than many learned men (that feel not their necessities) can pray to God. The Spirit of God is a better Methodist than we are: And though I know that we are bound to use our utmost care and skill for the orderly actuating of each holy affection in our *Prayers*, and not pretend the sufficiency of the Spirit for the patronage of our negligence or sloth (for the Spirit makes use of our understandings for the actuating of our wills and affections;) yet withall it cannot be denied, but that it was upon a special reason that the Spirit that is promised to Believers is called a *Spirit of Grace and Supplication*, Zech. 12. 10. And that it is given us to help our infirmities, even the infirmities of our understanding, when we know not what to pray for as we ought, Rom. 8. 26. And that the Spirit it self is said to make intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. It is not the Spirit without that is here meant: such intercession is nowhere ascribed to that. How then is the *Prayer of the Spirit within us* distinguished from our *Prayer*? Not as different effects of different causes: as different prayers by these different parties: But as the same prayer proceeding from different causes, having a special force (for quality and degree) as from one cause (the Spirit) which it hath not from the other cause (from our selves) except as received from the Spirit. The Spirit is as a

New Nature, or *fixed inclination* in the Saints: For their very *self-love* and *will to good* is sanctified in them, which works so readily (though voluntarily) as that it is in a sort by the way of *Nature*, though not excluding Reason and Will; and not as the motion of the brutish appetite. And that God is their felicity, and the only help and comfort of their souls, and so the principal Good to be desired by them, is become to them a truth so certain, and beyond all doubt, that their understandings are convinced that *Velle Bonum*, & *Velle Deum*, to *Love Good*, and to *Love God*, are words that have almost the same signification; and therefore here is no room for *deliberation* and *choice*, where there is *omnimoda ratio boni*, nothing but unquestionable good. A Christian (so far as he is such) cannot chuse but desire the favour and fruition of God in immortality, even as he cannot chuse (because he is a man) but desire his own felicity in general: And as he cannot (as a man) but be unwilling of destruction, and cannot but fear apparent misery, and that which bringeth it; so as a Christian he cannot chuse but be unwilling of damnation, and of the wrath of God, and of sin as sin, and fear the apparent dangers of his soul, so that his *New Nature* will presently cast his *Fear*, and *Repentance*, and *Desires* into their proper course and order, and set them on work on their several objects (about the main unquestionable things, however they may erre, or need more deliberation about things doubtful:) The *New Creature* is not as a *lifeless Engine* (as a *Clock*, or *Watch*, or *Ship*) where every part must be set in order by the art and hand of man, and so kept and used: But it is liker to the frame of our *own nature*; even like *man* who is a *living Engine*, when every part is set in its place and order by the *Creatour*, and hath in it self a living and harmonical principle, which disposeth it to *action*, and to *regular action*, and is so to be kept in *order* and daily *exercise* by *our selves*, as yet to be principally ordered and actuated, by the Spirit which is the principal cause.

By all which you may understand how the Holy Ghost is in us a spirit of Supplication, and helpeth of our infirmities, and teacheth us to pray, and intercedeth in us; and also that Prayer is to the New Man, so natural a motion of the soul to-
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wards God, that much of our *walking with God* is exercised in this holy duty: And that it is to the *New Life*, as *breathing* to our *Natural Life*; and therefore no wonder that we are commanded to *pray continually*, 1 These 5. 17. as we must *breath* continually, or as nature which needeth a daily supply of food for nourishment, hath a daily appetite to the food which it needeth, so hath the *Spiritual Nature* to its necessary food, and nothing but sickness doth take it off.

And thus I have shewed you how our *walking with God* containeth a holy use of his appointed means.

II. To *walk with God* includeth our *Dependence on him for our Receivings, and taking our Mercies as from his hand*. To live as upon *his Love and Bounty*; as Children with their Father, that can look for nothing but from *him*. As the eye of a Servant, yea of a craving Dog, is upon his Masters face and hand, so must our eye be on the Lord, for the gracious supply of all our wants. If *men* give us any thing, we take them but as the Messengers of God, by whom he sendeth it us: We will not be unthankful unto *men*; but we thank them but for *bringing us* our Fathers gifts. Indeed man is so much more than a meer Messenger, as that his *own Charity* also is exercised in the gift. A *meer Messenger* is to do no more but obediently to deliver what is sent us, and he need not exercise any Charity of his own; and we owe him thanks only for his *fidelity and labour*, but only to his *Master* for the *gift*: But *God* will so far honour *man*, as that he shall be called also to use *his Charity*, and distribute his Masters gifts with some *self-denial*; and we owe *him thanks*, as under God; he partaketh in the *Charity* of the *Gift*; and as one child oweth thanks to another, who both in obedience to the *Father*, and Love to his Brother, doth give some part of that which his Father had given him before. But still it is from our *Fathers Bounty*, as the principal cause that all proceeds. Thus *Jacob* speaketh of God, *Gen. 48. 15.* [*God, before whom my Fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed mee all my life long unto this day; the Angel which redeemed mee from all evil, bless the Lads, &c.*] When he had mentioned his Father *Abraham and Isaac's walking with God*, he describeth his *own* by his *dependence upon God*, and receiving from him, ac-

knowledging him the God that had fed him, and delivered him all his life. Carnal men that live by sense, do depend upon inferiour sensible causes; and though they are taught to *pray to God*, and thank him with their tongues, it is indeed their own contrivances and industry, or their visible benefactors, which their hearts depend upon and thank. It were a shame to them to be so plain as *Pharaoh*, and to say, *Who is the Lord?* or to speak as openly as *Nebuchadnezzar*, and say, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built, by the might of my power? &c.* Dan. 4. 30. Yet the same Atheism and Self-idolizing is in their hearts, though it be more modestly and cunningly express. Hence it is that they that *walk with God*, have all their Receivings sanctified to them, and have in all a Divine and spiritual sweetness, which those that take them but as from Creatures, do never feel or understand.

12. Lastly it is contained in our *Walking with God*, that the *greatest business of our lives be with Him*, and for him. It is not a walk for *complement* or *recreation* only that is here meant; but it is a life of nearness, converse and employment, as a servant or child that dwelleth with his Master or Father in the house. God should be always so regarded, that *Man* should stand by as *Nothing*, and be scarce observed in comparison of Him. We should begin the day with God, and entertain Him in the first and sweetest of our thoughts: we should *walk abroad* and do our work as in his sight: we must resolve to do no work but *His*, no not in our trades and ordinary callings: we must be able to say, It is the work which my Master set me to do, and I do it to obey and please his *Will*. At night we must take an account of our selves, and spread open that account before him, desiring his acceptance of what was well, and his pardon for what we did amiss, that we may thus be ready for our last account. In a word, though *Men* be our fellow-labourers and companions, yet the principal business of our Care and Diligence, must be our Masters service in the world. And therefore we must look about us, and discern the *opportunities* of serving him, and of the best improvement of his talents; and must make it our *daily study* and *business*, to do him the *greatest service* we are able, whatever it may cost us through the malice of the enemies, being

sure

sure our labour shall not be in vain, and that we cannot serve him at too dear a rate. It is not as idle companions, but as servants, as souldiers, as those that put forth all their strength, to do his work and reach the Crown, that we are called to *walk with God*. And all this is done, though not in the same degree by all, yet according to the measure of their Holiness by every one that lives by faith.

Having told you what it is to *Walk with God*, as to the *Matter* of it, I shall more briefly tell you as to the *Manner*: The *nature of God*, of *man*, and of the *work*, will tell it you.

1. That our walk with God must be with the *greatest reverence*: were we never so much assured of his special love to us, and never so full of *faith* and *joy*, our *reverence* must be never the less for this. Though *Love* cast out that guilty fear which discourageth the sinner from hoping and seeking for the mercy which would save him, and which disposeth him to hate and fly from God, yet doth it not cast out that *Reverence* of God, which we owe him as his creatures so infinitely below him as we are. It cannot be that God should be known and remembred as God, without some admiring and awful apprehensions of him. Infiniteness, Omnipotency and inaccessible Majesty and Glory, must needs affect the soul that knoweth them, with reverence and selfe-abasement. Though we receive a *Kingdome that cannot be moved*, yet if we will serve God acceptably, we must serve him with reverence and godly fear, as knowing that as he is our God, so he is also a consuming fire, Heb. 12. 28, 29. We must so worship him as those that remember that we are worms and guilty sinners, and that he is most High and Holy, and will be sanctified in them that come nigh him, and before all the people he will be glorified, Lev. 10. 3. Unreverence sheweth a kind of *Atheistical contempt* of God, or else a sleepiness and inconsiderateness of the soul. The sense of the *Goodness* and *Love* of God, must consist with the sense of his *Holiness* and *Omnipotency*. It is presumption, pride or blockish stupidity, which excludeth *Reverence*; which *Faith* doth cause, and not oppose.

2. Our walking with God must be a work of *humble boldness* and *familiarity*. The *Reverence* of his *Holiness* and *Greatness*, must not overcome or exclude the sense of his *Goodness* and

compassion, nor the full assurance of faith and hope. Though by sin we are enemies and strange to God, and stand afar off, yet in Christ we are reconciled to him and brought near, Eph. 2. 13. For he is our Peace, who hath taken down the partition, and abolished the enmity, and reconciled Jew and Gentile unto God. Ver. 14, 15, 16. And through him we have all an access to the Father by one Spirit: we are now no more strangers and forrainers; but fellow-Citizens of the Saints and of the household of God: ver. 18, 19. In him we have boldness and access with confidence by the belief of him, Eph. 3. 12. Though of our selves we are unworthy to be called his children, and may well stand a far off with the Publican, and not dare to lift up our faces towards heaven, but smite our breasts and say, O Lord be merciful to me a sinner. Yet have we boldness to enter into the Holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh: And having an high Priest over the house of God, we may draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. Therefore whensoever we are afraid at the sight of sin and Justice, let us remember that we have a great high Priest that is passed into the heavens, even Jesus the Son of God: and therefore let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. He that alloweth us to walk with him, doth allow us such humble familiarity as becometh those that walk together with him.

3. Our walking with God must be a work of some holy pleasure and delight. We may unwillingly be drag'd into the presence of an enemy, and serve as drudges upon meer necessity or fear. But walking together is the loving and delightful converse of friends. When we take sweet counsel of the Lord, and set him alwaies as at our right hand, and are glad to hear from him, and glad to speak to him, and glad to withdraw our thoughts from all the things and persons in the world, that we may solace our selves in the contemplations of his excellency, and the admirations of his Love and Glory, this is indeed to walk with God. You converse with him as with a stranger, an enemy, or your destroyer, and not as with God, while you had rather be far from him, and only tremble in his presence, and

and are glad when you have done and are got away, but have no delight or pleasure in him. If we can take delight in our walking with a friend, a friend that is truly loving and constant, a friend that is learned, wise and holy! if their wise and heavenly discourse be better to us, then our recreations, meat, or drink, or clothes! what delight then should we find in our secret converse with the most high, most wise and gracious God! How glad should we be to find him willing and ready to entertain us? How glad should we be that we may employ our thoughts on so high and excellent an object? what cause have we to say, [*My meditation of him shall be sweet, and I will be glad in the Lord, Ps. 104. 34. In the multitude of my thoughts within me (my sorrowful, troublesome, weary thoughts) thy comforts do delight my soul, Ps. 94. 19.* Let others take pleasure in childish vanity, or sensuality, but say thou as David, Ps. 119. 14, 15, 16. [*I have rejoiced in the wayes of thy Commandements, as much as in all riches: I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy waies: I will delight my self in thy statutes, and will not forget thy Word.*] Ver. 47. *I will delight my self in thy commandements which I have loved*] Let scorers delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge, (Prov. 1. 22.) but make me to go in the path of thy commandements, for therein do I delight: Psal. 119. 35. If thou wouldst experimentally know the safety and glory of a holy life, *delight thy self in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart, Ps. 37. 4.* Especially when we draw near him in his solemn worship, and when we separate our selves on his holy dayes from all our common worldly thoughts, to be conversant as in heaven with the blessed God, then may we with the holy Apostle be *in the spirit on the Lords day, Rev. 1. 10.* and if we turn away our foot from the Sabbath, from doing our pleasure on that holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shall honour him, not doing our own wayes, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words, then shall we delight our selves in the Lord,] Isa. 58. 13, 14. and understand how great a priviledge it is, to have the liberty of those holy dayes and duties for our sweet and heavenly converse with God.

4. Our walking with God must be a matter of industry and dili-

diligence: It is not an occasional idle converse, but a life of *observance, obedience and employment*, that this phrase importeth. The sluggish idle wishes of the *hypocrite*, whose hands refuse to labour, are not this walking with God: nor the *sarifice of fools*, who are hasty to utter the overflowings of their fantasie before the Lord, while they *keep not their foot, nor hearken to the Law, nor consider that they do evil*] Eccles. 5. 1, 2, 3. *He that cometh to God (and will walk with him) must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him: God is with you while you are with him; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you,* 2 Chron. 15. 2. *Up and be doing, and the Lord will be with you,* 1 Chron. 22. 16. If you would meet with God in the way of *Mercy* [*take diligent heed to do the Commandment and Law, to love the Lord your God, and to walk in all his Wayes, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul,* Josh. 22. 5.

5. Our walking with God is a matter of some *Constancy*: It signifieth our *course and trade of life*, and not some accidental action on the by: A man may walk with a *stranger* for a *Visit*, or in *Complement*, or upon some unusual occasion: But this walk with God, is the act of those that *dwell with him* in his *Family*, and do his *work*. It is not only to step and speak with him, or cry to him for mercy in some great extremity, or to go to Church for company or custome, or think or talk of him sometime heartlessly on the by, as a man will talk of news, or matters that are done in a *foreign Land*, or of persons that we think we have little to do with: But it is to be *alwaies with him*, Luk. 15. 31. *To seek first his Kingdom and Righteousness*, Matth. 6. 33. *Not to labour (comparatively) for the food that perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life*, Joh. 6. 27. *To delight in the Law of the Lord, and meditate in it day and night*, Psal. 1. 2. *That his words be in our hearts, and that we teach them diligently to our Children, and talk of them sitting in the house, and walking by the way, lying down, and rising up, &c.* Deut. 6. 6, 7, 8. *That we pray continually*, 1 Thel. 5. 17. *And in all things give thanks*. But will the *hypocrite* delight himself in the *Almighty*, or will he *alwaies call upon God*? Job 27. 10. *His goodness is as the morning Cloud,*

Cloud, and as the early Dew it goeth away, Hof. 6. 4.
So much of the description of this *Walking with God*.

C H A P. II.

Use. **W**WE are next to consider how far this doctrine doth concern *our selves*, and what *use* we have to make of it upon our *hearts* and *lives*.

And first it acquainteth us with the abundance of *Atheism* that is in the world, even among those that profess the knowledge of God. It is *Atheism* not only to say, *There is no God*: but to say so *in the heart*, Psal. 14. 1. While the heart is no more affected towards him, observant of him, or confident in him, or submissive to him, than if indeed there were no God: When there is nothing of God upon the Heart, no Love, no Fear, no Trust, no Subjection, then is *Heart-Atheism*. When men that have some kind of knowledge of God, yet glorifie him not *as God*, nor are thankful to him, but become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts are darkened; these men are *Heart-Atheists*, and professing themselves wise, they become fools, and are given up to vile affections: And as they do not like to retain God in their knowledge (however they may discourse of him, so) God oft giveth them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things that are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murther, debate, deceit, malignity, &c. Rom. 1. 21, 22, 26, 28, 29, 30. Swarms of such *Atheists* go up and down under the self-deceiving name of *Christians*: being indeed unbelieving and defiled, so void of *Purity*, that they deride it, and nothing is *Pure* to them; but even their mind and conscience is defiled: They profess that they know God, but they deny him in their works, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate, Tit. 1. 15, 16. What is he but an *Atheist*, when God is not in all his thoughts, Psal. 10. 4. unless it be in their *impious* or *blaspheming* thoughts, or in their *sleight contemptuous* thoughts! To take God for God indeed, and for our God, essentially includeth the taking him to be the *most powerful*, *Wise* and *good*, the *most just* and *holy*, the *Creator*, *Preser-*

ver and Governour of the world, whom we and all men are obliged absolutely to obey and fear, to love and desire, whose *Will* is our *Beginning, Rule and End*: He that taketh not God for such as here described, taketh him not for *God*, and therefore is indeed an *Atheist*: What name soever he assumeth to himself, this is the name that *God* will call him by; even a fool that hath said in his heart there is no *God*: while they are corrupt and do abominably, they understand not, and seek not after *God*; they are all gone aside, and are altogether become filthy, there is none of them that doth good; they are workers of iniquity that have no knowledge, and eat up the people of *God* as bread, and call not upon the *Lord*, Psal. 14. 1, 2, 3, 4. [*Ungodliness*] is but the English for [*Atheism*.] The *Atheist* or *Ungodly* in *Opinion*, is he that thinks that there is no *God*, or that he is *One* that we need not *Love and Serve* (and that is but the same, viz. to be no *God*.) The *Atheist* or *Ungodly* in *Heart or Will*, is he that consenteth not that *God* shall be his *God*, to be loved, feared and obeyed before all. The *Atheist* in *Life* or outward practice, is he that liveth as without *God* in the world; that seeketh him not as his chiefest good, and obeyeth him not as his highest absolute *Lord*; so that indeed *Atheism* is the summe of all iniquity, as *Godliness* is the summe of all Religion and moral good. If you see by the description which I have given you, what it is to be *Godly*, and to walk with *God*, and what it is to be an *Atheist* or *Ungodly*, you may easily see that *Godliness* is more rare, and *Atheism* more common, than many that themselves are *Atheists* will believe. It is not that which a man calls his *God*, that is taken by him for his *God* indeed. It is not the *Tongue*, but the *Heart* that is the man. *Pilate* called *Christ* the *King of the Jews*, when he crucified him. The *Jews* called *God* their *Father*, when *Christ* telleth them, they were of their father the *Devil*, and proveh it, because (what ever they said) they would do his lusts, Joh. 8. 44. The same *Jews* pretended to honour the name of the *Messiah*, and expect him, while they killed him. The question is not what men call themselves, but what they are: Not whether you say you take *God* for your *God*, but whether you do so indeed: Not whether you profess your selves to be *Atheists*, but whether you are *Atheists* indeed or not. If you are not, look over what

what I have here said, and tell your consciences, Do you walk with God? who is it that you submit your selves willingly to be disposed of by? To whom are you most subject? and whose commands have the most effectual authority with you? who is the *Chief Governour* of your hearts and lives? whom is it that you *principally desire to please*? whom do you most *fear*? and whose displeasure do you principally avoid? from whom is it that you expect your *greatest reward*? and in whom, and with whom do you place and expect your happiness? whose work is it that you do, as the greatest business of your lives? Is it the goodness of God in himself and unto you, that draweth up your hearts to him in Love? Is he the ultimate End of the main intentions, design, and industry of your lives? Do you trust upon his Word as your security for your everlasting hopes and happiness? Do you study and observe him in his works? Do you really live as in his presence? Do you delight in his Word, and meditate on it? Do you love the Communion of Saints? and to be most frequent and familiar with them that are most frequent and familiar with Christ? Do you favour more the *particular affectionate* discourse about his *Nature, Will and Kingdom*, than the frothy talk of empty wits, or the common discourse of carnal worldlings? Do you love to be employed in *thanking* him for his *Mercies*, and in *praising* him, and declaring the glory of his attributes and works? Is your *dependence on him* as your great *benefactor*, and do you receive your mercies as *his gifts*? If thus your *principal observation* be of God, and your *chief desire after God*, and your *chiefest confidence in God*, and your *chiefest business* in the world be *with God*, and *for God*, and your *chiefest joy* be in the *favour of God* (when you can apprehend it) and in the prosperity of his *Church*, and your hopes of glory; and your chiefest *grief and trouble* be your sinful distance from him, and your backwardness and disability in his love and service, and the fear of his displeasure, and the injuries done to his Gospel and honour in the world; then I must needs say, you are savingly delivered from your *Atheism and Ungodliness*; you do not only *talk of God*, but *walk with God*; you are then acquainted with that spiritual life and work, which the sensual world is unacquainted with, and with those invisible ever-

lasting excellencies, which if worldlings knew, they would change their minds, and choice and pleasures: You are then acquainted with that rational, manly, faintly life, which ungodly men are strangers to; and you are in the way of that well grounded Hope and Peace to which all the Pleasures and Crowns on earth, if compared, are but cheats and misery. But if you were never yet brought to *walk with God*, do not think that you have a *sound belief in God*, nor that you acknowledge him sincerely, nor that you are saved from *heart atheism*: Nor is it *Piety in the Opinion and the Tongue*, that will save him that is an *Atheist or ungodly in heart and life*. Divinity is an *affective-practical science*: *Knowing* is not the *ultimate or perfective act* of man: but a *means to holy Love and Joy and service*. Nor is it *clear and solid knowledge*, if it do not somewhat *affect the heart*, and engage and actuate the *life*, according to the nature and use of the thing known. The soundness of *Knowledge and Belief* is not best discerned in the intellectual acts themselves, but in their *powerful, free and pleasant efficacy*, upon our *choice and practice*. By these therefore you must judge, whether you are *Godly or Atheistical*. The question is not what your *Tongues* say of God, nor what complemental ceremonious observances you allow him, but what your *Hearts* and your *endeavours* say of him, and whether you *glorify him as God* when you say you *know him*: Otherwise you will find that the *wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who held the truth in unrighteousness,*] Rom. I. 18, 21.

And now alas, what matter of lamentation is here before us! To see how seriously men converse with one another; and how God is overlookt or neglected by the most! How men live together, as if there were *more* that is considerable and regardable in these particles of animated dust, than in the Lord Almighty, and in all his graces, service and rewards! To see how God is cast aside, and his interest made to give place to the interest of the flesh, and his services must stay till men have done their service to their lusts, or to worldly men, that can do them hurt, or shew them favour! And his will must not be done, when it crosseth the will of sinful man! How little do all the commands, and promises, and threatnings

of God signifie with these Atheistical men, in comparison of their lusts, or the laws of men, or any thing that concerneth their temporal prosperity ! O how is the world revolted from their Maker ! How have they lost the knowledge of themselves, and forgotten their natures, capacities and obligations, and what it is to be indeed *a man* ! O hearken sinners, to the call of your Redeemer ! Return, O seduced wandering souls, and know at last your resting place ! why is not God in all your thoughts ? or why is he thought on with so much remissness, unwillingness, and contempt ! and with so little pleasure, seriousness, or regard ? Do you understand your selves in this ? Do you deal worthily with God ? Or wisely for your selves ? Do you take more pleasure, with the Prodigal, to feed swine, and to feed with swine, then to dwell at home with your heavenly Father ? and to walk before him, and serve him in the world ? Did you but know how dangerous a way you have been in, and how unreasonably you have dealt, to forsake God in your hearts, and follow that which cannot profit you, what haste would you make to leave the crowd, and come home to God, and try a more noble and gainful conversation ? If Reasons may have room and leave to work upon you, I will set a few before you more distinctly, to call you off from your barren inordinate creature converse, to a believing serious converse with God.

1. *The higher and more excellent the object is (especially when it is also of most concernment to our selves) the more excellent is the converse.* Therefore as nothing dare compare it self with God, so no employment may be compared with this of *holy walking with him*. How vile a contempt is it of the Almighty, and of our Celestial joyes, for the heart to neglect them, and turn away, and dwell upon vanity and trouble, and let these highest pleasures go ! Is not *God and Glory* worthy of thy thoughts, and all thy service ?

2. *What are those things that take thee up ? Are they better then God ? Or fitter to supply thy wants ?* If thou think, and trust in them accordingly, ere long thou shalt know better what they are, and have enough of thy cursed choice and confidence. Tell those that stand by thee at the parting hour, whether thou didst choose aright and make a gaining or a

saving match. O poor sinners! have you not yet warning enough to satisfie you that all things below are Vanity and Vexation, and that all your hope of happiness is above! Will not the testimony of God satisfie you? will not the experience of the world for so many thousand years together satisfie you? will not the ill success of all the damned satisfie you? will nothing but your own experience convince you? If so, consider well the experience you have already made, and seasonably retire, and try no further, and trust not so dangerous a deceiver to the last, lest you buy your knowledge at a dearer rate than you will now believe.

3. *You have daily more to do with God, than with all the World, whether you will or no: And therefore seeing you cannot avoid him if you would, prefer that voluntary obediential converse, which hath a reward, before that necessitated converse which hath none. You are alwaies in his hands: he made you for his service; and he will dispose of you and all that you have according to his will. It shall not go with you as your selves would have it, nor as your friends would have it, nor as Princes and great ones of the world would have it; (unless as their wills comply with Gods;) but as God would have it, who will infallibly accomplish all his will. If a sparrow fall not to the ground without him, and all the hairs of our heads are numbered, then certainly he overruleth all your interellets and affairs, and they are absolutely at his dispose. To whom then in reason should you so much apply your selves as unto him? If you will not take notice of him, he will take notice of you: He will remember you whether you remember him or not: but it may be with so strict and severe a remembrance, as may make you wish he did quite forget you. You are alwaies in his presence; and can you then forget him, and hold no voluntary converse with him, when you stand before him? If it be but mean inferiour persons that we dwell with and are still in company with, yet we mind them more, and speak more to them, then we do to greater persons that we seldom see. But in God there is both Greatness and Nearness to invite you. Should not all the worms on earth stand by, while the Glorious God doth call you to him, and offer you the honour and happiness of his converse? shall the Lord of Heaven and Earth stand*

stand by, and be shut out, while you are chatting or trifling with his creatures? Nay, shall he be neglected that is alwaies with you? You cannot remove your selves a moment from his sight; and therefore you should not shut your eyes, and turn away your face, and refuse to observe him who is still observing you.

Moreover, your dependence both for soul and body is all on him: You can have nothing desirable but by his gift. He feeds you, he cloatheth you, he maintaineth you, he gives you life and breath, and all things; and yet can you overlook him or forget him? Do not all his mercies require your acknowledgement? A Dog will follow him that feedeth him: his eye will be upon his Master: And shall we live upon God, and yet forget and disregard him? We are taught a better use of his Mercies by the Holy Prophet, *Psal. 66. 8, 9. O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard: which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved!*

Nay it is not *your selves* alone, but all the world that depends on God. It is his power that supporteth them, and his will that disposeth of them, and his bounty that provideth for them: And therefore he must be the observation and admiration of the world: It is less unreasonable to take no notice of the *Earth* that beareth us and yieldeth us fruit, and of the *Sun* that yields us heat and light, than to disregard the Lord that is more to us than *Sun* and *Earth*, and all things. *The eyes of all things wait on him; and he giveth them their meat in season: He openeth his hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing, Psal. 145. 15, 16. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works: All his works therefore shall praise him, and his Saints shall bless him: They shall speak of the glory of his Kingdom, and talk of his power, vers. 10, 11.*

Moreover God is so abundantly and wonderfully represented to us in all his works, as will leave us under the guilt of most unexcusable contempt, if we overlook him, and live as without him in the world. *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work: Day unto day uttereth speech; and night unto night sheweth knowledge, Psal. 19. 1, 2.*
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Thus that which may be known of God is manifest; for the invisible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that the ungodly are without excuse, Rom. 1. 19, 20. Cannot you see that which all the world revealeth? nor hear that which all the world proclaimeth? O sing ye forth the honour of his name: make his praise glorious! Say to the Lord, How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee: All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee: they shall sing unto thy name: come and see the works of God: he is terrible in his doings towards the children of men, Psal. 66. 2, 3, 4, 5. Can we pass him by that is everywhere present, and by every Creature represented to us? Can we forget him, when all the world are our remembrancers? Can we stop our ears against the voice of Heaven and Earth? Can we be ignorant of him, when the whole Creation is our Teacher? Can we overlook that holy glorious Name, which is written so legibly upon all things that ever our eyes beheld, that nothing but blindness, sleepiness or distraction, could possibly keep us from discerning it! I have many a time wondred, that (as the eye is dazzled so with the beholding of the greatest Light, that it can scarce perceive the shining of a lesser, so) the Glorious transcendent Majesty of the Lord, doth not even overwhelm our understandings, and so transport and take us up, as that we can scarce observe or remember any thing else. For naturally the greatest objects of our sense, are apt to make us at that time insensible of the smaller: And our exceeding great business, is apt to make us utterly neglect and forget those that are exceeding small: And O what Nothings are the Best and Greatest of the Creatures, in comparison of God! And what toys and trifles are all our other businesses in the world, in comparison of the business which we have with Him! But I have been stopped in these admirations by considering that the wise Creator hath fitted and ordered all his Creatures according to the use which he designeth them to: And therefore as the eye must be receptive only of so much light as is proportioned to its use and pleasure, and must be so distant from the Sun, that its Light may rather guide, than blind us, and its Heat

may

may rather *quicken*, than consume us ; so God hath made our understandings capable of no other knowledge of Him here, than what is suited to the work of holiness : And while we have *Flesh*, and *fleshly works* to do, and lawful necessary business in the world, in which Gods own commands employ us, our souls in this Lanthorn of the body, must see him through so thick a glass, as shall so far allay our apprehension, as not to distract us, and take us off the works which he enjoyneth us. And God and our souls shall be at such a distance, as that the proportionable Light of his countenance may *conduct us*, and *not overwhelm us* ; and his Love may be so revealed, as to *quicken* our desires, and draw us on to a better state, but not so as to make us utterly *impatient* of this world, and utterly *weary* of our lives, or to swallow us up, or possess us of our *most desired happiness*, before we arrive at the *state of happiness*. While the soul is in the body, it maketh so much use of the body (the brain and spirits) in all its operations ; that our wise and merciful Creator and Governour, doth respect the body as well as the soul in his ordering, disposing, and representing of the objects of those operations : so that when I consider that certainly all men would be *distracted*, if their apprehensions of God were anywhit answerable to the *Greatness of his Majesty and Glory*. (the *Brain* being not able to bear such high operations of the soul, nor the *greatness of the passions* which would necessarily follow) it much reconcileth my wondering mind, to the wise and gracious providence of God, even in setting *innocent nature* it self at such a distance from his *Glory* (allowing us the presence of *such Grace*, as is necessary to bring us up to *Glory*) Though it reconcile me not to that doleful distance which is introduced by sin, and which is furthered by Satan, the world, and the flesh, and which our Redeemer by his Spirit and Intercession must heal.

And it further reconcileth me to this disposeure and will of the blessed God, and this necessary natural distance and darkness of our minds, when I consider, that if God, and Heaven, and Hell, were as near and open to our apprehensions, as the things are which we *see and feel*, *this life* would not be what God intended it to be, a *life of Tryal and preparation* to another, a *work, a race, a pilgrimage, a warfare* ; what *Tryal*
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would there be of any mans *Faith*, or *Love*, or *Obedience*, or *Constancy*, or *Self-denial*? If we saw God stand by, or apprehended him as if we saw him (in degree) it would be no more praise-worthy or rewardable for a man to abhor all temptations to worldliness, ambition, gluttony, drunkenness, lust, cruelty, &c. than it is for a man to be kept from sleeping that is pierced with thorns, or for a man to forbear to drink a cup of melted Gold which he knoweth will burn out his bowels, or to forbear to burn his flesh in the fire. It were no great commendation to his *Chastity*, that would forbear his *filthiness*, if he saw or had the fullest apprehensions of God; when he will forbear it in the presence of a mortal man: It were no great commendations to the intemperate and voluptuous, to have no mind of sensual delights, if they had but such a knowledge of God as were equal to fight. It were no thanks to the persecutor to forbear his cruelty against the servants of the Lord, if he saw *Christ coming with his glorious Angels, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel, and to be admired in his Saints, and glorified in them that now believe*, 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9, 10. I deny not but this happily-necessitated *Holiness* is best in it self, and therefore will be our state in *Heaven*; but what is there of *Tryal* in it? or how can it be suitable to the state of man, that must have *Good* and *Evil* set before him, and *Life* and *Death* left to his choice; and that must conquer if he will be crowned, and approve his fidelity to his Creator against competitors, and must live a rewardable life before he have the reward?

But though in this life we may neither hope for, nor desire, such overwhelming sensible apprehensions of God, as the rest of our faculties cannot answer, nor our bodies bear; yet that our apprehensions of him should be *so base*, and *small*, and *dull*, and *unconstant*, as to be *born down* by the noise of worldly business, or by the presence of any creature, or by the tempting baits of sensuality, this is the more odious, by how much God is more *Great* and *Glorious* than the creature, and even because the use of the creature it self is but to reveal the *Glory* of the Lord. To have *such sleight* and *stupid* thoughts of him, as will not carry us on in uprightnes of obedience, nor keep us in his fear, nor draw out our hearts in sincere desires to
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please him, and enjoy him, and as will not raise us to a contempt of the pleasures, and profits, and honours of this world, this is to be despisers of the Lord, and to live as in a *sleep*, and to be dead to God, and alive only to the world and flesh. It is no unjust dishonour or injury to the *Creature*, to be accounted as *Nothing* in comparison of God, that it may be able to *do Nothing* against Him and his interest: But to make such a *Nothing* of the *most Glorious God*, by our contemptuous forgetfulness or neglect, as that our apprehensions of Him cannot prevail against the sordid pleasures of the flesh, and against the richest baits of sin, and against all the wrath or allurements of man, this is but to make a God of dust, and dung, and nothing, and (in heart and practice) to make God worse than dust and dung. And it is a wonder that mans understanding can become so sottish, as thus to wink the Sun it self into a constant darkness, and to take God as *Nothing*, or as no God, who is so abundantly revealed to them in astonishing transcendent Greatness and Excellency, by all the Creatures in the world, and with whom we have continually so much to do. O sinful man! into how great a depth of ignorance, stupidity and misery art thou fallen!

But because we may see by the lives of the ungodly, that they little think that they have so much to do with God, though I have spoke of this to the Godly in the other Part of this Treatise, I shall somewhat more particularly acquaint those that have most need to be informed of it, *what business it is that they have with Ged.*

1. It is not a business that *may be done*, or *left undone*, like your business with *men*: but it is such as *must be done*, or you are *undone* for ever. Nothing is *absolutely Necessary* but this: Nothing in all the world doth so much concern you. You may at far cheaper rates forbear to eat, or drink, or cloath your selves, or live, than forbear the dispatch of this necessary work.

2. Your business *with God*, and for *God* in the world, is that which *you have all your powers and endowments for*; it is that which you were born into the world for, and that which you have understanding and free will for, and that which you have your thoughts, and memories, and affections for, and that

which you have eyes, and ears, and tongues, and all your corporeal parts and abilities for: It is that which you have your food and rayment for; and that which you have your time for; and your preservation, protection and provisions: It is that which you have all your teaching for; which Christ himself came for into the world; which the Scriptures are written for; which Ministers are sent for, which all Order and Government in Church and State is principally appointed for: In a word, it is that for which you have your lives, and all things, and without which all were as nothing, and will be to you worse than nothing, if they do not further your work with God: You will wish you had never seen them if they befriend you or in this.

3. Your business with God, and for him, is such as you must be continually doing: as is incumbent on you every hour, for you have every hour given you for this end. You may dispatch this man to day, and another to morrow, and have no more to do with them again of a long time: but you have alwaies incessantly important works to do with God. For your common work should be all his work; and all should be done with principal respect to him.

But I shall yet more particularly tell the ungodly what business it is that they have with God, which it seems by their careless negligent lives they are not aware of.

1. You must be either saved or damned by him; either Glorified with Him, or punished by Him to everlasting: And it is Now that the matter must be determined, which of the two conditions you must be in: You must Now obtain your title to Heaven, if ever you will come thither: You must Now procure your deliverance from Hell fire, if ever you will escape it. Now it is that all that must be done, upon which the scales must turn for your salvation or damnation: And you know this work is principally to be done between you and God, who alone can save you or destroy you; and yet do you forget him, and live as if you had no business with him, when you have your salvation to obtain from him, and your damnation to prevent? Have you such business as this with any other?

2. You have a strict and righteous Judgement to undergo, in order

order to this salvation or damnation. You must stand before the Holy Majesty, and be judged by the Governour of the World : you must be there accused, and found guilty or not guilty ; and judged as fulfillers or as breakers of the holy Covenant of Grace : you must be set on the right hand or on the left : you must answer for all the time that you here spent, and for all the means and mercies which you here received, and for that you have done, whether it were good or evil : And it is *now* in this life that all your preparation must be made, and all that must be done, upon which your justification or condemnation will then depend. And it is between God and you that all this business must be done : And yet can you live as negligently towards him, as if you had no business with him ?

3. You have a *Death to dye*, a *change* to make which must be made but once ; which will be the entrance upon endless joy or pain : And do you think this needeth not your most timely and diligent preparation ? You must struggle with pains, and faint with weakness, and feel death taking down your earthen tabernacle : you must then have a life that is ending to review, and all that you have done laid open to your more impartial judgement ; You must then see Time as at an end, and the last sand running, and your candle ready to go out, and leave the snuff ; You must then look back upon all that you have had from the world, as ending ; and upon all that you have done as that which cannot be undone again, that you may do it better ; and you must have a more serious look into Eternity, when you are stepping thither, then you can now conceive of : And doth all this need no preparation ? It is *with God* that all that business must be *Now* transacted, that must make your death to be comfortable, or safe. If *Now* you will only converse with *men*, and know no business that you have with *God*, you shall find at last to your exceeding terrour, that you are in his hands, and passing to his bar, and that it is God that then you have to do with, when your business with all the world is at an end : *He* will *then* have something to do with *you*, if you will *now* find nothing to do with *him*.

4. In order to all this, you *have now your Peace to be made*

with God, and the pardon of all your sins to be obtained. For woe to you if then you are found under the guilt of any sin. Look back upon your lives, and remember how you have lived in the world, and what you have been doing: how you have spent your time, in youth and in your riper age; and how many sinful thoughts, and words, and deeds you have been guilty of; how oft you have sinfully pleased your appetites, and gratified your flesh, and yielded to temptations, and abused mercy, and lost your time: how oft you have neglected your duty, and betrayed your souls: how long you have lived in forgetfulness of God and your salvation; minding only the things of the flesh and of the world: how oft you have sinned ignorantly and against knowledge, through carelessness and through rashness, through negligence and through presumption, in passion, and upon deliberation; against convictions, purposes and promises: how oft you have sinned against the precepts of piety to God, and of justice and charity to men. Think how your sins are multiplied and aggravated, more in number then the hours of your lives: Aggravated by a world of mercies: by the clearest teachings, and the lowdest calls, and sharpest reproofs, and seasonable warnings, and by the long and urgent importunities of grace. Think of all these, and then consider whether you have nothing now to do with God, whether it be not a business to be followed with all possible speed and diligence to procure the pardon of all these sins: you have no such businesses as these, to transact with men: you may have businesses with them which your estates depend upon, or which touch your credit, commodity or lives; but you have no business with men (unless in subordination to God) which your salvation doth depend upon: your eternal happiness is not in their hands: They may kill your bodies, (if God permit them) but not your souls. You need not sollicite them to pardon your sins against God: It is a small matter how you are judged of by man: you have one that judgeth you, even the Lord, 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4. No man can forgive sin, but God only. O then how early, how earnestly should you cry to him for mercy! Pardon *must be obtained now or never*: There is *no justification* for that man at the day of judgement, that is not forgiven and justified now.

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Blessed then is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, whose sin is covered, and to whom it is not imputed by the Lord, Rom. 4.7,8. And wo to that man that ever he was born, that is then found without the pardon of his sins! Think of this as the case deserves, and then think if you can, that your daily business with God is small.

5. Moreover, you have *Peace of Conscience* to obtain; and that dependeth upon your *Peace with God*. Conscience will be your accuser, condemner and tormenter, if you make it not your friend, by making God your friend. Consider what Conscience hath to say against you, and how certainly it will speak home, when you would be loth to hear it: and bethink you how to answer all its accusations, and what will be necessary to make it a messenger of Peace; and then think your business with God to be but small, if you are able. It is no easie matter to get *assurance* that God is reconciled to you, and that he hath forgiven all your sins.

6. In order to all this, you must be *united to Jesus Christ*, and be *made his members*, that you may have *part in him*, and that he may wash you by his blood, and that he may answer for you to his Father! woe to you if he be not *your righteousness*, and if you have not *him* to plead your cause, and take upon him your final justification! None else can save you from the wrath of God: And he is the Saviour only of *his body*, Eph. 5.23. He hath *died for you without your own consent*, and he hath made an *universal conditional grant of pardon and salvation*, before you *consented* to it: But he will not be *united* to you, nor *actually forgive and justify and save you without your own consent*: And therefore that the Father may draw you to the Son, and may *give you Christ and Life in him* (1 Joh. 5.9, 10, 11.) when all your hope dependeth on it, you may see that you have more to do with God, then your senseless hearts have hitherto understood.

7. And that you may have a saving interest in Jesus Christ, you must *have sound Repentance* for all your former life of wickedness, and a *lively effectual faith in Christ*: Neither *sin* nor *Christ* must be made light of. *Repentance* must tell you to the very heart, that you have done foolishly in *sining*, and that *it is an evil and a bitter thing that you forsook the Lord,*
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and that his fear was not in you : and thus your Wickedness shall correct you and reprove you, Jer. 2. 19. And Faith must tell you that Christ is more necessary to you then food or life, and that there is no other name given under heaven by which you can be saved, Act. 4. 12. And it is not so easie, nor so common a thing to Repent and Believe as ignorant presumptuous sinners do imagine. It is a greater matter to have a truly humbled contrite heart, and to loath your selves for all your sins, and to loath those sins, and resolvedly give up your selves to Christ and to his Spirit for a holy life, then heartlessly and hypocritically to say, *I am sorry*, or *I Repent*, without any true Contrition or Renovation. And it is a greater matter to betake your selves to Jesus Christ as your only hope to save you both from sin and from damnation, then barely through custom and the benefit of education to say, *I do believe in Christ*. I tell you it is so great a work to bring you to sound Repentance and Faith, that it must be done by the power of God himself, Act. 5. 31. 2 Tim. 2. 25. They are the Gift of God, Eph. 2. 8. you must have his spirit to illuminate you, Eph. 1. 18. and shew you the odiousness of sin, the intolerableness of the wrath of God, the necessity and sufficiency, the power and willingness of Christ; and to overcome all your prejudice, and save you from your false opinions and deceits; and to repulse the temptations of Satan, the world and the flesh which will all rise up against you. All this must be done to bring you home to Jesus Christ, or else you will have no part in him, his righteousness and grace: And can you think that you have not most important business with God, who must do all this upon you, or else you are undone for ever!

8. Moreover you must have all the corruptions of your natures healed, and your sins subdued, and your hearts made new by sanctifying grace, and the Image of God implanted in you, and your lives made holy and sincerely conformable to the will of God. All this must be done, or you cannot be acceptable to God, nor ever will be saved: Though your carnal interest rise against it; though your old corrupted natures be against it; though your custome, and pleasure, and worldly gain and honour be against it; though all your carnal friends and superiors be against it; though the devil will do all that

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he can against it; yet all this *must be done*, or you are lost for ever: And all this must be done by the Spirit of God; for it is his work to make you New and Holy: And can you think then that the business is not great which you have with God? when you have tryed how hard every part of this work is, to be begun and carryed on, you will finde you have more to do with God, than with all the world.

9. Moreover in order to this, it is necessary that *you read, and hear, and understand the Gospel*, which must be the means of bringing you to God by Christ: This must be the instrument of God, by which he will bring you to *Repent and Believe*, and by which he will *renew your Natures*, and *imprint his Image on you*, and bring you to *Love him, and obey his will*. The *Word of God* must be your *Counsellor*, and your *delight*, and you must *set your heart to it, and meditate in it day and night*. *Knowledge* must be the means to reclaim your perverse misguided Wills, and to reform your careless crooked Lives, and to bring you out of the Kingdom of darkness into the State of Light and Life. And *such Knowledge* cannot be expected without a diligent attending unto Christ the Teacher of your souls, and a due consideration of the truth. By that time you have learnt what is needful to be learnt for a true Conversion, a sound Repentance, a saving Faith, and a holy Life, you will finde that you have far greater business with God than with all the world.

10. Moreover for the *attaining of all this Mercy, you have many a prayer to put up to God*: You must *daily pray* for the *forgiveness* of your sins, and deliverance from *temptations*, and even for *your daily bread*, or necessary provisions for the work which you have to do: You must *daily pray* for all the supplies of Grace which you want, and for the gradual mortification of the flesh, and for help in all the duties which you must perform; and for strength against all the spiritual enemies which will assault you; and preservation from the manifest evils which attend you: And these prayers must be put up with unwearied *constancy, fervency and Faith*. Keep up this course of *fervent prayer*, and beg for Christ, and Grace, and Pardon, and Salvation in any measure as they deserve, and according to thy *own necessity*, and then tell mee whether thy

business with God be small, and to be put off as lightly as it is by the ungodly.

11. Moreover, you are *made for the Glory of your Creator, and must apply your selves wholly to glorifie him in the world*: You must make his service the *trade and business* of your lives, and not put him off with something on the by: You are good for nothing else but to serve him; as a knife is made to cut, and as your cloaths are made to cover you, and your meat to feed you, and your horse to labour for you; so you are *made and redeemed*, and maintained for this, to *Love and Please* your great Creator: And can you think that it is but little business that you have with him, when he is the *End and Master* of your lives, and all you *are or have* is for him?

12. And for the due performance of his service, *you have all his Talents to employ*. To this end it is that he hath entrusted you with *reason, and health, and strength, with time, and parts, and interest, and wealth, and all his mercies, and all his ordinances and means of Grace*; and to this end must you use them, or you lose them: And you must give him an account of all at last, whether you have *improved* them all to your *Masters use*. And can you look within you, without you, about you, and see how much you are trusted with, and must be accountable to him for, and yet not see how great your business is with God?

13. Moreover, you have all the *graces* which you *shall receive to exercise*; and every grace doth carry you to God, and is exercised *upon him, or for him*: It is God that you must *study, and know, and love, and desire, and trust, and hope in, and obey*: It is God that you must *seek after, and delight in* so far as you enjoy him: It is *his* absence or displeasure that must be your *fear and sorrow*: Therefore the soul is said to be *sanctified* when it is renewed, because it is both *disposed and devoted unto God*. And therefore Grace is called *Holiness*, because it all *disposeth, and carryeth* the soul to God, and useth it *upon and for him*. And can you think your business with God is small, when you must *live upon him, and all the powers of your soul must be addicted to him, and be in serious motion towards him*? and when he must be much more to you than the Air which you breath in, or the Earth you live upon, or than

than the *Sun* that gives you light and heat; yea than the *soul* is to your *bodies*?

14. Lastly, you have abundance of *temptations* and *impediments* to *watch* and *strive* against, which would hinder you in the doing of all this work, and a *corrupt* and treacherous *heart* to watch and keep in order, which will be looking back, and shrinking from the service. Lay all this together, and then consider whether you have not more and greater business with God, than with all the creatures in the world.

And if this be so (as undeniably it is so) is there any cloak for that mans sin, who is all day taken up with creatures, and thinks of God as seldome and as carelessly as if he had *no business* with him? And yet, alas, if you take a survey of high and low, of Court, and City, and Country, you shall find that this is the case of no small number, yea of many that observe it not to be their case; it is the case of the prophane that pray in jeast, and swear, and curse, and rail in earnest. It is the case of the malignant enemies of holiness, that hate them at the heart that are most acquainted with this converse with God, and count it but hypocrisie, pride or fancy, and would not suffer them to live upon the Earth, who are most sincerely conversant in Heaven. It is the case of Pharisees and Hypocrites, who take up with ceremonious observances, as *touch not, taste not, handle not*, and such like traditions of their forefathers, instead of a spiritual rational service, and a holy serious walking with the Lord. It is the case of all ambitious men, and covetous worldlings, who make more ado to climb up a little higher than their brethren, and to hold the reins, and have their wills, and be admired and adored in the world, or to get a large estate for themselves and their posterity, than to please their Maker, or to save their souls: It is the case of every sensual Epicure, whose belly is his God, and serveth his fancy, lust and appetite before the Lord. It is the case of every un sanctified man, that seeketh first the prosperity of his flesh, before the Kingdom and Righteousness of God, and is most careful and laborious to lay up a treasure on Earth, and laboureth more (with the greater estimation, resolution and delight) for the meat that perisheth, than for that which endureth to everlasting life. All these (who are too great a part

of the world, and too great a part of professed Christians) are taken up with *creature converse*; and yet think to scape the deluge of Gods displeasure, because the *Henochs* and *Noahs* are so few who *walk with God*; and they think God will not destroy so many: And thus they think to be saved by their *multitude*, and to hide themselves in the *crowd* from God: They will go the wide and common path, and be of the mind that most are of: They will not be convinced till *most men* are convinced; that is, till their wisdom come too late, and cost them dearer than its worth. When *all men* are convinced that God should have been preferred before the world, and served before their fleshly lusts (as they will *certainly* and sadly be) then *they* will be convinced with the rest. When *all men* understand that Life was given them to have done the work which Eternal Life dependeth on, then *they* will understand it with the rest. When *all men* shall discern between the righteous and the wicked; between those that serve God, and that serve him not, then *they* will discern it with the rest: They will know what their business was in the world, and how much they had to do with God; when *all men* know it. But O how much better for them had it been to have known it in time while knowledge might have done them better service, than to make them feel the greatness of their sin and folly, and the hopes which once they had of happiness, and to help the sting of desperation continually to prick them at the heart: They would be of so *little a Flock* as that to which it was the *good pleasure* of God to give the Kingdom, Luk. 12. 32. If you demand a *Reason* of all this, their *Reason* was in their *throats* and *bellies*: They had *fleshly appetites* and *lusts*, and thereby could *relish* *fleshly pleasures*; but *spiritual life* and *appetite* they had none, and therefore *relished not* spiritual things: Had *Christ*, and *Holiness*, and *Heaven* been as *suitable* to their appetites, as the sweetness of their meat, and drink, and lusts, and as suitable to their *fantasies* as their worldly dignities and greatness were, they would then have made a better choice. They would have walked with God, if drunkenness and gluttony, and pride and wantonness, and covetousness and idleness, had been the way in which they might have walked with him. If these had been

Godliness,

Godliness, how *Godly* would they have been? How certainly would they have come to Heaven, if this had been the way? To be idle, and proud, and fleshly, and worldly, is it that they *love*; and to be humble, and holy, and heavenly, and mortified, is that which they *hate*, and cannot away with: And their *Love* and *Hatred* proceed from their corrupted natures; and these are instead of *Reason* to them. Their strong apprehensions of a *present suitability* in *fleshy pleasures* to their appetites, and of a *present unsuitableness* of a *holy life*, do keep out all effectual apprehensions of the excellencies of God, and of spiritual heavenly delights, which cross them in the pleasures which they most desire.

But yet (their appetites corrupting their understandings as well as their wills) they will not be mad without *some reason*, nor reject their Maker and their happiness without *some reason*, nor neglect that holy work which they were made for without *some reason*: Let us hear then what it is.

CHAP. III.

Object. I. **T**hey say [*It is true that God hath much to do with us, and for us: but it followeth not that we have so much to do with him, or for him, as you would have us to believe: For he is necessarily Good, and necessarily doth good; and therefore will do so, whether we think of him or not: The Sun will not give over shining on mee, though I never think on it, or never pray to it, or give it thanks. Nor doth God need any service that we can do him, no more than the Sun doth: nor is he pleased any more in the praise of men, or in their works.*

Answer. I. It is most certain that God is *Good* as *necessarily* as he is *God*: But it is not true that he must *necessarily* do good to you, or other individual persons; nor that he *necessarily* doth the Good he doth to them. As he is not *necessitated* to make *Toads* and *Serpents* as happy as *Men*, or *Men* as *Angels*; so he is not *necessitated* to save the Devils or damned souls (for he will not save them.) And he was under no greater a *necessity* to save you, than them. He was not *necessitated* to give you a *being*: He could have past you by, and caused others to have

possess your room. As it was Gods *freewill* and not any *necessity* that millions more are never born, that were in possibility of it : (For all that is possible doth not come to pass.) So that you and millions more were born, was not of *necessity* but of the same *freewill*. And as God did not *make* you of *Necessity* but of *freewill* ; so he doth not *Necessarily* but *Freely, justifie, or sanctifie, or save*. If he did it by necessity of nature, he would do it to *all* as well as *some* ; seeing *all* have a *natural capacity* of grace as well as those that receive it : God is *able* to Sanctifie and save more, yea all, if it were his will : And it is not for want of *power* or *Goodness* that he doth not. Millions of *beings* are *possible* which are not *future*. God doth not all the good which he is able, but communiceth so much to his several creatures as to his wisdom seemeth meet. If the *damned* would be so presumptuous as to argue, that because God is able yet to *sanctifie* and *save* them, therefore he *must* do it of *necessity of nature*, it would not be long before they should thus dispute themselves out of their *torments*. God will not ask leave of sinners to *be God* : Their denying him to be *Good* (that is, to be *God*) because he complyeth not with their *conceits* and *wills*, doth but prove them to be *fools* and *bad* themselves.

Indeed some Sciolists, pretending to learning, while they are ignorant of most obvious principles of natural knowledge, have taught poor sinners to cheat their souls with such dreams as these. They have made themselves believe that *Goodness* in God is nothing else but his *Benignity*, or disposition to do *Good*. As if the creature were the *ultimat end*, and all Gods *Goodness* but a *means thereto* : And so God were the *Alpha* or *first efficient*, and yet the *Creature* the *Omega* or *finis ultimus* : and all the *Goodness* in God were to be estimated and denominated by its respect to the *felicity of man* : And so the creature hath the *best part* of the *Deity*. Such notions evidently shew us, that lapsed man is predominantly *selfish*, and is become his own *Idol*, and is *lost in himself*, while he hath *lost himself*, by his *loss of God* : when we see how powerful his *self-interest* is, both with his *intellect* and *will* : even men of great ingenuity, till Sanctification hath restored them to God, and taught them better to know Him and themselves, are ready

ready to measure all *Good* or *Evil* by their *own interest*; when yet common reason would have told them, if they had not perverted it by *pride* and *partial studies*, that *short of God*, even among the *Creatures*, there are *many things* to be preferred before themselves and their *own felicity*: He is irrationally enslaved by *self love*, that cannot see that the *happiness of the world*, or of his *Country*, or of *multitudes* is more to be desired than *his happiness alone*. And that he ought rather to choose to be *annihilated* or to be *miserable* (if it were made a matter of his *deliberation* and *choice*) than to have the *Sun* taken out of the *firmament*, or the *World*, or his *Country* to be *annihilated* or *miserable*. And God is infinitely above the *Creature*.

Obj. But they say, *He needeth nothing to make him happy, having no defect of happiness.*

Ans. And what of that? Must it needs therefore follow that he *made not all things for himself*, but for the *creature finally*? He is perfectly happy in himself, and his *will is himself*: This *will* was fulfilled when the world was not made, (for it was his will that it should not be made till it was made) and it is fulfilled when it is made, and fulfilled by all that comes to pass: And as the *absolute simple Goodness and Perfection of Gods essence* is the *Greatest Good*, the eternal immutable Good; so the *fulfilling of his will* is the *ultimate end* of all *obedience*: He hath expressed himself to *take pleasure* in his works, and in the holiness, obedience and happiness of his chosen: And though *Pleasure* be not the same thing in God as it is in man (no more than *will* or *understanding* is) yet it is *not nothing* which God expresseth by such terms, but something which we have no fitter expression for: This *Pleasing of the will of God* being the *end of all*, even of our *felicity*, is *better* than our *felicity* it self.

They that will maintain that God, who is *naturally* and *necessarily Good*, hath no other *Goodness* but his *Benignity* or aptness to do good to his creatures, must needs also maintain that (*God being for the Creature, and not the Creature for God*) the *Creature is better* than *God*, as being the *ultimate end* of God himself, and the highest use of all his *Goodness* being but for the *felicity* of the *Creature*: As also that God doth do all the *Good* that he is able: (For *natural necessary agents work*

ad ultimum posse.) And that all men shall be saved, and all Devils, and every worm and toad be equal to the highest Angel, or else that God is *not able to do it*. And that he *did thus make happy all his Creatures from eternity* (for natural necessary agents work *alwayes* if they be not forcibly hindered;) and that there *never was* such a thing as *pain or misery*, in *man or brute*, or else that God was not able to prevent it. But abundance of such odious consequences must needs follow from the denying of the *Highest Good*, which is *God himself*, and confessing none but his *efficient Goodness*. But some will be offended with me for being so serious in confuting such an irrational Atheistical conceit, who know not *how far* it prevaileth with *an Atheistical generation*.

Be it known to you careless sinners, that though the *Sun* will *shine* on you whether you think on it or not, or love it, or thank it or not; and the *fire* will *warm* you whether you think on it and love it or not; yet *God* will not *justifie* or *save* you whether you *love* him or *think* on him or not: *God* doth not operate *brutishly* in your salvation; but *Governeth* you *wisely*, as *rational Creatures* are to be governed; and therefore will give you Happiness as a *reward*; and therefore will not deal alike with those that love him and that love him not, that seek him and that seek him not, with the labourers and the loiterers, the faithful and the slothful servant. Would you have us believe that *you* know better than *God himself* what pleaseth him, or on what terms he will give his benefits, and save mens souls? or do you know his nature better than *he* knoweth it, that you dare presume to say, because he needeth not our love or duty, therefore they are not *pleasing* to him! Then what hath God to do in governing the world, if he be pleased and displeas'd with nothing that men do, or with good and evil actions equally? Though you cannot *hurt* him, you shall find that he will hurt you if you disobey him: And though you cannot make *him* happy by your *holiness*, you shall find that he will not make *you* happy without it.

And if he did work as necessarily as the Sun doth shine, according to your similitude; yet, 1. Even the shining of the Sun doth not illuminate the blind, nor doth it make the seeds of thorns and nettles to bring forth vines or roses, nor the
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gendering of frogs to bring forth men; but it actuateth all things according to the several natures of their powers. And therefore how can you expect that an ignorant unbelieving and unholy soul, should enjoy felicity in God, when in that state they are uncapable of it? 2. And if the *Sun* do necessarily illuminate any one, he must necessarily be illuminated; and if it necessarily warm or quicken any thing, it must be necessarily warmed and quickened: else you would assert contradictions. So if God did necessarily save you and make you happy, you would necessarily be saved and made happy. And that containeth essentially your *Holiness*, your *Loving*, *desiring* and *seeking* after God; To be *saved* or *happy* without enjoying God by *Love*, or to *Love* him and not *Desire* him, *seek* him or *obey* him, are as great contradictions as to be *illuminated* without *light*, or *quicken*ed without *life*. What way soever it be that God conveyeth his *sanctifying spirit*, I am sure that if any man have not the *spirit of Christ*, the same is none of his, Rom. 8. 9. and that without *Holiness* none shall see God, Heb. 12. 14. and that if you will have the Kingdom of God, you must seek it first, preferring it before all earthly things, *Matth.* 6. 33. *Joh.* 6. 27. *Col.* 4. 1, 2, 3. And then if all the question that remaineth undecided be, whether God do you *wrong* or not in *damning* you, or whether God be *Good* because he will not save you when he can, I shall leave you to him to receive satisfaction, who will easily silence and confound your impudence, and justifie his works and laws. Prepare your accusations against him, if you will needs insist upon them, and try whether he or you shall prevail: but remember that thou art a worm and he is God, and that he will be the only judge when all is done; and ignorance and impiety that prate against him to their own confusion, in the day of his patience, shall not then usurp the throne.

Object. 2. *But how can God be sic for mortals to converse with, when they see him not, and are infinitely below him?*

Ans^r. I hope you will not say that you have nothing to do at home, with your own souls: and yet you never saw your souls. And it is the souls, the *Reason* and the *will* of men that you daily converse with here in the world, more then their bodies, and yet you never saw their souls, their *Reason* or their *will*s.

wills. If you have no higher light to discern by then your *eyesight*, you are not *men* but *beasts*. If you are *men*, you have *Reason*, and if you are *Christians* you have *faith*, by which you know things that you never saw. You have more *dependance* on the things that are *unseen*, then on those which *you see*, and have much more to do with them.

And though God be infinitely above us, yet he condescendeth to communicate to us according to our capacities: As the Sun is far from us, and yet doth not disdain to enlighten, and warm, and quicken a worm or fly here below. If any be yet so much an Atheist as to think that Religious converse with God is but a fancy, let him well answer me these few questions.

Quest. 1. Doth not the continued *being* and *well-being* of the Creatures, tell us that *there is a God* on whom (for *being* and *well-being*) they depend, and from whom they are and have whatsoever they are and whatsoever they have? And therefore that passively all the Creatures have more respect to him by far then to one another?

Quest. 2. Seeing God communicateth to every Creature according to their *several capacities*; is it not meet then that he deal with *man as man*, even as a *Creature Rational*, capable to know and love and obey his Great Creator, and to be happy in the knowledge, love and fruition of him? That man hath such *natural faculties*, and *capacities*, is not to be denied by a man that knoweth what it is to be a man: And that God hath not given him these *in vain*, will be easily believed by any that indeed believe that he is God.

Quest. 3. Is there *any thing else* that is *finally worthy* of the highest actions of our souls? or that is fully *adequate* to them, and fit to be our happiness? If not, then we are left either to certain infelicity, contrary to the tendency of our natures, or else we must seek our felicity in God.

Quest. 4. Is there any thing more certain then that by the title of Creation, our *Maker* hath a *full and absolute right* to all that he hath made; and consequently to *all our love* and *obedience*, our *time* and *powers*? For whom should they all be used but for him from whom we have them?

Quest. 5. Can any thing be more sure, then that God is the

the *Righteous Governour* of the world? and that he Governeth man as a *rational creature*, by *Laws* and *Judgement*? And can we live under his absolute *Sovereignty*, and under his many *righteous Laws*, and under his *Promises* of salvation to the *Justified*, and under his *threatnings* of damnation to the *unjustified*, and yet not have more to do with God than with all the world? If indeed you think that God doth not Love and reward the holy and obedient, and punish the ungodly and disobedient, then either you take him *not* to be the *Governour* of the world, or (which is worse) you take him to be an *unrighteous Governour*: And then you must by the same reason say, that *Magistrates* and *Parents* should do so too, and love and reward the obedient and disobedient alike: But if any mans disobedience were exercised to *your hurt*, by *slandering*, or *beating*, or *robbing* you, I dare say you would not then commend so *indifferent* and *unjust* a Governour.

Quest. 6. If it be not needless for man to *Labour* for *food* and *rayment*, and necessary provision for his body, how can it be needless for him to *labour* for the happiness of his soul? If God will not give us our *daily bread* while we never *think* of it, or *seek* it, why should we expect that he will give us *Heaven* though we never *think* on it, *value* it, or *seek* it?

Quest. 7. Is it not a contradiction to be *happy* in the fruition of God, and yet *not to mind* him, *desire* him, or *seek* him? How is it that the *Soul* can reach its *Object*, but by *estimation*, *desire* and *seeking* after it: And how should it *enjoy* it but by *Loving* it, and taking *pleasure* in it?

Quest. 8. While you seem but to wrangle against the *Duty* of believers, do you not plead against the *comfort* and *happiness* of believers? For surely the *employment* of the soul on God (and for him) is the *health* and *pleasure* of the soul; And to call away the soul from such employment, is to *imprison* it in the *dungeon* of this world, and to forbid us to smell to the *sweetest flowers*, and confine us to a *sink* or *dunghill*; and to forbid us to *tast* of the food of *Angels*, or of *men*, and to offer us *Vineger* and *Gall*, or turn us over to feed with *Swine*. He that pleadeth that there is no such thing as *real Holiness* & *Communion with God*, doth plead in effect that there is no true felicity or delight for any of the *Sons of men*: And

how welcome should ungodly Atheists be unto mankind, that would for ever exclude them all from happiueſs, and make them believe they ate all made to be remedileſly miſerable?

And here take notice of the madneſs of the unthankful world, that hateth and perſecuteth the Preachers of the Goſpel, that bring them the glad tidings of pardon, and hope, and life eternal, of ſolid happineſs, and durable delight; and yet they are not offended at theſe Atheiſts and ungodly Cavillers, that would take them off from all that is truly *good* and *pleaſant*, and make them believe that nature hath made them capable of no higher things than beaſts, and hath enthralled them in *remedileſs infelicity*.

Queſt. 9. Do you not ſee by experience that there are a people in the world whoſe hearts are upon God, and the liſe to come, and that make it their chiefeſt care and buſineſs to ſeek him and to ſerve him? How then can you ſay that there is no ſuch thing, or that we are not capable of it, when it is the caſe of ſo many before your eyes? If you ſay that it is but their fancy or ſelf-deceit: I anſwer, that really their hearts are ſet upon God, and the everlaſting world, and that it is their chiefeſt care and buſineſs to attain it; this is a thing that they feel, and you may ſee in the bent and labour of their lives; and therefore you cannot call that a fancy, of which you have ſo full experience: But whether the motives that have invited them, and engaged them to ſuch a choice and courſe, be *fancies* and *deceits* or not, let God be Judge, and let the awakened conſciences of worldlings themſelves be Judge, when they have ſeen the end, and tryed whether it be Earth or Heaven that is the ſhadow, and whether it be God or their unbelieving hearts that was deceived.

Queſt. 10. Have you any hopes of living with God for ever, or not? If you have not, no wonder if you live as beaſts, when you have no higher expectations than beaſts: When we are ſo blind as to give up all our hopes, we will alſo give up all our care and holy diligence, and think we have nothing to do with Heaven. But if you have any ſuch hopes, can you think that any thing is fitter for the chiefeſt of your thoughts and cares, than the God and Kingdom, which you hope for ever to enjoy? Or is there any thing that can be more ſuitable, or ſhould be

be more *delightful* to your thoughts, than to employ them about your highest hopes, upon your endless happiness and joy? and should not that be now the most noble and pleasant employment for your minds, which is nearest to that which you hope to be exercised in for ever? Undoubtedly he that hath *true and serious thoughts* of Heaven, will highly value that life on *Earth* which is likeliest to the life in Heaven: And he that hateth, or is most averse to that which is nearest to the work of Heaven, doth boast in vain of his hopes of Heaven.

By this time you may see (if you love not to be blind) that mans *chiefest business* in the world is *with his God*, and that our *thoughts* and all our powers are made to be employed upon him, or for him; and that this is no such needless work as Atheists make themselves believe.

Remember that it is the description of the desperately wicked, *Psal. 10. 4.* that *God is not in all his thoughts*. And if yet you understand it not, I will a little further shew you the evil of such Atheistical unhallowed thoughts.

1. There is nothing but *darkness* in all *thy Thoughts*, if God be not in them. Thou *knowest nothing*, if thou knowest not *him*; and thou *usest not* thy knowledge, if thou use it not on *him*. To know the creature as without God, is to *know nothing*: No more than to know all the *Letters* in the Book, and not to know their *signification* or *sense*. All things in the world are but *insignificant ciphers*, and of no other *sense* or *use*, if you separate them from *God*, who is their *sense* and *end*. If you leave out *God* in all your studies, you do but dream and dote, and not understand what you *seem* to understand. Though you were taken for the learnedst men in the world, and were able to discourse of all the Sciences, and your thoughts had no lower employment daily than the most sublime speculations which the nature of all the creatures doth afford, it is all but folly and impertinent dotage, if it reach not unto God.

2. Yea, your thoughts are *erroneous* and *false*, which is more than *barely ignorant*, if God be not in them. You have *false thoughts* of the world; of your *houses* and *lands*, and *friends* and *pleasures*, and whatsoever, is the daily employment of your minds. You take them to be *something*, when they are

nothing; you are covetous of the *empty purse*, and know not that you cast away the *treasure*: You are thirsty after the *empty cup*, when you wilfully cast away the *drink*. You hungrily seek to feed upon a *painted feast*: You *murder* the creature by separating it from *God* who is *its life*, and then you are *enamoured* on the *carkass*, and spend your daies and thoughts in its cold embracements. Your thoughts are but vagabonds, stragling abroad the world, and following impertinencies, if *God* be not in them. You are like men that walk up and down in their sleep, or like those that have lost themselves in the dark, who weary themselves in going they know not *whither*, and have *no end*, nor *certain way*.

3. If *God* be not in all your thoughts, they are *all in vain*. They are like the drone that gathereth no honey: They fly abroad and return home empty: They bring home no matter of honour to *God*, of profit or comfort to your selves: They are employed to no more purpose than in your *dreams*: Only they are more capable of sin: Like the distracted thoughts of one that doteth in a fever, they are all but *non-sense*, what ever you employ them on, while you leave out *God* who is the *sense* of all.

4. If *God* be not in all your thoughts, they are nothing but *confusion*: There can be no just *Unity* in them, because they forsake him who is the only *Center*, and are scattered abroad upon incoherent creatures. There can be no true *Unity* but in *God*: The further we go from him, the further we run into divisions and confusions. There can be no just *Method* in them, because he is left out that is the *Beginning* and the *End*. They are not like a well ordered Army, where every one is moved by the will of *one Commander*, and all know their colours and their ranks, and unanimously agree to do their work: But like a swarm of Flies, that buzze about they know not *whither*, nor *why*, nor *for what*. There is no true *Governement* in your thoughts, if *God* be not in them; they are masterless and vagrants, and have no true *order*, if they be not ordered *by him* and *to him*; if he be not their *First* and *Last*.

5. If *God* be not in all your thoughts, there is no *Life* in them: They are but like the motion of a bubble, or a feather in

in the Air: They are *impotent* as to the resisting of any evil, and as to the doing of any saving-good: They have no *strength* in them, because they are laid out upon *objects* that have no strength: They have no quickning, renewing, reforming, encouraging, resolving, confirming *power* in them, because there is no such power in the things on which they are employed: whereas the thoughts of *God* and *everlasting life*, can do wonders upon the soul: They can raise up men above this world, and teach them to despise the worldlings Idol, and look upon all the pleasures of the flesh as upon a Swines delight in wallowing in the mire. They can renew the soul, and cast out the most powerful beloved sin, and bring all our powers into the obedience of *God*, and that with pleasure and delight: They can employ us with the *Angels*, in a heavenly conversation, and shew us the *Glory* of the world above, and advance us above the life of the greatest Princes upon earth: But the *thoughts* of *earthly* *fleshy* things have *power* indeed to *delude* men, and *mislead* them, and hurry them about in a vertiginous motion; but no power to support us, or subdue concupiscence, or heal our folly, or save us from temptations, or reduce us from our errors, or help us to be useful in the world, or to attain felicity at last. There is no *Life*, nor *Power*, nor *Efficacy* in our *thoughts*, if *God* be not in them.

6. There is no *stability* or *fixedness* in your *thoughts*, if *God* be not in them. They are like a boat upon the Ocean, tost up and down with winds and waves: The *mutable* *uncertain* *creatures* can yield no *rest* or *settlement* to your minds. You are *troubled* about many things; and the more you think on them, and have to do with them, the more are you troubled: But you forget the *One thing Necessary*, and fly from the *Eternal Rock*, on which you must build if ever you will be established. While the Creature is in your thought instead of *God*, you will be one day deluded with its unwholesome pleasure, and the next day feel it gripe you at the heart: One day it will seem your happiness, and the next you will wish you had never known it: That which seemeth the *only comfort* of your lives this year, may the next year make you *awearry* of your lives. One day you are impatiently desiring and seeking it, as if you could not live without it: and the next day, or ere long you
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are impatiently desiring to be rid of it : You are now taking in your pleasant morsels, and drinking down your delicious draughts, and jovially sporting it with your inconsiderate companions : But how quickly will you be repenting of all this, and complaining of your folly, and vexing your selves, that you took not warning, and made not a wiser choice in time ? The creature was never made to be your *end*, or *rest*, or *happiness* : and therefore you are but like a man in a wilderness or a maze, that may go and go but knoweth not whither, and findeth no end, till you come home to God, who only is your proper end, and make him the *Lord* and *life* and *pleasure* of your thoughts.

7. As there is no present *fixedness* in your thoughts, so the *business* and *pleasure* of them will be of very *short continuance*, if God be not the chief in all. And who would choose to imploy his thoughts on such things as he is sure they must *soon forget*, and never more have any business with to all eternity ! You shall think of those houses, and lands, and friends, and pleasures but a little while, unless it be with repenting tormenting thoughts, in the place of misery : you will have no delight to think of any thing, which is now most precious to your flesh, when once the flesh it self decays, and is no more capable of delight, *Psal. 146. 4. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth ; in that very day his thoughts perish.*

Call in your thoughts then from these transitory things, that have no consistency or continuance, and turn them unto him with whom they may find everlasting employment and delight : Remember not the enticing baits of sensuality and pride, but [*Remember now thy Creatour in the dayes of thy youth, while the evil dayes come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.*]

8. Thy thoughts are but *sordid, dishonourable* and *low*, if God be not the *chiefest* in them. They reach no higher then the habitation of beasts ; nor do they attain to any sweeter employment then to meditate on the felicity of a brute : Thou chooshest with the *fly* to feed on dung and filthy ulcers, and as *magots* to live on stinking carrion, when thou mightst have free access to God himself, and mightst be entertained in the *Court of heaven*, and *welcomed* thither by the holy Angels :
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Thou wallowest in the mire with the swine, or diggest thy self a house in the earth, as worms and moles do, when thy thoughts might be soaring up to God, and might be taken up with high and holy and everlasting things. What if your thoughts were employed for preferment, wealth and honour in the world? Alas what silly things are these, in comparison of what your souls are capable of? You will say so your selves when you see how they will end, and fail your expectations. Imprison not your minds in this infernal cell, when the superior regions are open to their access: confine them not to this narrow vessel of the body, whose tossings and dangers on these boistrous seas will make them restless, and disquiet them with tumultuous passions, when they may safely land in Paradise and there converse with Christ. God made you *men*, and if you reject not his grace, will make you *Saints*: Make not your selves like *beasts* or *vermine*. God gave you *souls* that can step in a moment from earth to heaven, and there foretast the endless joyes: Do not you stick then fast in clay, and fetter them with worldly cares, or intoxicate them with fleshly pleasures, nor employ them in the worse-then-childish toys of ambitious, sensual, worldly men: Your thoughts have Manna, Angels food, provided them by God: If you will loath this and refuse it, and choose with the serpent to feed on the dust, or upon the filth of sin, God shall be judge, and your consciences one day shall be more faithful witnesses, whether you have dealt like wise men or like fools; like friends or enemies to your selves; and whether you have not chosen baseness, and denyed your selves the advancements which was offered you.

9. If God be not the *chiefest* in your *thoughts*, they are no better then *dishonest* and *unjust*. You are guilty of denying him his *own*. He made not your mindes for lust and pleasure, but for *himself*: you expect that your cattle, your goods, your servants, be employed for your selves, because they are your own. But God may call your *minds* his *own* by a much fuller title: for you hold all but derivatively and dependently from him: what will you call it but injustice and dishonesty, if your wife, or children, or servants, or goods, be more at the use and service of others, then of you? If any can shew a

better title to your Thoughts then God doth, let him have them; but if not, deny him not his own. O straggle not so much from home; for you will be nowhere else so well as there: Desire not to follow strangers, you know not whither, nor for what: you have a Master of your own, that will be better to you then all the strangers in the world. Bow not down to creatures, that are but Images of the true and solid good: Commit not Idolatry or Adultery with them in your thoughts: Remember still that God stands by: Bethink you how he will take it at your hands: and how it will be judged of at last, when he pleads his right, his kindness, and sollicitations of you; and you have so little to say for any pretence of right or merit in the creature. Why are not men ashamed of the greatest *dishonesty* against God, when all that have any humanity left them, do take *adultery, theft* and other *dishonesty* against creatures for a shame? The time will come when God and his *interest* shall be better understood, that *this dishonesty* against Him, will be the matter of the most confounding shame, that ever did or could befall men. Prevent this by the juster exercise of your thoughts, and keeping them pure and chaste to God.

10. If God be not in your *thoughts* (and the *chiefest* in them) there will be no matter in them of *solid comfort* or *content*. *Trouble* and *deceit* will be all their work: when they have fled about the earth, and taken a taste of every flower, they will come laden home with nothing better then *Vanity* and *Vexation*. Such thoughts may excite the *laughter* of a fool, and cause that *mirth* that is called *madness*, Eccles. 7. 4, 6, and 2. 2. But they will never conduce to *settled Peace*, and *durable content*: And therefore they are alwaies *repented* of themselves, and are troublesome to our *review*, as being the *shame* of the sinner, which he would fain be cleared of or disown. Though you may *approach* the creature with passionate fondness, and the most delightful promises and hopes, be sure of it, you will *come off* at last with grief and disappointment; if not with the loathing of that which you chose for your delight. Your thoughts are in a wilderness among thorns and bryars, when God is not in them as their guide and end: They are lost and torn among the creatures; but rest and satisf-

satisfaction they will find none. It may be at the present it is pleasanter to you to think of recreation, or business, or worldly wealth than to think of God: But the pleasure of these thoughts is as delusory, and short-lived, as are the things themselves on which you think. *How long* will you think with pleasure on such *fading transitory* things? And the pleasure cannot be great at the present, which reacheth but the flesh and fantasie, and which the possessed knoweth will be but short. Nay you will shortly find by sad experience, that of all the creatures under heaven, there will *none be so bitter* to your thoughts, as *those* which you now find greatest carnal sweetness in: O how bitter will the thought of idolized honour, and abused wealth and greatness be to a dying or a damned *Dives*! The thoughts of *that Alehouse* or *Playhouse* where thou hadst thy greatest pleasure, will trouble thee more than the thoughts of all the houses in the town besides: The thoughts of *that one woman* with whom thou didst commit thy pleasant sin, will wound and vex thee more than the thoughts of all the women in the town besides. The thoughts of *that beloved sport* which thou couldst not be weaned from, will be more troublesome to thee than the thoughts of a thousand other things in which thou hadst no inordinate delight. For the *end of sinful mirth is sorrow*: when *Solomon* had tryed to please himself to the full, in mirth, in build-ings, vineyards, woods, waters, in servants, and possessions, silver, and gold, and cattel, and singers, and instruments of musick of all sorts, in greatness, and all that the eye or appetite or heart desired, he findeth when he awaked from this pleasant dream, that he had all this while been taken up with *Vanity* and *Vexation*, in so much that he saith on the review [*Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun, is grievous to me, for all is vanity and vexation of spirit: Yea I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun,*] Eccles. 2. 1, 2, 3, &c. 17. 18. You may toil out and tire your selves among these bryars, in this barren wilderness; but if ever you would feel any *solid ground* of *quietness* and *rest*, it must be by coming off from *vanity*, and seeking your felicity in God, and living sincerely for *Him* and upon *Him*, as the worldling doth upon the world. *His pardoning mercy* must

must *begin* your *Peace* forgiving you your *former thoughts*, and his *healing quickening* mercy must *increase* it, by teaching you better to employ your thoughts, and drawing up your hearts unto himself; and his *glorifying* mercy must *perfect* it, by giving you the full intuition and fruition of himself in heaven, and employing you in his perfect Love and Praise, not leaving any room for creatures, nor suffering a thought to be employed on vanity for ever.

CHAP. IV.

BY this time I hope you may see reason to call your selves to a strict account, what converse you have been taken up with in the world, and upon what you have exercised your thoughts: surely you must needs be conscious, that the thoughts which have been denied God, have brought you home but little satisfaction, and have not answered the ends of your creation, redemption or preservation! and that they are now much fitter matter for your penitential tears, than for your comfort, in the review! I do not think you *dare own and stand to*, those thoughts which have been spent for *fleshly pleasures*, or in *unnecessary worldly cares*, or that were wasted in impertinent vagaries upon *any thing*, or *nothing*, when you should have been seeking God! I do not think you have now any great pleasure, in the review of those thoughts, which once were taken up with *pleasure*, when your most pleasant thoughts should have been of God. Dare you approve of your rejecting your Creatour and the great concernments of your soul out of your *thoughts*, and wasting them upon things unprofitable and vain? Did not God, and Heaven deserve more of your serious thoughts than any thing else that ever they were employed on? Have you laid them out on any thing that more concerned you? or on any thing more excellent, more honourable, more durable, or that could claim precedency upon any just account? Did you not shut *heaven it self* out of your thoughts, when you shut out *God*? And is it not just that *God and Heaven* should shut out *you*? If *Hea-*

ven be not the principal matter of your *thoughts*, its plain that you do not principally *love it* : And if so, judge you whether those that *Love it not* are fit to be made possessors of it.

O poor distracted senseless world ! Is not God Great enough to command and take up your chiefest cogitations ? Is not Heaven enough to find them work, and afford them satisfaction and delight ? And yet is the dung and dotage of the world enough ? Is your honour and wealth, and fleshly delights and sports enough ? God will shortly make you know, whether this were wise and equal dealing ! Is God so low, so little, so undeserving, to be so oft and easily forgotten, and so hardly and so sleightly remembred ? I tell you, *ere long* he will *make you* think of him to your sorrow, whether you will or no, if grace do not now set open your hearts, and procure him better entertainment :

But perhaps you will think that you *walk with God*, because you *think of him sometimes ineffectually*, and as on the by. But is he *esteemed as your God*, if he have not the *Command*, and if he have not the precedency of his creatures ? Can you dream that indeed you *walk with God*, when your hearts were never grieved for offending him, nor never much solicitous how to be reconciled to him ; nor much inquisitive whether your state or way be pleasing or displeasing to him ? when all the business of an unspeakable importance, which you have to do with God, before you pass to judgement, is *forgotten and undone*, as if you knew not of any such work that you had to do ! when you make no serious preparation for death, when you call not upon God in secret, or in your families, unless with a little heartless lip labour ; and when you love not the spirituality of his worship, but only delude your souls with the mockage of hypocritical outside complement. Do you *walk with God* while you are plotting for preferment, and gaping after worldly greatness, while you are gratifying all the desires of your flesh, and making provision for the future satisfying of its lusts ? *Rom. 13. 13.* Are you walking with God when you are hating him in his Holiness, his Justice, his Word and Waies, and hating all that seriously love and seek him ? when you are doing your worst to dispatch the work of your damnation, and put your salvation past all hope, and

draw as many to Hell with you as you can : If this be a *walking with God*, you may take further comfort that you shall also *dwell with God* according to the sense of such a walk : you shall *dwell with him* as a *devouring fire*, and as *just*, whom you thus walked with in the *contempt* of his mercies, and the *provocation* of his *Justice*.

I tell you, if you *walk with God* indeed, his authority would rule you, his Greatness would much take up your minds, and leave less room for little things ; You would trust his promises, and fear his threatnings, and be awed by his presence, and the Idols of your hearts would fall before him ; He would overpower your lusts, and call you off from your ambitious and covetous designs, and obscure all the creatures Glory. Believing serious effectual thoughts of God, are very much different from the *common, doubtful, dreaming, uneffectual* cogitations of the ungodly world.

Object. But (perhaps some will say) [*This seemeth to be the work of Preachers, and not of every Christian to be alwaies meditating of God : Poor people must think of other matters : They have their busineses to do, and their families to provide for : And ignorant people are weak-headed, and are not able either to manage or endure a contemplative life : so much thinking of God will make them melancholy and mad, as experience tells us it hath done by many : and therefore this is no exercise for them.*]

To this I answer, 1. *Every Christian* hath a *God* to serve, and a *Soul* to save, and a *Christ* to believe in and obey, and an *endless happiness* to secure and enjoy, as well as *Preachers : Pastors* must study to *instruct* their flock, and to *save themselves*, and those that hear them : The *people* must study to *understand* and *receive* the mercy offered them, and to make their own calling and election sure. It is not said of *Pastors only*, but of *every blessed man*, that *His delight is in the Law of the Lord*, and therein doth he meditate day and night, Psal. 1. 2. 2. And the *due meditation* of the soul upon *God*, is so far from taking you off from your necessary business in the world, that it is the only way to your *orderly* and *successful* management of it. 3. And it is not a *distracting thoughtfulness* that I perswade you to, or which is included in a *Christians walk with God* : but it is a *directing, quickening, exalting, comforting* course of *meditation* :

dition: Many a hundred have grown melancholy and mad with careful discontentful thoughts of the world; it doth not follow therefore that noman must think of the world at all, for fear of being mad or melancholy; but only that they should think of it more regularly, and correct the error of their thoughts and passions: so is it about God and heavenly things: Our thoughts are to be well ordered, and the error of them cured, and not the use of them forborn. Atheism and Impiety, and forgetting God, are unhappy means to prevent melancholy: There are wiser means for avoiding madness, than by renouncing all our Reason, and living by sense like the beasts that perish, and forgetting that we have an everlasting life to live.

But yet because I am sensible that some do here mistake on the other hand, and I would not lead you into any extrem, I shall fully remove the scruple contained in this Objection, by shewing you in those following Propositions, in what sense, and how far your thoughts must be taken up with God (supposing what was said in the beginning, where I described to you the duty of walking with God.)

Prop. 1. When we tell you that your Thoughts must be on God, it is not a course of idle musing, or meer thinking, that we call you to, but it is a necessary practical thinking of that which you have to do, and of him that you must love, obey and enjoy. You will not forget your Parents, or Husband, or Wife, or Friend; and yet you will not spend your time in sitting still and thinking of them, with a musing unprofitable thoughtfulness; But you will have such thoughts of them, and so many as are necessary to the Ends, even to the Love and Service which you owe them, and to the Delight that your hearts should have in the fruition of them. You cannot love, or obey, or take pleasure in those that you will not think of: You will follow your trades, or your Masters service but unhappily, if you will not think on them. Thinking is not the work that we must take up with: It is but a subservient instrumental duty, to promote some greater higher duty: Therefore we must Think of God, that we may Love him, and do his Service, and Trust him, and Fear him, and Hope in him, and make him our Delight. And all this is it that we call you to,
when

when we are perswading you to *Think on God*.

2. An *hypocrite*, or a *wicked enemy* of God, may *Think* of him *speculatively*, and perhaps be more frequent in such *thoughts* than many practical believers. A *Learned man* may study about God, as he doth about other matters, and names, and notions; and propositions and decisions concerning God, may be a principal part of his Learning: A *Preacher* may study about God and the matters of God, as a *Physician* or a *Lawyer* do about the matters of their own profession, either for the *pleasure* which knowledge as knowledge brings to humane nature, or for the *credit* of being esteemed *wise* and *learned*, or because their *gain* and *maintenance* comes in this way. They that fill many Volumes with Controversies concerning God, and fill the Church with contentions and troubles by them, and their own hearts with malice and uncharitableness against those that are not of their opinions, have many and many a *thought of God*, which yet will do nothing to the *saving* of their *souls*, no more than they do to the *sanctifying* of them. And such learned men may think more *Orthodoxly* and *Methodically* concerning God, than many an honest serious Christian, who yet thinks of him more *effectually* and *savingly*: Even as they can *discourse* more *orderly* and *copiously* of God, when yet they have no *saving knowledge* of him.

3. *All men* must not bestow *so much time* in Meditation as *some* must do: It is the *Calling* of *Ministers* to study so as to furnish their minds with all those truths concerning God, which are needful to the Edification of the Church; and so to *meditate on these things* as to give themselves wholly to them, 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16. It is both the work of their *common* and their *special Calling*: The study necessary to *Christians as such*, belongeth as well to others as to them: But other men have another *Special* or *particular Calling*, which also they must think of, so far as the nature and ends of their daily labours do require. It is a hurtful error to imagine that men must either lay by their Callings to meditate on God, or that they must do them negligently, or to be taken up in the midst of their employments with *such studies of God* as *Ministers* are that are *separated to that work*.

4. No man is bound to be *continually* taken up with *actual, distinct* cogitations about God: For in duty we have many many other things to think on, which must have their time: And as we have Callings to follow, and must eat our bread in the sweat of our brows, so we must manage them with prudence: *A good man will guide his affairs with discretion*, Psal. 112. 5. It is both necessary as *duty*, and necessary as a *means* to the preservation of our very faculties, that both *body* and *mind* have their *times* of employment about our lawful business in the world: The *understandings* of many cannot bear it, to be *alwaies* employed on the *greatest* and *most serious* things: Like *Lute-strings* they will *break*, if they be raised *too high*, and be not let down and relaxed when the lesson is plaid. To think of *nothing else but God*, is to *break the Law of God*, and to confound the mind, and to disable it to *think aright of God*, or *any thing*. As he that bid us *pray continually*, did not mean that we should do *nothing else*, or that *actual prayer* should have no interruptions, but that *habitual desires* should on *all meet occasion* be actuated and *expressed*; so he that would be *chief in all our thoughts*, did never mean that we should have *no thoughts* of any thing else, or that our serious meditation on him should be *continual* without interruption: but that the *final intending* of God, and our *dependence on him*, should be *so constant* as to be the *spring* or *mover* of the rest of the thoughts and actions of our lives.

5. An *habitual intending* God as our *End*, and *depending on his support*, and *subjection to his Government*, will carry on the soul in a sincere and constant course of Godliness, though the *actual most observed thoughts* of the soul, be *fewer* in number about God, than about the *means* that lead unto him, and the *occurrences* in our way: The soul of man is very active and comprehensive, and can think of several things at once: and when it is *once clear and resolved* in any case, it can *act* according to *that knowledge and resolution*, without any *present sensible cogitation*; nay while its *actual most observed thoughts*, are upon something else. A Musician that hath an *habitual skill*, can keep time and tune while he is *thinking* of some other matter: A *Weaver* can cast his shuttle right, and work truly, while he is thinking or talking of other things. A man can *eat*

and *drink* with discretion while he talks of other things. Some men can dictate to two or three Scribes at once, upon divers subjects: A Traveller can keep on his way, though he seldom think distinctly of his Journeys end, but be thinking or discoursing most of the way, upon other matters: For before he undertook his Journey he *thought* both of the *end* and *way*, and resolved then which way to go, and that he would go through all both fair and foul, and not turn back, till he saw the place: And this habitual understanding and resolution, may be secretly and unobservedly active, so as to keep a man from erring, and from turning back, though at the same time the Travellers most sensible thoughts and his discourse may be upon something else. When a man is once resolved of his End, and hath laid his design, he is past deliberating of that, and therefore hath less use of his cogitations thereabout: but is readier to lay them out upon the means, which may be still uncertain, or may require his frequent deliberation. We have usually more thoughts and speeches by the way, about our company, or our Horses, or Innes, or other accommodations, or the fairness or foulness of the way, and other such occurrences, than we have about the *place* that we are going to: And yet this *secret intention of our end*, will bring us thither. So when a soul hath cast up his accounts, and hath renounced a worldly and sensual felicity, and hath fixed his hopes and resolutions upon Heaven, and is resolved to cast himself upon Christ, and take God for his only portion, this *secret habitual resolution* will do much to keep him constant in the way, though his *thoughts* and *talk* be frequently on other things: Yea when we are *thinking of the creature*, and feel no *actual thoughts of God*, it is yet God more than the *creature* that we *think of*: For we did *beforehand* look on the *creature* as Gods *work*, representing him unto the world, and as his *talents* which we must employ for him, and as every creature is related to him: And *this estimation of the creature* is still *habitually* (and in some *secret less-perceived acts*) most prevalent in the soul. Though I am not alwaies *sensibly* thinking of the *King*, when I *use* his *Coin*, or *obey* his *Law*, &c. yet it is only *as his Coin* still that I use it, and *as his Laws* that I obey them. Weak Habits cannot do their work without great carefulness

of *thoughts*: but *perfect habits* will act a man with *little thoughtfulness*, as coming near the *natural way* of operation. And indeed the imperfection of our *Habitual Godliness* doth make our *serious thoughts* and *vigilancy* and *industry* to be the more necessary to us.

6. There are *some thoughts* of God that are necessary to the very *Being* of a *Holy state*; as that God be so much in our thoughts, as to be *preferred before all things else*, and *principally beloved and obeyed*; and to be the *end* of our lives, and the *byas* of our *wills*: And there are *some thoughts* of God that are necessary only to *acting* and *increase* of grace.

7. So great is the *weakness* of our *Habits*, so *many* and *great* are the *temptations* to be overcome, so *many difficulties* are in our way, and the *occasions* so *various* for the exercise of each grace, that it behoveth a Christian to exercise *as much thoughtfulness* about his *end* and *work*, as hath *any tendency* to promote his *work* and to *attain* his *end*: But such a *thoughtfulness* as *hindereth* us in our *work*, by *stopping*, or *distracting*, or *diverting* us, is no way pleasing unto God. So excellent is our *end*, that we can never *encourage* and *delight* the mind too much in the *forethoughts* of it. So *sluggish* are our *hearts*, and so loose and unconstant are our *apprehensions* and *resolutions*, that we have need to be most frequently quickening them, and lifting at them, and renewing our *desires*, and suppressing the contrary *desires*, by the *serious thoughts* of God and *Immortality*. Our *Thoughts* are the bellows that must kindle the flames of *Love*, *desire*, *hope* and *zeal*: Our thoughts are the spur that must put on a *sluggish* tired heart. And so far as they conduce to any such works and ends as these, they are *desireable* and *good*. But what Master loveth to see his servant *sit down* and *Think* when he should be *at work*? Or to *use his Thoughts* only to *grieve* and *vex* himself for his faults, but not to *mend* them? to sit down lamenting that he is so bad and unprofitable a servant, when he should be up and doing his Masters business as well as he is able. Such *Thoughts* are *fits* as *hinder* us from duty, or *discourage* or *unfit* us for it, however they may go under a better name.

8. The *Godly themselves* are very much wanting in the *holiness* of their *thoughts*, and the *liveliness* of their *affections*.

Sense leadeth away the thoughts too easily after these present sensible things; while *faith* being *infirm*, the *Thoughts* of God and heaven are much disadvantaged by their invisibility. Many a gracious soul cryeth out, *O that I could think as easily and as affectionately and as unweariedly about the Lord and the life to come, as I can do about my friends, my health, my habitation, my business, and other concernments of this life!* But alas such thoughts of God and Heaven have far more enemies and resistance, then the thoughts of earthly matters have.

9. It is not *distracting, vexatious thoughts of God*, that the holy Scriptures call us to; but it is to such thoughts as tend to the *healing and peace and felicity* of the soul; and therefore it is not to a *melancholy*, but a *joyful life*. If God be better then the world, it must needs be better to think of him. If he be more *beloved* then any friend, the thoughts of him should be *sweeter* to us. If he be the *everlasting hope and happiness* of the soul, it should be a *foretast of happiness* to find him nearest to our hearts. The nature and use of holy thoughts, and of all Religion, is but to *exalt and sanctifie and delight* the soul, and bring it up to *everlasting Rest*: And is this the way to *melancholy or madness*? Or is it not liker to make men *melancholy*, to think of nothing but a *vain, deceitful and vexatious* world, that hath much to disquiet us, but nothing to satisfie us, and can give the soul no hopes of any durable delight?

10. Yet as God is not *equally related* unto all, so is he not the *same* to all mens thoughts. If a *wicked enemy of God and godliness*, be forced and frightened into some thoughts of God, you cannot expect that they should be as *sweet and comfortable* thoughts, as those of his most obedient children are. While a man is under the *guilt and power* of his reigning sin, and under the *wrath and curse* of God, unpardoned, unjustified, a child of the devil, it is not *this mans duty* to think of God, as if he were fully *reconciled* to him, and took pleasure in him as in his own. Nor is it any wonder if *such a man* think of God with *fear*, and think of his sin with grief and shame. Nor is it any wonder if the justified themselves do think of God with *fear and grief*, when they have provoked him by some sinful and unkind behaviour, or are cast into *doubts* of their sincerity and interest in Christ, and when he hides his face, or
assault-

assaulteth them with his terrors. To doubt whether a man shall live for ever in Heaven or Hell, may rationally trouble the thoughts of the wisest man in the world; and it were but sottishness not to be troubled at it: *David* himself could say [In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God and was troubled: I complained and my spirit was overwhelmed: Thou heldest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. — Will the Lord cast off for ever? —] Psal. 77. 2, 3, 4, 5, 7.

Yet all the sorrowful thoughts of God, which are the duty of either the godly or the wicked, are but the necessary preparatives of their joy: It is not to melancholy, distraction or despair that God calleth any, even the worst: But it is that the wicked would [Seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: that he would forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his Thoughts; and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon] Isa. 55. 6, 7. Despair is sin; and the thoughts that tend to it are sinful thoughts, even in the wicked. If worldly crosses, or the sense of danger to the soul had cast any into melancholy, or overwhelmed them with fears, you can name nothing in the world that in reason should be so powerful a remedy to recover them, as the Thoughts of God, his Goodness and Mercy and readiness to receive and pardon those that turn unto him, his Covenant, and Promises, and Grace through Christ, and the everlasting happiness which all may have that will accept and seek it in the time of grace, and prefer it before the deceitful transitory pleasures of the world. If the Thoughts of God and of the Heavenly everlasting joyes, will not comfort the soul, and cure a sad despairing mind, I know not what can rationally do it. Though yet its true that a presumptuous sinner must needs be in a trembling state, till he find himself at peace with God: And mistaken Christians, that are cast into causeless doubts and fears, by the malice of Satan, are unlikely to walk comfortably with God, till they are resolved and recovered from their mistakes and fears.

C H A P. V.

Obj. **B**Ut, it may be the objector will be ready to think, that [*If it be indeed our duty to walk with God, yet Thoughts are no considerable part of it: what more uncertain or mutable then our Thoughts? It is Deeds and not Thoughts that God regardeth: To do no harm to any, but to do good to all, this is indeed to walk With God. You set a man upon a troublesome and impossible work, while you set him upon so strict a guard, and so much exercise of his thoughts: what cares the Almighty for my thoughts?*]

Ans. 1. If God know better then you, and be to be believed, then *Thoughts* are not so inconsiderable as you suppose. Doth he not say, that [*the Thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord? Prov. 15. 26.* It is the work of the Gospel by its power, to pull down strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5. The unrighteous mans forsaking his thoughts, is part of his necessary conversion, Isa. 55. 7. It was the description of the deplorate state of the old world, Gen. 6. 5. [*God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart, was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart*] Judge by this, whether *Thoughts* be so little regarded by God, as you imagine. David saith of himself [*I hate vain thoughts*] Psal. 119. 113. Solomon saith, [*The thoughts of the righteous are right*] Prov. 12. 5. Paul saith that [*Charity thinketh not evil*] 1 Cor. 13. 5.

2. *Thoughts* are the issue of a rational soul. And if its operations be contemptible, its essence is contemptible: if its essence be noble, its operations are considerable. If the soul be more excellent then the body, its operations must be more excellent. To neglect our *Thoughts* and not employ them upon God, and for God, is to vilifie our noblest faculties, and deny

deny God who is a spirit that spiritual service which he requireth.

3. Our Thoughts are commonly our most *cordial voluntary* acts, and shew the temper and inclination of the heart: And therefore are regardable to God that searcheth the heart, and calleth first for the service of the heart.

4. Our Thoughts are *radical* and *instrumental* acts: such as *they* are, such are the actions of our lives. Christ telleth us that *out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, which defile the man*, Matth. 15. 19.

5. Our Thoughts are *under a Law*, as well as *words* and *deeds*, Prov. 24. 9. *The thought of foolishness is sin*] And Matth. 5. 28, &c. Christ extendeth the Law even to the *thoughts* and *desires* of the heart. And under the Law it is said, *Dent. 15. 9. Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, &c.*] *viz.* of unmercifulness towards thy brother.

6. Thoughts can reach *higher* much then *sense*, and may be employed upon the most excellent and invisible objects, and therefore are fit instruments to elevate the soul that would converse with God. Though God be infinitely above us, our Thoughts may be exercised on him: Our *persons* never were in Heaven, and yet our *Conversation* must be in Heaven, *Phil. 3. 20.* And how is that but by our *thoughts*? Though we *see not Christ*, yet by the exercise of *believing thoughts* on him, we *love him* and *rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. Though God be *invisible*, yet our *Meditation* of him may be *sweet*, and we may *delight in the Lord*, *Psal. 104. 34.* Say not that all this is but *fantastical* and *delusory*, as long as Thoughts of *things unseen* are meeter to actuate and elevate the love, desires and delights of the soul, and to move and guide us in a regular and holy life, then the *sense* of *lesser present good*. The Thoughts are not *vain* or *delusory*, unless the *object* of them be *false* and *vain* and *delusory*. Where the *object* is *great*, and *sure* and *excellent*, the *thoughts* of such things are *excellent* operations of the soul. If thoughts of *vainglory*, *wealth* and *pleasure*, can delight the ambitious, covetous and sensual; no wonder if the *Thoughts* of *God* and *life eternal* afford us *solid high delights*.

7. The *Thoughts* are not so lyable to be counterfeited and hypocritical as are the *words* and *outward deeds*: And therefore they shew more what the *man is*, and what is in his heart. For as Solomon saith, *Prov. 23. 7. as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*]

8. Our *Thoughts* may exercise the highest graces of God in man; and also shew those graces, as being their effects. How is our *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Desire*, and *Trust*, and *Joy*, and *Hope* to be exercised but by our *cogitations*? If *Grace* were not necessary and excellent, it would not be wrought by the *Spirit of God*, and called the *Divine nature*, and the *image of God*: And if *Grace* be excellent, the use and exercise of it is excellent: And therefore our *Thoughts* by which it is exercised must needs have their excellency too.

9. Our *Thoughts* must be the instruments of our improving all holy *Truth* in Scripture, and all the mercies which we receive, and all the afflictions which we undergo. What good will *Reading* a Chapter in the Bible do to any one that never *Thinketh* on it? Our *delight in the Law of God* must engage us to *meditate in it day and night*, *Psal. 1. 2.* What good shall he get by *hearing* a Sermon that exerciseth not his *Thoughts* for the receiving and digesting it. Our *considering what is said*, is the way in which we may expect that *God* should give us *understanding in all things*, *2 Tim. 2. 7.* What the better will he be for any of the merciful providences of *God*, who never bethinks him whence they come, or what is the use and end that they are given for? what good will he get by any affliction that never bethinks him, who it is that chastiseth him and for what, and how he must get them removed, and sanctified to his good? A man is but like one of the pillars in the Church, or like the corps which he treadeth on, or at best but like the dog that followeth him thither for company, if he use not his *Thoughts* about the work which he hath in hand, and cannot say, as *Psal. 48. 9. We have thought of thy loving kindness O God in the midst of thy Temple*] He that bideth you *Hear*, doth also bid you *Take heed how you hear*, *Luk. 8. 18.* And you are commanded to *lay up the Word in your heart and soul*, *Deut. 11. 18, 19.* And to set your hearts to all the words which are testified among you: for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.]

10. Our

10. Our *Thoughts* are so considerable a part of Gods service, that they are oft put for the whole. Mal. 3. 16. *A book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord and that Thought upon his Name*] Our believing and loving God, and trusting in him, and desiring him and his grace, are the principal parts of his service, which are exercised immediately by our *thoughts*: And in praise and prayer it is this inward part that is the soul and life of all. He is a foolish hypocrite that thinks to be heard for his much babbling, Matth. 6. 7.

And on the contrary the *Thoughts* are named as the sum of all iniquity, Isa. 59. 7. *Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity*] Isa. 65. 2. [*I have spread out my hands all the day long unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts,*] Jer. 4. 14. *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness that thou maist be saved: how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee!* Psal. 14. 1. *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.*]

11. A mans *Thoughts* are the appointed orderly way for the Conversion of a sinner, and the preventing of his sin and misery. David saith Psal. 119. 59 *I thought on my wayes, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.*] The prodigal Luk. 15. 17, 18. *Came to himself and returned to his Father, by the success of his own Consideration.* Thus saith the Lord of Hosts. *Consider your wayes,*] Hag. 1. 5. is a voice that every sinner should hear. Ezek. 18. 14. *It is he that Considereth and doth not according to his Fathers sins, that shall not die.* Therefore it is Gods desire, *O that they were wise and understood this, and that they would consider their latter end,* Deut. 32. 29. It is either mens inconsiderateness, or the error of their thoughts, that is the cause of all their wickedness: Isa. 1. 3 *My people doth not consider*] Paul [*verily thought that he ought to do many things against the Name of Jesus*] Act. 26. 9. *Many deceive themselves by thinking themselves something when they are nothing,* Gal. 6. 3. *They think it strange that we run not with them to excess of riot: and therefore they speak evil of us,* 1 Pet. 4. 4. *Disobedient formalists Consider not that they do evil,* when they think they are offering acceptable sacrifices to God: Eccles. 5. 1, 2. *The very murder of Gods holy ones hath proceeded from these erroneous thoughts; They that kill*

you shall think they do God service, Job. 16. 2. All the ambition, and covetousness, and injustice, and cruelty following thereupon, which troubleth the world, and ruinech mens souls, is from their *erroneous thoughts*, overvaluing these deceitful things. *Psal. 49. 11. Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations.*] The presumptuous and impenitent are surprized by destruction, for want of *thinking of it* to prevent it: [*In such an hour as you think not, the son of man cometh.*]

12. Lastly the *Thoughts* are the most *constant actions* of a man, and therefore *most* of the man is in them. We are not *alwayes reading, or bearing, or praying, or working*: but we are *alwayes Thinking*. And therefore it doth especially concern us to see that this *constant breath* of the soul be sweet, and that this *constant stream* be pure and run in the right channel. Well therefore did *David* make this his request, *Psal. 139. 23, 24. Search me O God and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* I say therefore to those that insist on this irrational objection, that *these very Thoughts of theirs*, concerning the *inconsiderableness* of *Thoughts*, are so foolish and ungodly, that when they understand the evil even of *these*, they will know that *Thoughts* were more to be regarded. [*If therefore thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thy self, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy mouth.*]

And though, after all this, I still confesse that it is so exceeding hard a matter to keep the thoughts in *holy exercise* and *order*, that even the *best* do daily and hourly sin, in the omissions, the disorder or the vanity of their thoughts, yet for all that we must needs conclude that the *inclination* and *design* of our *Thoughts* must be principally for God, and that the *Thoughts* are *principal instruments* of the soul, in acting it in his service, and moving it towards him, and in all this holy work of our *Walking with God*: And therefore to imagine that *Thoughts* are *inconsiderable* and of little use, is to unman us and unchristen us. The *labour of the mind* is necessary for the attaining the *felicity of the mind*, as the *labour of the body* is necessary for the things that belong unto the *body*. As *bodily idleness*

idleness bringeth unto *beggery*, when *the diligent hand makes rich*; so the *idleness* of the *soul* doth impoverish the *soul*, when the laborious Christian liveth plentifully and comfortably through the blessing of God upon his industry and labour. You cannot expect that *God appear to you* in a *bodily shape*, that you may have *immediate converse with him in the body*: The *corporal eating* of him in *transubstantiate bread*, supposed common to men and mice or dogs, we leave to Papiſts, who have made themselves a singular new Religion, in despite of the common sense and reason of mankind, as well as of the Scriptures and the judgement of the Church: It is *in the spirit* that you must converse with *God who is a spirit*. The *mind* seeth him *by faith*, who is *invisible* to the *bodily eyes*. Nay if you will have a true and saving knowledge of God, you must *not liken him* to any thing that is *visible*, nor have any *corporal conceivings* of him: Earthly things may be the *glass* in which we may behold him, while we are here in the flesh. But our conceivings of him must be *spiritual*, and Minds that are immerſt in flesh and earth, are unmeet to hold communion with him: The *natural man* knoweth him not, and the *carnal mind* is enmity to him, and they that are in the *flesh cannot please him*, Rom. 8. It is the pure abstracted elevated soul, that understandeth by experience what it is to *Walk with God*.

CHAP. VI.

§. I. **H**AVING in the foregoing Uses, reproved the Atheism and contempt of God, which *ungodly* men are continually guilty of, and endeavoured to convince them of the necessity and desirableness of *Walking with God*, and in particular of improving our *Thoughts* for holy converse with him, and answered the objections of the impious and Atheists; I shall next endeavour to cure the *remnants* of this disease, in those that are *sincerely holy*, who live too strangely to God their Father in the World. In the performance of this, I shall first shew you what are the *benefits* of this holy life which

should make it appear desirable and delightful. 2. I shall shew you why *Believers* should addict themselves to it as *doubly obliged*, and how it appeareth that their neglect of it is a sin of special aggravations. This is the remainder of my task.

§. 2. I. To *Walk with God in a Holy and Heavenly Conversation*, is the employment most *suitable to humane nature*, not to its *corrupt disposition*, nor to the *carnal interest and appetite*; but to *nature as nature*, to *man as man*: It is the very work that he was made for: The faculties and frame of soul and body *were composed* for it by the wise *Creatour*: They are *restored* for it by the gracious *Redeemer*. Though in *corrupted nature* where sensuality is predominant, there is an estrangedness from God, and an enmity and hatred of him, so that the wicked are more averse to all serious holy converse with him (in prayer, contemplation, and a heavenly life) than they are to a worldly sinful life; yet all this is but the *disease of nature*, corrupting its appetite, and turning it against that proper food, which is most suitable to its sound desires, and necessary to its health and happiness. Though sinful habits are become as it were a second Nature to the ungodly, so depraving their judgements and desires, that they verily think the business and pleasures of the flesh are most suitable to them; yet these are as contrary to *nature as nature*, that is, to the primitive tendencies of all our faculties, and the proper use to which they were fitted by our *Creatour*, and to that true felicity which is the end of all our parts and powers, even as *madness* is contrary to the *rational nature*, though it were hereditary.

1. What can be more agreeable to the *nature* of man, than to be *rational and wise*, and to live in the purest *exercise of Reason*? And certainly there is nothing more *rational* than that we should live to God, and gladly accept of all that communion with him which our natures on earth are capable of. Nothing can be more *Reasonable* than for the *Reasonable soul* to be entirely addicted to him that did create it, that doth preserve it, and by whom it doth subsist and act. Nothing is more *Reasonable* than that the Absolute Lord of nature be honoured and served wholly by his Own: Nothing is more *Reasonable* than that the *Reasonable creature* do live in the truest

trueſt dependence upon, and ſubordination to the *Higheſt Reason*; and that derived, imperfect, defectible wiſdome, be ſubſervient to, and guided by the primitive, perfect, indefectible wiſdome: It is moſt reaſonable that the *Children* depend upon the *Father*, and the *fooliſh* be ruled by the *moſt wiſe*, and that the *Subjects* be governed by the *uniſverſal King*; and that they honour him and obey him, and that the *indigent* apply themſelves to him that is *Allſufficient*, and is moſt able and ready to ſupply their wants; and that the *Impotent* reſt upon him that is *Omnipotent*.

2. Nothing can be *more Reaſonable*, than that the Reaſonable Nature ſhould intend *its End*, and ſeek after *its true and chief felicity*: And that it ſhould *Love Good as Good*, and therefore prefer the *chiefeſt Good* before that which is tranſitory and inſufficient. Reason commandeth the Reaſonable Creature to avoid its own deluſion and deſtruction, and to reſt upon him that can everlaſtingly ſupport us, and not upon the creature that will deceive us and undo us: and to prefer the higheſt and nobleſt conſeſe before that which is inferiour, unprofitable and baſe, and that we rejoyce more in the higheſt, pureſt, and moſt durable delights, than in thoſe that are ſordid, and of ſhort continuance. And who knoweth not that God is the chiefeſt Good, and true felicity of man, the everlaſting Rock, the durable delight, and to be preferred before his creatures? And who might not find that would uſe his Reason, that all things below are vanity and vexation?

3. Nothing can be more Rational and Agreeable to Mans Nature, than that the ſuperiour faculties ſhould govern the inferiour, that the brutiſh part be ſubject to the Rational; and that the ends and objects of this higher faculty be preferred before the objects of the lower, that the objects of ſenſe be made ſubſervient to the objects of Reason. If this be not *Natural and Rational*, then it is *natural to Man to be no Man*, but a *Beaſt*, and *Reaſonable to be Unreaſonable*. Now it is evident that a *Holy Living unto God*, is but the improvement of *true Reason*, and its imploymenſe for and upon its nobleſt object, and its ultimate End: And that a *ſenſual life* is the exerciſe of the inferiour brutiſh faculties, in predominacy above and before the rational: And therefore to queſtion whether

God or the *Creature* should be first sought, and loved, and principally desired, and delighted in, and served, is but to question whether we should live like *Men* or like *Beasts*, and whether *Dogs* or *wise men* be fitter companions for us? and whether the *Rider* or the *Horse* should have the rule? whether the *Rational* or *Sensitive* Powers be superiour and proper to the nature of a man?

Object. *But there is a middle state of life betwixt the sensual and the Divine or Holy Life which sober Philosophers did live; and this is the most Natural Life, and most properly so called.*

Ans^w. I deny this: There is no middle state of life, if you denominate the several states of life, from the *several Ends*, or the *several Powers*. I grant that the very sensitive powers in man, especially the imagination, is much advanced by the conjunction of Reason, above that of a brute: And I grant that the Delights of the Phantasie may be preferred before the immediate pleasure of the senses: And I grant that some little distant knowledge of God, and things Divine, and Hopes of attaining them, may affect an unsanctified man with an answerable pleasure. But all this is nothing to prove that there is a *third* sort of *End*, or of *Powers*, and so a third or middle state of life, specifically distinct from the *sensitive* and the *Holy life*. Besides, the *Vegetative* man hath no other *life* or faculties, than the *Sensitive* and the *Rational*: And therefore one of these must be in predominancy or rule. And therefore he can have no middle sort or *End*; and therefore no middle state of life, that can be said to be agreeable to his nature. Those that seek and take up their chief felicity in Riches and plenty, and provisions for the flesh, though not in *present* pleasing of the sense, do live but the life of sensuality. A Fox or Dog takes pleasure when he hath eaten his belly full, to hide and lay up the rest: And so doth the Bee to fill the Hive, and make provision for the Winter. The Proud that delight in Honour and applause, and making others subject to their lusts, do live but the life of sensuality: A Dog, a Horse, and other brutes, have something of the same. They that are grave through Melancholy, or because they can reach no great matter in the world, and because their old or duller spirits are not much pleased with juvenile delights, and so live retiredly, and

seek

seek no higher pleasure or felicity, but only sit down with the weeping or the laughing Philosopher, lamenting or deriding the Vanity of the world, do yet live no other than a sensual life: as an old Dog that hath no pleasure in hunting or playfulness, as he had when he was a Whelp. Only he is less deluded and less vain, than other sensualists that find more pleasure in their course.

All the doubt is concerning those that place their felicity in Knowledge, and those that delight in Moral Vertues, or that delight in studying of God, though they are no Christians.

Ans^w. The point is weighty, and hath oft unhappily fallen into injudicious hands. I shall endeavour to resolve it as truly, clearly and impartially as I can. 1. It is a great error against the Nature of man, to say, that Knowledge as such, is fit to be any mans chief and ultimate End. It may be that act which is next the Enjoying Act of the Will, which is it that indeed is next the End, objectively considered: But it is not that Act which we call *Ultimate Ultim^{us}*. And this is plain 1. Because the Object of the Understanding, which is Truth, is not formally the nearest object or matter of full felicity or delight: It is Goodness that is the nearest object. 2. And therefore the office of the Intellect is but introductive and subservient to the office of the Will, to apprehend the Verity of Good, and present it to the will to be prosecuted or embraced, or delighted in. There are many Truths that are ungrateful and vexatious, and which men would wish to be no truths: And there is a knowledge which is troublesome, useless, undesirable and tormenting, which even a wise man would fain avoid if he knew how. Morality is but preparatively in the intellect: and therefore intellectual acts as such are not morally Good, or evil, but only participatively, as subject to the Will. And therefore knowledge as such being not a Moral Good, can be no other than such a Natural Good as is *Bonum alicui*, only so far as it tendeth to some Welfare or Happiness, or pleasure of the possessor or some other: And this Welfare or Pleasure is either that which is suited to the Sensitive Powers, or to the Rational (which is to be found in the love of God alone.)

2. I add therefore that even those men that seem to take up their

their *felicity* in common *Knowledge*, indeed do but make their *Knowledge* *subservient* to something else which they take for their *felicity*. For *Knowledge* of *Evil* may Torment them. It is only to *know* something which they take to be *Good*, that is their *Delight*. And it is the *Complacency* or *Love* of that *Good* at the *Heart*, which sets them on work, and causeth the delight of *Knowing*. If you will say that common *Knowledge* as *Knowledge* doth *immediately* *Delight*, yet will it be found but such a pleasing of the *Phantasie*, as an Ape hath in spying marvels, which if it have no end that's higher, is still but a sensitive *Delight*; but if it be referred to a higher *Delight* (in *God*) it doth participate of the nature of it. *Delight* in general is the common end of Men and Brutes: But in *specie* they are distinguished as *Sensual* or *Rational*.

3. If you suppose a Philosopher to be *Delighted* in studying *Mathematicks*, or any of the works of *God*, either he hath herein an *End*, or no *End* beyond the *Knowledge* of the *Creature*: Either he *terminateth* his desires and delights in the *Creature*, or else *useth* it as a means to raise him to the *Creatour*. If he study and delight in the *Creature* *ultimately*, this is indeed the *Act* of a *rational Creature*, and an *act* of *Reason*, as to the faculty it proceeds from (and so is a *Rational Convivance* for *sensual ends and pleasures*:) But it is but the *error* of *Reason*, and is no more agreeable to the *Rational Nature*, than the *deceit* of the *senses* is to the *sensitive*. Nor is it *finally* to be numbred with the operations felicitating humane nature, any more than an erroneous dream of pleasure, or than that man is to be numbred with the lovers of learning, who taketh pleasure in the binding, leaves or letters of the book, while he understandeth nothing of the sense. But if this Philosopher seek to know the *Creatour* in and by the *Creatures*, and take delight in the *Makers Power, Wisdome and Goodness*, which appeareth in them, then this is *truly* a *Rational Delight*, in it self considered, and befitting a man. And if he reach so far in it, as to make *God* his *Highest desire and delight*, overpowering the desires and delights of *sensuality*, he shall be *happy*, as being led by the *Son* unto the *Father*: But if he make but some *little approaches* towards it, and drown all such desires in the *sensual desires and delights*, he

is then but an unhappy *sensualist*, and liveth *brutishly* in the tenor of his life, though in *some acts* in part he operate *rationaly* as a man.

The like I may say of them that are said to place their *delight* in *Moral Vertues*. Indeed nothing is properly a *Moral Good* (or virtue) but that which is exercised upon *God* as our *End*, or upon the Creature as a *Means* to this *End*. To study and know meer *notions* of *God*, or what is to be held and said of him in discourse, is not to study or to *know God*, no more than to love the language and phrase of holy writing, is to *Love God*. To study *God* as one that is *less regardable* and desirable than our *sensual delights*, is but to blaspheme him. To study seek and serve him as one that can promote or hinder our sensual felicity, is but to abuse him as a means to your sensuality. And for the virtues of Temperance, Justice or Charity, they are but Analogically and *secundum quid* to be found in any ungodly person. *Materially* they may have them in an eminent degree; but not as they are *informed* by the *End* which moralizeth them. *Jezebel's* fast was not formally a virtue, but an odious way of Hypocrisie to oppress the innocent: He that doth works of *Justice* or *Mercy*, to *Evil ends* only (as for applause, or to deceive, &c.) and not from the true principles of *Justice* and *Mercy*, doth not thereby exercise Moral Vertue, but hypocrisie, and other vice. He that doth works of *Justice* and *Mercy*, out of meer natural compassion to others, and desire of their good, without respect to *God*, as obliging, or rewarding, or desiring it, doth perform such a *natural good work*, as a Lamb or a gentle Beast doth to his fellows, which hath not the true form of Moral Vertue, but the Matter only. He that in such works hath some little by-respect to *God*, but more to his carnal interest among men, doth that which on the *by*, participateth of Moral Good, or is such *secundum quid*, but not *simpliciter*, being to be *denominated* from the *part predominant*. He that doth works of *Justice* or *Charity* *principally* to please *God*, and in *true obedience* to his *Will*, and a desire to be conformed thereto, doth that which is *formally* a *Moral Good*, and *Holy*, though there may be abhorred mixtures of worse respects.

So that there are but two states of life here: One of those

that walk after the flesh, and the other of those that walk after the spirit: However the flesh hath several materials and waies of pleasure: And even the Rational aētings that have a carnal end, are carnal finally and morally, though they are acts of Reason; For they are but the errors of Reason, and defectiveness of true Rationality; and being but the acts of erroneous Reason as captivated by the flesh, and subservient to the carnal Interest, they are themselves to be denominated carnal: And so even the Reasonable soul as byassed by sensuality, and captivated thereto, is included in the name of [Flesh] in Scripture.

How much Moral Good is in that course of Piety or Obedience to God, which proceedeth only from the Fear of Gods. Judgements, without any Love to him, I shall not now discuss, because I have too far digrest already.

All that I have last said, is to shew you the Reasonableness of Living unto God, as being indeed the proper and just employment of the superiour faculties of the soul, and their Government of the lower faculties. For if any other called Moralists do seem to subject the Sensual life to the Rational, either they do but seem to do so; the sensual interest being indeed predominant, and their rational operations subjected thereto: or at the best, it is but some poor and erroneous employment of the Rational faculties which they exercise, or some weak approaches towards that high and holy life, which is indeed the life which the Rational nature was created for, and which is the right improvement of it.

4. Moreover, nothing is more befeeming the nature of man, than to aspire after the highest and noblest improvement of his self; and to live the most excellent life that it is capable of. For every nature tendeth to its own perfection. But it is most evident that to Walk with God in Holiness, is a thing that humane nature is capable of; and that is the highest life that we are capable of on earth: And therefore it is the life most suitable to our natures.

5. And what can be more Rational and befeeming a Created Nature, than to live to those ends, which our Creatour intended in the fabrication of our Natures? It is His Ends that are principally to be served. But the very composure of our faculties

ties plainly prove, that *His End* was that we should be fitted for *His Service* : He gave us no powers or capacity in vain : And therefore to serve him and walk with him, is most suitable to our natures.

Obj. *That is Natural which is first, and born with us : But our enmity to Holiness is first, and not our Holiness.*

Ans. It may be called *Natural* indeed, because it is *first*, and born with us : And in *that respect* we confess that sin and not Holiness is *Natural* to us. But Holiness is called *Natural* to us, in a higher respect, because it was the Primitive *Natural* constitution of man, and was *before* sin, and is the perfection or health of nature, and the right employment and improvement of it, and tends to its happiness. An hereditary leprosie may be called *Natural*, as it is *first*, and before *health* in that person : But *health* and *soundness* is *Natural*, as being the *well-being* of *Nature*, when the *Leprosie* is unnatural, as being but its *desease*, and tending to its destruction.

Obj. *But Nature in its first constitution was not Holy, but Innocent only, and it was by a superadded gift of Grace that it became Holy as some Schoolmen think ; and as others think, Adam had no Holiness till his restoration.*

Ans. These are Popish improved fancies, and contrary to Nature and the Word of God. 1. They are nowhere written, nor have no evidence in Nature, and therefore are the groundless dreams of men.

2. The work of our recovery to God is called in Scripture a *Redemption, Renovation, Restoration*, which imply that *Nature* was once in that *Holy* estate before the fall. And it is expressly said, that the *New man* which we put on is *renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him*] Col. 3. 10. And after Gods Image *Adam* was created.

3. If it belong to the soundness and integrity of *Nature* to be *Holy* (that is, disposed and addicted to live to God) then it is an abusive temerity, for men out of their own imagination, to feign, that God first made *Nature defective*, and then mended it by *superadded Grace*. But if it belong not to the soundness and integrity of humane *Nature* to be *Holy*, then why did God give him *Grace* to make him so? Nay then, it would follow that when God sanctified *Adam*, or any since, he made

him specifically another thing, another creature, of another nature, and did not only cure the diseases of his nature.

4. It is yet apparent in the very Nature of mans faculties, that their very usefulness and tendency, is to live to God, and to enjoy him: And that God should make a Nature apt for such a use, and give it *no disposedness* to its proper use, is an unnatural conceit. We see to this day that it is but an unreasonable abuse of Reason, when it is not used Holily for God; and it is a very disease of nature to be otherwise disposed. Therefore Primitive Nature had such a Holy inclination.

5. The contrary opinion tendeth to *Infidelity*, and to brutifie humane Nature. For if no man can believe that he must be Holy and live to God, and enjoy him hereafter in Heaven, but he that also believeth that *Primitive Nature* was never *disposed* or qualified for such a life; and that God must first make a man another creature *in specie*, of another nature (and consequently not a man) this is not only so improbable, but so contrary to Scripture and Reason, that few considerate persons would believe it. As if we must believe that God would turn brutes into men. God healeth, elevateth and perfecteth Nature, but doth not specifically change it, at least in this life.

Obj. *But let it be granted that he giveth not man specifically another Nature, yet he may give him such higher gifts, as may be like another Nature to him so far.*

Ans^r. No doubt he may and doth give him such gifts as actuare and perfect Nature: but some *Disposition* to our *ultimate end* is *essential* to our *Nature*; and therefore to assign man another *ultimate end*, and to give a *Disposition* to it, of which he had no seed, or part, or principle before, is to make him another creature. I confess that in *lapsed man*, the *Holy Disposition* is so far dead, as that the change maketh a man a *New Creature* in a *Moral sense* (as he is a *New Man* that changeth his mind and manners:) But still Nature hath its aptitude as *Rational* to be employed for its Maker; so that he is not a *New Creature* in a *Natural sense*.

An *actual* or *habitual willingness* to this Holy employment, a *promptitude* to it, and a due understanding of it, is the *New Creature Morally* so called which is given in our sanctification: But the *Natural aptitude* that is in our faculties as *Rational*,

to this holy life, is *essential* to us *as men*, or *as Rational*; even to have the *Potentiam naturalem* which must yet have further help or moral life to actuate it. And *Adam* had both these: The one he retained, or else he had not continued a man, The other he lost, or else he had not had need of Renovation.

6. If *Adams Nature* had not been *Dispos'd to God* as to his *End and Sovereign*, then the Law of Nature (to adhere to God, and obey and serve him) was not written in his heart: And then it would not have been his duty to adhere to God, and to obey and serve him; which is so false, that even in *lapsed unrenewed Nature*, there is left *so much aptitude* hereto, as will prove him to be still *under the obligations* of this Law of Nature, even *actually to adhere to God, and to obey him*, which a dead man, a mad man, or an Infant is not (immediately.)

By all this you see, that though the *blindness* and *disease* of *Reason*, is contrary to faith and holiness, yet *Reason it self* is so much for it, as that *Faith it self* is but the act of *elevated well informed Reason*; and supernatural Revelation is but the means to inform our *Reason*, about things which have not a natural evidence, discernable by us. And sanctification (actively taken) is but the *healing* of our *Reason* and *Rational appetite*: And *Holiness* is but the *health* or soundness of them. The *error* of Reason must be renounced by Believers; but not the *use* of Reason: The *sufficiency* of Reason and Natural Light without supernatural Light and Help, we must all deny: But to set Reason as Reason in opposition to *Faith* or *Holiness*, or *Divine Revelation*, is as gross a piece of foolery, as to set the wise faculty in opposition to the Light of the Sun, or to its objects. It is the *unreasonableness* of sinners that is to be cured by *Illuminating Grace*. *They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge*. Their Reason is wounded, depraved and corrupted about the matters of God: They have Reason to *serve* the flesh, but not to *Master* it. God doth renew men by giving them *wisdome*, and bringing them to a *sound mind*; As *Logick* helpeth *Reason* in discourse and arguing, so *Theology* informeth *Reason* about the matters of God and our salvation: and the *Spirit of God* doth make his Doctrine and Revelation effectual. Make *Nature sound*, and *Reason clear*, & then we will consent that all men be persuaded

To live according to their *Nature*, and their *Reason*. But if a *Bedlam* will rave and tear himself and others, and say, this is according to *my Nature* or *my Reason*; it is fitter that chains and whips do cure that *Nature* and *Reason*, than that he be allowed to live according to his madness. If a *Drunkard* or *Whoremonger* will say, *My Nature* and *Reason* incline mee to please my appetite and lust, it is fit that the *swinish Nature* be corrected, and the *beast* which rideth and ruleth the *man*, be taken down; and when indeed his *Nature* is the *Nature of a man*, and fitted to the use and ends that it was *made for*, then let him live according to it and spare not. If a *malicious* man will abuse or kill his neighbours, and say, This is according to *my Nature*, let that *Nature* be used as the *Nature of Wolves and Foxes*, and other noxious creatures are. But let humane *Nature* be cured of its blindness, carnality and corruption, and then it will need no external testimony to convince it, that no employment is so *natural* and *suitable* to man, as to *Walk with God, in Love and Confidence*, and reverent *Worship*, and cheerful *Obedience* to his Will. A worldly fleshly sensual life, will then appear to be below the rational nature of a man, as it is below us to go to graze with horses, or to live as meer companions of brutes. It will then appear to be as *natural* for us to Love and Live to our Creatour and Redeemer, and to *Walk with God*, as for a *Child* to love his Parents, and to live with them and serve them. When I say that this is *Natural*, I mean not that it is *Necessary* by *Natural Necessity*, or that *Grace* doth operate *per modum naturæ*, as the irrational motion is so called. There is a *Brutish* or *Inanimate Nature*, and there is a *Rational Voluntary Nature*: *Grace* worketh not according to the way of *Inanimate* or *Brutish Nature*, but according to the way of *Rational Nature*, in *free Agents*. I may well say that whatever is *Rational*, is *Natural* to a *Rational Creature* as such, so far as he discerneth it. Yea and *Habits*, though they effect not necessarily; but freely in a *Rational nature*, yet they Incline Necessarily, & *per modum naturæ*. They contain in their being a *Natural aptitude* and *propensity* to action.

Obj. But thus you confound *Nature* and *Grace*, *Natural* and *supernatural* operations, while you make *Grace* *Natural*.

Ans. No such matter: Though walking with God be called

led *Natural*, as it is most agreeable to Nature so far as it is *sound*, and is the felicity and meetest employment of the rational nature as such; Yet 1. *Diseased nature* doth abhor it, as a diseased stomach the pleafantest and most wholesome food (as I said before.) 2. And this disease of Nature cannot be cured without Divine supernatural Grace. So that as to the *efficient cause*, our Holiness is supernatural. But it is un- sound doctrine of those that affirm that *Adam* in his *pure Natural state of innocency*, had no *Natural Holiness*, or *aptitude* and *promptitude* to *walk with God* in order to *everlasting happiness*; but say that all this was either *wanting* to him, and was a *state specifically distinct*, which he fell short off by his sin, or that it was *given him by superadded Grace*, and was not in his *entire Nature*.

And yet we deny not but as to *Degrees*, *Adams* nature was to grow up to more perfection: and that his *Natural Holiness* contained not a *sufficient immediate aptitude* and *promptitude* to every duty which might afterward be required of him; but this was to be obtained in the *exercise* of that Holiness which he had: Even as a Vine or other fruit tree, though it be *Natural* to it to bear its proper fruit, yet hath it not an *immediate sufficient aptitude* hereto, whilst it is but appearing out of the seed, before it be grown up to just maturity. = Or as it is *Natural* to a man to *discourse* and *reason*; but yet his *nature* in infancy, or untaught and unexercised, hath not a *sufficient immediate aptitude* and *promptitude* hereunto. Or as *Grace* inclineth a *renewed soul* to every holy *Truth* and *duty*: and yet such a soul in its infancy of *Grace*, hath not a *sufficient immediate aptitude* or *promptitude* to the receiving of every holy truth, or the doing of every holy duty; but must grow up to it by degrees. But the addition of these *degrees*, is no *specific alteration* of the nature of man, or of that grace which was before received.

Having been so long upon this first Consideration (that *Walking with God* is most agreeable to humane nature) I shall be briefer in the rest that follow.

II. **T**O Walk with God and live to him, is incomparably the *Highest* and *Noblest* life. To converse with men only, is to converse with Worms: whether they be Princes or poor men, they differ but as the bigger vermine from the lesser. If they be *Wise* and *Good*, their Converse may be profitable and delightful, because they have a beam of excellency from the face of God: (And O how unspeakable is the distance between *his Wisdom and Goodness*, and *theirs*!) But if they be *foolish*, *ungodly* and *dishonest*, how loathsome is their conversation? What stinking breath is in their profane and filthy language? in their lies and slanders of the just? in their sottish jeers and scorns of those that Walk with God? which expose at once their *folly* and *misery* to the pitty of all that are truly understanding. When they are gravely speaking evil of the things which they understand not, or with a fleering confidence deriding merrily the holy commands and waies of God, they are much more lamentably expressing their infatuation, than any that are kept in chains in *Bedlam*: Though indeed with the most they scape the reputation which they deserve, because they are attended with persons of their own proportion of wisdom, that alwayes reverence a silken coat, and judge them wise that wear gold lace, and have the greatest satisfaction of their wills and lusts, and are able to do most mischief in the world: and because *good men* have learnt to honour the *worst* of their *superiours*, and not to call them as they are. But God is bold to call them as they are, and give them in his word, such names and characters by which they might come to know themselves. And is it not a *Higher*, *Nobler* life to *Walk with God*, then to *Converse in Bedlam*, or with intoxicated sensualists, that live in a constant deliration?

Yea worse then so: *ungodly* men are *children of the Devil*, so called by Jesus Christ himself, *Joh. 8. 44.* because they have much of the *nature* of the *Devil*, and the *lusts* of their father they will do; yea they are taken captive by him at his will, *2 Tim. 2. 26.* They are the *servants of sin*, and do the drudgery that so vile a Master sets them on, *Joh. 8. 34.* Certainly as the

the spirits of the just are so *like to Angels*, that Christ saith, we shall be *as they* and *equal to them*; so the wicked are nearer kin to *Devils* than they themselves will easily believe. They are as *like him* as *children to their Father*: He is a *lyar*, and so are *they*: He is a *hater of God*, and godliness, and godly men, and so are *they*: He is a *murderer*, and would fain devour the holy seed; and such are they. He envyeth the progress of the Gospel, and the prosperity of the Church, and the increase of Holiness; and so do they. He hath a special malice against the most powerful and successful Preachers of the Word of God, and against the most zealous and eminent Saints; and so have they. He cares not by what lyes and fictions he disgraceth them, nor how cruelly he useth them; No more do they, (or some of them at least:) He cherisheth licentiousness, sensuality and impiety; and so do they. If they do seem better in their adversity and restraint, yet try them but with prosperity, and power, and you shall see quickly how like they are to devils. And shall we delight more to converse with *brutes* and incarnate *devils*, than *with God*? Is it not a more high and excellent conversation to *Walk with God*, and live to Him, than to be companions of such *degenerate men*, that have almost forfeited the reputation of *humanity*? Alas, they are companions so deluded and ignorant, and yet so wilfull; so miserable, and yet so confident and secure, that they are, to a believing eye, the most lamentable sight that the whole world can shew us out of hell. And how sad a life must it then needs be, to converse with such, were it not for the hope that we have of furthering their recovery and Salvation!

But to *Walk with God* is a word so high, that I should have feared the guilt of *arrogance* in using it, if I had not found it in the holy Scriptures. It is a word that importeth so high and holy a frame of soul, and expresseth such high and holy actions, that the *naming* of it striketh my heart with reverence, as if I had heard the voice to *Moses* [*Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*] *Exod. 3. 5.* Methinks he that shall say to me, *Come see a man that walks with God*, doth call me to see one that is next unto an *Angel*, or *glorified soul*! It is a far more reverend

object in mine eye, then ten thousand Lords or Princes considered only in their fleshly glory. It is a *wiser action* for people to run and crowd together, to see a man that *Walks with God*, then to see the pompous train of Princes, their entertainments, or their triumphs. O happy man, that *Walks with God*, though neglected and contemned by all about him ! What blessed sights doth he daily see ! What ravishing tydings, what pleasant melody doth he daily hear, unless it be in his swoons or sickness ! what delectable food doth he daily tast ! He seeth by faith the God, the Glory, which the blessed Spirits see at hand by nearest intuition : He seeth that in a glass and darkly, which they behold with open face : He seeth the glorious Majesty of his Creatour, the Eternal King, the Cause of Causes, the composer, upholder, preserver, and governour of all the worlds : He beholdeth the wonderful methods of his providence : And what he cannot reach to see, he admireth, and waiteth for the time when that also shall be open to his view ! He seeth by Faith the world of Spirits, the hosts that attend the throne of God ; their perfect righteousness, their full devotedness to God ; their ardent love, their flaming zeal, their ready and chearful obedience, their dignity and shining glory, in which the lowest of them exceedeth that which the Disciples saw on *Moses* and *Elias* when they appeared on the holy Mount, and talkt with Christ. They hear by faith the heavenly consort, the high and harmonious Songs of praise, the joyful triumphs of crowned Saints, the sweet commemorations of the things that were done and suffered on earth, with the praises of him that redeemed them by his blood, and made them Kings and Priests to God : Herein he hath sometime a sweet foretast of the everlasting pleasures, which though it be but little, as *Jonathans* honey on the end of his rod, or as the clusters of grapes which were brought from *Canaan* into the wilderness, yet are they more excellent then all the delights of sinners. And in the beholding of this celestial Glory, some beams do penetrate his breast, and so irradiate his longing soul, that he is *changed thereby* into the same image from Glory to Glory ; the Spirit of Glory and of God doth rest upon him ; And O what an excellent holy frame doth this *converse with God* possess his soul of ! How reverently,

ly doth he think of him ! what life is there in every Name and Attribute of God which he heareth or thinketh on ! The mention of his Power, his Wisdom, his Goodness, his Love, his Holiness, his Truth, how powerful and how pleasant are they to him ! when to those that know him but by the hearing of the ear, all these are but like common names and notions ; and even to the weaker sort of Christians, whose Walking with God is more uneven, and low, interrupted by their sins and doubts and fears, this life and glory of a Christian course is lesse perceived.

And the sweet *appropriating* and *applying* works of faith, by which the soul can *own his God*, and finds it *self owned by him*, are exercised most easily and happily in these near approaches unto God. Our doubts are cherished by our darkness ; and that is much caused by our distance : The nearer the soul doth approach to God, the more distinctly it heareth the voice of mercy, the sweet reconciling invitations of Love ; and the more clearly it discerneth that *goodness* and *amiableness* in God, which maketh it easier to us to believe that he loveth us, or is ready to embrace us ; and banisheth all those false and horrid apprehensions of him, which before were our discouragement, and made him seem to us more terrible than amiable. As the Ministers and faithful servants of Christ, are ordinarily so misrepresented by the malignant Devil, to those that know them not, that they are ready to think them some silly fools, or falsehearted hypocrites, and to shun them as strange undesirable persons ; but when they come to through acquaintance with them by a nearer and familiar converse, they see how much they were mistaken, and wronged by their prejudice and belief of slanderers misreports : Even so a weak believer that is under troubles, in the apprehension of his sin and danger, is apt to hearken to the enemy of God, that would shew him nothing but his wrath, and represent God as an enemy to him : And in this case it is exceeding hard for a poor sinner to believe that God is reconciled to him, or loveth him, or intends him good, but he is ready to dread and shun him as an enemy, or as he would fly from a wild beast or murderer, or from fire or water that would destroy him : And all these injurious thoughts of God

are cherished by strangeness and disacquaintance. But as the soul doth fall into an understanding and serious converse with God, and having been often with him, doth find him more merciful than he was by Satan represented to him, his experience reconcileth his mind to God, and maketh it much easier to him to believe that God is reconciled *unto him*, when he hath found much better entertainment with God than he expected, and hath observed his benignity, and the treasures of his bounty laid up in Christ, and by him distributed to believers, and hath found him ready to hear and help, and found him the only full and suitable felicitating Good, this banisheth his former horrid thoughts, and maketh him ashamed that ever he should think so suspiciously, injuriously and dishonourably of his dearest God and Father.

Yet I must confesse that there are many upright troubled souls, that are much in reading, prayer and meditation, that still find it hard to be perswaded of the Love of God, and that have much more disquietment and fear since they see themselves to think of God, than they had before: But yet for all this, we may well conclude, that to *walk with God*, is the way to *consolation*, and tendeth to acquaint us with his *love*. As for those troubled souls whose experience is objected against this, some of them are such as are yet but in their *return to God*, from a life of former sin and misery, and are yet but like the *needle* in the compasse that is *shaken*, in a *trembling motion* towards their *rest*, and not in any *settled apprehensions* of it. Some of them by the straying of their imagination too high, and putting themselves upon more than their heads can bear, and by the violence of fears or other passions, do make themselves incapable of those sweet consolations which else they might find in their converse with God; as a Lute when the strings are broken with straining, is incapable of making any melody. All of them have false apprehensions of God, and therefore trouble themselves by *their own mistakes*. And if some perplex themselves by their *error*, doth it follow that therefore the *Truth* is not *comfortable*? Is not a Fathers presenee consolatory, because some children are afraid of their Fathers, that know them not because of some disguise? And some of Gods children walk so
unevenly

unevenly and carelessly before him, that their sins provoke him to hide his face, and to seem to reject them and disown them, and so to trouble them that he may bring them home : But shall the comforts of our Fathers Love and Family, be judged of by the fears or smart of those whom he is scourging for their disobedience, or their tryal? Seek God with understanding, as knowing his essential properties, and what he will be to them that sincerely and diligently seek him, and then you will quickly have experience, that nothing so much tendeth to quiet, and settle a doubting, troubled, unstable soul, as *faithfully to walk with God.*

But the soul that estrangeth it self from God, may indeed for a time have the *quietness* of security ; but (so far) it will be strange to the *assurance* of his Love, and to *true consolation.* Expect not that God should follow you with his comforts in your sinfulnesse and negligence, and cast them into your hearts whilest you neither seek nor mind them, or that he give you the fruit of *his wayes* in *your own wayes.* Will he be your joy when you *forget him*? will he *delight your souls* with his *goodness* and *amiableness*, while you are taken up with other matters, and think not of him? can you expect to find the *comforts* of his *family*, among his *enemies*, out of *doors*? The experience of all the world can tell you, that *prodigals* while they are stragling from their Fathers house, do never tast the *comfort* of his *embraces*; The *strangers* meddle not with his *childrens joyes*: They grow not in the way of ambition, covetousnesse, vainglory, or sensuality; but in the way of holy obedience, and of believing! contemplations of the Divine everlasting objects of delight. For, lo, they that are far from him shall perissh: he destroyeth them that go a whoring from him: but it is good for us to draw nigh to God, Psal. 73. 27, 28.

III. **W**alking with God, is the only course that can prove and make men truly wise. It proves them wise that make so wise and good a choice, and are disposed and skilled in any measure for so high a work. Practical Wisdom is the solid, useful, profitable wisdom: And Practical Wisdom is seen in our Choice of Good, and Refusal of Evil, as its most immediate and excellent effect. And no Choosing or Refusing doth shew the Wisdom or Folly of man so much as that which is about the Greatest matters, and which everlasting life or death depends on. He is not thought so wise among men that can write a Volume about the Orthography or Etymology of a word, or that can guess what wood the Trojane Horse was made of, or that can make a chain to tye a Flea in, as he that can bring home Gold and Pearls, or he that can obtain and manage Governments, or he that can cure mortal maladies: For as in lading we difference Bulk and Value, and take not that for the best commodity which is of greatest quantity or weight, but that which is most precious and of greatest use: so there is a bulky knowledge, extended far, to a multitude of words and things, which are all of no great use or value; and therefore the Knowledge of them is such as they: And there is a precious sort of Knowledge, which fixeth upon the most precious things; which being of greatest Use and Value, do accordingly prove the Knowledge such. Nothing will prove a man simply and properly wise, but that which will prove or make him Happy. He is wise indeed, that is wise to his own and others good: And that is indeed his Good, which saveth his soul, and maketh him for ever blessed. Though we may admire the Cunning of those that can make the most curious engines, or by deceiving others advance themselves, or that can subtilly dispute the most curious niceties, or criticize upon the words of several languages; yet I will never call them wise, that are all that while the Devils slaves, the enemies of God, the refusers of Grace, and are making haste to endless misery: And I think there is not one of those in Hell who were once the subtle men on earth, that now take themselves to have been truly wise, or glory much in the remembrance of such Wisdom.

And

And as this *Choice* doth prove men wise, so the practice of this *Holy walking with God*, doth make them much wiser than they were. As there must be some work of the *Spirit* to draw men to believe in *Christ*, and yet the *Spirit* is promised and given (in a special sort or measure) to them that do *Believe*; so must there be some special *Wisdom* to make men *Choose* to walk with God; but much more is given to them in this holy course. As *Solomon* was wiser than most of the world, before he asked wisdom of God, or else he would not have made so wise a *Choice*, and preferred wisdom before the riches and honours of the world: And yet it was a more notable Degree of wisdom that was afterwards given him in answer to his prayer: so it is in this case.

There are many undeniable Evidences to prove, that walking with God doth do more to make men truly wise, than all other learning or policy in the world.

1. He that walketh with God, doth begin aright, and settle upon a sure foundation: (And we use to say, that a work is half finished that is well begun:) He hath engaged himself to the best and wisest Teacher: He is a Disciple to Him that knoweth all things. He hath taken in infallible principles, and taken them in their proper place and order: He hath learnt those Truths which will every one become a Teacher to him, and help him to that which is yet unlearnt. Whereas many that thought they were Doctors in *Israel*, if ever they they will be wise and happy, must become fools (that is, such as they have esteemed fools) if ever they will be wise, 1 Cor. 3. 18. and must be called back with *Nicodemus* to learn *Christ's* Cross, and to be taught that that which is born of the flesh is but flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit: and that therefore they must be born again (not only of water, but also of the spirit) if ever they will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Joh. 3. 3, 5, 6. O miserable beginning! and miserable progress! when men that never soundly learnt the mysteries of Regeneration, and Faith, and Love, and Self-denial, and Mortification, do proceed to study names and words, and to turn over a multitude of Books, to fill their brains with airy notions, and their Common-places with such sayings as may be provision and furniture for their pride and ostentation, and

and ornament to their style and language; and know not yet what they must do to be saved, and indeed know nothing as they ought to know! *1 Cor. 8. 2.* As every Science hath its principles, which are supposed in all the consequential verities; so hath Religion as Doctrinal and Practical, those *Truths* which must be *first received* before any other can be received as it ought; and those *things* which must be *first done*, before any other can be done so as to attain their ends. And these *Truths* and *Duties* are principally about God himself, and are *known* and *done* effectually by those, and only those, that *walk with God*, or are devoted to him. It is a lamentable thing to see men immerst in serious studies, even till they grow aged, and to hear them seriously disputing and discoursing about the controversies or difficulties in Theology, or inferiour Sciences, before ever they had any saving knowledge of God, or of the work of the Holy Ghost in the converting and sanctifying of the soul, or how to escape everlasting misery!

2. He that *walketh with God*, hath fixed upon a *right end*, and is renewing his *estimation* and *intention* of it, and daily prosecuting it: And this is the first and greatest part of Practical Wisdome. When a man once knoweth his *End* aright, he may the better judge of the aptitude and seasonableness of all the means. When we know once that *Heaven* containeth the only felicity of man, it will direct us to Heavenly cogitations, and to such spiritual means as are fitted to that *End*: If we have the right mark in our eye, we are liker to level at it than if we *mistake* our mark. He is the wise man, and only he, that hath steadily fixed his eye upon that blessedness which he was created and redeemed for, and maketh strait towards it, and bends the powers of soul and body, by faithful constant diligence to obtain it. He that hath rightly and resolvedly *determined* of his *end*, hath *virtually* resolved a *thousand controversies* that others are unsatisfied and erroneous in: He that is resolved, that *his End is to Please and Glorifie God, and to enjoy him for ever*, is easily resolved whether a *holy life*, or a *sensual and worldly*, be the way: whether the way be to be *Godly*, or to make a *mock at Godliness*: whether *Covetousness* and *Riches*, *Ambition* and *Preferment*, *Voluptuousness* and *Fleshy pleasures*, be the means to attain his *End*: whether it will

will be attained rather by the studying of the Word of God, and meditating on it day and night, and by holy conference, and fervent prayer, and an obedient life; or by negligence, or worldliness, or drunkenness, or gluttony, or cards and dice, or beastly filchiness, or injustice and deceit. Know once but whither it is that we are going, and its easie to know whether the *Saint*, or the *Swine*, or the *Swaggerer* be in the way. But a man that doth *mistake his End*, is out of his way at the first step; and the further he goes, the further he is from true felicity; and the more he erreth, and the further he hath to go back again, if ever he return. Every thing that a man doth in the world, which is not *for the right end* (the *Heavenly felicity*) is an act of *foolishness* and *error*, how splendid soever the *Matter* or the *Name*, may make it appear to ignorant men. Every word that an ungodly person speaketh being not for a *right End*, is in him but sin and *folly*, however *materially* it may be an excellent and useful Truth. While a miserable soul hath his back upon God, and his face upon the world, every step he goeth is an act of folly, as tending unto his further misery. It can be no act of wisdom, which *tendeth* to a mans *damnation*. When such a wretch begins to enquire and bethink him where he is, and whither he is going, and whither he *should* go, and to think of turning back to God, then and never till then, he is beginning to *come to himself*, and to be *wise*, Luk. 15. 17. Till God and Glory be the *End* that he aimeth at, and seriously bends his study, heart and life to seek, though a man were searching into the mysteries of nature, though he were studying or discussing the notions of Theology; though he were admired for his learning and wisdom by the world, and cryed up as the Oracle of the Earth, he is all the while but playing the fool, and going a cleanlier way to Hell than the grosser sinners of the world! For is he wise, that knoweth not whether *Heaven* or *Earth* be *better*? whether *God* or his *Flesh* should be *obeyed*? whether *everlasting joyes*, or the *transitory pleasures of sin*, should be *preferred*? or that seemeth to be convinced of the truth in these and such like cases, and yet hath not the wit to make his choice, and bend his life according to his conviction? He cannot be wise that *practically* mistakes his *End*.

3. He that *walketh with God*, doth know those things, with a *deep, effectual, heart-changing knowledge*, which other men know but *superficially*, by the *halves*, and as in a *dream*. And true wisdom consisteth in the *Intensiveness* of the knowledge *subjectively*, as much as in the *extensiveness* of it *objectively*. To see a few things in a narrow room perspicuously and clearly, doth shew a better eye-sight, than in the open Air to see many things obscurely so as scarce to discern any of them aright; (like him that saw men walk like trees.) The clearness and depth of knowledge, which makes it effectual to its proper use, is the *greatness* and *excellency* of it: Therefore it is that unlearned men that love and fear the Lord, may well be said to be incomparably more wise and knowing men, than the most learned that are ungodly. As he hath more riches that hath a *little Gold or Jewels*, than he that hath many *load of stones*: so he that hath a *deep effectual knowledge of God the Father*, and the *Redeemer*, and of the *life to come*, is wiser and more knowing than he that hath only a *notional knowledge* of the same things, and of a thousand more. A wicked man hath so much knowledge, as teacheth him to *speak the same words* of God, and Christ, and Heaven, which a true Believer speaks; but not so much as to work in him the *same affections* and *choice*, nor so much as to cause him to do the *same work*. As it is a far more excellent kind of knowledge which a man hath of any Country by *travel and habitation* there, than that which cometh but by *reading or report*; or which a man hath of meat, of fruits, of wine, by *eating and drinking*, than that which another hath by *hearsay*; so is the inward heart-affecting knowledge of a true believer, more excellent than the flashy notions of the ungodly. *Truth* simply as *Truth*, is not the highest and most excellent object of the mind: But *Good as Good*, must be *apprehended* by the *Understanding*, and commended to the *Will*, which *entertaineth* it with *Complacency*, *adhereth* to it with *Choice* and *Resolution*, *prosecuteth* it with *Desire* and *Endeavour*, and *Enjoyeth* it with *Delight*: And though it be the *Understanding* which *apprehendeth* it, yet it is the *Heart or Will* that *relisheth* it, and *tasteth* the greatest sweetness in it, working upon it with some mixture of internal sense (which hath made some ascribe a knowledge of *Good* as such unto the *Will*)

will.) And it is the *Wills intention* that causeth the *Understanding* to be denominated *Practical*: And therefore I may well say, that it is *Wisdom* indeed when it reacheth to the *heart*. No man *knoweth* the *Truth* of God so well as he that most firmly *Believeth* him: And do man knoweth the *Goodness* of God so well as he that *Loveth* him most: No man knoweth his *Power* and *Mercy* so well as he that doth most confidently *Trust* him: And no man knoweth his *Justice* and *Dreadfulness* so well as he that *feareth* him: No man knoweth or believeth the *Glory of Heaven* so well as he that most *esteemeth*, *desireth* and *seeketh* it, and hath the most *Heavenly Heart* and *Conversation*: Ho man *believeth in Jesus Christ* so well as he that giveth up himself unto him, with the greatest Love and Thankfulness, and Trust and Obedience. As *James* saith [*Show mee thy Faith by thy works*] so say I, Let me know the *measure* and *value* of my *knowledge* by my *Heart* and *Life*. That is *wisdom* indeed which conformeth a man to God, and saveth his soul: This only will be owned as wisdom to eternity, when dreaming notions will prove but folly.

4. He that *walketh with God* hath an *infalible Rule*, and taketh the right course to have the best acquaintance with it, and skill to use it. The *Doctrin* that informeth him is *Divine*: It is from *Heaven*, and not of *Men*: And therefore if God be *wiser* than *man*, he is able to make his *Disciples wisest*; and Teaching will more certainly and powerfully illuminate. Many among men have pretended to *Infalibility*, that never could justify their pretensions, but have confuted them by their own mistakes and crimes: But none can deny the *Infalibility of God*. He never yet was deceived, or did deceive: He erreth not, nor teacheth error. *Nicodemus* knew Christ was to be believed, when he knew that he was a *Teacher come from God*, Joh. 3. 2. Christ knew that the Jews themselves durit not deny the truths of *John's Doctrin*, if he could but convince them that it was [*from Heaven, and not of men*] It is *impossible for God to lye*: It is the Devil that was a *Liar* from the beginning, and is yet the *Father of lyes*. No wonder if they believe lyes that follow such a Teacher. And those that follow the *flesh* and the *world*, do follow the *Devil*: They that will believe what their *fleshy interest* and *lusts* perswade them

to believe, do believe what the *Devil* perswadeth them to believe; For *he* perswadeth them *by these*, and *for these*. What marvel then if there be found men in the world, that can believe that *Holiness* is *Hypocrisie*, or a *needless thing*! that those are the worst men that are most careful to please **God**; that the *world* is more worthy of their care and labour, than their *salvation* is; that the pleasures of sin for a season are more desirable, than the everlasting happiness of the Saints; that cards and dice, and mirth and lust, and wealth and honour, are matters more delectable, than Prayer, and meditating on the Word of God, and loving him, and obeying him, and waiting in the hopes of life eternal; that gluttons and drunkards, and whoremongers, and covetous persons, may enter into the Kingdom of God, &c. What wonder if a thousand such damnable lyes, are believed by the Disciples of the Father of lyes! what wonder if there are so many Saint-haters, and God-haters in the world, as to fill the earth with persecutions and cruelties, or make a scorn of that which **God** most highly valueth, and all this under pretences of *Order*, or *Unity*, or *Justice*, or something that is *good*, and therefore fit to palliate their sin! Is there any thing so false, or foul, or wicked, that Satan will not teach his followers? Is he grown modest, or moderate, or holy, or just? Is he reconciled to Christ, to Scripture, to Godliness, or to the Godly? Or is his Kingdom of darkness at an end? and hath he lost the earth? Or are men therefore none of the servants of the Devil, because they were baptized (as *Simon Magus* was) and call and think themselves the servants of Christ? As if still it were not the art by which he gets and keeps Disciples, to suffer them to wear the livery of Christ, and to use his name, that he may thus keep possession of them in peace, who else would be frightened from him, and fly to Christ! He will give them leave to study Arts and Sciences, and to understand things excellent of inferiour use, so be it they will be deceived by him in the matters of God and their salvation. He can allow them to be learned Lawyers, excellent Physicians, Philosophers, Politicians, to be skilful Artists, so be it they will follow him in sin to their damnation, and will overlook the *Truth* that *should set them free*, (Joh. 8.32. Yea he will permit them (when there's

there's no remedy) to study the holy Scriptures, if he may but be the expounder and applyer of it: Yea he will permit them notionally to understand it, if they will not learn by it to be converted, to be holy, and to be saved: He can suffer them to be *eminent Divines*, so they will *not be serious Christians*. Thus is the world by the grand Deceiver hurried in darkness to perdition, being taken captive by him at his will, *2 Tim. 2. 26*. But the Sanctified are all illuminated by the Holy Ghost, by whom their eyes are so effectually opened, that *they are turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Act. 26. 18*. *The Father of Glory hath given them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ, that the eyes of their understanding being enlighthned, they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the Glory of his inheritance in the Saints, Eph. 1. 17, 18*. Certainly that illumination of the Holy Ghost which is so often mentioned in Scripture as given to all true believers, is not a fanſie, nor an insignificant name: And if it signifie any thing, it signifieth somewhat that is much above the teaching of man. All that walk with God *are taught of God!* And can *man teach like God?* God hath acceſſe unto the heart, and there he doth transcribe his Laws, and put them into our inward parts. And they that walk with him have not only his Word to read, but his *Spirit* to help them to understand it: and being with him, in his family (yea he dwelleth in them and they in him) he is ready at hand to resolve their doubts: when he gave them *his fear*, he gave them the *beginning of wisdom*, *Pſal. 111. 10*. He causeth them to *incline their ear to wisdom*, *Prov. 2. 2, 6*. and to *apply their hearts unto it*, *Pſal. 90. 12*. and *maketh them to know it in the hidden parts*, *Pſal. 51. 6*.

It is his Law that they have determined to make their rule: They live as under his authority: They are more observant of his Will and Government, than of any Laws or Government of man. And as they obey man in and for the Lord, so they do it in subordination to him, and therefore not *against him* and *his Laws*, which being the standard of Justice, and the Rule of Rulers, and of subjects both, they are in the safest way of unerring wisdom, who *walk with God* according to

that Rule; and refuse to turn aside, though commanded by man, or enticed by Satan, the world, or flesh.

5. He that walketh with God is the most considerate person, and therefore hath great advantage to be wise. The frequent and serious thoughts of God, do awaken all the powers of the soul, so that drowsiness doth not hinder the understanding, and so occasion its deceit: There is scarce a more common and powerful cause of mens folly and delusion and perdition, in all the world, than that *sleepiness* and *stupidity* which hindereth Reason from the *vigorous* performance of its office: In this *senseless* case, though a man both know and consider of the same Truths, which in their nature are most powerful to cleanse and govern and save his soul, yet *sugginess* doth enervate them: He knoweth them as if he knew them not, and considereth them as if he never thought of them: They work little more upon him, then if he believed them not, or had never heard of them: even as a dream of the greatest matters, moveth not the Sleeper from his pillow: In this senseless state, the Devil can do almost any thing with a sinner: He can make him sin against his knowledge: And when Conscience hath frightened him into some kind of Penitence, and made him cry out, I have sinned and done foolishly, and caused him to promise to do so no more; yet doth the Devil prevail with him to go on, and to break his promises, as if he had never been convinced of his sins, or confessed them, or seen any reason or necessity to amend: He doth but imprison the truth in unrighteousness, and bury it in a senseless heart: whereas if you could but *awaken* all the powers of his soul, to give this *same* truth its due entertainment, and take it deeper into his heart, it would make him even scorn the baits of sin, and see that the ungodly are beside themselves, and make him presently resolve and set upon a holy life. And hence it is that *sickness* which causeth men to receive the *sentence of death*, doth usually make men bewail their former sinful lives and marvel that they could be before so sottish as to resist such known and weighty truths; and it makes them purpose and promise reformation and wish themselves in the case of those that they were wont before to deride and scorn: Because now the Truth is deeper received and digested, by their awakened

awakened souls, and appeareth in its proper evidence and strength. There is no man but must acknowledge, that the same truth doth at one time command his soul, which at another time seems of little force: It is a wonder to observe how differently the *same consideration* worketh with a man when he is *awakened*, and when he is in a *secure stupid case*!

Now this is his advantage that *walks with God*: He is much more frequently than others *awakened*, to a serious apprehension of the things which he understandeth: The thoughts of the presence of the most Holy God, will not suffer him to be as *secure* and *senseless* as others are, or as he is himself when he turneth aside from this Heavenly conversation. He hath in God such exceeding transcendent excellencies, such Greatness, such Goodness continually to behold, that it keepeth his soul in a much more *serious lively* state, than any other means could keep it in: so that when ever any *truth* or *duty* is presented to him, all his faculties are awake and ready to observe it and improve it. A Sermon, or a good book, or godly conference, or a mercy, when a man hath been with God in prayer or contemplation, will relish better with him, and sink much deeper, than at another time. Nay one serious thought of God himself, will do more to make a man truly and solidly wise, than all the reading and learning in the world, which shuts him out.

6. *Walking with God* doth *fix the mind*, and keep it from *diversions* and *vagaries*, and consequently much helpeth to make men wise. A *stragling* mind is empty and unfurnished. He that hath no *dwelling*, for the most part hath no *wealth*. *Wandering* is the *beggars* life. Men do but bewilder and lose themselves, and not grow wise, whose thoughts are ranging in the corners of the earth, and are like masterlesse dogs, that run up and down according to their *fanisie*, and may go any *whether*, but have *business* nowhere. The creature will not *fix the soul*: But God is the center of all our cogitations: In *him* only they may *unite* and *fix* and *rest*. He is the only *loadstone* that can effectually attract and hold it *steadfast* to himself. Therefore he that *walks with God* is the most *constant* and *unmoveable* of men: Let prosperity or adversity come; let the world be turned upside-down, and the mountains be
hurled.

hurled into the sea, yet he changeth not: Let men *allure* or *threat*, let them *scorn* or *rage*, let laws, and customs, and governments, and interest change, he is still the same. For he knoweth that God is still the same, and that his Word changeth not. Let that be death one year which was the way to reputation another, and let the giddy world turn about as the seasons of the year, this changeth not his mind and life (though in things lawful he is of a yeilding temper:) For he knoweth that the interest of his soul doth not change, with the humours or interests of men: He still feareth *sinning*, for he knoweth that *Judgement* is still drawing on, in all changes and seasons whatsoever: He is still set upon the pleasing of the most Holy God, whoever be uppermost among men; as knowing that the God whom he serveth is able to deliver him from man, but man is not able to deliver him from God. He still goeth on in the Holy path, as knowing that Heaven is as sure and as desirable as ever it was. *Psal. 112. 6, 7. Surely he shall not be moved for ever: the Righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance: He shall not be afraid of evil tydings: His heart is fixed trusting in the Lord: His heart is established, he shall not be afraid.*]

7. He that *walketh with God*, hath the *great master-truths* upon his heart; which are the *standard* of the rest, and the *stock*, as it were, out of which they *spring*. The *great truths* about God, and *Grace* and *Glory*, have a greater power then many hundred truths of an inferiour nature. And moreover, such a one is sure that he shall be wise in the *greatest* and most *necessary* points. He is guilty of no ignorance or error that shall keep him out of *heaven*, or hinder his acceptance with his God. And if he be wise enough to please God and to be saved, he is wise indeed: (as before was hinted.)

8. *Walking with God* doth take off the *vizar* of *deluding things*, and *keepeth us* out of the reach and power of those *objects* and *arguments* which are the *instruments* of *deceit*. When a man hath been believingly and seriously with God, how easily can he see through the *sophistry* of the tempting world! How easily can he practically confute the reasonings of the flesh! and discern the dotage of the seeming subtilties of wicked men, that will needs think they have *reason* for that which

is displeasing to their Maker, and tends to the damning of their souls! so far as a man is conversant with God, so far he is sensible, that all things are nothing, which can be offered as a price to hire him to sin: and that the name of preferment, and honour and wealth, or of disgrace and imprisonment and death, are words almost of no signification, as to the tempters ends, to draw the soul from God and duty. It is men that know not God, and know not what it is to *walk with him*, that think these words so big and powerful, to whom *wealth* and *honour* signifie more then *God* and *Heaven*; and *poverty*, *disgrace* and *death*, do signifie more then *Gods displeasure* and *everlasting punishment in hell*. As it is easie to cheat a man that is *far from the light*, so is it easie to deceive the learnedst man that is *far from God*.

9. *Walking with God*, doth greatly help us against the *deceitfulness* and *erroneous disposition* of our own hearts. The *Will* hath a very great power upon the *understanding*: And therefore ungodly fleshly men will very hardly receive any truth which crosseth the carnal interest or disposition: And will hardly let go any error that feedeth them: because their corrupted wills are a byas to their understandings, and make them desperately partial in all their reading and hearing, and hypocritical in their prayers and enquiries after truth. Interest and corruption locketh up their hearts from their own observation. Whereas a man that *walketh with God*, that is jealous and holy and just and a searcher of the heart, is driven from hypocrisie, and forced to behave himself as in the open light, and to do all as in the sight of all the world, as knowing that the sight of God is of far greater concernment and regard. The partiality, corruption and byas of the heart, is detected and shamed by the presence of God. Therefore to *walk with God* is to *walk in the light*, and as children of the light, and not in darkness. And he that doth *Truth cometh to the light*, that his deeds might be manifest, that they are wrought in God: *When every one that doth evil hateth the light; neither cometh to the light lest his deeds should be reprov'd: And this is their condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love the darkness rather then the light, because their deeds are evil*, Job. 3. 19, 20, 21. It tendeth therefore exceedingly

to make men wise, to *walk with God*, because it is a *walking in the light*, and in such a *presence* as most powerfully prevail-eth against that hypocrisie, deceitfulness and partiality of the heart, which is the common cause of damning error.

10. Lastly, they that *walk with God* are entitled by many *promises*, to the *guidance* and *direction* of his spirit. And blessed are those that have such a guide: at once a *light in the world* without them, and a *light* immediately from God *within* them: For so far as he is received and worketh in them, he will lead them into truth, and save them from deceit and folly, and having *guided them by his counsel*, will *afterward take them unto glory*, Psal. 73. 24. Whereas the ungodly are *led by the flesh*, and often *given up to their own hearts lusts*, to *walk in their own counsels*, Rom. 8. 1, 13. Psal. 81. 12. till at last the *fools do say in their hearts, there is no God*, Psal. 14. 1. and they become *corrupt and abominable, eating up the people of the Lord as bread*, and *call not on his Name*, ver. 2. &c. *Deceiving and being deceived: sensual, having not the spirit*, Jud. 19. *who shall receive the reward of their unrighteousness, as accounting it pleasure to riot in the day time*, 2 Pet. 2. 13.

I V. **A** Nother benefit of *walking with God*, is, that it *maketh men good, as well as wise*: It is the most excellent means for the advancement of mans soul to the *highest degree of holiness attainable* in this life: If conversing with *Good men* doth powerfully tend to make men *good*; conversing with *God* must needs be more effectual; which may appear in these particulars.

1. The apprehensions of the *presence* and *attributes* of God, do most effectually *check the stirrings* of corruption, and rebuke all the vicious inclinations and motions of the soul: even the most *secret sin* of the heart, is rebuked by his *presence*, as well as the most open transgression of the life: For the thoughts of the heart are open to his view. All that is done before God, is done as in the open light: nothing of it can be hid: no sin can have the encouragement of secrecie to embolden it. It is all committed in the presence of the Universal King and Lawgiver of the world, who hath forbidden it: It

is done before him that most abhorreth it, and will never be reconciled to it. It is done before him that is the Judge of the world, and will shortly pass the sentence on us according to what we have done in the body. It standeth up in his presence who is of infinite Majesty and perfection, and therefore most to be revered and honoured; And therefore if the presence of a wise and grave and venerable person, will restrain men from sin, the presence of God apprehended seriously, will do it much more. It is committed before him that is our dearest friend, and tender Father, and chiefest benefactor: And therefore ingenuity, gratitude and love, will all rise up against it in those that *walk with God*. There is that in God, before the eyes of those that *walk with him*, which is most *contrary to sin*, and most *powerful* against it, of any thing in the world. Every one will confess that if mens eyes were opened to see the Lord in Glory standing over them, it would be the most powerful means to restrain them from transgressing: The drunkard would not then venture upon his cups: the fornicator would have a cooling for his lusts: the swearer would be afraid to take his Makers name in vain: the prophane would scarce presume to scorn or persecute a holy life. And he that *walketh with God*, though he see him not corporeally, yet seeth him by faith, and liveth as in his presence; and therefore must needs be restrained from sin, as having the means which is next to the sight of God. If pride should begin to stir in one that *walks with God*, O what a powerful remedy is at hand! How effectually would the presence of the Great and Holy God rebuke it! and constrain us to say as *Job 42. 5, 6. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.*] If worldly love or carnal lust should stir in such a one, how powerfully would the terrors of the Lord repress it? and his Majesty rebuke it? and his Love and Goodness overcome it? If worldly cares or murmuring discontentments begin to trouble such a one, how effectually will the Goodness, the Allsufficiency and the faithfulness of God allay them, and quiet and satisfie the soul, and cause it to be offended at its own offence, and to chide it self for its repinings and distrust? If *Passion* arise and begin to discompose us, how

powerfully will the presence of God rebuke it? and the reverence of his Majesty, and the sense of his Authority and Pardoning grace will assuage it, and shame us into silent quietness; who dare let out his passions upon man, in the presence of his Maker, that apprehendeth his presence? The same I might say of all other sins.

2. The presence and attributes of God apprehended by those that walk with him, is the potent remedy against Temptations. Who will once turn an eye to the gold and glory of the world that is offered him to allure him to sin, if he see God stand by? who would be tempted to lust or any sinful pleasure, if he observe the presence of the Lord? Satan can never come in so ill a time with his temptations, and have so little hope to speed, as when the soul is contemplating the attributes of God, or taken up in prayer with him, or any way apprehensive of his presence. The soul that faithfully walks with God, hath enough at hand in him to answer all temptations. And the further any man is from God, and the less he knoweth him, the more Temptations can do upon him.

3. The presence of God, affordeth the most powerful motives unto Good, to those that walk with him. There is no grace in man, but what is from God, and may find in God its proper object or incentive. As God is God, above the creature transcendentally and infinitely in all perfections, so all the motives to goodness which are fetcht from him, are transcendentally above all that may be fetcht from any creature. He that liveth alwaies by the fire or in the Sun-shine, is likest to be warm. He that is most with God, will be most like to God in Holiness. Frequent and serious converse with him, doth most deeply imprint his communicable attributes on the heart, and make there the clearest impression of his image. Believers have learned by their own experience, that one hours serious prayer, or meditation, in which they can get nigh to God in the Spirit, doth more advance their grace, then any help that the creature can afford them.

4. Moreover those that walk with God, have not only a Powerful, but an universal incentive for the actuating and increasing of every grace. Knowledge, and faith, and fear, and love, and trust, and hope, and obedience, and zeal, and all have

have in God their proper objects and incentives: One Creature may be useful to us in one thing, and another in another thing; but God is the most effectual mover of all his graces: and that in a holy harmony and order. Indeed he hath no greater Motive to draw us to Love him, and Fear him, and Trust him, and Obey him, than himself. It is life eternal to know him in his Son, Joh. 17. 3. And that is, not only because it entitleth us to life eternal, but also because it is the beginning and incentive of that life of holiness which will be eternal.

5. Moreover, those that walk with God, have a constant as well as a Powerful and Universal incentive to exercise and encrease their Graces. Other helps may be out of the way: Their Preachers may be silenced or removed; Their Friends may be scattered or taken from them: Their Books may be forbidden, or not at hand: But God is alwaies ready and willing: They have leave at all times to come to him, and be welcome. Whenever they are willing they may go to him by prayer or contemplation, and find all in him which they can desire. If they want not Hearts, they shall find no want of any thing in God. At what time soever fear would torment them, they may draw near and put their trust in him, Psal. 56. 2, 3, 4. & 11. 1. & 18. 2, 30. & 31. 1, 6. He will be a sure and speedy refuge for them, a very present help in trouble, Psal. 46. 1. & 62. 7, 8. & 91. 2, 9 & 94. 22. Whenever coldness or lukewarmness would extinguish the work of Grace, they may go to him, and find those streams of flaming Love flow from him, those strong attractives, those wonderful mercies, those terrible judgements, of which while they are musing, the fire may again wax hot within them, Psal. 39. 3.

6. Lastly, by way of encouraging reward, God useth to give abundantly of his Grace, to those that walk most faithfully with him: He will shew most Love to those that most love him: He will be nearest to them that most desirously draw nigh to him; while he forsaketh those that forsake him, and turneth away from those that turn away from him, 2 Chro. 15. 2. Prov. 1. 32. Ezz. 8. 22. [The hand of our God is for good upon all them that seek him: but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.]

Thus it is apparent in all those evidences, that walking with

God, is not only a *discovery* of the Goodness that men have; but the only way to encrease their Grace, and make them better. O what a sweet humility and seriousness, and spirituality appeareth in the conference, or conversation, or both, of those that newly come from a believing close converse with God! When they that come from *men* and *Books*, may have but a common mind or life! And those that come from the *business* and *pleasure* of the world and flesh, and from the company of foolish riotous gallants, may come defiled, as the Swine out of the mire!

V. Lastly, *to walk with God, is the best preparation for times of suffering, and for the day of death.* As we must be judged according to what we have done in the body; so the nearer we find our selves to judgement, the more we shall be constrained to *judge our selves* according to what we have done, and shall the more perceive the effects upon our souls.

That this is so excellent a preparative for *sufferings* and *death*, will appear by the consideration of these particulars.

I. That they *walk with God* are *safest from all destructive sufferings*; and shall have none but what are sanctified to their good, *Rom. 8. 28.* They are near to God, where destruction cometh not; as the Chicken under the wings of the Hen; They *walk with him* that will not lead them to perdition: that will not neglect them, nor sell them for nought, nor expose them to the will of men and devils, though he may suffer them to be tryed for their good. No one can take them out of his hands. Be near to him, and you are safe: The destroyer cannot fetch you thence. He can fetch you (when the time is come) from the side of your merriest companions, and dearest friends; from the presence of the greatest Princes; from the strongest Tower, or most sumptuous Pallace, or from your heaps of riches, in your securest health: But he cannot take you from the arms of Christ, nor from under the wings of your Creatours love. [*For there is no God like him, in Heaven above, or on the earth beneath, who keepeth Covenant and Mercy with his servants,*

servants, that walk before him with all their heart, 1 King. 8. 23.] 1 King. 11. 38. However we are used in our Fathers presence, we are sure it shall be for good in the latter end: For he wanteth neither Power nor Love to deliver us, if he saw deliverance to be best.

2. *Walking with God is the surest way to obtain a certainty of his special love, and of our salvation: And what an excellent preparative for sufferings or death such assurance is, I need not tell any considerate beleever. How easie may it be to us to suffer poverty, disgrace or wrongs, or the pains of sickness or death, when once we are certain that we shall not suffer the pains of Hell! How chearfully may we go out of this troublesome world, and leave the greatest prosperity behind us, when we are sure to live in Heaven for ever! Even an Infidel will say, that he could suffer or dye, if he could but be certain to be Glorified in Heaven when he is dead.*

3. *Walking with God doth mortifie the flesh, and alle the affections and lusts thereof: The soul that is taken up with higher matters, and daily seeth things more excellent, becometh as dead to the things below: And thus it weaneth us from all that in the world which seemeth most desirable to carnal men. And when the flesh is mortified, and the world is nothing to us, or but as a dead and loathsome carcase, what is there left to be very troublesome in any suffering from the world? or to make us loth by death to leave it? It is men that know not God, that overvalue the profits and honours of the world; and men that never felt the comforts of Communion with God, that set too much by the pleasures of the flesh: And it is men that set too much by these, that make so great a matter of suffering. It is he that basely overvalueth wealth, that whineth and repineth when he comes to poverty: It is he that set too much by his honour, and being befooled by his pride, doth greatly esteem the thoughts or applauding words of men, that swelleth against those that disesteem him, and breaketh his heart when he falleth into disgrace. He that is cheated out of his wits by the pomps and splendour of a high and prosperous estate, doth think he is undone when he is brought low. But it is not so with him that walks with God: For being taken up with far higher things, he knoweth the vanity of these: As*
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he seeth not in them any thing that is worthy of his *strong desires*, so neither any thing that is worthy of *much lamentation* when they are gone. He never thought that a shadow or feather, or a blast of wind could make him happy: And he cannot think that the *loss* of these can make him miserable. He that is taken up with God, hath a higher interest and business, and findeth not himself so *much concerned* in the storms or calms that are here below, as others are, who know no better, and never minded higher things.

4. *Walking with God doth much overcome the fear of man*: The fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in Hell fire, will extinguish the fear of them that can but kill the body, *Luke 12. 4.* The threats or frowns of a worm are inconsiderable to him that daily walketh with the great and dreadful God, and hath his power and word for his security. As *Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, because he had respect to the recompence of reward*; so he feared not the wrath of the King, for he endured as seeing him that is invisible, *Heb. 11. 27.*

5. *Walking with God doth much prepare for sufferings and death*, in that it breedeth quietness in the conscience: so that when all is at peace within, it will be ease to suffer any thing from without. Though there is no proper merit in our works to comfort us, yet it is an unspeakable consolation to a slandered persecuted man to be able to say, *These evil sayings are spoken falsely of me, for the sake of Christ: and I suffer not as an evil doer, but as a Christian*: And it is matter of very great peace to a man that is hastening unto death, to be able to say as *Hzekiah, 2 King. 20. 3.* [*Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight:*] And as *Paul, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.* *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c.*] And as *2 Cor. 1. 12.* *For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world:*] such a testimony of conscience is a precious cordial to a suffering or a dying man: [The time that we have spent in a holy and heavenly conversation,

tion, will be exceeding sweet in the last review, when time spent in sinful vanity, and idleness, and in worldly and fleshly designs, will be grievous and tormenting. The day is coming, and is even at hand, when those that are now the most hardened Infidels, or obstinate presumptuous sinners, or scornful malicious enemies of holiness, would wish and wish a thousand times, that they had spent that life in a *serious obedient walking with God*, which they spent in seeking worldly wealth, and laying up a treasure on earth, and feeding the inordinate desires of their flesh. I tell you, it is walking with God, that is the only way to have a sound and quiet conscience: And he that is *healing and settling his conscience upon the Love of God and the Grace of Christ*, in the time of his *prosperity*, is making the wisest preparation for *adversity*: And the preparation thus made so long before (perhaps twenty, or forty, or threescore years or more) is as truly useful and comfortable at a dying hour, as that part which is made *immediately before*. I know that besides this *general preparation*, there should be also a *particular special preparation*, for sufferings and death: But yet this *general* part is the *chiefest* and most necessary part. A man that hath walked in his life time with God, shall certainly be saved, though death surprize him unexpectedly, without any more particular preparation: But a *particular preparation* without either such a *life*, or *such a heart* as would cause it if he had recovered, is no sufficient preparation at all, and will not serve to any mans salvation. Alas what a pittiful provision doth that man make for death and for salvation, who neglecteth his soul, despiseth the commands of God, and disregardeth the promises of eternal life, till he is ready to dye, and then cryeth out [*I repent, I am sorry for my sin, I would I had lived better*] and this only from the constraint of *fear*, without any such *love to God and holiness* which would make him walk with God if he should recover! what if the *Priest* absolve this man from all his sins? Doth *God* therefore absolve him? Or shall he thus be saved? No, it is certain that all the *Sacraments* and *Absolution* in the world, will never serve to save such a soul, without that grace which must make it *new and truly holy*. The *Absolution* of a *Minister of Christ*, which is pronounced in *his name*, is a very great comfort to the *truly penitents*:

nitent: For such God hath first pardoned by his general Act of Oblivion in the Gospel, and it is God that sendeth his Messenger to them (in Sacraments and Ministerial Absolution) with that pardon particularized and applied to themselves. But where the heart is not truly penitent and converted, that person is not pardoned by the Gospel, as being not in the Covenant, or a child of promise; and therefore the pardon of a Minister, being upon mistake, or to an unqualified person can reach no further than to admit him into the esteem of men, and to the Communion and outward priviledges of the Church (which is a poor comfort to a soul that must lye in Hell:) But it can never admit him into the Kingdom of Heaven. God indeed may approve the act of his Ministers, if they go according to his rule, and deal in Church administrations with those that make A CREDIBLE PROFESSION of FAITH and HOLINESSE, as if they had true faith and holiness: but yet he will not therefore make such Ministerial acts effectual to the saving of unbelieving or unholy souls. Nay (because I have found many sensual ungodly people inclining to turn Papists, because with them they can have a quick and easie pardon of their sins, by the Pope, or by the Absolution of the Priest) let me tell such, that if they understand what they do, even this cheat is too thin to quiet their defiled consciences: For even the Papists School-doctors do conclude, that when the Priest absolveth an impenitent sinner, or one that is not qualified for pardon, such a one is not loosed or pardoned in Heaven (*Leg. Martin. de Ripalda exposit. Liber. Magist. li. 4. dist. 18. p. 654, 655. & p. 663, 664. dist. 20. Aquin. Dist. 20. q. 1. a. 5. Suar. Tom. 4. in 3. p. disp. 52. Greg. Valent. Tom. 4. disp. 7. q. 20. p. 5. Tolet. lib. 6. cap. 27. Navar. Notab. 17. & 18. Cordub. de indulg. li. 5. q. 23.*) they deny not the truth of those words of Origen. *Hom. 14. ad cap. 24. Levit. [Exit quis à fide, perexit de castris Ecclesia etiam si Episcopi Voce non abjiciatur: sicut contra interdum fit, ut aliquis non recto judicio eorum qui praesunt Ecclesia, foras mittatur: sed si non egit ut mereretur exire, nihil laditur: interdum enim quod foras mittitur, intus est; & qui foris est, intus videtur retineri:]* And what he saith of Excommunication, is true of Absolution: An erring Key doth neither lock out of Heaven, nor let into Heaven. **A Godly Believer**

Believer shall be saved though the Priest condemn him: and an *unbeliever* or *ungodly person* shall be condemned by God, though he be absolved by the Priest.

Nay if you have not walked with God in the spirit, but walked after the flesh, though your *repentance* should be *sound* and *true* at the last, it will yet very hardly serve to *comfort* you, though it may serve to your *salvation*: because you will very hardly get any assurance that it is *sincere*. It is dangerous lest it should prove but the effect of fear (which will not save) when it cometh not till death do fright you to it. As *Augustine* saith, *Nullus expectet, quando peccare non potest: arbitrii enim libertatem querit Deus, ut deleri possint commissa; non necessitatem, sed charitatem, non tantum timorem: quia non in solo timore vivit homo.* Therefore the same *Augustine* saith, [*Siquis positus in ultima necessitate voluerit accipere penitentiam, & accipit; fateor vobis, non illi negamus quod petit; sed non prasumimus quod bene hinc exit: si securus hinc exierit, ego nescio: Penitentiam dare possumus, securitatem non possumus.* You see then how much it is needful to the peace of conscience at the hour of death, that you *walk with God* in the time of life.

6. Moreover, to *walk with God* is an excellent preparation for *sufferings* and *death*, because it tendeth to *acquaint the soul with God*, and to embolden it both to go to him in *Prayer*, and to *Trust* on him, and expect *salvation* from him. He that *walketh with God* is so much used to *holy Prayer*, that he is a *man of Prayer*, and is skilled in it, and hath tryed what prayer can do with God: so that in the hour of his extremity, he is not to seek, either for a *God to pray to*, or a *Mediator* to intercede for him, or a *Spirit of Adoption* to enable him as a child to *fly for help to his reconciled Father*. And having not only been frequently *with God*, but frequently *entertained* and *accepted* by him, and had his prayers *heard* and *granted*, it is a great encouragement to an afflicted soul in the hour of distresse, to go to such a God for help. And it is a dreadful thing when a soul is ready to go out of the world, to have no comfortable knowledge of God, or skill to pray to him, or encouragement to expect acceptance with him: To think that he must presently appear before a God, whom he never knew, nor heartily loved, being never acquainted with

that communion with him in the way of Grace, which is the way to communion in Glory, O what a terrible thought is this! But how comfortable is it when the soul can say [*I know whom I have believed? The God that afflicteth me is he that loveth me, and hath manifested his love to me by his daily attractive, assisting and accepting Grace! I am going by death to see him intuitively, whom I have often seen by the eye of Faith, and to live with him in Heaven, with whom I lived here on earth; From whom, and Through whom, and To whom was my life! I go not to any enemy, nor an utter stranger, but to that God who was the Spring, the Ruler, the Guide, the Strength and the Comfort of my life. He hath heard me so oft, that I cannot think he will now reject me: He hath so often comforted my soul, that I will not believe he will now thrust me into Hell: He hath mercifully received me so oft, that I cannot believe he will now refuse me: Those that come to him in the way of Grace, I have found he will in no wise cast out.*] As *strangeness to God* doth fill the soul with *distrustful fears*, so *walking with him* doth breed that *humble confidence*, which is a wonderful comfort in the hour of distress, and a happy preparations to sufferings and death.

7. Lastly, to *walk with God*, doth encrease that *Love of God* in the soul, which is the *heavenly tincture*, and inclineth it to look upward, and being weary of a sinful flesh and world; to desire to be perfected with God. How happy a preparation for death is this, when it is but the passage to *that God* with whom we *desire to be*, and to that *place* where we *fain would dwell* for ever! To *love* the state and place that we are going to, being made *connatural* and *suitable* thereto, will much overcome the fears of death. But for a soul that is acquainted with nothing but this life, and savoureth nothing but *Earth* and *Flesh*, and hath no *connaturality* with the things above, for such a soul to be surprized with the tydings of death, alas, how dreadful must it be!

And thus I have shewed you the *Benefits* that come by *walking with God*, which if you *Love* your selves with a rational love, methinks should resolve every impartial considerate Reader, to give up himself without delay, to so desirable a course of life! or, if he have begun it, to follow it more chearfully and faithfully than he had done.

C H A P. VII.

I Am next to shew you that *Believers* have *special obligations* to this holy course of life, and therefore are doubly faulty if they neglect it: Though indeed, to neglect it *totally*, or in the *main drift* of their lives, is a thing *inconsistent* with a living Faith.

Consider, 1 If you are true Christians, your *Relations* engage you to *walk with God*: Is he not your *Reconciled Father*, and you his *Children* in a special sense? And whom should *Children* dwell with, but with their *Father*? You were glad when he received you into his *Covenant* that he would *enter* into so near a *Relation* to you, as he *expresseth*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17, 18. [*I will receive you, and will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*] And do you draw back, as if you *repented* of your *Covenant*? and were not only *wearry* of the *Duty*, but of the *Priviledges* and *Benefits* of your *Relation*? *You* may have access to *God*, when *others* are shut out: *Your Prayers* may be heard, when the prayers of the *wicked* are abominable: *You* may be welcome, when the worldling, and ambitious, and carnal are despised: He that dwelleth in the highest Heaven, is willing to *look to you with respect*, and *dwell with you*, when he beholdeth the proud afar off, *Isa.* 66. 1, 2. & 57. 15, 16. And yet will *you* not come that may be welcome? Doth he put such a *difference* between *you* and *others*, as to feed you as his *Children* at his *table*, while others are called *Dogs*, and are *without the doors*, and have but your *crums* and *leavings*? and yet will you be so foolish and unthankful, as to run out of your *Fathers* presence, and choose to be without, among the *Dogs*? How came your *Fathers* presence to be so grievous to you? and the *priviledges* of his family to seem so vile? Is it not some *unchild-like carriage*? the guilt of some disobedience or contempt that hath first caused this? Or have you fallen again in *love* with *fleshy pleasures*, and some vanity of the world? Or have you had enough of *God* and *Godliness*? till you begin to grow

aware of him? If so, you never truly knew him. However it be, if you grow indifferent as to God, do not wonder it shortly you find him set as light by you: And believe it, the day is not far off, in which the *Fatherly Relation of God*, and the priviledges of *Children*, will be more esteemed by you: when all things else forsake you in your last distress, you will be loth that God should then forsake you, or seem as a stranger to hide his face: Then you will cry out, as the afflicted Church, *Isa. 63. 15, 16.* [*Look down from Heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: Where is thy zeal and thy strength? the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies towards me? are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our Father: though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not, thou O Lord art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting*] Nothing but God, and his Fatherly Relation, will then support you: Attend him therefore, and with reverent, obedient cheerfulness and delight, converse with him as with your dearest Father. For since the beginning of the world, men have not known by sensible evidence, either the ear or the eye, besides God himself, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him, *Isa. 64. 4.* Though he be wroth with us because we have sinned, yet doth he meet him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, that remembreth him in his waies, *vers. 5.* Say not, I have played abroad so long that I dare not now go home: I have sinned so greatly, that I dare not speak to him, or look him in the face. Come yet but with a penitent returning heart, and thou mayest be accepted through the Prince of Peace: Prodigals find better entertainment than they did expect, when once they do but resolve for home. If he allow us to begin with [*Our Father which art in Heaven*] we may boldly proceed to ask forgiveness of our trespasses, and whatever else is truly good for us. But, alas, as our iniquities seduce us away from God, so the guilt of them affrighteth some from returning to him, and the love of them corrupteth the hearts of others, and makes them too indifferent as to their communion with him; so that too many of his children live as if they did not know their Father, or had forgotten him: We may say as *Isa. 64. 6, 7, 8, 9.* [*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and we all do*

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fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away: and there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee; for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities: But now, O Lord, thou art our Father; We are the Clay, and thou our Potter, and we are all the work of thy hand. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever: Behold, see, We beseech thee, We are all thy people.] O do not provoke your Father to disown you, or to withdraw his help, or hide his face, or to send the Rod to call you home! for if you do, you will wish you had known the priviledges of his presence, and had kept nearer to him! Be not so unnatural, so unthankful, so unkind, as to be weary of your Fathers presence (and such a Father's too) and to take more delight in any others.

Moreover, you are related to God in Christ, as a *Wife unto a Husband*, as to *Covenant union*, and nearness and dearness of *affection*, and as to *his tender care* of you for your good: And is it seemly, is it wisely or gratefully done of you, to desire rather the company of others, and delight in creatures more than him? *Isa. 54. 5, 6.* How affectionately doth *thy Maker* call himself the *Husband* of his people? And can thy heart commit *adultery*, and forsake him: [*My Covenant thy brake, though I was an Husband to thee, saith the Lord, Jer. 3 1. 32.* O put not God to exercise his *jealousie*. It is one of his terrible attributes, to be [*a jealous God.*] And can he be *otherwise* to thee, when thou lovest not his converse or company, and carest not how long thou art from him in the world? Woe to thee if he once say as *Hos. 2. 2.* [*She is not my Wife, neither am I her Husband.*]

Nay more than this, if you are Christians, you are *members of the body of Christ*: And therefore how can you withdraw your selves from him, and not feel the pain and torment of so sore a wound or dislocation? you cannot *live* without a constant dependence on him, and communication from him, *Joh. 15. 1, 4, 5.* *I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman: Abide in me, and I in you. — I am the Vine, ye are the Branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me, ye can do nothing. — If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* So

So near are you to Christ, that he delighteth to acquaint you with his *secrets*: O how many mysteries doth he reveal to those that *walk with him*, which carnal strangers never know! *Mysteries of Wisdom!* Mysteries of Love and saving Grace! *Mysteries of Scripture, and Mysteries of Providence!* Mysteries felt by inward experience, and Mysteries revealed, foreseen by Faith! Not only the strangers that pass by the doors, but even the common servants of the family are unacquainted with the secret operations of the Spirit, and entertainments of Grace, and Joy in believing, which those that *walk with God* either do or may possess. Therefore Christ calleth you friends as being more than *servants*, Joh. 15. 14, 15. *Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you: Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what the Lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.*] It is true, for all this, that every true Christian hath reason (and is apt) to complain of his *darkness* and *distance* from God. Alas, they *know so little* of him, and of the Mysteries of his Love and Kingdom, that sometimes they are apt to think that they are indeed but *utter strangers* to him: But this is, because there is infinitely *more still unknown* to them than they know! what! can the silly shallow creature comprehend his infinite Creatour? Or shall we *know all* that is to be *known in Heaven*, before we *enjoy all* that is to be *enjoyed in Heaven*? It is no more wonder to hear a believer pant and mourn after a *fuller knowledge of God*, and nearer access to him, than to *seek after Heaven*, where this will be his happiness. But yet, though his Knowledge of God be *small*, compared with his *Ignorance*, that *little Knowledge* of God which he hath attained, is more mysterious, sublime and excellent, than all the learning of the greatest un sanctified Scholars in the world. *Walk with him* according to the nearness of your Relations to him, and you shall have this excellent knowledge of his Mysteries, which no Books or Teachers alone can give. You shall be effectually touched at the heart with the truths which others do uneffectually hear: You shall be *powerfully moved*, when they are but *uneffectually exhorted*. When they only hear the voice without them, you shall hear the voice within you, and as it were

were behind you, saying, This is the way, walk in it : O that you could duly value such a friend, to watch over you, and for you, and dwell in you, and tell you faithfully of every danger, and of every duty, and teach you to know good and evil, and what to choose, and what to refuse ! How closely and delightfully would you converse with *such a blessed friend, if you rightly valued him ?*

2. **M**oreover, you that are the servants of God, have by your Covenant and Profession, renounced and forsaken all things else (as they stand in any opposition to him, or competition with him) and have resigned your selves wholly unto him alone : And therefore with him must you converse, and be employed, unless you will forsake your Covenant. You knew first that it was your interest to forsake the world and turn to God : You knew the world would not serve your turn, nor be instead of God to you either in life, or at death : And upon this Knowledge it was that you changed your Master, and changed your minds, and changed your way, your work, your hopes : And do you dream now that you were mistaken ? Do you begin to think that the world is fitter to be your God or Happiness ? if not, you must still confess that both your Interest and your Covenant do oblige you to turn your hearts and minds from the things which you have renounced, and to walk with him that you have taken for your God, and to obey him whom you have taken for your King and Judge, and to keep close to him with purest Love, whom you have taken for your everlasting portion. Mark what you are minding all the day, while you are neglecting God : Is it not something that you have renounced ? And did you not renounce it upon sufficient cause ? Was it not a work of your most serious deliberation ? and of as great wisdom, as any that ever you performed ? if it were, turn not back in your hearts again from God unto the renounced Creature. You have had many a lightning from Heaven into your understandings, to bring you to see the difference between them : You have had many a teaching, and many a warning, and many a striving of the spirit, before you were prevailed with to renounce the world, the flesh and the devil, and to

give up your self intirely and absolutely to God. Nay, did it not cost you the smart of some afflictions, before you would be made so wise? And did it not cost you many a gripe of conscience, and many a terrible thought of Hell, and of the wrath of God, before you would be heartily engaged to him, in his Covenant? And will you now live as strangely and neglectfully towards him, as if those daies were quite forgotten? and as if you had never felt such things? and as if you had never been so convinced, or resolved? O Christians, take heed of forgetting your former case! your former thoughts! your former convictions and complaints and covenants! God did not work all that upon your hearts to be forgotten: He intended not only your *present change*, but your *after remembrance* of it, for your close adhering to him while you live; and for your quickning and constant preservance to the end. The *forgetting* of their *former miseries*, and the *workings of God* upon their hearts in their conversion, is a great cause of mutability and revolting, and of unspeakable hurt to many a soul.

Nay, may you not remember also what sorrow you had in the day of your *Repentance*, for your *forsaking* and *neglecting* God so long? And will you grow again neglective of him? Was it *then* so hainous a sin in your eyes? and is it not *now* grown less? Could you *then* aggravate it so many waies (and justly) and now do you justify or extenuate it? Were you *then* ready to sink under the burden of it? and were so hardly perswaded that it would be forgiven you? and *now* do you make so small a matter of it? Did you *then* so much wonder at your folly, that could so long let out your thoughts and affections upon the creature, while you neglected God and Heaven! and do you begin to look that way again? Do you *now* grow familiar with a life *so like* to that which was once your state of death? and bear that easily that once was the *breaking of your heart*? O Christians, turn not away from that God again, who once fetcht you home, with so much *smart* and so much *grace*! with such a twist of *Love* and Fatherly *severity*! Methinks when you remember how you were once awakened, you should not easily fall asleep again. And when you remember the thoughts which *then* were in your hearts, and the tears that were in your eyes, and the earnest prayers which you then put up, that God would
 receive

receive you, and take you for his own, you should not *now* forget him, and live as if you could live without him. Remember that so far as you withdraw your hearts from God, and let them follow inferiour things, so far you *contradict his works* upon your hearts; so far you *violate your Covenant* with him, or *sin against it*: so far you are *revolters*, and go against the principal part of your *profest Religion*: Yea so far you are *ungodly*, as you thus withdraw your hearts from God. Cleave to him, and prosecute your Covenant, if you will have the saving benefits of *his Love and Covenant*.

3. **M**oreover, the servants of God are doubly obliged to *walk with him*, because *they have had that experience of the goodness, the safety and the sweetness of it, which strangers have not*. Do you not remember how glad you were, when you first believed that he pardoned and accepted you? And how much you rejoiced in his Love and entertainment? And how much better you found your *Fathers house*, than ever you had found your sinful state? And how much sweeter his service was than you did before believe? It's like you can remember something like that which is described in *Luk. 15. 20, 22, 23, 24*. [*And he arose and came to his Father: But when he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him; And the Son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son; But the Father said to his servants Bring forth the best Robe and put it on him, and put a Ring on his hand, and Shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted Calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: for this my Son was dead and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.*] What would you have thought or said of this Prodigal, if after all this he should have been weary of his Fathers house and company, and have taken more pleasure in his former company? Would you not have said, he was a *forgetful and unthankful wretch*, and worthy never more to be received? I do not speak to you now as to *Apostates*, that are turned *ungodly*, and have quite forsaken God and Holiness: But I beseech you consider what it is, after such experiences and obligations as these, so much as to *abate your love*, and

grow *remiss*, and *mindless*, and *indifferent*, as if you were *weary* of God, and were inclined to neglect him, and look again to the world for your hope, and satisfaction, and delight? As you love your souls, and as you would avoid the sorrows which are greater than any that ever you felt, take heed of sleighting the Love that hath done such wonders for you, and of dealing so unthankfully with the everliving God, and of turning thus away from him that hath received you! Remember whilst you live, the Love of your espousals: Was God so good to you at the *first*, and holiness so desirable? and is it not so still?

And I am sure that your own experience will bear witness, that since that time, in all your lives, it never was so well with you as when you *walked* most faithfully *with God*. If you have received any falls and hurts, it hath been when you have straggled from him: If ever you had safety, peace or joy, it hath been when you have been nearest to him: your wounds, and grief, and death hath been the fruit of your own *waies*, and of your *forsaking* him: Your recovery, and health, and life have been the fruit of his *waies*, and of *your adhering* to him: Many and many a time you have confessed this, and have said, It is good for me to draw near to God. He hath helped you when none else could help you; and comforted you when none else could comfort you. How far are you above the worldlings happiness, when you are nigh to God? One lively thought of his Greatness, and Excellency, and of his Love to you in Jesus Christ, will make the name of wealth, and honour, and favour, and preferment, and sensual pleasures, to seem to you as words of no signification: How indifferent will you be, as to your prosperity in the world, when you feel what it is to *walk with God*? If you are lively experimental Christians, you have found this to be true: Have you not found that it is the very *Health* and *Ease*, and proper employment of your souls to *walk with God*, and keep close to him? And that all goes well with you while you can do thus, however the world doth esteem or use you? And that when you grow strange or disobedient to God, and mindless of his Goodness, his presence and his authority, you are like the stomach that is sick, and like a bone that is out of joynt, that can have no ease till it be healed, and restored to its proper place? No meats or drinks, no
company

company nor recreation, no wealth or greatness will serve to make a sick man well, or ease the dislocated bones. Nothing will serve a faithful holy soul but God: This is the cause of the dolour of his heart, and of the secret groans and complainings of his life, because in this life of distance and imperfection, he finds himself *so far from God*; and when he hath done all that he can, he is still so *dark*, and *strange*, and *cold* in his affections! when persecution driveth him from the Ordinances and publick Worship, or when sin hath set him at a greater distance from his God, he bemoaneth his soul as *David* in his banishment from the Tabernacle, *Psal. 42. 1, 2, &c.* *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?*] And it is no wonder if with his greatest joy, he be yet clouded with these sorrows, because he yet wanteth more of God than he enjoyeth: and his *enjoying graces* (*Love and Joy*) are yet imperfect. But when he hath attained his nearest approach to God, he will have fulness of Delight in fulness of fruition.

O Christians! Do I need to tell you, that after all the tryals you have made in the world, you have never found any state of life, that was worthy your desires, nor that gave you any true content, but only this *living upon God*? If you have not found such *comfort* here as others have done, yet at least you have seen it afar off, within your reach: As men that in the Indies, in the discovery of Plantations, expect Gold Mines, when they find those golden sands that promise it. You have found a life which is certainly *desirable*, and *leadeth to joy* in the midst of sorrow: And it is no *small joy* to have a *certain promise* and *prospect* of *everlasting joy*. It is therefore more excusable in those that *never tasted any better* than the pleasures of the flesh, to neglect this sweeter Heavenly life, than it is in you that have been convinced by your own experience, that there is no life to be compared with it.

4. **Y**our *walking with God* is the necessary prosecution of your *Choice and Hopes of life eternal*. It is your necessary preparation to your enjoying him in Heaven. And have you fixed on those *Hopes* with so great reason and deliberation, and will you now draw back and be slack in the prosecution of them? Have you gone so far in the way to Heaven, and do you now begin to look behind you, as if you were about to change your mind? Paul setteth you a better example, *Phil. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.* [*Yea doubtless I account all things but loss for the excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him — If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead: Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus: Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the price of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus*] He compareth himself to a runner in a race, that till he apprehend the price or mark doth still make forward with all his might, and will not so much as mind or look at any thing behind him, that would turn him back, or stop him in his course. The world and the flesh are the things behind us: We turned our backs upon them at our conversion, when we turned to God: It is these that would now call back our thoughts, and corrupt our affections, when we should run on, and reach forward to the heavenly price: It is God and Heaven and the remaining duties of a holy life, that are the things before us! And shall we now look back? what we that are running and striving for a Crown of endless glory! we, that if we lose it, do lose our souls and hopes for ever! we, that have loitered in the morning of our lives, and lost so much precious time as we have done! we, that have gone so far in our way, and held out through so many difficulties and assaults! Shall we now grow weary of walking with God, and begin to look to the things behind us? Did he not tell us at the first, that Father and Mother, and

house

house and land, and life, and all things must be forsaken for Christ, if we will be his Disciples? These are the things behind us, which we turned our back on when we consented to the Covenant; and are they now grown better? or is God grown worse, that we turn our hearts from him to them? when we first begun our Christian race, it was upon supposition that it was for that immortal Crown, which all the world is not to be compared to: And have we not still the same consideration before us, to move us to hold on till we attain it? Hold on Christians, it is for Heaven! Is there not enough in that word to drive back all the cares and pleasures, that importune your minds to forget your God? Is there not enough in that word to quicken you up in your greatest dulness? and to call you home when you are wandring from God, and to make you again fall out with all, that would reduce you, or divert you, and call it *Vanity* and *Vexation* of spirit. Methinks the forethought of that life and work which you hope to have with God for ever, should make you earnestly desire to have as much of the like on earth, as is here to be attained! If it will be your Heaven and Happiness then, it must needs be desirable now. It is not befitting a man that saith he is seeking for perfect communion with God in Heaven, and that above all things (as every Christian doth) to live in a daily neglect or forgetfulness of God on earth. Delightfully to draw near him, and exercise all our faculties upon him, or for him, sometime in prayer and contemplation on himself, and alwaies in works of obedience to him; this is the life that becometh those that profess to seek eternal life. O therefore let us make it our daily work, to keep our God and Glory in our eye, and to spur on our dull affections, and in the diligent attendance and following the Captain of our salvation, to prosecute our expected End.

§. **L**astly consider, that God doth purposely provide you hard Entertainment in the world, and cause every creature to deny you the pleasure and satisfaction which you desire, that so you may have none to walk with but himself, with any heart-venting, comfort and content. If you see not enough in him to allure you,

you to himself, you shall feel enough in the world to drive you to him: If his *Love and Goodness* will not serve alone to make him your *pleasure*, and hold you to him in the *best*, and most *excellent* way (of *Love*) at least the storms and troubles that are abroad shall shew you a *Necessity* of keeping close to God; and the *Love of your selves* shall help you to do that, which was not done by the *attraction of his Love alone*. If you will put him to it, to send out his command to every creature, to cross and vex you, and disappoint all your expectations from it, that so he may force you to remember your Father and your home, deny not then but it is long of your selves that you were not saved in an *easier way*. Would you wish God to make that condition *pleasant* to you, which he seeth you take *too much pleasure* in already (or seek and desire it, at least?) When as it is the pleasantness of the Creature that is your danger, and which detaineth your thoughts and affections from himself? If you could but learn to *walk with him*, and to take up your *pleasure* in *his Love* appearing to you in his *Creatures*, and to make *their sweetness* a means to your apprehension of the *sweetness of his favour*, and of the *everlasting joyes*, then you might say the Creature doth you good; and then it's like you might be permitted to possess and use it for *such pleasure*. The *jealous God* will watch your hearts, though you watch them not; and he will make you know that he seeth *which way* they run out from him, and *what Creature* it is that is minded and delighted in while he is neglected, as if he were *unsuitable*, and *scarce desirable*. And you must never look that he should long permit you those *prohibited delights*, or let you alone in those idolatrous inclinations: If he *Love you*, he will cure that *Carnal Love*, and recover your *Love to himself* that hath deserved it. If he intend not your salvation, he may let you go, and try again whether the Creature will prove better to you than himself: But you cannot think that he will thus let go *his Children* that must live with him for ever. Have you not perceived that this is the *design and meaning* of his *afflicting and disappointing* providences? even to leave you no comfortable entertainment or converse but with himself, and with his servants, and with those means that lead you to himself? If you begin to desire

desire to lodge abroad in strange habitations, he will uncover those houses, and will not leave you a room that's dry to put your head in; or he will throw open the doors, and leave all open to the lust of ravenous beasts and robbers. He will have thy heart, and he will have thy company, because thou art his child, and because he loveth thee. He will allow thee neither thy carnal *Delights* or *Hopes*. If he perceive thee either taking that *Pleasure* in thy *Prosperity* which thou shouldest take in him alone, or *Hoping* at least that the world may hereafter prove more amiable and delightful to thee; the more he loveth thee, the more his *Providence* shall conspire with his *Grace*, to change thy mind, by depriving thee of thy unwholsome dangerous *delights*, and of all thy *Hopes* of such hereafter. Use the world as a traveller, for the ends to which it was ordained, to the service of God, and the furtherance of thy salvation, and then thou shalt find that God will furnish thee with all that is necessary to these necessary ends: But if the world must have your *Love* and *Care*, and must be your chiefest *business* and *delight*, and your *excuse* for not attending upon God, murmur not, nor marvel not if he dispose of it and you accordingly. If you are yet too *healthful* to think with *seriousness* on your eternal state; If you are too *Rich* to part with all for Christ, or openly to own his *Cause*; If you are too much esteemed in the world to own a scorned slandered Religion; If you are so *busy* for *Earth*, that you cannot have *time* to think of *Heaven*; If you have so much *delight* in *House* or *Land*, or in your *employments*, or *recreations*, or *friends*, that God and *Godliness* can have little or none of your *delight*: Marvel not then if God do shake your *Health*, or waste your *Riches*, or turn your *Honour* into *contempt*; and suffer men to slander and reproach you, and spit in your face, and make you of no reputation: Marvel not if he turn you out of all, or turn all to your grief and trouble, and make the world a desert to you, and the inhabitants as wolves and bears. The great Lesson that Christ hath undertaken to teach you, is the difference betwixt the *Creator* and the *Creature*, and the difference betwixt *Heaven* and *Earth*. The great work that Christ hath undertaken to do upon you, is to recover your hearts from the world to God: And this Lesson he will

teach you, and this work *he will do* upon you, whatever it cost you: For it *must* be done. Yet is not the world *unjust enough*, or *cruel* or *vexatious enough* to you, to teach you to come home, and take up your *content* and *rest* in God? It may then prove *more cruel*, and *more vexatious* to you, till you have better learned this necessary Lesson. Yet is not your condition empty enough of carnal delusory pleasures, to wean you from the world, and make you look to *surer* things? Yet are you keeping up your worldly *hopes*, that the world will again prove better to you, and that you shall have happy daies hereafter? It seems you are not yet brought low enough: you must yet take another purge, and perhaps a sharper than you took before: You must have more blood letting, till your deliration cease, and your *feaverish* thirst after creature-comforts do abate. It is sad that we should be so *foolish* and *unkind*, as to stay from God, as long as any preferments, or pleasures, or profits in the world, will entertain us: But seeing it is so, let us be thankful both to that *Grace* and that *Providence* which cureth us. If you perceive it not better to *dwell with God*, than with a *flattering prospering world*, he will try whether you can think it better to *dwell with God*, than with a *malicious, cruel, persecuting world*: And whether it be better to have your *hearts in Heaven*, than in poverty, prison, banishment or reproach. If you find it not better to converse with God, than with those that *honour* you, *please* you, or *prefer* you; he will try whether you can think it better to *converse* with him, than with those that *bate*, *revile*, *belye*, and *persecute* you. And are these the *wise* and *wholsome* methods of our great Physician? And shall we not rather be ruled by him, than by our brutish appetites? and think better of his counsels, than of the blind concupiscence of the flesh? Let this be the *issue* of all our sufferings, and all the cruelties and injuries of the world, to drive us home to *converse with God*, and to turn our *desires*, and *labours*, and *expectations*, to the *true felicity* that never will forsake us; and then, the Will of the Lord be done! Let him choose *his means*, if *this* may be the *end*: Let us kiss the Rod, and not revile it, if *this* may be the fruit of his corrections. Who will not pray that God would deny us those contents, which keep us from seeking our contents

in him? And that he would deny us all those *hurtful pleasures* which hinder us from *pleasing him*, or from making *him* and *his waies* our chiefest pleasure? And that he would permic us no such creature-converse, as hinderth our converse with *him*? It is *best* living there (be it in prison or at liberty) where we may *live best to God*. Come home, O suffering Christian, to thy God! take up thy *Content* and *Rest in him*; be satisfied with him as thy *Portion*; and remember *Where it is* that he is to be *fully and perpetually enjoyed*; and then it is good for thee that thou wast afflicted; for all thy sufferings have their end.

This last Consideration will be further prosecuted in the following Part: And the *Directions for Walking with God*, which I should here give you, I have reserved for a peculiar Treatise, intitl'd A Christian Directory.

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Converse with God:

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The Insufficiency and Uncertainty

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HUMANE FRIENDSHIP:

AND THE

Improvement of Solitude

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With some of the Authors breathings after him.

By RICHARD BAXTER.

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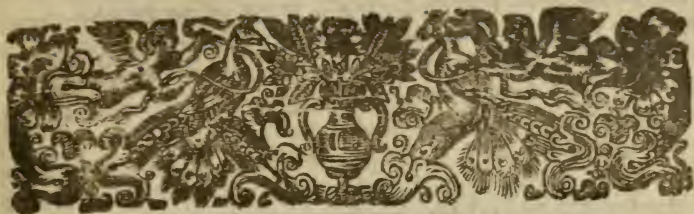


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Joh. 16. 32.

Behold the hour cometh, yea is come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone : And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.



Having treated of our *Conformity to Christ in sufferings, in General*, I since came distinctly to treat of his *particular sufferings* in which we must be *conformed to him* : And having gone over many of those particulars, I am this day to handle the instance of [*Christ's being forsaken by his friends and followers.*]

He thought meet to foretell them how they should manifest their infirmity and untrustiness in this temporary forsaking of him, that so he might fullyer convince them, that he knew what was in man, and that he knew future contingencies, (or things to come which seem most dependent on the will of man) and that he voluntarily submitted to his deserted state, and expected no support from creatures, but that *man* should then do *least for Christ*, when *Christ* was doing *most for man* ; that *man* by an unthankful *forsaking Christ*, should then manifest his *forsaken* deplorate state, when *Christ* was to make atonement for his *Reconciliation to God*, and was preparing the

most costly remedy for his recovery. He foretold them of the fruit which their infirmity would produce, to humble them that were apt to think too highly of themselves for the late free confession they had made of Christ, when they had newly said [*Now we are sure that thou knowest all things: by this we are sure that thou comest forth from God,* ver. 30]

He answereth them [*Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, &c.*] Not that Christ would not have his servants know his graces in them, but he would also have them know the *corruption* that is latent, and the infirmity consistent with their grace. We are very apt to judge of all that *is in us*, and of all that we *shall do* hereafter, by what we *feel at the present* upon our hearts. As when we *feel* the stirring of some *corruption* we are apt to think that there is *nothing else*, and hardly perceive the contrary grace, and are apt to think it will never be better with us: so when we *feel* the exercise of *faith, desire* or *love*, we are apt to overlook the contrary *corruptions*, and to think that we shall never feel them more. But Christ would keep us both humble and vigilant, by acquainting us with the mutability and unconstancy of our minds. When it goes well with us, we forget that the time is coming when it may go worse. As Christ said to his Disciples here in the case of *Believing*, we may say to our selves in that and other cases: *Do we now Believe?* It is well: but the time may be coming in which we may be brought to shake with the stirrings of our remaining unbelief, and shrewdly tempted to question the truth of Christianity it self, and of the holy Scriptures, and of the life to come. *Do we now rejoyce* in the persuasions of the Love of God? The time may be coming, when we may think our selves forsaken and undone, and think he will esteem and use us as his enemies. *Do we now pray with fervour*, and pour out our souls enlargedly to God? It is well: but the time may be coming when we shall seem to be as dumb and prayerless, and say, we cannot pray, or else we find no audience and acceptance of our prayers. Christ knoweth that in us which we little know by our selves; and therefore may *foreknow* that we will commit such sins, or fall into such dangers, as we little *fear*.

What Christ here prophesieth to them did afterwards all
come

come to pass. As soon as ever danger and trouble did appear, they began to flag, and to shew how ill they could adhere unto him or suffer with him, without his special corroborating grace: In the garden when he was sweating blood in prayer they were sleeping; Though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak: They could not *watch with him one hour*, Matth. 26. 40, 41. When he was apprehended, they shifted each man for himself, Matth. 26. 56. [*Then all the Disciples forsook him and fled.* And as this is said to be *that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, Matth. 26. 54, 56. so it might be said to be, that *this prediction of Christ himself might be fulfilled.* Not that Scripture Prophecies did *cause the sin* by which they were fulfilled, nor that God caused the sin to fulfill his own predictions, but that God cannot be deceived who foretold in Scriptures long before that thus it would come to pass: when it is said that [*thus it must be that the Scripture may be fulfilled*] the meaning is not, that [*thus God will make it be*] or [*thus he causeth men to do*] that he may fulfill the Scriptures: It is not *necessitas consequentis vel causata* that is inferred from predictions; but only *necessitas consequentia*; a *Logical Necessity in ordine cognoscendi & dicendi*; not a *Natural Necessity in ordine essendi*: not a *Necessity of the Thing it self* as caused by the prediction or decree; but a *necessity of the truth of this conclusion in arguing*; [*such a thing will be, because God hath decreed, foreknown or foretold it:.*] or [*whatever God foretelleth, must necessarily come to pass; (that is, will certainly come to pass: but this God hath foretold: therefore this will come to pass.)*]

Here are three observable points in the Text, that are worthy our distinct consideration, though for brevity sake I shall handle them together.

1. *That Christ was forsaken by his own Disciples and left alone.*

2. *When the Disciples left Christ, they were scattered every one to his own.* They returned to their old habitations, and old acquaintance, and old employment, as if their hopes and hearts had been almost *broken*, and they had lost all their labour in following Christ so long: Yet the root of faith and love that still remained, caused them to enquire further

of the end, and to come together in secret to confer about these matters.

3. *When Christ was forsaken of his Disciples and left alone, yet was he not forsaken of his Father, nor left so alone as to be separated from him or his love.*

We are now to consider of this not only as a part of *Christ's* humiliation, but also as a point in which we must expect to be conformed to him. It may possibly seem strange to us that Christ would suffer all his Disciples to forsake him in his extremity; and I doubt it will seem strange to us, when in our extremity, and our suffering for Christ (and perhaps for them) we shall find our selves forsaken by those that we most highly valued, and had the greatest familiarity with. But there are many Reasons of this permissive providence open to our observation.

1. No wonder if when Christ was suffering for sin, he would even then permit the power and odiousness of sin to break forth, that it might be known he suffered *not in vain*. No wonder if he permitted his followers to desert him, and to shew the latent unbelief, and selfishness, and unthankfulness that remained in them, that so they might know that the death of Christ was as necessary for them as for others; and the universality of the disease might shew the need that the remedy should be universal. And it is none of Christ's intent to make his servants to seem better than they are, to themselves or others, or to honour himself by the hiding of their faults, but to magnifie his pardoning and healing grace, by the means or occasion of the sins which he pardoneth and healeth.

2. Hereby he will bring his followers to the fuller knowledge of themselves, and shew them that which all their dayes should keep them humble, and watchful, and save them from presumption and trusting in themselves: When we have made any full confession of Christ, or done him any considerable service, we are apt to say with the Disciples, *Matth. 19. 27.* [*Behold we have forsaken all and followed thee; What shall we have?*] As if they had rather been Givers to Christ, than Receivers from him; and had highly merited at his hands: But when Peter forswearth him, and the rest shift for themselves, and when they come to themselves, after such cowardly and

and ungrateful dealings, then they will better understand their weakness, and know on whom they must depend.

3. Hereby also they shall better understand what they *would have been*, if God had left them to themselves, that so they may be thankful for grace received, and may not boast themselves against the miserable world, as if they had made themselves to differ, and had not received all that grace by which they excel the common sort: when our falls have hurt us and shamed us, we shall know to whom we must be beholden to support us.

4. Christ would permit his Disciples thus far to forsake him, because he would have no *support from man*, in his *sufferings for man*: This was part of his voluntary humiliation, to be deprived of all earthly comforts, and to bear affliction even from those few, that but lately were his faithful servants: that *men* dealing like *men*, and *sinners*, while he was doing like *God*, and as a *Saviour*, no man might challenge to himself the honour of contributing to the Redemption of the world, so much as by encouraging the Redeemer.

5. Christ did permit the Faith and courage of his Disciples thus far to fail, that their witness to him might be of the greater credit and authority, when his actual Resurrection and the Communication of the Spirit should compel them to believe: when all their doubts were dissipated, they that had doubted themselves, and yet were constrained to believe, would be received as the most impartial witnesses by the doubting world.

6. Lastly, by the desertion and dissipation of his Disciples, Christ would teach us whenever we are called to follow him in suffering, what to expect from the best of men; Even to know that of themselves they are untrusty, and may fail us: and therefore not to look for too much assistance or encouragement from them. *Paul* lived in a time when Christians were more self-denying and steadfast than they are now: And *Paul* was one that might better expect to be faithfully accompanied in his sufferings for Christ, than any of us: And yet he saith, *2 Tim.* 4. 16. [*At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me:*] and prayeth, that it be not laid to their charge: Thus you have seen some Reasons why Christ consented to be left of all, and permitted his Disciples to desert him in his sufferings.

Yet note here, that it is but a partial temporary *forsaking* that Christ permitteth; and not a total or final forsaking or Apostasie. Though he will let them see that they are *yet men*, yet will he not leave them to be but *as other men*: Nor will he quite cast them off, or suffer them to perish.

Nor is it all alike that thus forsake him; *Peter* doth not do as *Judas*: The *sincere* may manifest their *infirmity*; but the *Hypocrites* will manifest their *hypocrisie*.

And accordingly in *our sufferings* our familiars that were false-hearted (as being worldlings and carnal at the heart) may perhaps *betray us*, and *set against us*, or *forsake the cause of Christ*, and follow the way of gain and honour: when our tempted shrinking friends that yet may have some sincerity, may perhaps *look strange* at us, and seem *not to know us*, and may hide their heads, and shew their fears; and perhaps also begin to study some self-deceiving arguments and distinctions, and to stretch their consciences, and venture on some sin, because they are afraid to venture on affliction; till Christ shall cast a gracious rebuking quickning aspect on them, and shame them for their sinful shame, & fear them from their sinful fears, and inflame their Love to him by the motions of his Love to them, and destroy the Love that turned them from him: And then the same men that dishonourably failed Christ and us, and began to shrink, will turn back and reassume their arms, and by patient suffering overcome, and win the Crown as we have done before them.

Use. **C**Hristians, expect to be conformed to your Lord in *this part* of his Humiliation also: Are your friends yet fast and friendly to you? For all that expect that *many* of them at least should prove less friendly: and promise not your selves an unchanged constancy in them: Are they yet *useful* to you? expect the time when they cannot help you: Are they your comforters and delight, and is their company much of your solace upon earth? Be ready for the time when they *may* become your sharpest scourges, and most heart-peircing griefs, or at least when you shall say, We have no pleasure in them. Have any of them, or all, already failed you? what wonder?

wonder? Are they not men, and sinners? To whom were they ever so constant as not to fail them? Rebuke your selves for your unwarrantable expectations from them: And learn hereafter to know what man is, and expect that friends should use you as followeth.

1. Some of them that you *thought sincere*, shall prove perhaps *unfaithful and dissemblers*, and upon *fallings out*, or matters of *self-interest* may seek your ruine. Are you better than *David* that had an *Achitophel*? or than *Paul* that had a *Demas*? or than *Christ* that had a *Judas*? Some will *forsake God*: what wonder then if they forsake you? *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*, Mat. 24. 12. Where pride and vain-glory, and sensuality and worldliness are unmortified at the heart, there is no trustiness in such persons: For their wealth, or honour, or fleshly interest, they will part with God and their salvation; much more with their best deserving friends. Why may not you as well as *Job* have occasion to complain, [*He hath put my Brethren far from me, and my acquaintance are very estranged from me: My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me: They that dwell in my house, and my Maidens count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight: I called my servant, and he gave me no answer: I intreated him with my mouth: My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the childrens sake of my own body: Yea young children despised me: I arose, and they spake against me: All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me*, Job 19. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Why may not you as well as *David* be put to say *Yea mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread hath lift up his heel against me!*] Psal. 41. 9. Those that have been most acquainted with the secrets of your soul, and privy to your very thoughts, may be the persons that shall betray you, or grow strange to you. Those that you have most obliged by benefits, may prove your greatest enemies. You may find some of your friends like birds of prey, that hover about you for what they can get, and when they have caught it, fly away. If you have given them all that you have, they will forsake you, and perhaps reproach you, because you have no more to give them. They are your friends more for what they

they yet expect from you, than for what they have already received. If you cannot still be helpful to them, or feed their covetous desires, or supply their wants, you are to them but as one that they had never known. Many a faithful Minister of Christ hath studied, and preached, and prayed, and wept for their peoples souls, and after all have been taken for their enemies, and used as such; yea even because they have done so much for them. Like the Patient, that being cured of a mortal sickness, sued his Physician at Law for making him sick with the Physick (But it is indeed our uncured patients only that are offended with us.) Paul was accounted an enemy to the Galatians; because he told them the truth. Ungrateful truth maketh the faithfullest Preachers most ungrateful. It must seem no wonder to a Preacher of the Gospel, when he hath entreated, prayed and wept night and day for miserable souls, and laid his hands as it were under their feet in hopes of their conversion and salvation, to find them after all, his bitter enemies, and seeking his destruction, that could have laid down his life for their salvation. Jeremy seemed too impatient under this affliction, when he said [Give heed to me O Lord, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me: Shall evil be recompenced for good? Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them: Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword, &c. Jer. 18. 19, 20.

Thus may ingratitude afflict you, and kindness be requited with unkindness, and the greatest benefits be forgotten, and requited with the greatest wrongs: your old familiars may be your foes: and you may be put to say as Jeremy [For I heard the defaming of many: fear on every side: Report, say they, and we will report it: All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him.] Jer. 20. 10. Thus must the servants of Christ be used, in conformity to their suffering Head.

2. And some that are sincere, and whose hearts are with you, may yet be drawn by temptation to disown you: when malice is slandering you, timorous friendship may perhaps
be

be silent, and afraid to justify you, or take your part: when a *Peter* in such imbecillity and fear can disown and deny his *suffering Lord*, what wonder if faint-hearted friends disown you, or me, that may give them too much occasion or pretence? why may not you and I be put to say as *David* did, *Psal.* 38. 11, 12. [*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my kinsmen stand afar off: They that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long!*] They that in fearfulness will fail their *Maker and Redeemer*, and hazard their *salvation*, may by a *smaller* temptation be drawn to fail such friends as we.

3. Moreover, a hundred things may occasion *fallings out*, even amongst *unfeigned friends*: *Passions* may cause *inconvenient actions or expressions*, and these may cause *passions* in their friends; and these may grow so high till friends do seem to one another to be like enemies: *Paul* and *Barnabas* may grow so hot, as to fall out to a parture. How easily can Satan set fire on the tinder which he findeth in the best and gentlest natures, if God permit him? No friends so near and dear, that *passionate weaknesses* may not either alienate, or make a grief to one another, How apt are we to take *unkindnesses* at one another, and to be *suspicious* of our friends, or *offended* with them? And how apt to give occasion of such offence? How apt are we to censure one another, and to misinterpret the words and actions of our friends? And how apt to give occasion of such mistakes and cutting censures? And the more kindness we have found in, or expected from our friends, the more their real or supposed injuries will affect us. We are apt to say, [*Had it been a stranger, I could have born it: But to be used thus by my bosome or familiar friend, goes near my heart.*] And indeed the unkindnesses of friends is no small affliction; the suffering going usually as near the heart, as the person that caused it was near it: especially when our own weakness causeth us to forget the frailty and infirmities of man, and with what allowances and expectations we must choose and use our friends; and when we forget the Love that remaineth in the midst of passions.

4. Also *cross-interests* and unsuitableness may exceedingly interrupt the fastest friendship. *Friendship* is very much founded

in *suitableness*, and maintained by it: And among mortals, there is no perfect *suitableness* to be found; but much *unsuitableness* still remaineth. That which pleaseth one, is displeasing to another: One liketh this place, and the other that: One liketh this habit, and the other that: One is for mirth, and the other for sadness: One for talk, and the other for silence: One for a publick, and the other for a private life. And their personality or individuation having self-love as inseparable, will unavoidably cause a contrariety of interests. The Creature is insufficient for us: If one have it, perhaps the other must want it: Like a covering too narrow for the bed. Sometimes our *Reputations* seem to stand cross, so that one mans is diminished by anothers: and then how apt is envy to create a grudge, and raise unfriendly jealousies and distastes! Sometimes the *commodity* of one is the *discommodity* of the other: And then [*Mine and Thine*] (which are contrary to the community of friendship) may divide, and alienate, and make *Two* of those that seemed *One*. The instances of *Abraham* and *Lot* (upon the difference among their servants) and of *Isaac* and *Ismael*, and of *Jacob* and *Esau*, and of *Laban* and *Jacob*, and of *Leah* and *Rachel*, and of *Joseph* and his Brethren, and of *Saul* and *David*, and of *Ziba*, *Mephiboseth* and *David*, with many others tell us this. It is rare to meet with a *Jonathan*, that will endearedly love that man to the death, who is appointed to deprive him of a Kingdome. If one can but say [*I suffer by him, or I am a looser by him*] it seemeth enough to excuse unfriendly thoughts and actions. When you can gratifie the desires of all the covetous, ambitious, self-seeking persons in the world, or else cure their diseases, and possess their minds with perfect Charity, then all the world will be your friends.

5. *Crossopinions* also are like to alienate many of your friends. This age hath over and over again given the world as full and sad demonstrations of the power of *Crossopinions*, to alienate friends, and make divisions, as most ages of the world have ever had. If your friend be *proud*, it's wonderful how he will slight you, and withdraw his Love, if you be not of *his mind*. If he be *zealous*, he is easily tempted, to think it a part of his duty to God, to disown you if you differ from him,

as taking you for one that disowneth the truth of God, and therefore one that God himself disowneth; or at least to grow *cold* in his affection toward you, and to decline from you, as he that thinks you do from God. As agreement in opinions doth strangely reconcile affections; so disagreement doth secretly and strangely alienate them; even before you are well aware, your friend hath lost possession of your hearts, because of an unavoidable diversity of apprehensions: When all your friends have the same intellectual complexion and temperature, and measure of understanding with your selves, then you may have hope to escape the ruptures which unlikeliness and differences of apprehensions might else cause.

6. Moreover, some of your friends may so far *overgrow* you in *wisdom*, or *wealth*, or *honour*, or *worth* in their *own conceits*, that they may begin to take you to be unsuitable for them, and unmeet for their further special friendship. Alas poor man, they will pity thee that thou art no wiser, and that thou hast no greater light to change thy mind as fast as they, or that thou art so weak and ignorant as not to see what seems to them so clear a truth; or that thou art so simple to cast away thy self by crossing them that might prefer thee, or to fall under the displeasure of those that have power to raise or ruine thee: But if thou *be so simple*, thou mayest be the object of their *lamentation*, but art no *familiar friend* for them. They think it fittest to close and converse with those of their own *rank* and *stature*, and not with such *shrubs* and *children*, that may prove their trouble and dishonour.

7. And some of your friends will think that by a more *through acquaintance* with you, they have found out more of your *infirmities* or *faults*; and therefore have found that you are *less amiable* and *valuable* than at first they judged you: They will think that by distance, unacquaintedness, and an overhasty love and judgement, they were mistaken in you; and that now they see reason to *repent* of the love which they think was guilty of some *errors* and *excess*: when they come nearer you, and have had more tryal of you, they will think they are fitter to judge of you than before: And indeed our defects are so many, and all our infirmities so great, that the more men know us, the more they may see in us that deserveth pity or

reproof; and as pictures, we appear less beautiful at the nearest view: Though this will not warrant the withdrawing of that Love which is due to friends, and to vertue even in the imperfect: nor will excuse that alienation and decay of friendship that is caused by the pride of such as overlook perhaps much greater failings and weakneses in themselves, which need forgiveness.

8. And perhaps *some* of your friends will grow weary of their friendship, having that infirmity of humane nature, not to be much pleased with *one thing long*. Their Love is a flower that quickly withereth: It is a short-lived thing that soon groweth old. It must be *novelty* that must feed their love and their delight.

9. And perhaps they may have got some *better friends* in their apprehensions, that may have so much interest as to take them up, and leave no room for antient friends. It may be they have met with those that are *more suitable*, or can be *more useful* to them: that have *more learning*, or *wit*, or *wealth*, or *power*, than you have, and therefore seem more worthy of their friendship.

10. And some of them may think when you are in a *low* and *suffering state*, and in *danger of worse*, that it is part of their *duty of self-preservation* to be strange to you (though in heart they wish you well.) They will think they are *not bound* to hazard themselves upon the displeasure of superiours, to own or befriend you or any other: Though they must not desert Christ, they think they may desert *a man* for their own preservation.

To avoid both extreams in such a case, men must both study to understand which way is most serviceable to Christ, and to his Church, and withall to be able to deny themselves, and also must study to understand what Christ meaneth in his final sentence [*In as much as you did it (or did it not) to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it (or did it not) to me.*] As if it were to *visit the contagious*, we must neither cast away our lives to *do no good*, or for that which in *value* holdeth no *proportion* with them; nor yet must we deny to run any hazard when it is *indeed our duty*: So is it in our visiting those that suffer for the cause of Christ: (but that here the *owning them* being the *confessing of him*, we need more seldome to fear being too forward.)

11. And some of your friends may cover their unfaithfulness with the pretence of *some fault* that you have been guilty of, *some error* that you hold, or some *unhandsome* or *culpable* act that you have done, or some *duty* that you have *left undone* or *failed* in. For they think there is not a better shelter for their *unfaithfulness*, then to pretend for it the *Name* and *Cause of God*, and so to make a *duty* of their *sin*. Who would not justify them, if they can but prove, that *God requireth them*, and *Religion* obligeth them to forsake you for your faults? There are few crimes in the world that by some are not fathered on God (that most hateth them) as thinking no name can so much honour them. False friends therefore use this means as well as other Hypocrites: And though *God is Love*, and condemneth nothing more then *uncharitableness* and *malice*, yet *these* are commonly by falshearted Hypocrites, called by some pious vertuous names, and God himself is entitled to them: so that few worldlings, ambitious persons or timeservers, but will confidently pretend Religion for all their falshood to their friends, or bloody cruelty to the servants of Christ, that comply not with their carnal interest.

12. Perhaps some of your friends may *really mistake your case*, and think that you suffer as *evil doers*, and instead of *comforting* you may be your *sharpest censurers*: This is one of the most notable things set out to our observation in the book of *Job*: It was not the smallest part of his affliction, that when the hand of God was heavy upon him, and then if ever was the time for his friends to have been his comforters, and friends indeed, on the contrary *they* became his *scourge*, and by *unjust accusations*, and *misinterpretations* of the providence of God, did greatly add to his affliction! when God had taken away his children, wealth and health, his friends would take away the reputation and comfort of his integrity; and under pretence of bringing him to repentance, did charge him with that which he was never guilty of; *They* wounded his *good-name*, and would have wounded his *conscience*, and deprived him of his inward peace: Censorious false accusing friends do cut deeper then malicious slandering enemies: It is no wonder if *strangers* or *enemies* do misjudge and misreport our actions: But when your *bosome friends*, that should most

intimately know you, and be the chief witness of your innocency against all others, shall in their jealousy, or envy, or peevishness, or falling out, be your chief reproachers and unjust accusers, as it makes it serve more credible to others, so it will come nearest to your selves. And yet this is a thing that must be expected: yea even your most self-denying acts of obedience to God, may be so misunderstood by godly men, and real friends, as by them to be taken for your great miscarriage, and turned to your rebuke: As *David's* dancing before the Ark was by his wife; which yet did but make him resolve to be yet more vile. If you be cast into poverty, or disgrace, or prison, or banishment, for your necessary obedience to Christ, perhaps your friend or wife may become your accuser for this your greatest service, and say, This is your own doing: your rashness, or indiscretion, or self-conceitedness, or willfulness hath brought it upon you: what need had you to say such words, or to do this or that? why could not you have yeilded in so small a matter?] Perhaps your *costliest* and *most excellent* obedience shall by your *nearest* friends be called the fruits of *pride*, or *humour*, or *passion*, or some corrupt affection, or at least of *folly* and *inconsiderateness*. When flesh and blood hath long been striving *in you* against your duty, and saying, [Do not cast away thy self: O serve not God at so dear a rate: God doth not require thee to undo thy self: why shouldest thou not avoid so great inconveniences?] When with much ado you have conquered all your carnal reasonings, and denied your selves and your carnal interest, you must expect even from some religious friends, to be accused for these very actions, and perhaps their accusations may fasten such a blot upon your names, as shall never be washed out till the day of judgement. By difference of interests, or apprehensions, and by unacquaintedness with your hearts, and actions, the righteousness of the righteous may be thus taken from him, and friends may do the work of enemies, yea of Satan himself the accuser of the brethren; and may prove as thorns in your bed, and gravel in your shoes, yea in your eyes, and wrong you much more then open adversaries could have done. How it is like to go with that *mans reputation*, you may easily judge, whose friends are like *Jobs*, and his

enemies like *Davids* that lay snares before him, and diligently watch for matter of reproach: yet this may befall the *best of men.*

13. You may be permitted by God to fall into some *real crime*, and then your friends may possibly think it is their *duty* to disown you, so far as you have wronged God: When you provoke God to frown upon you, he may cause your *friends* to frown upon you: If you will fall out with him, and grow strange to him, no marvel if your truest friends fall out with you, and grow strange to you. They love you for your godliness, and for the sake of Christ; and therefore *must* abate their love if you abate your godliness; and must for the sake of Christ be displeas'd with you for your sins. And if in such a case of real guilt, you should be displeas'd at their displeasure, and should expect that your friend should befriend your sin, or carry himself towards you in your guilt as if you were innocent, you will but shew that you understand not the nature of true friendship, nor the use of a true friend; and are yet your selves too friendly to your sins.

14. Moreover, those few friends that are truest to you, may be utterly unable to relieve you in your distress, or to give you ease, or do you any good. The case may be such that they can but pity you and lament your sorrows, and weep over you: you may see in them that man is not as God, whose friendship can accomplish all the good that he desireth to his friends. The wisest and greatest and best of men are silly comforters, and uneffectual helps: you may be sick, and pained, and griev'd, and distress'd, notwithstanding any thing that they can do for you: Nay perhaps in their ignorance, they may increase your misery, while they desire your relief; and by striving indirectly to help and ease you, may tie the knot faster and make you worse. They may provoke those more against you that oppress you, while they think they speak that which should tend to set you free: They may think to *ease* your troubled minds by such words as shall *increase* the trouble: or to deliver you as *Peter* would have delivered Christ, and saved his Saviour, first by *carnal counsel*, Matth. 16. 22. [*Be it far from thee Lord; this shall not be unto thee*] And then by *carnal unjust force*, (by drawing his sword

against

against the officers.) *Love and good meaning* will not prevent the mischiefs of ignorance and mistake. If your friend cut your throat while he thought to cut but a vein to cure your disease, it is not his *friendly meaning* that will save your lives. Many a thousand sick people are *killed* by their *friends*, that attend them with an earnest desire of their life; while they ignorantly give them that which is contrary to their disease, and will not be the less pernicious for the good meaning of the giver. Who have more tender affections than Mothers to their children? And yet a great part of the calamity of the world of sickness, and the misery of mans life, proceedeth from the ignorant and erroneous indulgence of Mothers to their children, who to please them, let them eat and drink what they will, and use them to excess and gluttony in their childhood, till nature be abused and mastered and clogged with those superfluities and crudities, which are the dunghill matter of most of the following diseases of their lives.

I might here also remember you how your friends may themselves be overcome with a temptation, and then become the more dangerous tempters of you, by how much the greater their interest is in your affections. If they be infected with *error*, they are the likeliest persons to ensnare you: If they be tainted with *Covetousness* or *Pride*, there is none so likely to draw you to the same sin: And so your *friends* may be in *effect* your most deadly *enemies*, deceivers and destroyers.

15. And if you have *friends* that are never so *firm* and *constant*, they may prove (not only *unable* to relieve you, but) *very additions* to your *grief*. If they are *afflicted* in the *participation* of your *sufferings*, as your *troubles* are become *theirs* (without your care) to their *trouble* for you will become *yours*, and so your stock of sorrow will be increased. And they are mortals, and lyable to distress as well you. And therefore they are like to bear their share in several sorts of *sufferings*: And so *friendship* will make their *sufferings* to be *yours*: Their *sicknesses* and *pains*, their *fears* and *griefs*, their *wants* and *dangers*, will all be *yours*. And the *more* they are your *heartly friends*, the *more* they will be *yours*. And so you will have as many *additions* to the proper burden of your *griefs*, as you have *suffering friends*: When you do but hear that they are
dead,

dead; you say as *Thomas*, Joh. 11. 16. [*Let us also go that we may die with him.*] And having *many* such friends you will almost alwaies have one or other of them in distress; and so be seldome free from sorrow; besides all that which is properly your own.

16. Lastly, if you have a friend that is both *true* and *useful*, yet you may be lured he must stay with you but a little while. *The godly men will cease, and the faithful fail from among the children of men; while men of lying flattering lips, and double hearts survive, and the wicked walk on every side while the vilest men are exalted*, Psal. 12. 1, 2, 8. while swarms of false malicious men, are left round about you, perhaps God will take away your *dearest* friends: If among a multitude of unfaithful ones, you have *but one* that is your friend indeed, perhaps God will take away *that one*. He may be separated from you into *another Country*; or taken away to *God by death*. Not that God doth grudge you the mercy of a faithful friend; but that *he would be your All*, and would not have you *hurt* your selves with too much affection to any Creature, and for other reasons to be named anon.

And to be *forsaken* of your friends, is not all your affliction: but to be *so forsaken* is a great aggravation of it. 1. For they use to forsake us in our greatest sufferings and streights, when we have the *greatest need* of them.

2. They fail us most at a *dying hour*, when all other worldly comfort faileth: As we must leave our houses, lands and wealth, so must we for the present leave our friends: And as all the rest are silly comforters, when we have once received our citation to appear before the Lord, so also are our friends but silly comforters; They can weep over us, but they cannot with all their care, delay the separating stroak of death, one day or hour.

Only by their prayers, and holy advice, remembering us of everlasting things, and provoking us in the work of preparation, they may prove to us friends indeed. And therefore we must value a holy, heavenly, faithful friend, as one of the greatest treasures upon earth. And while we take notice how *as men* they may forsake us, we must not deny but that *as Saints* they are precious, and of singular use to us; and Christ

useth by them to communicate his mercies; and if any creatures in the world may be blessings to us, it is *holy persons*, that have most of God in their hearts and lives.

3. And it is an aggravation of the cross, that they often fail us, when we are most faithful in our duty, and stumble most upon the most excellent acts of our obedience.

4. And those are the persons that oftentimes fail us, of whom we have deserved best, and from whom we might have expected most.

Review the experiences of the choicest servants that Christ hath had in the world, and you shall find enough to confirm you of the vanity of man, and the instability of the dearest friends. How highly was *Athanasius* esteemed? and yet at last deserted and banished even by the famous *Constantine* himself! How excellent a man was *Gregory Nazianzene*, and highly valued in the Church? and yet by reproach and discouragements driven away from his Church at *Constantinople* whither he was chosen: and envied by the Bishops round about him. How worthy a man was the eloquent *Chrysostome*, and highly valued in the Church! And yet how bitterly was he prosecuted by *Hierome* and *Epiphanius*; and banished, and dyed in a second banishment, by the provocation of factious contentious Bishops, and an Empress impatient of his plain reproofs? What person more generally esteemed and honoured for learning, piety and peaceableness than *Melanchthon*? and yet by the contentions of *Illyricus* and his party, he was made weary of his life. As highly as *Calvin* was (deservedly) valued at *Geneva*, yet once in a popular lunacy and displeasure, they drove him out of their City, and in contempt of him some called their dogs by the name of *Calvin*; (though after they were glad to intreat him to return.) How much our *Grindal* and *Abbot* were esteemed, it appeareth by their advancement to the Archbishoprick of *Canterbury*: and yet who knoweth not that their eminent piety sufficed not to keep them from dejecting frowns! And if you say, that it is no wonder if with *Princes* through interest, and with *people* through levity, it be thus; I might heap up instances of the like untrustiness of particular friends: But all History and the experiences of the most, do so much abound with them, that I think

think it needless. Which of us must not say with *David* that [*all men are lyars*] Psal. 116. that is, *deceitful* and *un-trusty*, either through unfaithfulness, weakness or insufficiency; that either will forsake us, or cannot help us in the time of need?

Was *Christ* forsaken in his extremity by his own *Disciples*, to teach us what to *expect*, or *bear*? Think it not strange then to be conformed to your Lord, in this, as well as in other parts of his humiliation. *Expect* that men should prove *deceitful*: Not that you should entertain *ensorious* suspicions of your *particular friends*: but remember in general that *man is frail*, and the *best* too *selfish* and *uncertain*; and that it is no wonder if those should prove your greatest grief, from whom you had the highest expectations. Are you better than *Job*, or *David*, or *Christ*? and are your friends more firm and unchangeable than theirs?

Consider, 1 That Creatures must be set at a sufficient distance from their Creator. Allsufficiency, Immutability and indefectible fidelity, are proper to *Jehovah*. As it is no wonder for the Sun to set or be eclipsed, as glorious a body as it is; so it is no wonder for a friend, a pious friend, to fail us, for a time, in the hour of our distress. There are *some* that *will not*: but there is *none* but *may*, if *God* should leave them to their weakness. *Man* is not your *Rock*: He hath *no stability* but what is derived, dependant, and uncertain, and defectible. Learn therefore to *rest on God alone*, and lean not too hard or confidently upon any mortal might.

2. And *God* will have the *common infirmity* of man to be *known*, that so the *weakest* may not be *utterly discouraged*, nor take their *weakness* to be *gracelessness*, whilst they see that the *strongest* also have their *infirmities*, though not *so great* as theirs. If any of *Gods* servants lives in constant holiness and fidelity, without *any shakings* or stumbling in their way, it would tempt some self-accusing troubled souls, to think that they were altogether graceless, because they are so far short of others. But when we read of a *Peters* denying his Master in so horrid a manner, with swearing and cursing that he knew not the man, *Matth.* 26. 74: and of his dissimulation and not walking uprightly, *Gal.* 2. and of a *Dauids* unfriendly

and unrighteous dealing with *Mephibosheth*, the seed of *Zonathan*; and of his most vile and treacherous dealing with *Driah*, a faithful and deserving subject; it may both abate our wonder and offence at the unfaithfulness of our friends, and teach us to compassionate their frailty, when they desert us; and also somewhat abate our immoderate dejectedness and trouble, when we have failed God or man our selves.

3. Moreover, consider, how the *odiousness* of that *sin*, which is the root and cause of such unfaithfulness, is greatly manifested by the failing of our friends. God will have the *odiousness* of the *remnants* of our *self-love* and *carnal mindedness*, and *cowardize* appear: we should not discern it in the seed and root, if we did not see, and taste it in the fruits. *Seeing* without *tasting* will not sufficiently convince us: A crab looks as beautiful as an apple; but when you *tast* it, you better know the difference. When you must your selves be unkindly used by your friends, and forsaken by them in your distress, and you have *tasted* the fruits of the remnants of their worldliness, selfishness and carnal fears, you will better know the odiousness of these vices, which thus break forth against all obligations to God and you, and notwithstanding the light, the conscience, and perhaps the grace, that doth resist them.

4. Are you not prone to *overvalue* and *overlove* your friends? If so, is not this the meetest remedy for your disease? In the *loving* of God, we are in no danger of *excess*; and therefore have no need of any thing to *quench* it. And in the *loving* of the *godly* purely upon the account of *Christ*, and in *loving* *Saints* as *Saints*, we are not apt to go *too far*. But yet our understandings may mistake, and we may think that *Saints* have more of sanctity than indeed they have; and we are exceeding apt to mix a *selfish common love* with that which is *spiritual* and *holy*; and at the same time, when we *Love* a *Christian* as a *Christian*, we are apt not only to *Love* him (as we ought) but to *overlove* him because he is *our friend*, and *Loveth us*. Those *Christians* that have no *special Love* to us, we are apt to *undervalue* and *neglect*, and *Love* them below their holiness and worth: But those that we think *entirely* *Love us*, we *Love* above their proper worth, as they stand in the esteem.

esteem of God : Not but that we *may* Love those that Love us, and add this Love to that which is purely for the sake of Christ; but we should not let our *own interest prevail* and *overtop* the interest of Christ, nor Love any *so much* for *Loving us*, as for *Loving Christ*: And if we *do so*, no wonder if God shall use such remedies as he seeth meet, to abate our excuse of selfish love.

O how highly are we apt to think of *all that Good* which is found in those who are the highest *esteemers of us*, and most *dearly love us*; when perhaps in it self it is but some *ordinary good*, or *ordinary degree* of goodness which is in them! Their Love to us unresistibly procureth our Love to them: And when we Love them, it is wonderful to observe, how easily we are brought to think well of almost all they do, and highly to value their judgements, graces, parts and works: when *greater excellencies* in *another* perhaps are scarce observed, or regarded but as a common thing: And therefore the destruction or want of Love, is apparent in the vilifying thoughts and speeches, that most men have of one another; and in the low esteem of the judgements, and performances and lives of other men: (much more in their contempt, reproaches and cruel persecutions.) Now though God will have us encrease in our Love of Christ in his members, and in our pure Love of Christians as such, and in our common charity to all, yea and in our just fidelity to our friend; yet would he have us suspect and moderate our selfish and excessive Love, and inordinate partial esteem of one above another, when it is but for our selves, and on our own account. And therefore as he will make us know, that we our selves are no such excellent persons, as that it should make another so laudable, or advance his worth, because he Loveth us; so he will make us know, that our friends whom we overvalue, are but like other men: If we exalt them too highly in our esteem, it is a sign that God must cast them down. And as their Love to us was it that made us so exalt them; so their unkindness or unfaithfulness to us, is the fittest means to bring them lower in our estimation and affection. God is very jealous of our hearts, as to our overvaluing and overloving any of his Creatures: what we give inordinately and excessively to them, is some way or other taken from him, and given them to his injury, and therefore to

his offence. Though I know that to be void of natural, friendly or social affections, is an odious extream on the other side; yet God will rebuke us if we are guilty of excess. And it's the greater and more inexcusable fault to over-love the Creature, because our Love to God is so cold, and hardly kindled and kept alive: He cannot take it well to see us dote upon dust and frailty like our selves, at the same time when all his wondrous kindness, and attractive goodness, do cause but such a faint and languid Love to him, which we our selves can scarcely feel. If therefore he cure us by permitting our friends to shew us truly what they are, and how little they deserve such excessive Love (when God hath so little) it is no more wonder, than it is that he is tender of his glory, and merciful to his servants souls.

5. By the failing and unfaithfulness of our friends, the wonderful *Patience of God* will be observed and honoured, as it is shewed both to *them and us*. When *they forsake us* in our distress (especially when we suffer for the cause of Christ) it is *God* that they injure more than us: And therefore if *he* bear with them, and forgive their weakness upon repentance, why should not *we* do so that are much less injured? The worlds perfidiousness should make us think, How great and wonderful is the patience of God, that beareth with, and beareth up so vile, ungrateful, treacherous men that abuse him to whom they are infinitely obliged? And it should make us consider, when men deal treacherously with us, How great is that mercy that hath born with, and pardoned greater wrongs which I my self have done to God, than these can be which men have done to me! It was the remembrance of *David's* sin, that had provoked God to raise up his own Son against him (of whom he had been too fond) which made him so easily bear the curses and reproach of *Shimei*. It will make us bear abuse from others, to remember how ill we have dealt with God, and how ill we have deserved at his hands our selves.

6. And I have observed another of the Reasons of Gods permitting the failing of our friends, in the *season and success*. It is, that the *Love of our friends may not hinder us when we are called to suffer or dye*. When we over-love them, it teareth our very hearts to leave them: And therefore it is a strong temptation

tation to draw us from our duty, and to be unfaithful to the cause of Christ, lest we should be taken from our too-dear friends, or lest our suffering cause their too-much grief. It is so hard a thing to dye with willingness and peace, that it must needs be a mercy to be saved from the impediments which make us backward: And the excessive Love of friends and relations, is not the least of these impediments: O how loth is many a one to dye, when they think of parting with wife, or husband, or children, or dear and faithful friends! Now I have oft observed, that a little before their death or sickness, it is ordinary with God to permit some unkindness between such too-dear friends to arise, by which he moderated and abated their affections, and made them a great deal the willinger to dye. Then we are ready to say, It is time for me to leave the world, when not only the rest of the world, but my dearest friends have first forsaken me! This helpeth us to remember our dearest everlasting friend, and to be grieved at the heart that we have been no truer our selves to him, who would not have forsaken us in our extremity. And sometime it maketh us even aweary of the world, and to say as *Elias*, Lord take away my life, &c. 1 *King.* 19. 4, 10, 14. when we must say, I thought I had one friend left, and behold even he forsaketh me in my distress.] As the Love of friends intanglenth our affections to this world, so to be weaned by their unkindnesses from our friends, is a great help to loosen us from the world, and proveth oft a very great mercy to a soul that is ready to depart.

And as the friends that Love us most, and have most interest in our esteem and Love, may do more than others, in tempting us to be unfaithful to our Lord, to entertain any error, to commit any sin, or to flinch in suffering; so when God hath permitted them to forsake us, and to lose their too great interest in us, we are fortified against all such temptations from them. I have known where a former intimate friend hath grown strange, and broken former friendship, and quickly after turned to such dangerous wayes and errors, as convinced the other of the mercifulness of God, in weakning his temptation by his friends desertion; who might else, have drawn him along with him into sin. And I have often observed,

served, that when the husbands have turned from Religion to Infidelity, Familism, or some dangerous heresie, that God hath permitted them to hate and abuse their wives so inhumanely, as that it preserved the poor women from the temptation of following them in their Apostasie or sin: When as some other women with whom their husbands have dealt more kindly, have been drawn away with them into pernicious paths.

Therefore still I must say, we were undone if we had the disposing of our own conditions. It would be long before we should have been willing our selves to be thus unkindly dealt with by our friends: And yet God hath made it to many a soul, a notable means of preserving them from being undone for ever. Yea the *unfaithfulness* of all our friends, and the *malice and cruelty* of all our enemies, doth us not usually so much harm, as the *Love and Temptation* of some one deluded erring friend, whom we are ready to follow into the gulf.

7. Lastly, consider that it is not *desirable or suitable to our state, to have too much of our comfort by any creature*: Not only because it is most pure and sweet which is most immediately from God; but also because we are very prone to overlove the Creature; and if it should but seem to be very commodious to us, by serving our necessities or desires, it would seem the more amiable, and therefore be the stronger snare: The work of mortification doth much consist in the annihilation or deadness of all the Creatures as to any power to draw away our hearts from God, or to entangle us and detain us from our duty. And the more excellent and lovely the creature appeareth to us, the less it is dead to us, or we to it; and the more will it be able to hinder or ensnare us.

When you have well considered all these things, I suppose you will admire the wisdom of God in leaving you under this kind of tryal, and weaning you from every creature, and teaching you by his providence as well as by his word, to *Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?*] And you will see that it's no great wonder that corrupted souls, that live in other sins, should be guilty of this unfaithfulness to their friends: and that he that dare unthankfully trample upon the unspeakable kindness of
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the Lord, should deal unkindly with the best of men. You make no great wonder at other kind of sins, when you see the world continually commit them; why then should you make a greater or a stranger matter of this than of the rest? Are *you* better than *God*? Must unfaithfulness *to you* be made more hainous, than that unfaithfulness *to him*, which yet you daily see and sleight? The *least* wrong to *God* is a thousandfold more than the greatest that can be done to you, as such. Have you done that for your nearest friend, which *God* hath done for him and you, and all men? Their obligations to you are nothing in comparison of their great and manifold obligations to *God*.

And *you* know that you have more wronged *God*, *your selves*, than any man ever wronged *you*: And if yet for all that *he* bear with *you*, have you not great reason to bear with others?

Yea, you have not been innocent *towards men* your selves: Did you never wrong or fail another? Or rather, are you not apter to see and aggravate the wrong that others do to you, than that which you have done to others? May you not call to mind your own neglects, and say, as *Adonizebeck*, Judg. 1. 7. [*Threescore and ten Kings having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: As I have done, so God hath requited me.*] Many a one have I failed or wronged: and no wonder if others fail and wrong me.]

Nay you have been much more unfaithful and injurious to *your selves*, than ever any *other* hath been to you: No friend was so near you, as *your selves*: None had such a charge of of you: None had such helps and advantages to do you good or hurt: And yet all the enemies you have in the world, even in Earth or Hell, have not wronged and hurt you half so much as you have done your selves. O, methinks the man or woman that knoweth themselves, and knoweth what it is to Repent; that ever saw the greatness of their own sin and folly, should have no great mind or leisure to aggravate the failings of their friends, or the injuries of their enemies, considering what they have proved to themselves! Have I forfeited my *own salvation*, and deserved everlasting wrath, and sold my Saviour and my soul for so base a thing as sinful pleasure,

sure, and shall I ever make a wonder of it, that *another* man doth me some *temporal hurt*? Was any friend so near to me as my self? Or more obliged to me? O sinful soul, let *thy own*, rather than *thy friends* deceit and treachery, and neglects, be the matter of thy displeasure, wonder and complaints!

And let thy *Conformity* herein to Jesus Christ, be thy holy ambition and delight: Not as it is *thy suffering*, nor as it is caused by *mens sin*: but as it is thy *Conformity* and fellowship in the sufferings of thy Lord, and caused by his Love.

I have already shewed you that *sufferers* for Christ, are in the highest form among his Disciples. The order of his followers usually is this; 1. At our entrance, and in the lowest form, we are exercised with the fears of Hell, and Gods displeasure, and in the works of Repentance for the sin that we have done. 2. In the second form, we come to think more seriously of the remedy, and to enquire what we shall do to be saved, and to understand better what Christ hath done and suffered, and what he is and will be to us; and to value him and his love and grace: And here we are much enquiring how we may know our own sincerity, and our interest in Christ, and are labouring for some assurance, and looking after signs of grace. 3. In the next form or order we are searching after further knowledge, and labouring better to understand the mysteries of Religion, and to get above the rudiments and first principles: And here if we scape turning bare Opinionists or Hereticks by the snare of controversie or curiosity, it's well. 4. In the next form we set our selves to the fuller *improvement* of all our further *degrees of knowledge*; and to *digest it all*, and turn it into *stronger Faith*, and *Love*, and *Hope*, and *greater Humility*, *Patience*, *Self-denial*, *Mortification*, and contempt of earthly vanities, and hatred of sin; and to walk more watchfully and holily, and to be more in holy duty. 5. In the next form we grow to be more publick-spirited: to set our hearts on the Churches welfare, and long more for the progress of the Gospel, and for the good of others; and to do all the good in the world that we are able, for mens souls or bodies, but especially to long and lay out our selves for the conversion and salvation of ignorant, secure, unconverted souls. The *counterfeit* of this, is, An eager desire

to profelyte others to our opinions or that Religion which we have chosen, by the direction of flesh and blood, or which is not of God, nor according unto Godliness, but doth subserve our carnal ends. 6. In the next form we grow to study more the pure and wonderful Love of God in Christ, and to rellish and admire that Love, and to be taken up with the Goodness and tender mercies of the Lord, and to be kindling the flames of holy Love to him that hath thus Loved us; and to keep our souls in the exercise of that Love: And withall to live in Joy, and Thanks, and Praise to him that hath redeemed us and Loved us. And also by Faith to converse in Heaven, and to live in holy contemplation, beholding the Glory of the Father and the Redeemer in the Glass which is fitted to our present use, till we come to see him face to face. Those that are the highest in this form, do so walk with God, and burn in Love, and are so much above inferiour vanities, and are so conversant by Faith in Heaven, that their hearts even dwell there, and there they long to be for ever. 7. And in the highest form in the School of Christ, we are exercising this confirmed Faith and Love, in sufferings, especially for Christ: In following him with our Cross, and being conformed to him, and glorifying God in the fullest exercise and discovery of his Graces in us, and in an actual trampling upon all that standeth up against him, for our hearts: and in bearing the fullest witness to his Truth and Cause, by constant enduring, though to the death. Not but that the *weakest* that are sincere, *must suffer for Christ* if he call them to it: *Martyrdome* it self is not proper to the *strong Believers*: Whoever forsake h not all that he hath for Christ, cannot be his Disciple, *Luke 14. 33.* But to suffer with that Faith and Love forementioned, and in that manner, is proper to the strong: And usually God doth not try and exercise his young and weak ones with the tryals of the strong; nor set his Infants on so hard a service, nor put them in the front or hottest of the battel, as he doth the ripe confirmed Christians. The sufferings of their inward doubts and fears doth take up such: It is the *strong* that ordinarily are called to *sufferings for Christ*, at least in any *high degree*; I have digrest thus far to make it plain to you, that our *Conformity to Christ, and fellowship with him in his*

sufferings, in any notable degree, is the lot of his best confirmed servants, and the highest forme in his School among his Disciples: and therefore not to be inordinately feared or abhorred, nor to be the matter of impatiency, but of holy joy: and in such infirmities we may glory. And if it be so of *sufferings* in the general, (for Christ) then is it so of this particular sort of suffering, even to be forsaken of all our best and nearest, dearest friends, when we come to be most abused by the enemies.

For my own part, I must confess that as I am much wanting in other parts of my conformity to Christ, so I take my self to be yet much short, of what I expect he should advance me to, as long as my friends no more forsake me. It is not long since I found my self in a low (if not a doubting) case, because I had so few enemies and so little sufferings for the cause of Christ (though I had much of other sorts:) And now that doubt is removed by the multitude of furies which God hath let loose against me. But yet, methinks, while my *friends themselves* are so friendly to me, I am much short of what I think I must at last attain to.

BUt let us look further into the Text, and see what is the cause of the *failing* and *forsaking* Christ in the *Disciples*; and what it is that they betake themselves to, when they leave him.

[*Ye shall be scattered every man to his Own.*]

Self-denial was not perfect in them, selfishness therefore in this hour of temptation did prevail. They had before forsaken all to follow Christ; they had left their Parents, their Families, their Estates, their Trades, to be his Disciples: But though they believed him to be the Christ, yet they dreamt of a visible Kingdome, and did all this with too carnal expectations of being great men on earth, when Christ should begin his reign. And therefore when they saw his apprehension and ignominious suffering, and thought now they were frustrate of their hopes, they seem to repent that they had followed him (though not by apostasie and an habitual or plenary change of mind, yet) by a sudden passionate frightful apprehension

hension, which vanished when grace performed its part. They now began to think that they had *lives* of their *Own* to save, and *families* of their *Own* to mind, and *business* of their *Own* to do: They had before forsaken their *private interests* and *affairs*, and gathered themselves to Jesus Christ, and lived in communion with him, and one another. But now they return to their trades and callings, and are scattered every man to his own.

Selfishness is the great enemy of all societies, of all fidelity and friendship: There is no trusting that person in whom it is predominant. And the remnants of it where it doth not reign, do make men walk unevenly and unsteadfastly towards God and men. They will certainly deny both God and their friends, in a time of tryal who are not able to deny themselves: Or rather he never was a real friend to any, that is predominantly selfish. They have alway some interest of their *own*, which their friend must needs contradict, or is insufficient to satisfie. Their houses, their lands, their monies, their children, their honour or something which they call their *Own*, will be frequently the matter of contention; and are so near them, that they can for the sake of these cast off the nearest friend. Contract no special friendship with a selfish man: nor put no confidence in him, whatever friendship he may profess. He is so confined to himself, that he hath no true love to spare for others: If he seem to love a friend, it is not as a friend, but as a servant, or at best as a benefactor: He loveth you for himself, as he loveth his money, or horse, or house, because you may be serviceable to him: Or as a horse or dog doth love his keeper, for feeding him: And therefore when your provender is gone, his love is gone: when you have done feeding him, he hath done loving you. When you have no more for him, he hath no more for you.

Object. *But (some will say) it is not the falseness of my friend that I lament, but the separation, or the loss of one that was most faithful: I have found the deceitfulness of ordinary friends, and therefore the more highly prize those few that are sincere. I had but one true friend among abundance of self-seekers; and that one is dead, or taken from me, and I am left as in a wilderness, having no mortal man that I can trust or take much comfort in.*

Ans. Is this your case? I pray you answer these few Questions, and suffer the truth to have its proper work upon your mind.

Quest. 1. *Who was it that deprived you of your friend? was it not God? Did not he that gave him you take him from you? Was it not his Lord and owner that call'd him home? And can God do any thing injuriously or amiss? will you not give him leave to do as he list with his own? Dare you think that there was wanting either wisdom or goodness, justice or mercy in Gods disposal of your friend? Or will you ever have Rest, if you cannot have Rest in the will of God?*

2. *How know you what sin your friend might have fallen into, if he had lived as long as you would have him? You'l say, that God could have preserved him from sin: It's true: but God preserveth sapientially, by means, as well as omnipotentially: And sometime he seeth that the temptations to that person are like to be so strong, and his corruption like to get such advantage, and that no means is so fit as Death it self, for his preservation. And if God had permitted your friend by temptation to have fallen into some scandalous sin, or course of evil, or into errors or false wayes, would it not have been much worse then death to him and you? God might have suffered your friend that was so faithful, to have been sisted and shaken as Peter was, and to have denied his Lord; and to have seemed in your own eyes, as odious as he before seemed amiable.*

3. *How know you what unkindness to your self, your dearest friend might have been guilty of? Alas there is greater frailty and inconstancy in man, then you are aware of. And there are sadder roots of corruption unmortified, that may spring up into bitter fruits, then most of us ever discover in our selves. Many a Mother hath her heart broken by the unnaturalness of such a child, or the unkindness of such a husband, as if they had died before, would have been lamented by her, with great impatience and excess. How confident soever you may be of the future fidelity of your friend, you little know what tryal might have discovered. Many a one hath failed God and man that once were as confident of themselves, as ever you were of your friend. And which of us see not reason*

son to be distrustful of our selves? And can we know another better then our selves? or promise more concerning him?

4. *How know you what great calamity might have befallen your friend, if he had lived as long as you desired?* When the Righteous seem to men to perish, and merciful men are taken away, it is from the evil to come that they are taken, *Isa. 57. 1.* How many of my friends have I lamented as if they had died unseasonably, concerning whom some following providence quickly shewed me, that it would have been a grievous misery to them to have lived longer! Little know you what calamities were eminent on his person, his family, kindred, neighbours, country, that would have broke his heart: What if a friend of yours had died immediately before some calamitous subversion of a Kingdome, some ruines of the Church, &c. and if ignorantly he had done that which brought these things to pass, can you imagine how lamentably sad his life would have been to him, to have seen the Church, the Gospel, and his Country in so sad a case? especially if it had been long of him? Many that have unawares done that which hath ruined but a particular friend, have lived in so much grief and trouble, as made them consent that death should both revenge the injured on them, and conclude their misery. What then would it have been to have seen the publick good subverted, and the faithful overwhelmed in misery, and the Gospel hindered, and holy worship changed for deceit and vanity, and for conscience to have been daily saying, [I had a hand in all this misery: I kindled the fire that hath burned up all!]

What comfort can you think such friends if they had survived, would have found on earth? Unless it were a comfort to hear the complaints of the afflicted, to see and hear such odious sins as sometimes vexed righteous *Lot* to see and hear; or to hear of the scandals of one friend, and the apostasie of another, and the sinful compliances and declinings of a third; and to be under temptations, reproaches and afflictions themselves? Is it a matter to be so much lamented that God hath prevented their greater miseries and wo?

5. *What was the world to your friends while they did enjoy it?* Or what is it now, or like to be hereafter to your selves? was it so good and kind to them, as that you should lament their

their *separation* from it? was it not to them a place of toil and trouble, of envy and vexation, of enmity and poison? of successive cares and fears and griefs? and worst of all, a place of sin? Did they groan under the burden of a sinful nature, a distempered, tempted, troubled heart of languishings and weakness of every grace; of the rebukes of God, the wounds of conscience, and the malice of a wicked world? And would you have them under these again? Or is their deliverance become your grief? Did you not often joyn in prayer with them, for deliverance from malice, calamities, troubles, imperfections, temptations and sin? and now those prayers are answered in their deliverance: and do you now *grieve* at that which then you *prayed* for!

Doth the world use *your selves* so well and kindly, as that you should be sorry that your friends partake not of the feast? Are you not groaning from day to day *your selves*? and are you grieved that your friends are taken from your griefs? you are not well pleased with your own condition: when you look into your hearts you are displeas'd and complain: when you look into your *lives*, you are displeas'd and complain: when you *look* into your *families*, into your *neighbourhoods*, unto your *friends*, unto the *Church*, unto the *Kingdome*, unto the *world*, you are displeas'd and complain: And are you also displeas'd that your friends are not under the same displeas'dness and complaints as you? Is the world a place of *Rest* or *trouble* to you? And would you have your friends to be as far from *Rest* as you?

And if you *have* some *Ease* and *Peace* at present, you little know what storms are near! you may see the dayes, you may hear the tydings, you may feel the griping griefs and pains, which may make you call for Death *your selves*, and make you say that a life on earth is no felicity, and make you confess that they are *Blessed that are dead in the Lord*, as *resting from their labours*, and being past these troubles, griefs and tears. Many a poor troubled soul is in so great distress, as that they take their own lives to have some tast of Hell: and yet at the same time, are grieving because their *friends* are taken from them, who would have been *grieved* for *their* griefs, and for ought they know might have fallen into as sad a state as they themselves are now lamenting.

6. *Do you think it is for the Hurt or the Good of your friend, that he is removed hence ?* It cannot be for his *Hurt* unless he be in *Hell*. (At least, it is uncertain whether to live would have been for his *Good*, by an increase of *Grace*, and so for greater *Glory*.) And if he be in *Hell*, he was no fit person for you to take *much pleasure* in upon *earth* : He might be indeed a fit object for your *compassion*, but not for your *complacency*. Sure you are not undone for want of such company as God will not endure in his sight, and you must be separated from for ever. But if they be in *Heaven*, you are scarce their friends if you would wish them thence. *Friendship* hath as great respect to the *good of our friends* as of *our selves*. And do you pretend to *friendship*, and yet lament the removal of your friend to his greatest happiness ! Do you set more by your own enjoying his company, than by his enjoying God in perfect blessedness ! This sheweth a very culpable defect either in *Faith* or *Friendship* ; and therefore beseemeth not *Christians* and *friends*. If *Love* teacheth us to mourn with them that mourn, and to rejoyce with them that rejoyce ; can it be an act of *rational Love* to mourn for them that are possessed of the highest everlasting joyes ?

7. *God will not honour himself by one only, but by many* : He knoweth best when his work is done : When our friends have finished all that God intended them for, when he put them into the world, is it not time for them to be gone, and for others to take their places, and finish *their work* also in their time ? God will have a succession of his servants in the world. Would you not come down, and give place to him that is to follow you, when your part is played, and his is to begin ? If *David* had not died, there had been no *Solomon*, no *Jehoshaphat*, no *Hezekiah*, no *Josiah*, to succeed him and honour God in the same throne. You may as wisely grudge that one day only takes not up all the week, and that the clock striketh not the same hour still, but proceedeth from one to two, from two to three, &c. as to murmur that one man only continueth not, to do the work of his place excluding his successors.

8. *You must not have all your Mercies by one messenger or hand* : God will not have you confine your *Love* to one only of his servants : And therefore he will not make one only use-

ful to you: but when one hath delivered his message and done his part, perhaps God will send you other mercies by another hand: And it belongeth to him to choose the messenger who gives the gift. And if you will childishly dote upon the first messenger, and say you will have all the rest of your mercies by his hand, or you will have no more, your frowardness more deserveth correction than compassion: and if you be kept fasting till you can thankfully take your food, from any hand that your Father sends it by, it is a correction very suitable to your sin.

9. *Do you so highly value your friends for God, or for them, or for your selves, in the final consideration?* If it was for God, what reason of trouble have you, that God hath disposed of them, according to his wisdom and unerring will? should you not then be more pleased that God hath them, and employeth them in his highest service, than displeased that you want them?

But if you value them and love them for *themselves*, they are now more *lovely* when they are more *perfect*; and they are now fitter for your content and joy, when they have themselves unchangeable content and joy, than they could be in their sin and sorrows.

But if you valued and loved them but for *your selves only*, it is just with God to take them from you, to teach you to value men to righter ends, and upon better considerations: and both to prefer God before your selves, and better to understand the nature of true friendship, and better to know that your own felicity is not in the hands of any creature, but of God alone.

10. *Did you improve your friends while you had them?* or did you *only Love them*, while you made but little *use of them* for your souls? If you *used* them not, it was just with God for all *your Love* to take them from you. They were given you as your *candle*, not only to *Love it*, but to *work by the Light* of it: And as your *garments*; not only to *Love them*, but to *wear them*; and as your *meat*, not only to *Love it*, but to *feed upon it*. Did you receive their counsel, and hearken to their reproofs, and pray with them, and confer with them upon those holy truths that tended to elevate your minds to
God,

God, and to inflame your breasts, with sacred Love? If not, be it now known to you, that God gave you not such helps and mercies only to talk of, or look upon and Love, but also to improve for the benefit of your souls.

II. *Do you not seem to forget both where you are your selves, and where you must shortly and for ever live?* Where would you have your friends, but where you must be *your selves*? Do you mourn that they are taken hence? Why, if they had staid *here* a thousand years, how little of that time should you have had their company? when you are almost leaving the world *your selves*, would you not send your treasure before you to the place where you must abide? How quickly will you pass from hence to God, where you shall *find your friends* that you lamented as if they had been lost, and there shall dwell with them for ever! O foolish mourners! would you not have your friends at *home*! at *their home* and *your home*, with *their Father* and *your Father*; *their God* and *your God*! Shall you not there enjoy them long enough! Can you so much miss them for one day, that must live with them to all eternity? And is not eternity long enough for you to enjoy your friends in?

Obj. *But I do not know whether ever I shall there have any distinct knowledge of them, or love to them, and whether God shall not there be so far All in All, as that we shall need or fetch no comfort from the creature.*

Ans. There is no reason for either of these doubts. For, 1. You cannot justly think that the knowledge of the Glorified shall be more confused or imperfect than the knowledge of natural men on earth. We shall know *much more*, but not so *much less*. Heaven exceedeth earth in knowledge, as much as it doth in joy.

2. The Angels in Heaven have now a distinct particular knowledge of the least believers; rejoicing particularly in their conversion, and being called by Christ himself [*Their Angels.*] Therefore when we shall be *equal to the Angels*, we shall certainly know our nearest friends that there dwell with us, and are employed in the same attendance.

3. *Abraham* knew the Rich man in Hell, and the man knew *Abraham* and *Lazarus*: Therefore we shall have as distinct a Knowledge.

4. The two Disciples Knew *Moses* and *Elias* in the mount, whom they had never seen before : Though it is possible Christ told them who they were, yet there is no such thing expressed : and therefore it is as probable that they knew them by the communication of their irradiating glory. Much more shall we be then illuminated to a clearer knowledge.

5. It is said expressly, 1 *Cor.* 13. 10, 11, 12. that our present knowledge shall be done away only in regard of its imperfection ; and not of it self, which shall be perfected : [when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away :] As we put away childish thoughts and speeches, when we become men : The change will be from [seeing in a glass] to [seeing face to face] and from [knowing in part] to [knowing even as we are known.]

2. And that we shall both Know, and Love and rejoyce in creatures even in Heaven, notwithstanding that God is all in all, appeareth further thus.

1. *Christ* in his glorified humanity is a *Creature* : and yet there is no doubt but all his members will there Know and Love him in his glorified humanity, without any derogation from the glory of the Deity.

2. The *Body of Christ* will continue its unity, and every member will be so nearly related, even in Heaven, that they cannot choose but Know and Love each other. Shall we be ignorant of the members of our Body ? and not be concerned in their felicity with whom we are so nearly one ?

3. The state and felicity of the Church hereafter, is frequently described in Scripture as consistent in society. It is a *Kingdom*, the *City of God*, the *Heavenly Jerusalem* : and it is mentioned as part of our happiness to be of that society, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24, &c.

4. The Saints are called *Kings* themselves : and it is said that they shall judge the world, and the Angels (And Judging in Scripture is frequently put for Governing) Therefore, (whether there will be another world of mortals which they shall Govern as Angels now Govern men ; or whether the Misery of damned men and Angels will partly consist in as base a subjection to the glorified Saints, as dogs now have to men, or wicked reprobates on earth to Angels ; or whether in respect of

of both these together the Saints shall then be Kings, and Rule and Judge; or whether it be only the participation of the Glory of Christ, that is called a Kingdom, I will not here determine, but) it is most clear that they will have a distinct particular *Knowledge* of the world, which they themselves must judge; and some concernment in that work.

5. It is put into the description of the Happiness of the Saints, that they shall come from the East, and from the West, and shall sit down with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, in the Kingdom of God. Therefore they shall know them, and take some comfort in their presence.

6. *Love* (even to the *Saints* as well as *unto God*) is one of the graces that shall endure *for ever*, 1 Cor. 13. It is exercised upon an *Immortal object* (the Image and Children of the Most High) and therefore must be one of the *Immortal Graces*. For *Grace* in the *Nature* of it dyeth not: and therefore if the *Object* cease not, how should the *Grace* cease, unless you will call it's *perfecting a ceasing*?

It is a state too high for such as we, and I think for any meer Creature to live so *Immediately* and *only upon God*, as to have no *use* for any fellow *Creature*, nor no comfort in them. God can make use of *Glorified Creatures*, in such subserviency and subordination to himself, as shall be no diminution to his *Allsufficiency* or *Honour*, nor to our glory and felicity. We must take heed of fancying even such a Heaven it self, as is above the capacity of a Creature; as some very wise Divines think they have done, that tell us we shall *immediately see Gods Essence* (his *Glory* being that which is provided for our *intuition* and felicity, and is distinct from his *Essence*; being not *everywhere* as his *Essence* is.) And as those do that tell us because that God will be *All in All*, therefore we shall there have none of our comfort by any creature. Though *flesh and blood shall not enter into that Kingdom*, but our *Bodies* will then be *Spiritual Bodies*; yet will they be really the same as now, and distinct from our souls: and therefore must have a felicity suitable to a *Body glorified*: And if the soul did *immediately see Gods Essence*, yet as no reason can conclude that it can see *nothing else*, or that it can see even *Created Good*, and *not Love it*, so the *Body* however must have objects and felicity fit for a *Body*.

Obj. *But it is said, If we knew Christ after the flesh, henceforth know we him no more.*

Ans^w. No doubt but all the carnality in principles, matter, manner and ends of our knowledge will then cease as it's imperfection: But that a carnal knowledge be turned into a spiritual, is no more a diminution to it, than it is to the glory of our Bodies, to be made like the stars in the Firmament of our Father.

Obj. *But then I shall have no more comfort in my present friends than in any other.*

Ans^w. 1. If you had none in them, it is no diminution to our happiness, if indeed we should have all in God immediately and alone. 2. But if you have as much in others that you never knew before, that will not diminish any of your comfort in your antient friends. 3. But it is most probable to us, that as there is a twofold object for our love in the Glorified Saints; one is their *Holiness*, and the other is the *Relation* which they stood in between God and us, being made his instruments for our conversion and salvation, so that we shall *Love Saints in Heaven* in both respects: And in the first respect (which is the chiefest) we shall love those most that have most of God, and the greatest Glory (though such as we never knew on earth) And in the second respect we shall Love those most that were employed by God for our greatest good.

And that we shall not there lay by so much respect to our selves, as to forget or disregard our benefactors, is manifest, 1. In that we shall for ever remember Christ, and Love him, and Praise him, as one that formerly Redeemed us, and washed us in his blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests to God: And therefore we may also in just subordination to Christ, remember them with Love and Thankfulness, that were his Instruments for the collation of these benefits.

2. And this kind of *Self-Love* (to be sensible of Good and Evil to our selves) is none of the sinful or imperfect selfishness to be renounced or laid by, but part of our very Natures, and as inseparable from us as we are from our selves.

Much more, were it not digressive, might be said on this subject; but I shall only add, that as God doth draw us to every

every holy duty by shewing us the *excellency* of that duty; and as *perpetuity* is not the smallest *excellency*; so he hath purposely mentioned that *Love endureth for ever* (when he had described the *Love of one another*) as a principal motive to *kindle and encrease this Love*. And therefore those that think they shall have no *personal Knowledge* of one another, nor *personal Love* to one another (for we cannot *Love* personally, if we *know not* personally) do take a most effectual course to destroy in their souls all holy special Love to Saints, by casting away that principal or very great motive given them by the Holy Ghost. I am not able to *Love much* where I foreknow that I shall not *Love long*. I cannot Love a comely Inne, so well as a nearer dwelling of my own, because I must be gone to morrow. Therefore must I love my *Bible* better than my *Law books*, or *Physick books*, &c. because it leadeth to Eternity. And therefore I must Love *Holiness* in my self and others, better than meat and drink, and wealth and honour, and beauty and pleasure; because it must be *Loved* for ever, when the Love of these must needs be transitory, as *they* are transitory. I must profess from the very experience of my soul, that it is the belief that I shall Love my friends in Heaven, that principally kindleth my Love to them on Earth: And if I thought I should never know them after death, and consequently never love them more, when this life is ended, I should in reason number them with temporal things, and Love them comparatively but a little; even as I Love other transitory things (allowing for the *excellency* in the nature of *Grace*) But now I converse with some delight with my Godly friends, as believing I shall converse with them for ever, and take comfort in the very *Dead* and *Absent*, as believing we shall shortly *meet in Heaven*: and I Love them, I hope, with a Love that is of a *Heavenly Nature*, while I Love them as the *Heirs of Heaven*, with a Love which I expect shall there be perfected, and more *fully* and *for ever* exercised.

12. The last Reason that I give you, to move you to bear the *Loss* or *Absence* of your friends, is, that it gives you the loudest call to retire from all the world, and to converse with God himself, and to long for Heaven, where you shall be separated from your friends no more. And your forsaken state
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will somewhat assist you to that solitary converse with God, which it calls you to : But this brings us up to the third part of the Text.

AND yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.]
Doct. *When all forsake us, and leave us (as to them) alone, we are far from being simply alone; because God is with us.*

He is not without company, that is with the King, though twenty others have turned him off. He is not without Light that hath the shining Sun, though all his Candles be put out. If God be our God, he is our All, and is enough for us : And if he be our All, we shall not much find the want of creatures while he is with us.

For 1. He is *with us*, who is *Everywhere*, and therefore is never from us; and knoweth all the waies and projects of our enemies; being *with them in wrath*, as he is *with us in mercy*.

2. He is *with us* who is *Almighty*, sufficient to preserve us, conquerable by none; and therefore while he is with us, we need not fear what man can do unto us : For they can do nothing but what he will : No danger, no sickness, no trouble or want can be so great as to make it any difficulty to God to deliver us when and how he please.

3. He is with us who is *Infinitely wise*, and therefore we need not fear the subtilty of enemies; nor shall any of his undertaken works for his Church or us miscarry for want of foresight, or through any oversight. We shall be preserved even from our own *Folly*, as well as from our Enemies subtilty : For it is not our own wisdom that our greatest concerns do principally rest upon, nor that our safety and peace are chiefly secured by; but it is the Wisdom of our great Preserver. He knoweth what to do with us, and what paths to lead us in, and what is best for us in all conditions. And he hath promised to Teach us, and will be our sure infallible Guide.

4. He is with us who is *Infinitely Good*, and therefore is only fit to be a continual delight and satisfaction to our souls : that hath nothing in him to disaffect us, or discourage us : whom

we may love without fear of overloving; and need not set any bounds to our Love, the object of it being infinite.

5. He is *with us*, who is most nearly related to us, and most dearly loveth us; and therefore will never be wanting to us in any thing that is fit for us to have. This is he that is *with us*, when all have left us, and as to man we are alone; and therefore we may well say that we are not alone. Of this I shall say more anon in the application.

Quest. *But how is he with us?* Answ. 1. *He is with us* not only in his *Essential presence*, as he is *everywhere*, but as by his *Gracious Fatherly presence*: We are in his *Family*, attending on him: even as the eye of a servant is to the hand of his Master: We are *alwaies with him*, and (as he phraseth it himself in the Parable *Luke 15.*) *all that he hath in ours*, that is, all that is fit to be communicated to us, and all the provisions of his bounty for his children. When *we awake*, we should be *still with him*: When we go abroad we should be alwaies as before him: Our life and works should be a *Walking with God*.

2. He is alwaies *with us efficiently to do us Good*; Though we have none else that *careth* for us, yet will he never cast us out of his care, but biddeth us cast *our care on him*, as promising that he will *care for us*. Though we have none else to *provide* for us, he is alwaies with us, and our Father knoweth what we want, and will make the best provision for us, *Mat. 6. 32, 33.* Though we have none else to defend us against the power of our enemies, he is alwaies *with us* to be our sure defence: He is the Rock to which we fly, and upon which we are surely built. He gathereth us to himself as the Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, *Mat. 23. 37.* And sure while *Love* is thus protecting us, we may well say that *the Father himself is with us*. Though in all our wants we have no other to supply us, yet he is still with us to perform his promise, that no good thing shall be wanting to them that fear him. Though we may have none else to strengthen and help us, and support us in our weakness, yet he is alwaies with us, whose Grace is sufficient for us, to manifest his strength in weakness. Though we have no other to *Teach us*, and to *resolve our doubts*, yet he is with us that is our chiefest Master, and hath taken us to

be his Disciples, and will be our Light and Guide, and will lead us into the Truth. Though we have none else to be *our Comforters*, in our agony, darkness or distress; but all forsake us, or are taken from us, and we are exposed as *Hagar* with *Ishmael* in a wilderness; yet still the Father of all consolations is with us; his Spirit who is the Comforter is in us: And he that so often speaketh the words of Comfort to us in his Gospel, and saith [*Be of good cheer; let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid, &c.*] will speak them (in the season and measure which is fittest for them) unto our *hearts*. Though all friends turn enemies, and would destroy us, or turn false accusers, as *Job's* friends, in their ignorance or passion; though all of them should add affliction to our affliction, yet is our Redeemer and Justifier still *with us*, and will lay his restraining hand upon our enemies, and say to their proudest fury [Hitherto and no further shalt thou go] He is angry with *Job's* accusing friends, notwithstanding their friendship and good meaning, and though they seemed to plead for God and Godliness against *Job's* sin: And *who shall be against us while God is for us?* or *who shall condemn us when it is he that justifieth us?* Though we be put to say as *David*, Psal. 142. 4. [*I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul:*] Yet we may say with him, *vers.* 5. & 7. [*I cryed unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the Land of the Living: Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise thy Name: The righteous shall compass me about: for thou shalt deal bountifully with me: 2, 3 I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble: When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path: in the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.*] Thus [*God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble.*] Psal. 46. 1. *Therefore should we not fear though the earth were removed, and though the mountains were carried into the midst of the Sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, &c.* *vers.* 2, 3. Though as *David* saith, Psal. 41. 5, 6, 7. [*Mine enemies speak evil of me: when shall he dye, and his name perish? And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity: his heart gathereth iniquity to it self; when he goeth abroad he telleth it: All*

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that hate me whisper together against me : against me do they devise my hurt : An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him ; and now that he lyeth, he shall rise up no more : Yea my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, that did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me —] Yet we may add as he, v. 12. [And as for me, thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and settest me before thy face for ever.] Though (as Psal. 35. 7, &c. Without cause they have hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul : 11. And false witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not ; they rewarded me evil for good : 15, 16. In my adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together ; the abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not ; they did tear and ceased not ; With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth : 20. For they speak not peace, but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the Land.] Yet vers. 9. [My soul shall be joyful in the Lord ; it shall rejoice in his salvation : 10. All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, who deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him.] Though friends be far off, the Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit : Many are the afflictions of the righteous ; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.] Psal. 34. 18, 19. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants ; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.] v. 22. Therefore [I will be glad and joyce in his Mercy, for he hath considered my trouble, and hath known (and owned) my soul in adversity : and hath not shut me in the hand of the enemy — When my life was spent with grief, and my years with sighing ; my strength failed because of mine iniquity, and my bones were consumed ; I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours, and a fear to mine acquaintance ; they that did see me without fled from me : I was forgotten, and as a dead man out of mind : I was like a broken vessel : I heard the slander of many : fear was on every side ; while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life : But I trusted in thee O Lord : I said, Thou art my God : my times are in thy hand : deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me : Make

thy face to shine upon thy servant: Save me for thy mercies sake: — O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues, Psal. 31.] Thus God is *with us* when men are far from us, or against us: His people finde by happy experience that they are *not alone*. Because he is *nigh them*, evil shall not come *nigh them*, unless as it worketh for their good. He is their *hiding place* to preserve them from trouble: the great water-floods shall not come *nigh them*: he will compass them about with songs of deliverance.] Psal. 32. 6, 7.

3. And as God is *with us* thus *Relatively* and *Efficiently*, so also *Objectively* for our holy converse. Whereever our friends are, God is still at hand to be the most profitable, honourable and delightful Object of our thoughts. There is enough in him to take up all the faculties of my soul. He that is but in a well furnished Library may find great and excellent employment for his thoughts many years together: And so may he that liveth in the open world, and hath all the visible works of God to meditate upon: But all this were nothing if God were not the *sense* of *Books* and *Creatures*, and the matter of all these noble studies: He that is alone, and hath only God himself to study, hath the *matter* and *sense* of all the Books and *Creatures* in the world, to employ his thoughts upon. He never need to want matter for his meditation, that hath God to meditate on. He need not want matter of discourse (whether mental or vocal) that hath God to talk of, though he havn not the name of any other friend to mention. All our Affections may have in him the highest and most pleasant work. The soul of man cannot have a more sweet and excellent work than to Love him: He wanteth neither work nor pleasure, that in his solitude is taken up in the believing contemplations of Eternal Love, and of all his blessed Attributes and works. O then what happy and delightful converse may a Believer have with God alone! He is alwaies present, and alwaies at leisure to be spoken with, and alwaies willing of our access and audience: He hath no interest cross to our felicity, which

which should move him to reject us (as worldly great ones often have) He never misunderstandeth us, nor chargeth that upon us which we were never guilty of: If we converse with *men*, their *mistakes*, and *interests*, and *passions*, and *insufficiencies*, do make the trouble so great, and the benefit so small, that many have become thereby aweary of the world, or of humane society, and have spent the rest of their daies alone in desert places. Indeed so much of *God* as appears in men, so much is their converse excellent and delightful: and theirs is the best that have most of *God*: But there is so much of vanity, and self, and flesh, and sin in the most or all of us, as very much darkneth our Light, and dampeth the pleasure, and blasteth the fruit of our societies and converse. O how oft have I been solaced in *God*, when I found nothing but deceit and darkness in the world! How oft hath he comforted me, when it was past the power of man! How oft hath he relieved and delivered me, when all the help of man was vain! It hath been my *Stay* and *Rest*, to look to him, when the creature hath been a broken staff, and deceitful friends have been but as a broken tooth, or a foot that is out of joynt (as *Solomon* speaketh of confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble, *Prov.* 25. 29.) Verily as the world were but an horrid dungeon without the Sun, so it were a howling wilderness, a place of no considerable employment or delight, were it not that in it we may live to *God* and do him service, and sometime be refreshed with the light of his countenance, and the communications of his Love. But of this more anon.

Use I. **W**E see our *Example*, and our *encouragements*. Let us now as *followers of Christ*, endeavour to *imitate* him in this, and to *Live upon God*, when men forsake us, and to know that while *God* is with us, we are not alone, nor indeed forsaken while he forsakes us not.

I shall, 1. Shew you here *Negatively*, what you must not do. 2. *Affirmatively*, what you must do; for the performance of your duty in this imitation of *Christ*.

1. You must not make this any pretence for the undervaluing of your useful friends; nor for your unthankfulness for

so great a benefit as a godly friend : nor for the neglect of your duty in improving the company and help of friends : Two is better then one : The communion of Saints, and help of those that are wise and faithful, is a mercy highly to be esteemed. And the undervaluing of it, is at least a sign of a declining soul.

2 You must not hence fetch any pretence to slight your friends, and disoblige them, or neglect any duty that you owe them, or any means therein necessary to the continuation of their friendship.

3. You must not causelessly withdraw from humane society into *Solitude*. A weariness of converse with men, is oft conjunct with a weariness of our duty : And a retiring voluntarily into solitude, when God doth not call or drive us thither, is oft but a retiring from the place and work which God hath appointed us : And consequently a retiring rather from God, than to God. Like some idle servants, that think they should not work so hard, because it is but *Worldly business*, and think their Masters deal not *Religionally* by them, unless they let them neglect their labour, that they may spend more time in serving God : as if it were no serving God to be faithful in their Masters service.

I deny not but very holy persons have lived in a state of retirement from humane converse : In such cases as these it may become a duty, 1. In case of *such persecution* as at present leaveth us no opportunity of serving or honouring God so much in any other place or state.

2. In case that *natural infirmity* or *disability* or any other *accident* shall make one less serviceable to God and his Church in society than he is in solitude.

3. In case he hath committed a sin so heinous and of indelible scandal and reproach, as that it is not fit for the servants of Christ any more to receive him into their local communion, though he repent : (For as to *Local communion*, I think, such a case may be.)

4. In case a man through custome and ill company be so captivated to some fleshly lust, as that he is not able to *bear the temptations* that are found in humane converse ; but falleth by them into frequent heinous sinning : In this case the right hand

or eye is rather to be parted with, than their salvation. And though a meer restraint by distance of temptations and opportunities of sinning, will not prove a man sanctified, nor save the soul that loveth the sin and fain would live in it; Yet,

1. Grace may sometime appear in the strength and self-denial which is exercised in the very avoiding of temptations, when yet perhaps the person hath not strength enough to have stood against the temptation if it had not been avoided. And,
2. The distance of temptations, and opportunity of serious and frequent consideration, may be a means to help them to sincerity that want it.

5. In case a man by *age* or *sickness* find himself so *near to death*, as that he hath now a more *special call* to look after his *present actual preparation*, than to endeavour any more the *good of others*; and find withall, that *solitude* will help him in his *preparations*, his society being such as would but hinder him. In these *five cases* I suppose it lawful to retire from humane converse into *solitude*.

But when there is no such necessity or call, it usually proceedeth from one of these vicious distempers: 1. From *Cowardize* and fear of suffering, when the souldiers of Christ do hide their heads, instead of confessing him before men.

2. From a laziness of minde and weariness of duty: when slothful unprofitable servants hide their talents, pretending their fear of the austerity of their Lord. Its easier to *run away from our work*, then *do it*: and to go out of the reach of ignorance, malice, contradiction and ungodliness, than to *encounter them*, and *conquer them* by Truth and Holy lives. So many persons as we converse with, so many are there to whom we owe some duty: And this is not so easie as it is to over-run our work, and to hide our selves in some Wilderness or Cell, whilst others are fighting the battels of the Lord.

3. Or it may proceed from meer *impatience*: When men cannot bear the frown, and scorns, and violence of the ungodly, they fly from sufferings, which by patience they should overcome. 4. Or it may come from *humour* and *mutability* of mind, and discontent with ones condition: Many retire from humane converse to please a *discontented* passionate mind; or expecting to finde that in privacy, which in publick they could

not find, nor is anywhere to be found on earth. 5. And some do it in *Melancholy*, meerly to please a *sick imagination*, which is vexed in company, and a little easeth it self in living as the possessed man among the Tombs. 6. And sometimes it proceedeth from *self-ignorance*, and an *unhumbled state* of a soul: When men think much better of themselves than others, they think they can more comfortably converse with *themselves* than with *others*: Whereas if they well understood that they are the *worst* or *greatest enemies*, or *troubles* to themselves, they would more fear their own company than other mens: They would then consider what proud, and fleshly, and worldly, and selfish, and disordered hearts they are like to carry with them into their solitude, and there to be annoyed with from day to day: And that the *nearest enemy* is the *worst*, and the *nearest trouble* is the *greatest*.

These *vices* or *infirmities* carry many into solitude; and if they live where Popish vanity may seduce them, they will perhaps imagine, that they are *erving God*, and entring into *perfection*, when they are but *sinfully* obeying their *corruptions*: and that they are advanced above others in degrees of grace, while they are pleasing a diseased fancy, and entring into a dangerous course of sin. No doubt but the duties of a publick life are more in number, and greater in weight, and of more excellent consequence and tendency (even to the most publick good, and greatest honour of God) than the duties of privacy or retirement. *Vir bonus est commune bonum*: A good man is a common good. And (saith Seneca) *Nulla essent communia nisi pars illorum pertineret ad singulos*] If every one have not some share or interest in them, how are they common? Let me add these few Considerations, to shew you the evil of *voluntary unnecessary Solitude*.

1. You less contribute to the *honour of your Redeemer*, and less promote his Kingdom in the world, and less subserve his death and office, while you do good but to few, and live but *almost to your selves*.

2. You live in the *poorest exercise* of the grace of *Charity*; and therefore in a low undesirable condition.

3. You will want the communion of Saints, and benefit of publick ordinances (for I account not a *Colledge* life a *Solitary* life)

life.) And you will want the help of the Charity, Graces and Gifts of others, by which you might be benefited.

4. It will be a life of smaller comfort, as it is a life of smaller benefit to others. They that do but little good (according to their ability) must expect but little comfort. They have usually most peace and comfort to themselves, that are the most profitable to others. [*Non potest quisquam bene degere qui se tantum intuetur: Alteri vivas oportet, si tibi vis vivere: Sen.*] *No man can live well, that looketh but to himself: Thou must live to another, if thou wilt live to thyself.*]

O the delight that there is in *doing good to many!* None knoweth it that hath not tryed it: Not upon any account of *Merit*; but as it *Pleaseth God*, and as *Goodness it self* is amiable and sweet; and as *we receive by communicating*; and as *we are under promise*; and as *Charity makes all the good that's done to another to be to us as our own!*

5. We are dark and partial, and heedless of our selves, and hardly brought or kept in acquaintance with our hearts; and therefore have the more need of the eye of others: And even an enemies eye may be useful, though malicious; and may do us good while he intends us evil, saith *Bernard* [*Malum quod nemo videt nemo arguit: Ubi autem non timetur reprehensor, securus accedit tentator; licentius perpetratur iniquitas*] [*The evil that none seeth, none reproveth: and where the reproveth is not feared, the tempter cometh more boldly, and the sin is committed the more licentiously.*] It's hard to know the spots in our own faces, when we have no *glass* or *beholder* to acquaint us with them. Saith *Chrysofome* [*Solitude is velamen omnium vitiorum*] the *cover of all vices*] In *company* this cover is laid aside, and vice being more *naked*, is more *ashamed*. It is *beholders* that cause *shame*; which *Solitude* is not acquainted with: And it's a peece of *impenitency* not to be *ashamed of sin*.

6. And we are for the most part so weak and sickly, that we are unable to subsist without the help of others. *Sen. Nemo est ex imprudentibus qui relinqui sibi debet*] *unwise men* (or infants, or sick-like men) *must not be left to themselves.*] And God hath let some impotency, insufficiency and necessity upon all that should keep men sociable, and make them acknowledge

their need of others, and be thankful for assistance from them, and be ready to do good to others, as we would have others do to us. He that *feeleth* not the need of others, is so unhum- bled as to have the greater need of them.

7. *Pride* will have great advantage in private, and *Repentance* great disadvantage, while our sins seem to be all dead, be- cause there is not a temptation to draw them out, or an ob- server to reprove them. [*Tam diu patiens quisq; sibi videtur & humilis, donec nullius hominum consortio commiscetur; ad na- turam pristinam reversurus quum interpellaverit cujuslibet oc- casionis commotio, inquit Cassianus*] Many a man seems to him- self patient and humble, while he keeps out of company; who would return to his own nature if the commotion of any occasion did but provoke him.] It's hard to know what sin or grace is in us, if we have not such tryals as are not to be found in Soli- tude.

8. *Flying* from the observation and judgement of others, is a kind of *self-accusation*; as if we confess our selves so bad as that we cannot stand the tryal of the Light. [*Bona conscientia turbam advocat: Mala in solitudine anxia est & sollicita: si honesta sunt qua facis, omnes sciant: si turpia, quid refert neminem scire: cum tu scias! O te miserum si contemnis hunc testem: inquit Seneca.*] That is [*A good conscience will call in the crowd (or witnesses, not caring who seeth:) A bad conscience is anxious and solicitous even in solitude: If they be things honest which thou doest, let all men know: If they be disbo- xest, what good doth it thee that no man else knoweth it, when thou knowest it thy self! O miserable man if thou despise this wit- ness!*] Something is suspected to be amiss with those that are alwaies in their Chambers, and are never seen. Tell not men that you cannot bear the light: It is he that doth evil that ha- reth the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

9. Solitude is too like to *Death*, to be desirable: He liveth that doth good; and he is dead that is usefess. [*Vivit is qui mul- tis usui est: Vivit is qui sentitur: qui vero latitant & torpent, mortem suam antecesserint, inquit Sen.*] [*He liveth that is profitable to many: He liveth that is observed or perceived: but they that lye hid and drowse do anticipate their death.*] And it is the most culpable death, and therefore the worst, to have Life, and not to use it.

10. A life of *holy Communion* is likest unto Heaven, where none shall be solitary, but all as members of the Heavenly Jerusalem, shall in harmony Love and Praise their Maker.

These Reasons seem to me sufficient to satisfie you that no man should *choose a Solitude without a special necessity or call*: nor yet should it be taken for a life of *greater perfection*, then a *faithful serving of God in publick, and doing good to more.*

I shall now come to the *Affirmative*, and tell you for all this, that [*If God call us into Solitude, or men forsake us, we may rejoyce in this, that we are not alone, but the Father is with us.*] Fear not such Solitude, but be ready to improve it, if you be cast upon it. If God be your God, reconciled to you in Christ, and his Spirit be in you, you are provided for Solitude, and need not fear if all the world should cast you off. If you be banished, imprisoned, or left alone, it is but a Relaxation from your greatest labours; which though you may not cast off your selves, you may lawfully be sensible of your ease, if God take off your burden. It is but a cessation from your sharpest conflicts, and removal from a multitude of great temptations. And though you may not cowardly retreat or shift your selves from the fight and danger, yet if God will dispense with you, and let you live in greater peace and safety, you have no cause to murmur at his dealing. A fruit tree that groweth by the high-way side, doth seldome keep its fruit to ripeness, while so many passengers have each his stone or cudgel to cast at it: Seneca could say [*Nunquam a turba mores quos extuli refero: Aliquid ex eo quod composui turbatur; aliquid ex his que fugavi redit: inimica est multorum conversatio*] I never bring home well from a crowd the manners which I took out with me: something is disordered of that which I had set in order: something of that which I had banished doth return: the conversation of many I find an enemy to me.] O how many vain and foolish words corrupt the minds of those that converse with an ungodly world, when your ears and minds who live in Solitude, are free from such temptations! You live not in so corrupt an Air as they: You hear not the filthy ribbald speeches, which fight against modesty and chastity, and are the bellows of lust: You

hear not the discontented complaining words of the impatient; nor the passionate provoking words of the offended; nor the wrangling quarrelsome words of the contentious; nor the censorious, or slanderous, or reproachful words of the malicious, who think it their interest to have their brethren taken to be bad, and to have others hate them, because they themselves hate them; and who are as zealous to quench the charity of others, when it is destroyed in themselves, as holy persons are zealous to provoke others to Love, which dwelleth and ruleth in themselves. In your Solitude with God, you shall not hear the lyes and malicious revilings of the ungodly against the generation of the just: nor the subtle cheating words of Hereticks, who being themselves deceived, would deceive others of their faith, and corrupt their lives. You shall not there be distracted with the noise and clamours of contending uncharitable professors of Religion, endeavouring to make odious first the opinions, and then the persons of one another: one saying, Here is the Church, and another, There is the Church: one saying, This is the true Church Government, and another saying, Nay, but that is it: One saying, God will be worshipped thus, and another, Not so, but thus or thus: You shall not there be drawn to side with one against another, nor to joyn with any faction, or be guilty of divisions: You shall not be troubled with the oaths and blasphemies of the wicked, nor with the imprudent miscarriages of the weak; with the persecutions of enemies, or the falling out of friends: You shall not see the cruelty of proud oppressors, that set up lyes by armed violence, and care not what they say or do, nor how much other men are injured or suffer, so that themselves may tyrannize, and their wills and words may rule the world, when they do so unhappily rule themselves. In your Solitude with God, you shall not see the prosperity of the wicked to move you to envy, nor the adversity of the just to be your grief: You shall see no worldly pomp and splendour to befool you; nor adorned beauty to entice you, nor wasting calamities to afflict you: You shall not hear the laughter of fools, nor the sick mans groans, nor the wronged mans complaints, nor the poor mans murmurings, nor the proud mans boastings, nor the angry mans abusive ragings.

As you lose the help of your gracious friends, so you are freed from the fruits of their peevishness and passions; of their differing opinions and ways and tempers; of their inequality, unsuitableness, and contrariety of minds or interests; of their levity and unconstancy, and the powerful temptations of their friendship, to draw you to the errors or other sins which they are tainted with themselves. In a word, you are there half delivered from the VANITY and VEXATION of the world; and were it not that you are yet undelivered from *your selves*, and that you take distempered corrupted hearts with you, O what a felicity would your solitude be! But, alas, we cannot overrun our own diseases, we must carry with us the remnants of our corrupted nature; our deadness, and dulness, our selfishness and earthly minds, our impatience and discontents; and worst of all, our lamentable weakness of faith and love and heavenly mindedness, and our strangeness to God, and backwardness to the matters of eternal life. O that I could escape these, though I were in the hands of the cruellest enemies! O that such a heart could be left behind! How gladly would I overrun both house, and land, and honour, and all sensual delights, that I might but overrun it! O where is the place where there is none of this darkness, nor disaffection, nor distance, nor estrangedness from God! O that I knew it! O that I could find it! O that I might there dwell! though I should never more see the face of mortals; nor ever hear a humane voice, nor ever taste of the delights of flesh! Alas, foolish soul! such a place there is, that hath all this and more than this: but it is not in a wilderness, but in Paradise; not here on earth, but above with Christ! And yet am I so loth to die? yet am I no more desirous of the blessed day, when I shall be unclothed of flesh and sin? O death, what an enemy art thou even to my soul! By affrighting me from the presence of my Lord, and hindering my desires and willingness to be gone, thou wrongest me much more, than by laying my flesh to rot in darkness. Fain I would know God, and fain I would more love him and enjoy him: but O this hurtful love of life! O this unreasonable fear of dying, detaineth my desires from pressing on to the happy place where all this may be had! O wretched man that I am, who shall

deliver me from this body of death ! this carnal unbelieving heart, that sometime can think more delightfully of a *Wilderness* than of *Heaven*; that can go seek after God in desert solitude, among the birds and beasts and trees, and yet is so backward to be loosed from flesh that I may find him and enjoy him in the world of glory ! Can I expect that heaven come down to earth ! and that the Lord of Glory should remove his Court, and either leave the retinue of his celestial Courtiers, or bring them all down into this drossy world of flesh and sin, and this to satisfie my fleshly foolish mind ! Or can I expect the translation of *Enoch* or the Chariot of *Elias* ? Is it not enough that my Lord hath conquered Death, and sanctified the passage, and prepared the place of my perpetual abode !

Well ! for all this, though a *Wilderness* is *not Heaven*, it shall be sweet and wellcome for the *sake* of Heaven, if *thence* I may but have a clearer prospect of it : and if by retiring from the crowd and noise of folly I may but be more composed and better disposed to converse above, and to use my faith (alas, my too weak languid faith) untill the beatifical vision and fruition come. If there may be but more of God, or readier access to him, or more heart-quickening flames of Love, or more heart-comforting intimations of his favour, in a wilderness then in a City, in a prison then in a Palace, let that wilderness be my City, and let that prison be my Palace, while I must abide on earth. If in solitude I may have *Enochs* walk with God, I shall in due season have such a translation as shall bring me to the same felicity which he enjoyeth : and in the mean time as well as after, it is no incommodity, if by mortal eyes I be seen no more. If the Chariot of contemplation will in solitude raise me to more believing affectionate converse with heaven, than I could expect in tumults and temptations, it shall reconcile me unto solitude, and make it my Paradise on earth, till Angels instead of the Chariot of *Elias*, shall convey me to the presence of my glorified Head, in the Celestial Paradise.

Object. *But it is grievous to one that hath been used to much company, to be alone.*

Answer. Company may so use you, that it may be more grievous

vous to you *not* to be alone. The society of waspes and serpents may be spared; and Bees themselves have such stings as make some that have felt them think they bought the honey dear.

But can you say you are *alone* while you are *with God*? Is his presence nothing to you? Doth it not signifie more then the company of all men in the world? saith Hierome, [*Sapiens nunquam solus esse potest: habet enim secum omnes qui sunt, & qui fuerunt boni — & si hominum sit inopia, loquitur cum Deo*] viz. *A wise man cannot be alone: for he hath with him the good men that are or have been — And if there be a want of men, he speaks with God.*] He should rather have said, *There can be no want of man, when we may speak with God*: And were it not that God is here revealed to us as in a glass, and that we do converse with God in man, we should think humane converse little worth.

Object. *O but solitude is disconsolate to a sociable mind.*

Ans. But the most desirable society is no solitude: saith Hierome [*In finita eremi vastitas te terret? sed tu Paradisum mente deambula: Quotiescunque cogitatione ac mente illuc conscenderis, toties in eremo non eris*] that is [*Doth the infinite vastness of the wilderness terrifie thee? But do thou (ascend) in mind and walk in Paradise: As oft as thou ascendest thither in thought and mind, so oft thou shalt not be in the wilderness.*] If God be nothing to thee, thou art not a *Christian* but an *Atheist*. If God be God to thee, he is *All in all to thee*; and then should not his presence be instead of all? O that I might get one step nearer unto God, though I receded many from all the world! O that I could find that place on earth where a soul may have nearest access unto him, and fullest knowledge and enjoyment of him, though I never more saw the face of friends! I should chearfully say with my blessed Saviour [*I am not alone, for the Father is with me.*] And I should say so for these Reasons following.

I. *If God be with me, the Maker, and Ruler, and Disposer of all is with me*: so that all things are *virtually* with me in him. I have that in Gold and Jewels which I seem to want in Silver, Lead and Dross. I can want no friend if God vouchsafe to be my friend; and I can enjoy no benefit by all my friends, if God be my enemy: I need not fear the greatest enemies, if God be reconciled.

reconciled to me? I shall not miss the light of the Candle, if I have this blessed Sun. The Creature *is nothing* but what it is *from God*, and *in God*: And it is worth nothing, or good for nothing, but what it's worth in order unto God, as it declarerh him, and helps the soul to know him, serve him, or draw nearer to him: As it is Idolatry in the unhappy worldling, to thirst after the Creature with the neglect of God, and so to make the world his God; so doth it savour of the same heinous sin to lament our loss of Creatures more than the displeasure of God. If God be my enemy, or I am fallen under his indignation, I have then so much greater matters to lament than the loss, or absence, or frowns of man, as should almost make me forget that there is such a thing as man to be regarded: But if God be my Father, and my friend in Christ, I have then so much to think of with delight, and to recreate and content my soul, as will proclaim it most incongruous and absurd to lament inordinately the absence of a worm, while I have his Love and presence who is All in All. If God cannot content me, and be not enough for me, how is he then my God? or how shall he be my Heaven and everlasting Happiness?

2. If God be with me, he is with me to whom I am absolutely devoted. I am wholly his, and have acknowledged his interest in me, and long ago disclaimed all usurpers, and repented of alienations, and unreservedly resigned my self to him: And where should I dwell but with him that is my owner, and with whom I have made the solemnest Covenant that ever I made? I never gave my self to any other, but in subordination to him, and with a *salvo* for his highest inviolable right. Where should my goods be but in my own house? with whom should a Servant dwell but with his Master? and a Wife but with her Husband? and Children but with their Father? I am nearer related to my God and to my Saviour, than I am to any of my Relations in this world. I owe more to him than to all the world: I have renounced all the world, as they stand in any competition or comparison with him: And can I want *their* company then while I am *with him*? How shall I *hate* Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brother and Sister for his sake, if I cannot *spare them*, or be without them

them to enjoy him? To *hate* them is but to *use* them as men do *hated things*, that is, to cast them away with contempt as they would alienate me from Christ, and to cleave to him, and be satisfied in him alone. I am now married to Christ, and therefore must cheerfully leave Father and Mother, and my native place, and all to cleave to him: And with whom should I now delight to dwell, but with him who hath taken me into so near relation, to be, as it were, one flesh with him! O my dear Lord, hide not *thou* thy face from an unkind an unworthy sinner! Let me but dwell with thee and see thy face, and feel the gracious embracements of thy Love, and then let me be cast off by all the world, if thou see it meetest for me; or let all other friends be where they will, so that my soul may be with thee: I have agreed for thy sake to forsake all, even the dearest that shall stand against thee; and I resolve by thy grace to stand to this agreement.

3. *If God be with me I am not alone, for he is with me that Loveth me best.*] The Love of all the friends on earth is nothing to his Love. O how plainly hath he declared that he loveth me, in the strange condescension, the sufferings, death, and intercession of his Son? What Love hath he declared in the communications of his Spirit, and the operations of his Grace, and the near relations into which he brought me? What Love hath he declared in in the course of his providences? in many and wonderful preservations and deliverances? in the conduct of his wisdom, and in a life of mercies? What Love appeareth in his precious promises, and the glorious provisions he hath made for me with himself to all eternity? O my Lord, I am ashamed that thy Love is so much lost; that it hath no better return from an unkind unthankful heart; that I am not more delighted in thee, and swallowed up in the contemplation of thy Love; I can contentedly let go the society and converse of all others, for the converse of some one bosome friend, that is dearer to me than they all, as *Jonathan* to *David*: And can I not much more be satisfied in thee alone, and let go all if I may continue with thee? My very Dog will gladly forsake all the Town, and all persons in the world, to follow me alone! And have I not yet found so much Love and Goodness in thee my dear and blessed God, as to be willing to

converse alone with thee? All men delight most in the company of those that Love them best: They choose not to converse with the *Multitude* when they look for solace and content, but with their dearest friends: And should any be so dear to me as God? O were not thy Love unworthily neglected by an unthankful heart, I should never be so unsatisfied in thee, but should take up, or seek my comforts in thee: I should then say, Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on earth that I desire besides thee! Though not only my friends, but my flesh and heart themselves should fail me, it is thou that will still be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever: it is good therefore for me to draw near to thee, how far soever I am from man: O let me there dwell where thou wilt not be strange, for thy loving kindness is better than life: instead of the multitude of my turmoiling thoughts, let me be taken up in the believing views of thy reconciled face, and in the glad attendance upon thy Grace: or at least in the multitude of my thoughts within me, let thy celestial comforts delight my soul. Let me dwell as in thy family; and when I awake, let me be still with thee! Let me go no whither but where I am still following thee: Let me do nothing but thy work, nor serve any other but when I may truly call it a serving thee: Let me hear nothing but thy voice, and let me know thy voice by whatever instrument thou shalt speak: Let me never see any thing but thy self and the glass that representeth thee, and the books in which I may read thy name: And let me never play with the outside, and gaze on words and letters as insignificant, and not observe thy name which is the sense. Whether it be in company or in solitude, let me be continually with thee, and do thou vouchsafe to hold me by my right hand: And guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me unto thy glory, *Psal.* 73. 23, 24, 25, 26, 28. *Psal.* 63. 3.

4. If God be with me I am not alone; for *I shall be with him whose Love is of greater use and benefit to me, than the Love of all my friends in the world.* Their Love may perhaps be some little comfort, as it floweth from *His*: But it is *His Love* by which and upon which I Live. It is His Love that gives me *Life and Time, and health and food, and preservation; that gives*

gives me books and giveth me understanding : that giveth me provision, and saveth me from turning it to pernicious fleshliness and excess ; that giveth me even my friends themselves, and saveth me from that abuse which might make them to me worse than enemies. The Sun, the Earth, the Air is not so useful or needful to me as his Love. The Love of all my friends cannot make me well when I am sick : it cannot forgive the smallest of my sins ; nor yet assure me of Gods forgiveness : it cannot heal the maladies of my soul , nor give a solid lasting peace to the conscience which is troubled : if all my friends stand about me when I am dying, they cannot take away the fears of death, nor secure my passage to everlasting life : Death will be Death still, and danger will be danger, when all my friends have done their best. But my Almighty friend is Allsufficient : He can prevent my sickness, or rebuke and cure it, or make it so good to me, that I shall thank him for it : He can blot out my transgressions, and forgive all my sin ; and justify me when the world and my conscience do condemn me : He can teach me to believe, to repent, to pray, to hope, to suffer, and to overcome : He can quiet my soul in the midst of trouble, and give me a well grounded everlasting peace, and a joy which no man can take from me. He can deliver me from all the corruptions and distempers of my froward heart ; and ease me and secure me in the troublesome war which is daily managed in my breast. He can make it as easie a thing to dye, as to lye down and take my rest when I am weary, or to undress me at night and go to bed. He can teach Death to lay by its terrible aspect, and to speak with a mild and comfortable voice, and to bring me the joyfullest tydings that ever came unto my ears ; and to preach to me the last and sweetest Sermon, even the same that our Saviour preached on the Cross [*Luke 23. 43. Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with Christ in Paradise.*]

And is this the difference between the *Love of man* and of *God*? And yet do I lament the *loss of man* ! And yet am I so backward to converse with God, and to be satisfied in his Love alone ! Ah my God, how justly mayest thou withhold that Love which I thus undervalue ; and refuse that converse which I have first refused ? and turn me over to man, to silly

man, to sinful man, whose converse I so much desire, till I have learnt by dear experience the difference between man and God, and between an Earthly and an Heavenly friend! Alas, have I not tryed it oft enough, to have known it better before this day! Have I not oft enough found what man is in a time of tryal! Have I not been told it over and over, and told it to the quick, by deceitful friends, by self-seeking friends, by mutable, erroneous, deceived, scandalous, back-sliding friends, by proud and selfconceited friends; by passionate, quarrellsome, vexatious friends, by self-grieving troubled friends that have but brought me all their calamities and griefs to be additions to my own; by tempting friends, that have drawn me to sin more effectually than enemies; by tender, faithful, but unable friends, that have but fetcht fire from my calamities and sorrows to kindle their own, not equally sharing, but each one taking all my trouble entirely to himself: that have been *willing*, but *insufficient* to relieve me; and therefore the greater was their Love, the greater was their *own*, and consequently *mine* affliction: that would have been with me, but could not; that would fain have eased my pain, and strengthened my languishing body, but could not; that would fain have removed all my troubles, and comforted my cast-down mind, but could not. O how often have I found that humane friendship is a sweet desired addition to our woe; a beloved calamity, and an affliction which nature will not be without, not because it *loveth evil*, nor because it is *wholly deceived* in its choice (for there is *Good* in friendship, and *delight* in holy Love) but because the *Good* which is here accompanied with so *much evil*, is the beginning of a more high and durable friendship, and pointeth us up to the blessed delightful society and converse which in the heavenly *Jerusalem* we shall have with Christ!

But O how much better have I found the friendship of the Allsufficient God! His Love hath not only *pittied me*, but *relieved me*: He hath not only been as it were *afflicted with me* in my afflictions, but he hath delivered me seasonably, and powerfully, and sweetly hath he delivered me: And when he had once told me that *my afflictions were his own*, I had no reason to doubt of a deliverance. My burdened mind hath
been

been eased by his Love, which was but more burdened by the fruitless Love of all my friends. Oft have I come to man for help, and ease, and comfort, and gone away as from an empty Cistern, that had no water to cool my thirst; but God hath been a present help: Could I but *get near him*, I was sure of Light, how great soever was my former darkness: Could I but *get near him*, I was sure of warming quickning Life, how dead soever I had been before: But all my misery was that I could not *get near him*! My darkened estranged guilty soul, could not get quieting and satisfying acquaintance: My lumpish heart lay dead on earth, and would not stir, or quickly fell down again, if by any celestial force it began to be drawn up, and move a little towards him: My carnal mind was entangled in diverting vanities: And thus I have been kept from communion with my God. Kept! not by force or humane tyranny; not by bars or bolts, or distance of a place, or by the lowness of my condition; nor by any misrepresentations or reproach of man; but, alas, by my self, by the darkness and deadness, and sluggishness, and earthliness, and fleshliness, and passions of a naughty heart. These have been my bars, and bolts, and jaylors; These are they that have kept me from my God: Had it not been for these I might have got *nearer* to him; I might have walkt with him, and dwelt with him; yea *dwelt in him, and he in me*: and then I should not have mist any friends, nor felt mine enemies: And is it my sinful distance from my God that hath been my loss, my wilderness, my woe! And is it a nearer admittance to the presence of his Love that must be my recovery and my joy, if ever I attain to joy! O then my soul, lay hold on Christ the Reconciler, and in him and by him draw near to God: and cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils: Love God in his Saints, and delightfully converse with Christ in them, while thou hast opportunity. But remember thou Lifest not upon them, or on their Love, but upon God: and therefore desire *their Company* but for *His*: and if thou have *His*, be content if thou have not *theirs*. He wants not man that enjoyeth God. Gather up all the Love, and Thoughts, and Desires which have been scattered and lost upon the Creatures, and set them all on God himself, and press into his presence, and converse with him,

and thou shalt find the mistake of thy present discontents, and sweet experience shall tell thee thou hast made a happy change.

5. *If God be With me, I am not alone, because he is with me with whom my greatest business lyeth*: And what company should I desire, but theirs with whom I have my daily necessary work to do? I have more to do with God, than with all the world: Yea more and greater business with him in one day, than with all the world in all-my life. I have business with man about house, or lands, or food, or rayment, or labour, or journeying, or recreations, about society and publick peace: But what are these to my business with God! Indeed with holy men I have holy business; but that is but as they are Messengers from God, and come to me on his business, and so they must be dearly welcome: But even then my business is much more with God than with them; with him that sent them, then with the Messenger. Indeed my business with God is so great, that if I had not a Mediatour to encourage and assist me, to do my work and procure me acceptance, the thoughts of it would overwhelm my soul.

O therefore my soul, let man stand by: It is the Eternal God that I have to do with: and with whom I am to transact in this little time the business of my endless life. I have to deal with God through Christ, for the pardon of my sins, of all my great and grievous sins; and wo to me if I speed not that ever I was born: I have some hopes of pardon, but intermixt with many perplexing fears: I have evidences much blotted, and not easily understood: I want assurance that he is indeed my Father and reconciled to me, and will receive me to himself when the world forsaketh me: I have many languishing graces to be strengthened; and alas, what radicated, obstinate, vexatious corruptions to be cured! Can I look into my heart, into such an unbelieving, dead, and earthly heart, into such a proud, and peevish and disordered heart, into such a trembling, perplexed, self-accusing heart, and yet not understand how great my business is with God! Can I peruse my sins, or feel my wants, and sink under my weaknesses, and yet not discern how great my business is with God! Can I look back upon all the time that I have lost, and all the grace that I unthankfully resisted, and all the mercies that I trod under foot,

or fool'd away, and can I look before me and see how near my time is to an end, and yet not understand how great my business is with God! Can I think of the malice and diligence of Satan, the number, power and subtilty of mine enemies, the many snares and dangers that are still before me, the strength and number of temptations, and my ignorance, unwatchfulness and weakness to resist, and yet not know that my greatest business is with God! Can I feel my afflictions and lament them, and think my burden greater then I can bear, and find that man cannot relieve me; can I go mourning in the heavens of my soul, and water my bed with tears, and fill the air with my groans and lamentations, or feel my soul overwhelm'd within me, so that my words are intercepted, and I am readier to break then speak, and yet not perceive that my greatest business is with God? Can I think of dying? Can I draw near to judgement? Can I think of everlasting joyes in Heaven? and of everlasting pains in Hell, and yet not *feel* that my greatest business is with God? O then, my soul, the case is easily resolved, with whom it is that thou must most desirously and seriously converse. Where shouldst thou be but where thy business is, and so great business! Alas, what have I to do with man! what can it do but make my head ake, to hear a deal of senseless chat, about preferments, lands and dignities; about the words and thoughts of men, and a thousand toys that are utterly impertinent to my great employments, and signifie nothing but that the dreaming world is not awake! What pleasure is it to see the bustles of a Bedlam world? what a stir they make to *prove* or *make* themselves unhappy? How low and of how little weight, are the learned discourses about syllables and words, and names and notions, and mood and figure, yea or about the highest planets, when all are not referred unto God? Were it not that some converse with men, doth further my converse with God; and that God did transact much of his business by his messengers and servants, it were no matter whether ever I more saw the face of man: were it not that my Master hath placed me in society, and appointed me much of my *work* for others, and *with* others, and much of his *mercy* is conveyed by others, men might stand by, and solitude were better then the best society,

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and God alone should take me up. O nothing is so much my misery and shame, as that I am no more willing, nor better skilled in the management of my great important business! That my work is with God, and my heart is no more with him! O what might I do in holy meditation, or Prayer one hour, if I were as ready for prayer, and as good at prayer, as one that hath so long opportunity and so great necessity to converse with God, should be! A prayerless heart, a heart that flyeth away from God, is most unexcusable in such a one as I, that hath so much important business with him: It is work that must be done; and if well done, will never be repented of: I use not to return from the presence of God (when indeed I have drawn near him) as I do from the company of empty men, repenting that I have lost my time, and trembling that my mind is discomposed or depressed by the vanity and earthly favour of their discourse: I oft repent that I have prayed to him so *coldly*, and conversed with him so *negligently*, and served him so *remissly*; but I never repent of the *time*, the *care*, the *affections* or the *diligence* employed in his holy work. Many a time I have repented that ever I spent so much time with *man*, and wish I had never seen the faces of some that are eminent in the world, whose favour and converse others are ambitious of: But it is my grief and shame that so small a part of all my life, hath been spent with God; and that fervent prayer and heavenly contemplations, have been so seldom and so *short*. O that I had lived more with God, though I had been less with the dearest of my friends! How much more sweet then would my life have been! How much more blameless, regular and pure! How much more fruitful, and answerable to my obligations and professions! How much more comfortable to my review! How many falls, and hurts, and wounds, and griefs, and groans might I have escaped! O how much more pleasing is it *now* to my Rememberance, to think of the hours in which I have lain at the feet of God, though it were in tears and groans, than to think of the time which I have spent in any common converse with the greatest, or the learnedest, or the dearest of my acquaintance!

And as my *Greatest business* is with God, so my *daily business* is also with him: He purposely leaveth me under wants,
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and suffers necessities daily to return, and enemies to assault me, and affliction to surprize me, that I may be daily driven to him: He loveth to hear from me: He would have me be no stranger with him: I have business with him every hour, I need not want employment for all the faculties of my soul, if I know what it is to converse in Heaven. Even prayer, and every holy thought of God, hath an Object so great and excellent, as should wholly take me up. Nothing must be thought or spoken lightly about the Lord. His name must not be taken in vain: Nothing that is common beseemeth his worshippers. He will be sanctified of all that shall draw near him: He must be Loved with all the Heart and Might. His servants need not be wearied for want of employment, nor through the lightness or unprofitableness of their employment: If I had Cities to build, or Kingdoms to govern, I might better complain for want of employment for the faculties of my soul, than I can when I am to converse in Heaven. In other studies the delight abateth when I have reached my desire, and know all that I can know: But in God there is infinitely more to be known when I know the most. I am never *satiated* with the *easiness* of knowing, nor are my desires *abated* by any *unusefulness* or *unworthiness* in the Object; but I am drawn to it by its highest excellencies, and drawn on to desire more and more by the infiniteness of the Light which I have not yet beheld, and the infiniteness of the Good which yet I have not enjoyed. If I be idle, or seem to want employment, when I am to contemplate all the Attributes, relations, mercies, works, and revealed perfections of the Lord, its sure for want of eyes to see, or a Heart enclined to my business: if God be not enough to employ my soul, then all the persons and things on earth are not enough.

And when I have *Infinite Goodness* to delight in, where my soul may freely let out it self, and never need to fear excess of Love, how sweet should this employment be? As *Knowledge*, so *Love* is never stinted here, by the narrowness of the Object: We can never Love him in any proportion either to his Goodness and amiableness in himself, or to his Love to us. What need have I then of any other company or business, when I have infinite Goodness to delight in, and to Love (further than they

they subserve this greatest work?)

Come home then, O my soul, to God: converse in Heaven: Turn away thine eyes from beholding vanity: Let not thy affections kindle upon straw or bryars, that go out when they have made a flash or noise, and leave thee to thy cold and darkness: But come and dwell upon celestial beauties, and make it thy daily and most diligent work, to kindle thy affections on the infinite everlasting Good; and then they will never be extinguished or decay for want of fuel; but the further they go, and the longer they burn, the greater will be the flame. I though thou find it hard while Love is but a spark to make it burn, and complain that thy cold and backward heart is hardly warmed with the Love of God, yet when the whole pile hath taken fire, and the flame ascendeth, fire will breed fire, Love will cause Love; and all the malice of Hell it self shall never be able to suppress or quench it unto all eternity.

6. And it is a great encouragement to my converse with God, that no misunderstanding, no malice of enemies, no former sin or present frailty, no nor the infinite distance of the most Holy Glorious God, can hinder my access to him, or turn away his Ear or Love, or interrupt my leave and liberty of converse. If I converse with the poor, their wants afflict me, being greater than I can supply: Their complaints and expectations which I cannot satisfy, are my trouble. If I would converse with Great ones, it is not easie to get access: and less easie to have their favour, unless I would purchase it at too dear a rate: How strangely and contemptuously do they look at their inferiours! Great friends must be made for a word or smile: And if you be not quickly gone, they are weary of you: And if you seek any thing of them, or would put them to any cost or trouble, you are as welcome to them as so many vermine or noisome creatures. They please them best that drive you away. With how much labour and difficulty must you clime, if you will see the top of one of these mountains? And when you are there, you are but in a place of barrenness; and have nothing to satisfy you for your pains, but a larger prospect and vertiginous despect of the lower grounds which are not your own: it is seldome that these

these Great ones are to be spoken with: And perhaps their speech is but a denial of your requests, if not some snappish and contemptuous rejection, that makes you glad when you are got far enough from them, and makes you the better like and love the accessible, calm and fruitful plains.

But O how much greater encouragements hath my soul to converse with God! Company never hindereth him from hearkening to my suit: He is infinite and Omnipotent, and as sufficient for every individual soul, as if he had no other to look after in the world: when he is taken up with the attendance and praises of his Heavenly Host, he is as free and ready to attend and answer the groans and prayers of a contrite soul, as if he had no nobler creatures, nor no higher service to regard. I am oft unready, but God is never unready: I am unready to pray, but he is not unready to hear: I am unready to come to God, to walk with him, and to solace my soul with him; but he is never unready to entertain me. Many a time my conscience would have driven me away, when he hath called me to him; and rebuked my accusing fearful conscience. Many a time I have called my self a prodigal, a companion of Swine, a miserable hard-hearted sinner, unworthy to be called his Son, when he hath called me *Child*, and chid me for my questioning his Love. He hath readily forgiven the sins which I thought would have made my soul the fuel of Hell: He hath entertained me with joy, with musick and a feast, when I better deserved to have been among the Dogs without his doors. He hath embraced me in his sustaining consolatory arms, when he might have spurned my guilty soul to Hell, and said, Depart from me thou worker of iniquity, I know thee not. O little did I think that he could ever have forgotten the vanity and villany of my youth; yea so easily have forgotten my most aggravated sins. When I had sinned against light; when I had resisted conscience; when I had frequently and wilfully injured Love, I thought he would never have forgotten it: But the greatness of his Love and Mercy, and the blood and intercession of his Son, hath cancelled all. O how many mercies have I tasted since I thought I had sinned away all mercies! How patiently hath he born with me, since I thought he would never have put up more?

And yet besides my sins and the withdrawings of my own heart, there hath been nothing to interrupt our converse. Though he be God, and I a worm, yet that would not have kept me out: Though he be in Heaven, yet he is near to succour me on Earth, in all that I call upon him for: Though he have the Praise of Angels, he disdaineth not my tears and groans: Though he have the perfect Love of perfect souls, he knoweth the little spark in my breast, and despiseth not my weak and languid Love: Though I injure and dishonour him by Loving him no more; though I oft forget him, and have been out of the way when he hath come or called me; though I have disobediendly turned away mine ears, and unkindly refused the entertainments of his Love, and unfaithfully plaid with those whose company he forbade me, he hath not divorced me, nor turned me out of doors. O wonderful! that Heaven will be familiar with Earth! and God with man! the Highest with a worm! and the most Holy with an unconstant sinner! Man refuseth me, when God will entertaine me: Man, that is no wiser or better than my self. Those that I never wronged or deserved ill of, reject me with reproach: And God whom I have unspeakably injured doth invite me, and intreat me, and condescendeth to me, as if he were beholden to me to be saved: Men that I have deserved well of, do abhorre me: And God that I have deserved Hell of, doth accept me. The best of them are bryars, and as a thorny hedge, and he is Love, and Rest, and Joy: And yet I can be more welcome to him, though I have offended him, than I can to them whom I have obliged: I have freer leave to cast my self into my Fathers arms, than to tumble in those bryars, or wallow in the dirt. I upbraid my self with my sins, but he doth not upbraid me with them. I condemn my self for them, but he condemns me not: He forgiveth me sooner than I can forgive my self: I have peace with him, before I can have peace of conscience.

O therefore my soul, draw near to him that is so willing of thy company! That frowneth thee not away, unless it be when thou hast fallen into the dirt, that thou mayest wash thee from thy filthiness, and be fitter for his converse. Draw near to him that will not wrong thee, by believing misreports

of enemies, or laying to thy charge the things thou knewest not : but will forgive the wrongs thou hast done to him, and justifie thee from the sins that conscience layeth to thy charge. Come to him that by his Word and Spirit, his Ministers and Mercies calleth thee to come ; and hath promised that those that come to him he will in no wise shut out. O walk with him that will bear thee up, and lead thee as by the right hand (*Psal. 73. 23.*) and carry his Infants when they cannot go ! O speak to him that teacheth thee to speak, and understandeth and accepts thy stammering ; and helpeth thine infirmities when thou knowest not what to pray for as thou oughtest ; and giveth thee groans when thou hast not words, and knoweth the meaning of his Spirit in thy groans : that cannot be contained in the Heaven of Heavens, and yet hath respect to the contrite soul, that trembleth at his word, and feareth his displeasure : that pittieeth the tears, and despiseth not the sighing of a broken heart, nor the desires of the sorrowful. O walk with him that is never weary of the converse of an upright soul ! that is never angry with thee but for flying from him, or for drawing back, or being too strange, and refusing the kindness and felicity of his presence. The day is coming when the proudest of the sons of men would be glad of a good look from him that thou hast leave to walk with : Even they that would not look on thee, and they that injured and abused thee, and they that inferiours could have no access to, O how glad would they be then of a smile, or a word of hope and mercy from thy Father ! Draw near then to him, on whom the whole Creation doth depend ; whose favour at last the proudest and the worst would purchase with the loudest cries, when all their pomp and pleasure is gone, and can purchase nothing. O walk with him that is Love it self, and think him not unwilling or unlovely ; and let not the deceiver by hideous misrepresentations drive thee from him : when thou hast felt a while the storms abroad, methinks thou shouldest say, How good, how safe, how sweet is it to draw near to God !

1. *With whom should I so desirously converse, as with him Whom I must Live with for ever ?* If I take pleasure in my house, or land, or country, my walks, my books, or friends themselves as clothed with flesh, I must possess this pleasure

but a little while; Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: Had we known Christ himself after the flesh, we must know him so no more for ever. (Though his Glorified Spiritual Body we shall know.) Do you converse with Father or Mother? with Wives or Children? with Pastors and Teachers? Though you may converse with these as *Glorified Saints*, when you come to Christ, yet in *these Relations* that they stand in to you now, you shall converse with them but a little while: *For the Time is short: It remaineth that both they that have Wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoyce as though they rejoyced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it (or as though they used it not:)* for the fashion of this world doth pass away.]

1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31.

Why then should I so much regard, a converse of so short continuance? why should I be so familiar in my Inn, and so in love with that familiarity, as to grieve when I must but think of leaving it, or talk of going home, and look forward to the place where I must dwell for ever? Shall I be fond of the company of a passenger that I travel with (yea perhaps one that doth but meet me in the way, and goeth to a contrary place) and shall I not take more pleasure to remember home? I will not be so uncivil as to deny those I meet a short salute, or to be friendly with my fellow-travellers: But remember O my soul, that thou dost not *dwell* but *travel* here, and that it is thy Fathers house where thou must abide for ever: yea and he is nearer thee than man (though invisible) even in thy way. O see him then that is invisible: Harken to him when he speaketh: Obey his voice: Observe his way: Speak to him boldly, though humbly and reverently, as his child, about the great concernments of thy State: Tell him what it is that aileth thee: And seeing all thy smart is the fruit of thy own sin, confess thy folly and unkindness, crave his forgiveness, and remember him what his Son hath suffered, and for what: Treat with him about thy future course: Desire his Grace, and give up thy self to his conduct and his cure: Weep over in his ears the history of thy misdoings and unthankful course: Tell it him with penitential tears and
groans:

groans: But tell him also the advantage that he hath for the honouring of his grace, if it may now abound where sin aboundeth: Tell him that thou art most offended with thy self, for that which he is most offended with: That thou art angry with thy disobedient unthankful heart: that thou art even weary of that heart that loveth him no more: and that it shall never please thee, till it love him better and be more desirous to please him: Tell him of thy enemies, and crave the protection of his love: Tell him of thy frailties, infirmities and passions, and crave not only his tender forbearance, but his help: Tell him that without him thou canst do nothing; and crave the Grace that is sufficient for thee, that through him that strenghteneth thee thou maist do all things: when thou fallest, despair not, but crave his helping hand to raise thee. Speak to him especially of the everlasting things, and thank him for his Promises, and for thy hopes: for what thou shalt *be* and *have* and *do* among his *Holy Ones* for ever. Express thy joyes in the promise of those joyes; that thou must see his Glory, and love him and praise him better then thou canst now desire! Begin those praises, and as thou walkest with him, take pleasure in the mention of his perfections; be thankful to him and speak good of his Name: Solace thy self in remembring what a God, what a defence and portion all believers have: and in considering whither he is now conducting thee, and what he will do with thee, and what use he will make of thee for ever: Speak with Rejoycing of the glory of his works, and the righteousness of his judgements, and the holiness and evenness of his wayes: sing forth his praises with a joyful heart, and pleasant and triumphing voice; and frown away all slavish tears, all importune malicious suggestions or doubts, all peevish hurtfull nipping griefs, that would mar or interrupt the melody; and would untune or unstring a raised well composed soul. Thy Father loveth thy very moans and tears: but how much more doth he love thy Thanks and Praise? Or if indeed it be a winter time, a stormy day with thee, and he seem to chide or hide his face because thou hast offended him, let the cloud that is gathered by thy folly come down in tears, and tell him, Thou hast sinned against Heaven and before him, and art no more worthy

worthy to be called his Son; but yet fly not from him, but beg his pardon and the priviledges of a servant: And thou wilt find embracements, when thou fearest condemnation: and find that he is merciful and ready to forgive: Only return, and keep closer to him for the time to come. If the breach through thy neglect be gone so far, as that thou seemest to have lost thy God, and to be cast off, and left forsaken; despair not yet; for he doth but hide his face till thou repent: He doth not forsake thee, but only tell thee what it is to walk so carelessly as if thou wouldst forsake him: Thou art faster and surer in his Love and Covenant then thou canst believe or apprehend. Thy Lord was as dear as ever to his Father, when he cryed out, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me.* But yet neglect him not, and be not regardless of his withdrawings and of thy loss: Lift up thy voyce and cry but [*Father;*] in despite of unbelief, cry out [*My Father, my Saviour, my God*] and thou shalt hear him answer thee at last [*My Child:*] Cry out [*O why dost thou hide thy face? and why hast thou forsaken me! O what shall I do here without thee! O leave me not, lose me not in this howling wilderness! Let me not be a prey to any ravening beast! to my sin, to Satan, to my foes and thine!*] Lift up thy voyce and weep, and tell him, they are the tears and lamentations of *his Child*: O beg of him, that thy wanderings and childish folly, may not be taken as acts of enmity, or at least that they may be pardoned; and though he correct thee, that he will return and not forsake thee, but still take thee and use thee as his child. Or if thou hast not words to pour out before him, at least smite upon thy breast, and though thou be ashamed or afraid to look up toward heaven, look down and say, [*O Lord be merciful to me a sinner,*] and he will take it for an acceptable suit, that tendeth to thy pardon and justification, and will number such a sentence with the prayers which he cannot deny. Or if thou cry and canst not hear of him, and hast long called out upon thy *Fathers Name*, and hearest not his voyce and hast no return; enquire after him of those thou meetest: Ask for him of them that know him and are acquainted with his way! Make thy moan unto the watchmen; and ask them, where thou maist find thy Lord. And at last he will appear to thee, and find thee first
that

that thou maist find him, and shew thee where it was that thou didst lose him, by losing thy self and turning from him! seek him and thou shalt find him: wait and he will appear in kindness: For he never faileth or forsaketh those that wait upon him.

This kind of Converse, O my soul, thou hast to prosecute with thy God. Thou hast also the concernments of all *his servants*; his *afflicted ones*, his *broken hearted ones*, his *diseased ones*, his *persecuted ones*, to tell him of: Tell him also of the concernments of *his Kingdome*, the fury of his enemies, the dishonour they cast upon his Name, the matters of his Gospel, cause and interest in the world: But still let his Righteous Judgement be remembered, and all be terminated in the glorious everlasting Kingdom.

Is it not much better thus to converse with him that I must be with for ever, about the place, and the company, and work, and concernments of my perpetual abode, then to be taken up with strangers in my way, and detained by these impertinencies?

I have form'd my self so long in these meditations, that I will but name the rest and tell you what I had further to have treated on, and leave the enlargement to your own meditations.

8. I have no reason to be weary of converse with God, seeing *it is that for which all humane converse is regardable*. Converse with *man* is only so far desirable as it tendeth to our *Converse with God*: And therefore the *end* must be preferred before the *means*.

9. It is the *office of Christ*, and the *work of the Holy Ghost*, and the *use of all the means of Grace*, and of *all creatures, mercies and afflictions*, to reduce our straying souls to God, that we may converse with him and enjoy him.

10. *Converse with God is most suitable to those that are so near to death*; It best prepareth for it: It is likeliest to the work that we are next to do. We had rather when *death* comes, be found conversing with *God* than with *Man*: It is *God* that a dying man hath principally to do with: It is *his judgement* that he is going to; and *his mercy* that he hath to trust upon: And therefore it concerneth us to draw near him *now*, and

be no strangers to him, lest strangeness *then* should be our terror.

11. How wonderful a condescension is it that *God should be willing to converse with me!* with such a worm and sinful wretch: And therefore how unexcusable is my crime, if I refuse his company, and so great a mercy!

12. Lastly, Heaven it self is but our Converse with God and his Glorified ones, (though in a more perfect manner than we can here conceive.) And therefore our holy converse with him here is the state that is likest Heaven, and that prepareth for it, and all the Heaven that is on earth.

IT remaineth now that I briefly tell you, what you should do to attain and manage this Converse with God, in the improvement of your solitude. (For Directions in general for *Walking with God*, I reserve for another place.) At present let these few suffice.

Direct. 1. If you would comfortably Converse with God, *make sure that you are Reconciled to him in Christ, and that he is indeed your friend and Father.* Can two walk together except they be agreed? Can you take pleasure in dwelling with the consuming fire? or conversing with the most dreadful enemy? Yet this I must add, that every *doubting* or *self-accusing* soul may not find a pretence to fly from God. 1. That God ceaseth not to be a Father when ever a fearful soul is drawn to question it or deny it. 2. That in the Universal Love and Grace of God to miserable sinners, and in the universal act of conditional pardon and oblivion, and in the offers of Grace, and the readiness of God to receive the penitent, there is *Glad tidings* that should exceedingly rejoyce a sinner; and there is sufficient encouragement to draw the most guilty miserable sinner to seek to God, and sue for mercy. But yet the *sweetest converse* is for *children*, and for those that have *some assurance* that they are children.

But perhaps you will say, that *this is not easily attained: How shall we know that he is our friend?*

In brief, I answer, If you are *unfeignedly friends to God*, it is because he *first loved you.* Prefer him before all other friends,

friends, and all the wealth and vanity of the world; Provoke him not by wilfulness or neglect: use him as your best friend, and abuse him not by disobedience or ingratitude; own him before all, at the dearest rates, whenever you are called to it: Desire his presence: Lament his absence: Love him from the bottom of your hearts: Think not hardly of him: Suspect him not: Misunderstand him not: Hearken not to his enemies: Receive not any false reports against him: Take him to be really Better for you than all the world: Do these, and doubt not but you are friends with God, and God with you: In a word, *Be but heartily willing to be friends to God, and that God should be your chiefest friend, and you may be sure that it is so indeed, and that you are and have what you desire.* And then how delightfully may you converse with God!

Direct. 2. *Wholly depend on the Mediation of Christ, the great Reconciler: Without him there is no coming near to God: But in his Beloved you shall be accepted. Whatever fear of his displeasure shall surprize you, fly presently for safety unto Christ: Whatever guilt shall look you in the face, commit your self and cause to Christ, and desire him to answer for you: When the doors of mercy seem to be shut up against you, fly to him that bears the keys, and can at any time open to you and let you in: Desire him to answer for you to God, to your consciences, and against all accusers: By him alone you may boldly and comfortably converse with God: But God will not know you out of him.*

Direct. 3. *Take heed of bringing particular Guilt into the presence of God, if you would have sweet communion with him: Christ himself never reconciled God to sin: And the sinner and sin are so nearly related, that for all the death of Christ, you shall feel that iniquity dwelleth not with God, but he hateth the works of it, and the foolish shall not stand in his sight; and that if you will presume to sin because you are his Children, be sure your sin will find you out. O what fears, what shame, what self-abhorrence and self-revenge will guilt raise in a penitent soul, when it comes into the light of the presence of the Lord! it will unavoidably abate your boldness and your comforts: When you should be sweetly delighting in his plea-*

sed face, and promised Glory, you will be befooling your selves for your former sin, and ready even to tear your flesh, to think that ever you should do as you have done, and use him as you would not have used a common friend, and cast your selves upon his wrath. But an innocent soul, or pacified conscience, doth walk with God in quietness and delight, without those frowns and fears which are a taste of Hell to others.

Direct. 4. If you would comfortably converse with God, *be sure that you bring not Idols in your hearts: Take heed of inordinate affection to any Creature.* Let all things else be nothing to you, that you may have none to take up your thoughts but God. Let your *Minds* be further separate from them than your *Bodies*: Bring not into solitude or to contemplation, a proud, or lustful, or covetous mind: It much more concerneth thee, what *Heart* thou bringest, that what *Place* thou art in, or what *work* thou art upon. A mind that is drowned in ambition, sensuality or passion, will scarce find God any sooner in a wilderness than in a croud (unless he be there returning from those sins to God) whereever he seeth him, God will not own and be familiar with so foul a soul. *Seneca* could say [*Quid prodest totius regionis silentium, si affectus fremunt?*] *What good doth the silence of all the Country do thee, if thou have the noise of raging affections within?* And *Gregory* saith [*Qui corpore remotus vivit, &c.* He that in body is far enough from the tumult of humane conversation, is not in solitude, if he busie himself with earthly cogitations and desires: and he is not in the City that is not troubled with the tumult of worldly cares or fears, though he be pressed with the popular crouds.] Bring not thy house, or land, or credit, or carnal friend along with thee in thy heart, if thou desire and expect to walk in Heaven, and to converse with God.

Direct. 5. *Live still by Faith: Let Faith lay Heaven and Earth as it were together:* Look not at God as if he were far off: set him alwaies as before you, even as at your right hand, *Psal.* 16. 8. Be still with him when you awake, *Psal.* 139. 18. In the morning thank him for your rest; and deliver up your self to his conduct and service for that day. Go forth

as with him, and to do his work : Do every action, with the Command of God, and the Promise of Heaven before your eyes, and upon your hearts : Live as those that have incomparably more to do with *God* and *Heaven*, than with all this world; That you may say with *David*, Psal. 37. 25, 26. (as aforecited) *Whom have I in Heaven but thee! and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee :*] And with *Paul*, Phil. 1. 21. [*To me to Live is Christ, and to 'Dye is gain*] You must shut up the eye of sense (save as subordinate to Faith) and live by Faith upon a God, a Christ, and a World that is unseen, if you would know by experience what it is to be above the brutish life of sensualists, and to converse with God. O Christian, if thou hadst rightly learned this blessed life, what a high and noble soul-conversation wouldst thou have ! How easily wouldst thou spare, and how little wouldst thou miss the favour of the greatest, the presence of any worldly comfort ! City or Solitude would be much alike to thee, saving that the place and state would be best to thee, where thou hast the greatest help and freedom to converse with God. Thou wouldst say of humane society as *Seneca* [*Unus pro populo mihi est, & populus pro uno : Mihi satis est unus, satis est nullus*] [*One is instead of all the people to me, and the people as one : One is enough for me, and none is enough.*] Thus being taken up with God, thou mightest live in prison as at liberty, and in a wilderness as in a City, and in a place of banishment as in thy native Land : For the Earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof : and everywhere thou mayest find him, and converse with him, and lift up pure hands unto him : In every place thou art within the sight of home ; and Heaven is in thine eye, and thou art conversing with that God, in whose converse the highest Angels do place their highest felicity and delight.

How little cause then have all the Churches enemies to triumph, that can never shut up a true believer from the presence of his God ? nor banish him into such a place where he cannot have his conversation in Heaven ? The stones that were cast at holy *Stephen*, could not hinder him from seeing the Heavens opened, and Christ sitting at the right hand of God. A *Patmos* allowed holy *John* Communion with Christ, being there in the

Spirit on the Lords day, *Rev.* 1. 9, 10. Christ never so speedily and comfortably owneth his servants, as when the world disowneth them, and abuseth them for his sake, and hurls them up and down as the scorn and off-scouring of all. He quickly found the blind man that he had cured, when once the Jews had cast him out, *Joh.* 9. 35. Persecutors do but promote the blessedness and exceeding joy of sufferers for Christ, *Mat.* 5. 11, 12.

And how little Reason then have Christians, to shun such sufferings, by unlawful means, which turn to their so great advantage? and to give so dear as the hazard of their souls by wilful sin, to escape the honour, and safety, and commodity of Martyrdome?

And indeed we judge not, we Love not, we Live not as sanctified ones must do, if we *judge* not that the truest Liberty, and Love it not as the Best Condition, in which we may *Best* converse with God. And O how much harder is it to walk with God, in a Court, in the midst of sensual delights, than in a prison or wilderness where we have none to interrupt us, and nothing else to take us up? It is our prepossessed minds, our earthly hearts, our carnal affections and concupiscence, and the pleasures of a prosperous state that are the prison and the Jaylor of our souls. Were it not for these, how *free* should we be, though our bodies were confined to the straightest room! He is at Liberty that can walk in Heaven, and have access to God, and make use of all the Creatures in the world, to the promoting of this his Heavenly conversation. And he is the prisoner whose soul is chained to flesh and earth, and confined to his lands and houses, and feedeth on the dust of worldly riches, or walloweth in the dung and filth of gluttony, drunkenness and lust: that are far from God, and desire not to be near him; but say to him, Depart from us, we would not have the knowledge of thy waies: that Love their prison and chains so well, that they would not be set free, but hate those with the cruellest hatred that endeavour their deliverance. Those are the poor prisoners of Satan, that have not liberty to believe, nor to Love God, nor converse in Heaven, nor seriously to mind or seek the things that are high
and

and honourable : that have not liberty to meditate or pray, or seriously to speak of holy things, nor to love and converse with those that do so : that are tyed so hard to the drudgery of sin, that they have not liberty one month, or week, or day, to leave it, and walk with God so much as for a recreation ! But he that liveth in the family of God, and is employed in attending him, and doth converse with Christ, and the Host of Holy ones above, in reason should not much complain of his want of friends, or company or accommodations, nor yet be too impatient of any corporal confinement.

Lastly, be sure then most narrowly to watch your hearts, that nothing have entertainment there, which is against your Liberty of converse with God. Fill not those Hearts with worldly trash, which are made and new-made to be the dwelling place of God. Desire not the company which would diminish your heavenly acquaintance and correspondence. Be not unfriendly, nor conceited of a self-sufficiency; but yet beware lest under the honest ingenuous title of a friend, a special, faithful, prudent, faithful friend, you should entertain an Idol, or an enemy to your Love of God, or a corrival and competitor with your highest friend : For if you do, it is not the specious title of a friend that will save you from the thorns and bryars of disquietment, and from greater troubles than ever you found from open enemies.

O blessed be that High and everlasting friend, who is every way suited to the upright souls ! To their Minds, their Memories, their Delight, their Love, &c. by surest Truth, by fullest Goodness, by clearest Light, by dearest Love, by firmest Constancy, &c. — O why hath my drowsie and dark-sighted soul been so seldome with him ! why hath it so often, so strangely, and so unthankfully passed by, and not observed him, nor hearkened to his kindest calls ! O what is all this trash and trouble that hath filled my memory, and employed my mind, and cheated and corrupted my affections, while my dearest Lord hath been daies and nights so unworthily forgotten, so contemptuously neglected and disregarded, and loved as if I loved him
not !

not ! O that these *drowse* and those *waking* nights, those loitered, lost, and empty hours had been spent in the humblest converse with him, which have been dreamed and doted away upon — now I know not what ! O my God, how much wiser and happier had I been, had I rather chosen to mourn with thee, than to rejoyce and sport with any other ! O that I had rather wept with thee, than laughed with the creature ! For the time to come let that be my friend, that most befriendeth my dark, and dull, and backward soul, in its undertaken progress, and heavenly conversation ! Or if there be none such upon earth, let me here take no one for my friend ! O blot out every Name from my corrupted heart, which hindereth the deeper engraving of thy Name ! Ah Lord, what a stone, what a blind ungrateful thing, is a Heart not touched with celestial Love ! yet shall I not run to thee, when I have none else that will know me ! shall I not draw near thee, when all fly from me ! When daily experience cryeth out so loud [NONE BUT CHRIST: GOD OR NOTHING.] Ah foolish Heart, that hast thought of it [Where is that place, that Cave or Desert, where I might soonest find thee, and fullest enjoy thee ? is it in the wilderness that thou walkest, or in the croud : in the Closet, or in the Church ? where is it that I might soonest meet with God ?] But alas, I now perceive, that I have a *Heart* to find, before I am like to find my *Lord* ! O Loveless, Lifeless, stony heart ! that's dead to him that gave it Life ! and to none but him ! Could I not *Love*, or *Think*, or *Feel* at all, methinks I were less dead than now ? Less dead, if dead, than now I am alive ? I had almost said [Lord, let me never Love more till I can Love thee ? Nor think more on any thing till I can more willingly think of thee ?] But I must suppress that wish ; for *Life* will *act* : And the mercies and motions of *Nature* are *necessary* to those of *Grace*. And therefore in the life of *Nature*, and in the glimmerings of thy *Light*, I will wait for more of the *Celestial* life ! My God, thou hast my consent ! It is here attested under my hand : *Separate me from what and whom thou wilt so I may but be nearer thee !* Let me Love thee more, and feel more of thy

thy Love, and then let me Love or be beloved of the world, as little as thou wilt.

I thought *self-love* had been a more predominant thing : But now I find that Repentance hath its Anger, its Hatred and its Revenge ! I am truly Angry with that Heart that hath so oft and foolishly offended thee ! Methinks I *hate* that Heart that is so cold and backward in thy love , and almost grudge it a dwelling in my breast ! Alas when Love should be the life of Prayer, the life of holy meditation, the life of Sermons and of holy conference, and my soul in these should long to meet thee, and delight to mention thee , I straggle Lord, I know not whither ! or I sit still and wish, but do not rise and run and follow thee, yea I do not what I seem to do. All's dead, all's dead, for want of Love ! I often cry, O where is that place, where the quickening beams of Heaven are warmest, that my frozen soul might seek it out ! But whither ever I go, to City or to Solitude, alas, I find it is not *Place* that makes the difference. I know that Christ is perfectly replenished with Life and Light and Love Divine : And I hear him as our Head and Treasure proclaimed and offered to us in the Gospel ! This is thy Record, that he that hath the Son hath Life ! O why then is my barren soul so empty ! I thought I had long ago consented to thy offer ; and then according to thy Covenant, both He and Life in him are mine ! And yet must I still be dark and dead !

Ah dearest Lord, I say not that I have too long waited ! but if I *continue thus* to wait, wilt thou never find the time of Love ? and come and own thy gasping worm ? wilt thou never dissipate these clouds , and shine upon this dead and darkened soul ? Hath my Night no Day ? Thrust me not from thee O my God ! For that's a Hell, to be thrust from God. But sure the cause is all at home, could I find it out, or rather could I cure it ! It is sure *my* face that's turned from God, when I say, His face is turned from me. But if my Life must here be out of sight, and hidden in the Root (with Christ in God,) and if all the rest be reserved for that better world, and I must here have but these small beginnings, O make me

more to Love and long for the blessed day of thine appearing, and not to fear the time of my deliverance, nor unbelievably to linger in this *Sodom*, as one that had rather stay with sin, then come to thee! Though sin hath made me backward to the *fight*, let it not make me backward to receive the Crown; Though it hath made me a loiterer in thy work, let it not make me backward to receive that wages, which thy Love will give to our pardoned, poor, accepted services. Though I have too oft drawn back, when I should have come unto thee, and walked with thee in thy waies of Grace, yet heal that unbelief, and disaffection, which would make me to draw back, when thou callest me to possess thy Glory? Though the sickness and lameness of my soul have hindered me in my journey, yet let their painfulness help me to desire to be delivered from them and to be at home, where (without the interposing nights of thy displeasure) I shall fully feel thy fullest Love, and walk with thy Glorified ones in the Light of thy Glory, triumphing in thy Praise for evermore, *Amen.*

BUT now I have given you these few Directions for the *improvement of your solitude for converse with God*, lest I should occasion the hurt of those that are unfit for the Lesson I have given, I must conclude with this Caution (which I have formerly also published,) That it is not melancholly or weak-headed persons, who are not able to bear such exercises, for whom I have written these Directions. Those that are not able to be much in serious solitary thoughtfulness, without confusions and distracting suggestions, and hurrying vexatious thoughts, must set themselves for the most part to those duties which are to be done in company by the help of others; and must be very little in solitary duties: For to them whose natural faculties are so diseased or weak, it is *no duty*, as being *no means* to do them the desired good; but while they strive to do that which they

they are naturally unable to endure, they will but confound and distract themselves, and make themselves unable for those other duties which yet they are not utterly unfit for. To such persons therefore instead of ordered, well-digested Meditations, and much time spent in secret thoughtfulness, it must suffice that they be brief in secret Prayer, and take up with such occasional abrupter Meditations as they are capable of, and that they be the more in reading, hearing, conference, and praying and praising God with others: untill their melancholly distempers are so far overcome, as that (by the direction of their Spiritual Guides) they may judge themselves fit for this improvement of their Solitude.

FINIS.

1800
The following is a list of the names of the persons who were present at the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bank of the City of New York, held on the 15th day of January, 1800.

John Jay
John Adams
John B. Church
John C. Calhoun
John F. Kennedy
John H. Johnson
John L. King
John M. Mason
John N. Paine
John P. Quincy
John R. Smith
John T. Taylor
John W. Walker

1800

