

Concerning Religious Affections

Jonathan Edwards



CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS

CONCERNING RELIGIOUS AFFECTIONS

Jonathan Edwards



A free edition from

CHRISTIAN READER

A reading & audiobook app for classic Christian literature

ABOUT THIS BOOK



A landmark work of Puritan theology, this treatise investigates a vital question: **how can genuine spiritual experience be distinguished from mere enthusiasm or self-deception?** Writing amid the revivals of the Great Awakening, Edwards argues that **true religion consists largely in holy affections** — not empty emotions, but deep movements of the heart rooted in divine truth. He identifies twelve signs that neither confirm nor deny authentic faith, then presents twelve **distinguishing marks** of truly gracious affections. A penetrating guide to spiritual self-examination that remains deeply relevant today.



ABOUT CHRISTIAN READER



Christian Reader is a free reading and audiobook app for classic Christian literature, with high-quality narration available as a premium upgrade.

Available on iOS and Android.

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/christian-reader/id6755921023>

https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.samfrisch.christian_reader

CONTENTS



Title Page	5
The Preface	7
Part 1	23
Part 2	112
Part 3	278

TITLE PAGE



A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, in Three Parts;
Part 1. Concerning the nature of the **affections**, and their importance in **religion**.

Part 2. Showing what are **no certain signs** that **religious affections** are **gracious**, or that they are **not**.

Part 3. Showing what **are distinguishing signs** of truly gracious and **holy affections**.

By **Jonathan Edwards**, Master of Arts and Pastor of the **first Church in Northampton**.

Leviticus 9:24 and 10:1, 2. **And there came a fire out from before the Lord,—upon the altar;—which when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces. And Nadab and Abihu—offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not: And there went out a fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.**

Song of Solomon 2:12, 13. **The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land; the fig tree**

puts forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape, give a good smell. Verse 15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, which spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.

Boston: Printed for S. Kneeland and T. Green in **Queen Street**, over against the Prison. 1746.

A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, In Three Parts;

Part 1. Concerning the Nature of the **Affections**, and their Importance in **Religion**.

Part 2. Showing what are **no certain Signs** that **religious Affections** are **gracious**, or that they are **not**.

Part 3. Showing what **are distinguishing Signs** of truly gracious and **holy Affections**.

By **Jonathan Edwards**, Master of Arts And Pastor of the **First Church in Northampton**.

Leviticus 9 last verse and 10 1, 2.**And there came a Fire out from before the Lord,—upon the Altar;—which when all the People saw, they shouted and fell on their Faces. And Nadab and Abihu—offered strange Fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not: And there went out a Fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.**

Canticles 2 12, 13.**The Flowers appear on the Earth, the Time of the Singing of Birds is come, and the Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land; the Fig-tree putteth forth**

her green Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grape, give a good Smell. Verse 15. Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes, which spoil the Vines; for our Vines have tender Grapes.

BOSTON: Printed for S. Kneeland and T. Green in **Queen Street**, over against the Prison. 1746.

THE PREFACE



THE PREFACE.

There is no question whatsoever, that is of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in, than this, **What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favor with God, and entitled to his eternal rewards?** Or, which comes to the same thing, **What is the nature of true religion? And wherein do lie the distinguishing notes of that virtue and holiness, that is acceptable in the sight of God.** But though it be of such importance, and though we have clear and abundant light in the word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point, wherein professing Christians do more differ one from another. It would be endless to reckon up the variety of opinions in this point, that divide the Christian world; making manifest the truth of that of our Savior, **Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it.**

The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmost diligence and care, and exactness of search and inquiry, that I have been capable of: It is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I first

entered on the study of divinity. —But as to the success of my inquiries, it must be left to the judgment of the reader of the following treatise.

I am sensible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the subject of this discourse, in the midst of the dust and smoke of such a state of controversy, as this land is now in, about things of this nature: As it is more difficult to write impartially, so it is more difficult to read impartially. —Many will probably be hurt in their spirits, to find so much that appertains to religious affection, here condemned: And perhaps indignation and contempt will be excited in others, by finding so much here justified and approved. And it may be, some will be ready to charge me with inconsistency with myself, in so much approving some things, and so much condemning others; as I have found, this has always been objected to me by some, ever since the beginning of our late controversies about religion. It is a hard thing to be a hearty zealous friend of what has been **good** and glorious, in the late extraordinary appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and at the same time, to see the evil and pernicious tendency of what has been **bad**, and earnestly to oppose that. But yet, I am **humbly**, but **fully** persuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, nor go on in a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, until we do so. There is indeed something very mysterious in it, that so much good, and so much bad, should be mixed together in the **Church of God**: As it is a mysterious thing, and what has puzzled and amazed many a good Christian, that there should be that which is so divine and precious, as the saving grace of God, and the new and divine nature, dwelling in the same heart, with so much corruption, hypocrisy and iniquity, in a **par-**

ticular saint. Yet neither of these, is more mysterious than real. And neither of them is a new or rare thing. It is no new thing, that much false religion should prevail, at a time of great reviving of true religion; and that at such a time, multitudes of hypocrites should spring up among true saints. It was so in that great reformation, and revival of religion, that was in **Josiah's** time; as appears by **Jeremiah** 3:10 and 4:3, 4 and also by the great apostasy that there was in the land, so soon after his reign. So it was in that great outpouring of the Spirit upon the **Jews**, that was in the days of **John the Baptist**; as appears by the great apostasy of that people, so soon after so general an awakening, and the temporary religious comforts and joys of many; John 5:35. **Ye were willing, for a season, to rejoice in his light.** So it was in those great commotions that were among the multitude, occasioned by the preaching of Jesus Christ: **Of the many that were then called, but few were chosen**; of the multitude that were roused and affected by his preaching, and at one time or other appeared mightily engaged, full of admiration of Christ, and elevated with joy, but few were true disciples, that stood the shock of the great trials that came afterwards, and endured to the end: Many were like the stony ground, or thorny ground; and but few, comparatively, like the good ground: Of the whole heap that was gathered, great part was chaff, that the wind afterwards drove away; and the heap of wheat that was left, was comparatively small; as appears abundantly, by the history of the New Testament. So it was in that great outpouring of the Spirit that was in the Apostle's days; as appears by **Matthew** 24:10, 11, 12, 13. **Galatians** 3:1 and 4:11, 15. **Philippians** 2:21 and 3:18, 19. And the two Epistles to the **Corinthians**, and many other parts of the New Testament. And

so it was in the great **Reformation** from Popery. —It appears plainly to have been in the visible Church of God, in times of great reviving of religion, from time to time, as it is with the fruit trees in the spring; there are a multitude of blossoms; all which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promising appearance of young fruits; but many of them are but of short continuance, they soon fall off, and never come to maturity.

Not that it is to be supposed that it will always be so. For though there never will, in this world, be an entire purity; either in particular saints, in a perfect freedom from mixtures of corruption; or in the Church of God, without any mixture of hypocrites with saints, and counterfeit religion, and false appearances of grace, with true religion and real holiness: Yet, it is evident, that there will come a time of much greater purity in the Church of God, than has been in ages past: it is plain by those texts of Scripture. **Isaiah** 52:1. **Ezekiel** 44:6, 7, 9. **Joel** 3:17. **Zechariah** 14:21. **Psalms** 69:32, 35, 36. **Isaiah** 35:8, 10. **Chapter** 4:3, 4. **Ezekiel** 20:38. **Psalms** 37:9, 10, 11, 29. And one great reason of it will be, that at that time, God will give much greater light to his people, to distinguish between true religion and its counterfeits; Malachi 3:3. **And he shall sit as a refiner, and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver; that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness.** With Verse 18, which is a continuation of the prophecy of the same happy times, **then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.**

It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ, all along, hitherto. It is plainly by this means, principally, that he has prevailed against all revivings of religion, that ever have been, since the first founding of the Christian church. By this, he hurt the cause of Christianity, in, and after the apostolic age, much more than by all the persecutions of both **Jews** and heathens: The Apostles, in all their epistles, show themselves much more concerned at the former mischief, than the latter. By this, **Satan** prevailed against the Reformation, begun by **Luther**, **Zwingli**, and others, to put a stop to its progress, and bring it into disgrace; ten times more, than by all those bloody, cruel, and before, unheard-of persecutions of the Church of **Rome**. By this principally, has he prevailed against revivals of religion, that have been in our nation since the Reformation. By this he prevailed against **New England**, to quench the love, and spoil the joy of her espousals, about an hundred years ago. And I think, I have had opportunity enough to see plainly, that by this, the devil has prevailed against the late, great revival of religion in **New England**, so happy and promising in its beginning: Here most evidently has been the main advantage **Satan** has had against us; by this he has foiled us; It is by this means, that the daughter of Zion in this land, now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances, as we now behold her; with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in no wise able to arise; and this, so quickly after her late great joys and hopes. Lamentations 1:17. **Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: The Lord hath**

commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries shall be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them. I have observed the devil prevail the same way, against two great revivings of religion in this country. —**Satan** goes on with mankind, as he began with them: He prevailed against our first parents, and cast them out of **Paradise**, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy **Paradisaic** state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent, that beguiled **Eve** through his subtlety, by perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, hath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect, we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisaic state of the Church of God in **New England**.

After religion has revived in the Church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause, are commonly most exposed, where they are least sensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears openly before them, to make head against that, and do neglect carefully to look all round them, the devil comes behind them, and gives a fatal stab unseen; and has opportunity to give a more home stroke, and wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leisure, and according to his pleasure, being obstructed by no guard or resistance.

And so it is likely ever to be in the Church, whenever Religion revives remarkably, 'till we have learned well to distinguish between true and false Religion, between saving Affections and Experiences, and those manifold fair Shows, and glistening Appearances, by which they are counterfeited; the Consequences of which, when they are not distinguished, are often inexpressibly dreadful. **By this Means**, the Devil gratifies himself, by bringing

it to pass, that That should be offered to God, by Multitudes, under a Notion of a pleasing acceptable Sacrifice to him, that is indeed above all Things abominable to him. **By this Means**, he deceives great Multitudes about the State of their Souls; making them think they are something, when they are nothing; and so eternally undoes them. And not only so, but establishes many, in a strong Confidence of their eminent Holiness, who are in God's Sight, some of the vilest of Hypocrites. **By this Means**, he many Ways, damps and wounds Religion in the Hearts of the Saints, obscures and deforms it by corrupt Mixtures, causes their religious Affections woefully to degenerate, and sometimes for a considerable Time, to be like the **Manna**, that bred Worms and stank; and dreadfully ensnares and confounds the Minds of others of the Saints, and brings them into great Difficulties and Temptations, and entangles them in a Wilderness, out of which they can by no Means extricate themselves. **By this Means**, **Satan** mightily encourages the Hearts of open Enemies of Religion, and strengthens their Hands, and fills them with Weapons, and makes strong their Fortresses; when at the same Time, Religion and the Church of God he exposed to them, as a City without Walls. **By this Means**, he brings it to pass, that Men work Wickedness under a Notion of doing God Service, and so sin without Restraint, and with earnest Forwardness and Zeal, and with all their Might. **By this Means**, he brings in, even the Friends of Religion, insensibly to themselves, to do the Work of Enemies, by destroying Religion, in a far more effectual Manner, than open Enemies can do, under a Notion of advancing it. **By this Means** the Devil scatters the Flock of Christ, and sets them one against another, and that with great Heat of Spirit, under a Notion of Zeal for God; and Religion by

Degrees, degenerates into vain Jangling; and during the Strife, **Satan** leads both Parties far out of the right Way, driving each to great Extremes, one on the right Hand, and the other on the Left, according as he finds they are most inclined, or most easily moved and swayed, 'till the right Path in the Middle, is almost wholly neglected. And in the midst of this Confusion, the Devil has great Opportunity to advance his own Interest, and make it strong in Ways innumerable, and get the Government of all into his own Hands, and work his own Will. And by what is seen of the terrible Consequences of this counterfeit Religion, when not distinguished from true Religion, God's People in general have their Minds unhinged and unsettled, in Things of Religion, and know not where to set their Foot, or what to think or do; and many are brought into Doubts, whether there be any Thing at all in Religion; and Heresy, and Infidelity and Atheism greatly prevail.

Therefore, it greatly concerns us to use our utmost Endeavors, clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true Religion does consist. 'Till this be done, it may be expected that great Revivals of Religion, will be but of short Continuance. 'Till this be done, there is but little Good to be expected, of all our warm Debates, in Conversation and from the Press, not knowing clearly and distinctly, what we ought to contend for.

My Design is to contribute my Mite, and use my best (however feeble) Endeavors to this End, in the ensuing Treatise. Wherein it must be noted, that my Design is somewhat diverse from the Design of what I have formerly published, which was to show **the distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God**, including both his common, and saving Operations; but what I aim at now, is to show the Nature and Signs of the **gracious**

Operations of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all Things whatsoever that the Minds of Men are the Subjects of, which are not of a saving Nature. If I have succeeded in this my Aim, in any tolerable Measure, I hope it will tend to promote the Interest of Religion. And whether I have succeeded to bring any Light to this Subject, or not, and however my Attempt may be reproached, in these captious, censorious Times, I hope in the Mercy of a gracious and righteous God, for the Acceptance of the Sincerity of my Endeavors, and hope also, for the Candor and Prayers of the true Followers of the Meek and charitable Lamb of God.

THE PREFACE.

There is no question whatsoever, that is of greater importance to mankind, and that it more concerns every individual person to be well resolved in, than this, **What are the distinguishing qualifications of those that are in favor with God, and entitled to his eternal rewards?** Or, which comes to the same thing, **What is the nature of true religion? and wherein do lie the distinguishing notes of that virtue and holiness, that is acceptable in the sight of God.** But though it be of such importance, and though we have clear and abundant light in the Word of God to direct us in this matter, yet there is no one point, wherein professing Christians do more differ one from another. It would be endless to reckon up the variety of opinions in this point, that divide the Christian world; making manifest the truth of that of our Saviour, **Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leads to life, and few there be that find it.**

The consideration of these things has long engaged me to attend to this matter, with the utmost diligence and care, and exactness of search and inquiry, that I have been capable of: It is a subject on which my mind has been peculiarly intent, ever since I first entered on the study of divinity. But as to the success of my inquiries, it must be left to the judgment of the reader of the following treatise.

I am sensible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the subject of this discourse, in the midst of the dust and smoke of such a state of controversy, as this land is now in, about things of this nature: As it is more difficult to write impartially, so it is more difficult to read impartially. Many will probably be hurt in their spirits, to find so much that appertains to religious affection, here condemned: And perhaps indignation and contempt will be excited in others, by finding so much here justified and approved. And it may be, some will be ready to charge me with inconsistency with myself, in so much approving some things, and so much condemning others; as I have found, this has always been objected to me by some, ever since the beginning of our late controversies about religion. It is a hard thing to be a hearty zealous friend of what has been **good** and glorious, in the late extraordinary appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and at the same time, to see the evil and pernicious tendency of what has been **bad**, and earnestly to oppose that. But yet, I am **humbly**, but **fully** persuaded, we shall never be in the way of truth, nor go on in a way acceptable to God, and tending to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, till we do so. There is indeed something very mysterious in it, that so much good, and so much bad, should be mixed together in the **Church of God**: As it is a mysterious thing, and

what has puzzled and amazed many a good Christian, that there should be that which is so divine and precious, as the saving grace of God, and the new and divine nature, dwelling in the same heart, with so much corruption, hypocrisy and iniquity, in **a particular saint**. Yet neither of these, is more mysterious than real. And neither of them is a new or rare thing. It is no new thing, that much false religion should prevail, at a time of great reviving of true religion; and that at such a time, multitudes of hypocrites should spring up among true saints. It was so in that great reformation, and revival of religion, that was in **Josiah's** time; as appears by **Jeremiah** 3:10 and 4:3, 4, and also by the great apostasy that there was in the land, so soon after his reign. So it was in that great outpouring of the Spirit upon the **Jews**, that was in the days of **John the Baptist**; as appears by the great apostasy of that people, so soon after so general an awakening, and the temporary religious comforts and joys of many; John 5:35. **You were willing, for a season, to rejoice in his light**. So it was in those great commotions that were among the multitude, occasioned by the preaching of Jesus Christ: **Of the many that were then called, but few were chosen**; of the multitude that were roused and affected by his preaching, and at one time or other appeared mightily engaged, full of admiration of Christ, and elevated with joy, but few were true disciples, that stood the shock of the great trials that came afterwards, and endured to the end: Many were like the stony ground, or thorny ground; and but few, comparatively, like the good ground: Of the whole heap that was gathered, great part was chaff, that the wind afterwards drove away; and the heap of wheat that was left, was comparatively small; as appears abundantly, by the history of the New Testament. So it was in that great

outpouring of the Spirit that was in the apostle's days; as appears by **Matthew** 24:10, 11, 12, 13. **Galatians** 3:1 and 4:11, 15. **Philippians** 2:21 and 3:18, 19. And the two epistles to the **Corinthians**, and many other parts of the New Testament. And so it was in the great **Reformation** from popery. It appears plainly to have been in the visible church of God, in times of great reviving of religion, from time to time, as it is with the fruit trees in the spring; there are a multitude of blossoms; all which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promising appearance of young fruits; but many of them are but of short continuance, they soon fall off, and never come to maturity.

Not that it is to be supposed that it will always be so. For though there never will, in this world, be an entire purity; either in particular saints, in a perfect freedom from mixtures of corruption; or in the church of God, without any mixture of hypocrites with saints, and counterfeit religion, and false appearances of grace, with true religion and real holiness: Yet, it is evident, that there will come a time of much greater purity in the church of God, than has been in ages past: it is plain by those texts of Scripture. **Isaiah** 52:1. **Ezekiel** 44:6, 7, 9. **Joel** 3:17. **Zechariah** 14:21. **Psalms** 69:32, 35, 36. **Isaiah** 35:8, 10. **Chapter** 4:3, 4. **Ezekiel** 20:38. **Psalms** 3[reconstructed: 7]:9, 10, 11, 2[illegible]. And one great reason of it will be, that at that time, God will give much greater light to his people, to distinguish between true religion and its counterfeits; **Malachi** 3:3. **And he shall sit as a refiner, and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of** [reconstructed: Levi], **and purge** [reconstructed: them] **as gold and silver;** [reconstructed: that they] **may** [reconstructed: offer] **to the** [reconstructed: Lord] **an offering in righteousness.** With

verse 18, which is a continuation of the prophecy of the same happy times, **then shall you return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serves God, and him that serves him not.**

It is by the mixture of counterfeit religion with true, not discerned and distinguished, that the devil has had his greatest advantage against the cause and kingdom of Christ, all along, hitherto. It is plainly by this means, principally, that he has prevailed against all revivings of religion, that ever have been, since the first founding of the Christian church. By this, he hurt the cause of Christianity, in, and after the apostolic age, much more than by all the persecutions of both **Jews** and heathens: The apostles, in all their epistles, show themselves much more concerned at the former mischief, than the latter. By this, **Satan** prevailed against the Reformation, begun by **Luther, Zwingli**, and others, to put a stop to its progress, and bring it into disgrace; ten times more, than by all those bloody, cruel, and before, unheard of persecutions of the church of **Rome**. By this principally, has he prevailed against revivals of religion, that have been in our nation since the Reformation. By this he prevailed against **New England**, to quench the love, and spoil the joy of her espousals, about a hundred years ago. And I think, I have had opportunity enough to see plainly, that by this, the devil has prevailed against the late, great revival of religion in **New England**, so happy and promising in its beginning: Here most evidently has been the main advantage **Satan** has had against us; by this he has foiled us; it is by this means, that the daughter of Zion in this land, now lies on the ground, in such piteous circumstances, as we now behold her; with her garments rent, her face disfigured, her nakedness exposed, her

limbs broken, and weltering in the blood of her own wounds, and in no wise able to arise; and this, so quickly after her late great joys and hopes. Lamentations 1:17. Zion **[reconstructed: spreads] forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: The Lord has commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries shall be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them.** I have observed the devil prevail the same way, against two great revivings of religion in this country. **Satan** goes on with mankind, as he began with them: He prevailed against our first parents, and cast them out of **Paradise**, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy **paradisaic** state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent, that beguiled [reconstructed: Eve] through his subtlety, by perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, has suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect, we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisaic state of the church of God in **New England.**

After religion has revived in the church of God, and enemies appear, people that are engaged to defend its cause, are commonly most exposed, where they are least sensible of danger. While they are wholly intent upon the opposition that appears openly before them, to make head against that, and do neglect carefully to look all round them, the devil comes behind them, and gives a fatal stab unseen; and has opportunity to give a more home stroke, and wound the deeper, because he strikes at his leisure, and according to his pleasure, being obstructed by no guard or resistance.

And so it is likely ever to be in the church, whenever religion revives remarkably, until we have learned well to distinguish between true and false religion, between saving affections and experiences, and those manifold fair shows, and glistening appearances, by which they are counterfeited; the consequences of which, when they are not distinguished, are often inexpressibly dreadful. **By this means**, the Devil gratifies himself, by bringing it to pass, that that should be offered to God, by multitudes, under a notion of a pleasing acceptable sacrifice to him, that is indeed above all things abominable to him. **By this means**, he deceives great multitudes about the state of their souls; making them think they are something, when they are nothing; and so eternally undoes them: And not only so, but establishes many, in a strong confidence of their eminent holiness, who are in God's sight, some of the vilest of hypocrites. **By this means**, he many ways, damps and wounds religion in the hearts of the saints, obscures and deforms it by corrupt mixtures, causes their religious affections woefully to degenerate, and sometimes for a considerable time, to be like the **manna**, that bred worms and stank; and dreadfully ensnares and confounds the minds of others of the saints, and brings them into great difficulties and temptations, and entangles them in a wilderness, out of which they can by no means extricate themselves. **By this means**, **Satan** mightily encourages the hearts of open enemies of religion, and strengthens their hands, and fills them with weapons, and makes strong their fortresses; when at the same time, religion and the church of God he exposed to them, as a city without walls. **By this means**, he brings it to pass, that men work wickedness under a notion of doing God service, and so sin without restraints, and with earnest forwardness and zeal, and with all

their might. **By this means**, he brings in, even the friends of religion, insensibly to themselves, to do the work of enemies, by destroying religion, in a far more effectual manner, than open enemies can do, under a notion of advancing it. **By this means** the Devil scatters the flock of Christ, and sets them one against another, and that with great heat of spirit, under a notion of zeal for God; and religion by degrees, degenerates into vain jangling; and during the strife, **Satan** leads both parties far out of the right way, driving each to great extremes, one on the right hand, and the other on the left, according as he finds they are most inclined, or most easily moved and swayed, until the right path in the middle, is almost wholly neglected. And in the midst of this confusion, the Devil has great opportunity to advance his own interest, and make it strong in ways innumerable, and get the government of all into his own hands, and work his own will. And by what is seen of the terrible consequences of this counterfeit religion, when not distinguished from true religion, God's people in general have their minds unhinged and unsettled, in things of religion, and know not where to set their foot, or what to think or do; and many are brought into doubts, whether there be any thing at all in religion; and heresy, and infidelity and atheism greatly prevail.

Therefore, it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavors, clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist. Until this be done, it may be expected that great revivings of religion, will be but of short continuance. Until this be done, there is but little good to be expected, of all our warm debates, in conversation and from the press, not knowing clearly and distinctly, what we ought to contend for.

My design is to contribute my mite, and use my best (however feeble) endeavors to this end, in the ensuing treatise. Wherein it must be noted, that my design is somewhat diverse from the design of what I have formerly published, which was to show **the distinguishing marks of a work of the Spirit of God**, including both his common, and saving operations; but what I aim at now, is to show the nature and signs of the **gracious operations** of God's Spirit, by which they are to be distinguished from all things whatsoever that the minds of men are the subjects of, which are not of a saving nature. If I have succeeded in this my aim, in any tolerable measure, I hope it will tend to promote the interest of religion. And whether I have succeeded to bring any light to this subject, or no, and however my attempt may be reproached, in these captious, censorious times, I hope in the mercy of a gracious and righteous God, for the acceptance of the sincerity of my endeavors, and hope also, for the candor and prayers of the true followers of the meek and charitable Lamb of God.

PART 1



PART 1.

In these Words, the Apostle represents the State of the Minds of the Christians he wrote to, under the Persecutions they were then the Subjects of. These Persecutions are what he has Respect to, in the two preceding Verses, when he speaks of **the Trial of their Faith**, and of **their being in Heaviness through manifold Temptations**.

Such Trials are of threefold Benefit to true Religion: Hereby the Truth of it is manifested, and it appears to be indeed **true Religion**: They, above all other Things, have a Tendency to distinguish between true Religion and false, and to cause the Difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the Name of **Trials**, in the Verse next preceding the Text, and in innumerable other Places: They try the Faith and Religion of Professors, of what Sort it is, as apparent Gold is tried in the Fire, and manifested, whether it be true Gold or no. And the Faith of true Christians being thus tried and proved to be true, is **found to Praise, and Honour, and Glory**; as in that preceding Verse.

And then, These Trials are of further Benefit to true Religion; they not only manifest the **Truth** of it, but they make its genuine **Beauty** and **Amiability** remarkably to appear. True Virtue never appears so lovely, as when it is most oppressed: And the divine Excellency of real Christianity, is never exhibited with such Advantage, as when under the greatest Trials: Then it is that true Faith appears much more precious than Gold; and upon this Account, is **found to Praise, and Honour, and Glory.**

And again, Another Benefit that such Trials are of to true Religion, is, that they purify and increase it. They not only manifest it to be true, but also tend to refine it, and deliver it from those Mixtures of that which is false, which incumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They tend to cause the Amiability of true Religion to appear to the best Advantage, as was before observed; and not only so, but they tend to increase its Beauty, by establishing and confirming it, and making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from those Things that obscured its Lustre and Glory. As Gold that is tried in the Fire, is purged from its Alloy, and all Remainders of Dross, and comes forth more solid and beautiful; so true Faith being tried as Gold is tried in the Fire, becomes more precious; and thus also is **found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory.** The Apostle seems to have Respect to each of these Benefits, that Persecutions are of to true Religion, in the Verse preceding the Text.

And in the Text, the Apostle observes how true Religion operated in the Christians he wrote to, under their Persecutions, whereby these Benefits of Persecution appeared in them; or what manner of Operation of true Religion, in them, it was, whereby their Religion, under Persecution, was manifested to be **true**

Religion, and eminently appeared in the genuine **Beauty** and **Amiability** of true Religion, and also appeared to be **increased** and **purified**, and so was like to be **found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearing of Jesus Christ**. And there were two Kinds of Operation, or Exercise of true Religion, in them, under their Sufferings, that the Apostle takes Notice of in the Text, wherein these Benefits appeared.

1. **Love to Christ; Whom having not seen, ye love.** The World was ready to wonder, what strange Principle it was, that influenced them to expose themselves to so great Sufferings, to forsake the Things that were seen, and renounce all that was dear and pleasant, which was the Object of Sense: They seemed to the Men of the World about them, as though they were beside themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in their View, that could induce them thus to suffer, and support them under, and carry them through such Trials. But although there was nothing that was seen, nothing that the World saw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily Eyes, that thus influenced and supported them; yet they had a supernatural Principle of Love to something **unseen**; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually, whom the World saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily Eyes.

2. **Joy in Christ.** Though their outward Sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual Joys were greater than their Sufferings, and these supported them, and enabled them to suffer with Cheerfulness.

There are two Things which the Apostle takes Notice of in the Text concerning this Joy. 1. The Manner in which it rises, the Way in which Christ, though unseen, is the Foundation of it, **namely**

By Faith; which is the Evidence of Things not seen; **In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice** 2. The Nature of this Joy; **unspeakable, and full of Glory.** **Unspeakable** in the **Kind** of it; very different from worldly Joys, and carnal Delights; of a vastly more pure, sublime and heavenly Nature, being something supernatural, and truly divine, and so ineffably excellent; the Sublimity, and exquisite Sweetness of which, there were no Words to set forth. Unspeakable also in **Degree**; it pleasing God to give them this holy Joy, with a liberal Hand, and in large Measure, in their State of Persecution.

Their Joy was **full of Glory**: Although the Joy was unspeakable, and no Words were sufficient to describe it; yet something might be said of it, and no Words more fit to represent its Excellency, than these, that it was **full of Glory**; or, as it is in the Original, **glorified Joy**. In rejoicing with this Joy, their Minds were filled, as it were, with a glorious Brightness, and their Natures exalted and perfected: It was a most worthy, noble Rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debase the Mind, as many carnal Joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it: It was a Prelibation of the Joy of Heaven, that raised their Minds to a Degree of heavenly Blessedness: It filled their Minds with the Light of God's Glory, and made them themselves to shine with some Communication of that Glory.

Hence the Proposition or Doctrine, that I would raise from these Words is this,

DOCTRINE. True Religion, in great Part, consists in holy Affections.

We see that the Apostle, in observing and remarking the Operations and Exercises of Religion, in the Christians he wrote to, wherein their Religion appeared to be true and of the right Kind, when it had its greatest Trial of what Sort it was, being tried by Persecution as Gold is tried in the Fire, and when their Religion not only proved true, but was more pure, and cleansed from its Dross and Mixtures of that which was not true, and when Religion appeared in them most in its genuine Excellency and native Beauty, and was found to Praise, and Honour, and Glory; he singles out the religious Affections of **Love** and **Joy**, that were then in exercise in them: These are the Exercises of Religion he takes Notice of, wherein their Religion did thus appear true and pure, and in its proper Glory.

Here I would,

1. Show what is intended by the **Affections**,
2. Observe some Things which make it evident, that a great Part of true Religion lies in the Affections.

1. It may be inquired, what the Affections of the Mind are?

I answer, The Affections are no other, than the more vigorous and sensible Exercises of the Inclination and Will of the Soul.

God has endowed the Soul with two Faculties: One is that by which it is capable of Perception and Speculation, or by which it discerns and views and judges of Things; which is called the Understanding. The other Faculty is that by which the Soul does not merely perceive and view Things, but is some Way inclined with respect to the Things it views or considers; either is inclined **to them**, or is disinclined, and averse **from them**; or is the Faculty by which the Soul does not behold Things, as an indiffer-

ent unaffected Spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This Faculty is called by various Names: It is sometimes called the **Inclination**: And, as it has respect to the Actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the **Will**: And the Mind, with regard to the Exercises of this Faculty, is often called the **Heart**.

The Exercises of this Faculty are of two Sorts; either those by which the Soul is carried out towards the Things that are in view, in **approving** of them, being pleased with them, and inclined to them; or those in which the Soul opposes the Things that are in view, in **disapproving** them, and in being displeased with them, averse from them, and rejecting them.

And as the Exercises of the Inclination and Will of the Soul are various in their **Kinds**, so they are much more various in their **Degrees**. There are some Exercises of Pleasedness or Displeasedness, Inclination or Disinclination, wherein the Soul is carried but a little beyond a State of perfect Indifference. And there are other Degrees above this, wherein the Approbation or Dislike, Pleasedness or Aversion, are stronger; wherein we may rise higher and higher, until the Soul comes to act vigorously and sensibly, and the Actings of the Soul are with that Strength that (through the Laws of the Union which the Creator has fixed between Soul and Body) the Motion of the Blood and animal Spirits begins to be sensibly altered; whence oftentimes arises some bodily Sensation, especially about the Heart and Vitals, that are the Fountain of the Fluids of the Body: From whence it comes to pass, that the Mind, with regard to the Exercises of this Faculty, perhaps in all Nations

and Ages, is called **the Heart**. And it is to be noted, that they are these more vigorous and sensible Exercises of this Faculty, that are called the **Affections**.

The **Will**, and the **Affections** of the Soul, are not two Faculties; the Affections are not essentially distinct from the Will, nor do they differ from the mere Actings of the Will and Inclination of the Soul, but only in the Liveliness, and Sensibleness of Exercise.

It must be confessed, that Language is here somewhat imperfect, and the Meaning of Words in a considerable Measure loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by Custom, which governs the Use of Language. In some Sense, the Affection of the Soul differs nothing at all from the Will and Inclination, and the Will never is in any Exercise any further than it is **affected**; it is not moved out of a State of perfect Indifference, any otherwise than as it is **affected** one Way or other, and acts nothing voluntarily any further. But yet there are many Actings of the Will and Inclination, that are not so commonly called **Affections**: In every Thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an Exercise of the Will and Inclination, it is our Inclination that governs us in our Actions: But all the actings of the Inclination and Will, in all our common Actions of Life, are not ordinarily called Affections. Yet, what are commonly called Affections are not essentially different from them, but only in the Degree and Manner of Exercise. In every Act of the Will whatsoever, the Soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view: These are not essentially different from those Affections of **Love** and **Hatred**: That Liking or Inclination of the Soul to a Thing, if it be in a high Degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same Thing with the Affection of

Love: And that Disliking and Disinclining, if in a great Degree, is the very same with **Hatred**. In every Act of the Will **for**, or **to-wards** something not present, the Soul is in some Degree inclined to that Thing; and that Inclination, if in a considerable Degree, is the very same with the Affection of **Desire**. And in every Degree of the Act of the Will, wherein the Soul approves of something Present, there is a Degree of Pleasedness; and that Pleasedness, if it be in a considerable Degree, is the very same with the Affection of **Joy** or **Delight**. And if the Will disapproves of what is present, the Soul is in some Degree displeased, and if that Displeasedness be great, it is the very same with the Affection of **Grief** or **Sorrow**.

Such seems to be our Nature, and such the Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, that there never is in any Case whatsoever, any lively and vigorous Exercise of the Will or Inclination of the Soul, without some Effect upon the Body, in some Alteration of the Motion of its Fluids, and especially of the animal Spirits. And on the other Hand, from the same Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, the Constitution of the Body, and the Motion of its Fluids, may promote the Exercise of the Affections. But yet, it is not the Body, but the Mind only, that is the proper Seat of the Affections. The Body of Man is no more capable of being really the Subject of Love or Hatred, Joy or Sorrow, Fear or Hope, than the Body of a Tree, or than the same Body of Man is capable of thinking and understanding. As it is the Soul only that has Ideas, so it is the Soul only that is pleased or displeased with its Ideas. As it is the Soul only that thinks, so it is the Soul only that loves or hates, rejoices or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are these Motions of the animal Spirits, and Fluids of the Body, any thing properly belonging

to the Nature of the Affections; though they always accompany them, in the present State: but are only Effects or Concomitants of the Affections, that are entirely distinct from the Affections themselves, and no Way essential to them; so that an unbodied Spirit may be as capable of Love and Hatred, Joy or Sorrow, Hope or Fear, or other Affections, as one that is united to a Body.

The **Affections** and **Passions** are frequently spoken of as the same; and yet, in the more common Use of Speech, there is in some Respect a Difference. And **Affection** is a Word, that in its ordinary Signification, seems to be something more extensive than **Passion**; being used for all vigorous lively Actings of the Will or Inclination; but **Passion** for those that are more sudden, and whose Effects on the animal Spirits are more violent, and the Mind more overpowered, and less in its own Command.

As all the Exercises of the Inclination and Will, are either in approving and liking, or disapproving and rejecting; so the Affections are of two Sorts; they are those by which the Soul is carried out to what is in view, cleaving **to** it, or **seeking** it; or those by which it is averse **from** it, and **opposes** it.

Of the former Sort are **Love, Desire, Hope, Joy, Gratitude, Complacence**. Of the latter Kind, are **Hatred, Fear, Anger, Grief**, and such like; which it is needless now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some Affections wherein there is a Composition of each of the aforementioned Kinds of Actings of the Will; as in the Affection of **Pity**, there is something of the **former Kind**, towards the Person suffering, and something of the **Latter**, towards

what he suffers. And so in **Zeal**, there is in it high **Approbation** of some Person or Thing, together with vigorous **Opposition** to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

There are other mixed Affections that might be also mentioned, but I hasten to the

Second Thing proposed, Which was to observe some Things that render it evident, that true Religion, in great Part, consists in the Affections. And here,

1. What has been said of the Nature of the Affections, makes this evident, and may be sufficient, without adding any thing further, to put this Matter out of Doubt: For who will deny that true Religion consists, in a great Measure, in vigorous and lively Actings of the **Inclination** and **Will** of the Soul, or the fervent Exercises of the **Heart**.

That Religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull and lifeless Wouldings, raising us but a little above a State of Indifference. God, in his Word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good Earnest, **fervent in Spirit**, and our Hearts vigorously engaged in Religion: Romans 12:11. **Be ye fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord**. Deuteronomy 10:12. **And now Israel, What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his Ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul? And Chapter 6:4, 5. Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might**. It is such a fervent, vigorous Engagedness of the Heart in Religion, that is the Fruit of a real

Circumcision of the Heart, or true Regeneration, and that has the Promises of Life; Deuteronomy 30:6. **And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayest live.**

If we be not in good earnest in Religion, and our Wills and Inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The Things of Religion are so great, that there can be no Suitableness in the Exercises of our Hearts, to their Nature and Importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing, is Vigour in the Actings of our Inclinations so requisite, as in Religion; and in nothing is Lukewarmness so odious. True Religion is evermore a powerful Thing; and the Power of it appears, in the first Place, in the inward Exercises of it in the Heart, where is the principal and original Seat of it. Hence true Religion is called the **Power of Godliness**, in Distinction from the external Appearances of it, that are **the Form** of it, 2 Timothy 3:5. **Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it.** The Spirit of God, in those that have sound and solid Religion, is a Spirit of powerful holy Affection; and therefore, God is said **to have given them the Spirit of Power, and of Love, and of a sound Mind**, 2 Timothy 1:7. And such, when they receive the Spirit of God, in his sanctifying and saving Influences, are said to be **baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire**; by reason of the Power and Fervour of those Exercises the Spirit of God excites in their Hearts, whereby their Hearts, when Grace is in exercise, may be said to **burn within them**; as is said of the Disciples, Luke 24:32.

The Business of Religion is, from Time to Time, compared to those Exercises, wherein Men are wont to have their Hearts and Strength greatly exercised and engaged; such as Running, Wrestling or Agonizing for a great Prize or Crown, and Fighting with strong Enemies that seek our Lives, and Warring as those that by Violence take a City or Kingdom.

And though true Grace has various Degrees, and there are some that are but Babes in Christ, in whom the Exercise of the Inclination and Will towards divine and heavenly Things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the Power of Godliness in his Heart, has his Inclinations and Heart exercised towards God and divine Things, with such Strength and Vigour, that these holy Exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural Affections, and are effectual to overcome them: For every true Disciple of Christ, **loves him above Father or Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters, Houses and Lands; yea, than his own Life.** From hence it follows, that wherever true Religion is, there are vigorous Exercises of the Inclination and Will, towards divine Objects: But by what was said before, the vigorous, lively and sensible Exercises of the Will, are no other than the Affections of the Soul.

2. The Author of the human Nature has not only given Affections to Men, but has made them very much the Spring of Men's Actions. As the Affections do not only necessarily belong to the human Nature, but are a very great Part of it; so (inasmuch as by Regeneration, Persons are renewed in the whole Man, and sanctified throughout) holy Affections do not only necessarily belong to true Religion, but are a very great Part of that. And as true Religion is of a practical Nature, and God hath so constituted the

human Nature, that the Affections are very much the Spring of Men's Actions, this also shows, that true Religion must consist very much in the Affections.

Such is Man's Nature, that he is very inactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some Affection, either **Love** or **Hatred**, **Desire**, **Hope**, **Fear** or some other. These Affections we see to be the Springs that set Men going, in all the Affairs of Life, and engage them in all their Pursuits: These are the Things that put Men forward, and carry them along, in all their worldly Business; and especially are Men excited and animated by these, in all Affairs, wherein they are earnestly engaged, and which they pursue with Vigour. We see the World of Mankind to be exceeding busy and active; and the Affections of Men are the Springs of the Motion: Take away all **Love** and **Hatred**, all **Hope** and **Fear**, all **Life**, **Zeal** and affectionate **Desire**, and the World would be, in a great Measure, motionless and dead; there would be no such Thing as Activity amongst Mankind, or any earnest Pursuit whatsoever. It is Affection that engages the covetous Man, and him that is greedy of worldly Profits, in his Pursuits; and it is by the Affections, that the ambitious Man is put forward in his Pursuit of worldly Glory; and it is the Affections also that actuate the voluptuous Man, in his Pursuit of Pleasure and sensual Delights: The World continues, from Age to Age, in a continual Commotion and Agitation, in a Pursuit of these Things; but take away all Affection, and the Spring of all this Motion would be gone, and the Motion itself would cease. And as in worldly Things, worldly Affections are very much the Spring of Men's Motion and Action; so in religious Matters, the

Spring of their Actions are very much religious Affections: He that has doctrinal Knowledge and Speculation only, without Affection, never is engaged in the Business of Religion.

3. Nothing is more manifest **in Fact**, than that the Things of Religion take hold of Men's Souls, no further than they **affect** them. There are Multitudes that often hear the Word of God, and therein hear of those Things that are infinitely great and important, and that most nearly concern them, and all that is heard seems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no Alteration in their Disposition or Behaviour; and the Reason is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious Perfections of God, his almighty Power, and boundless Wisdom, his infinite Majesty, and that Holiness of God, by which he is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look on Iniquity, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight, and of God's infinite Goodness and Mercy, and hear of the great Works of God's Wisdom, Power and Goodness, wherein there appear the admirable Manifestations of these Perfections; they hear particularly of the unspeakable Love of God and Christ, and of the great Things that Christ has done and suffered, and of the great Things of another World, of eternal Misery, in bearing the Fierceness and Wrath of almighty God, and of endless Blessedness and Glory in the Presence of God, and the Enjoyment of his dear Love; they also hear the peremptory Commands of God, and his gracious Counsels and Warnings, and the sweet Invitations of the Gospel; I say, they often hear these Things, and yet remain as they were before, with no sensible Alteration on them, either in Heart or Practice, because they are not affected with what they hear; and never will be so until they are affected. I am bold to assert, that there never was

any considerable Change wrought in the Mind or Conversation of any one Person, by anything of a religious Nature, that ever he read, heard or saw, that had not his Affections moved. Never was a natural Man engaged earnestly to seek his Salvation: Never were any such brought to cry after Wisdom, and lift up their Voice for Understanding, and to wrestle with God in Prayer for Mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the Foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own Unworthiness and Deservings of God's Displeasure; nor was ever one induced to fly for Refuge unto Christ, while his Heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a Saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless Frame, or recovered from a declining State in Religion, and brought back from a lamentable Departure from God, without having his Heart affected. And in a Word, there never was any Thing considerable brought to pass in the Heart or Life of any Man living, by the Things of Religion, that had not his Heart deeply affected by those Things.

4. The holy Scriptures do everywhere place Religion very much in the affections; such as Fear, Hope, Love, Hatred, Desire, Joy, Sorrow, Gratitude, Compassion and Zeal.

The Scriptures place much of Religion in godly **Fear**; inso-much that it is often spoken of as the Character of those that are truly religious Persons, that **they tremble at God's Word**, that they **fear before him**, that **their Flesh trembles for Fear of him**, and that **they are afraid of his Judgments**, that **his Excellency makes them afraid**, and **his Dread falls upon them**; and the like: And a compellation commonly given the Saints in Scripture, is, **Fearers of God**, or **they that fear the Lord**. And because the Fear of God is a great Part of true

Godliness, hence true Godliness in general, is very commonly called by the Name of **the Fear of God**; as every one knows, that knows anything of the Bible.

So **Hope** in God and in the Promises of his Word, is often spoken of in the Scripture, as a very considerable Part of true Religion. 'Tis mentioned as one of the three great Things of which Religion consists, 1 Corinthians 13. 13. Hope in the Lord is also frequently mentioned as the Character of the Saints: Psalm 146. 5. **Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his Help, whose Hope is in the Lord his God.** Jeremiah 17. 7. **Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the Lord, whose Hope the Lord is.** Psalm 31. 24. **Be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen your Heart, all ye that Hope in the Lord.** And the like in many other Places. Religious Fear and Hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly constituting the Character of the true Saints. Psalm 33. 18. **Behold the Eye of the Lord is upon them that Fear him, upon them that Hope in his Mercy.** Psalm 147. 11. **The Lord taketh Pleasure in them that Fear him, in those that Hope in his Mercy.** Hope is so great a Part of true Religion, that the Apostle says we are **saved by Hope.** Romans 8. 24. And this is spoken of as the Helmet of the Christian Soldier. 1 Thessalonians 5. 8. **And for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation;** and the sure and steadfast Anchor of the Soul, which preserves it from being cast away by the Storms of the evil World, Hebrews 6. 19. **Which Hope we have as an Anchor of the Soul,** Benefit which true Saints receive by Faith.

The Scriptures place Religion very much in the Affection of Love, in Love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and Love to the People of God, and to Mankind. The Texts in which this is mani-

fest, both in the Old Testament, and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

The contrary Affection of **Hatred** also, as having Sin for its Object, is spoken of in Scripture, as no inconsiderable Part of true Religion. It is spoken of as that by which true Religion may be known and distinguished, Proverbs 8. 13. **The fear of the Lord is to hate Evil.** And accordingly the Saints are called upon to give Evidence of their Sincerity by this, Psalm 97. 10. **Ye that fear the Lord hate Evil.** And the Psalmist often mentions it as an Evidence of his Sincerity; Psalm 101. 2. 3. **I will walk within my House with a perfect Heart; I will set no wicked Thing before mine Eyes: I hate the Work of them that turn aside.** Psalm 119. 104. **I hate every false Way.** See Verse 128. Again Psalm 139. 21. **Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee.**

So holy **Desire**, exercised in Longings, Hungrings and Thirstings after God and Holiness, is often mentioned in Scripture as an important Part of true Religion; Isaiah 26. 8. **The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee.** Psalm 27. 4. **One Thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.** Psalm 42. 1, 2. **As the Heart 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?** Psalm 63. 1, 2. **My Soul thirsteth for thee; my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, to see thy Power and thy Glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary.** Psalm 84. 1, 2. **How amiable are thy**

Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord; my Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the living God. Psalm 119. 20. **My Soul breaketh for the Longing it hath unto thy Judgments, at all Times.** So Psalm 73. 25. and 143. 6. and 130. 6. Song of Solomon 3. 1, 2. and 6. 8. Such a holy Desire and Thirst of Soul is mentioned, as one of those great Things which renders or denotes a Man truly blessed, in the Beginning of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5. 6. **Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.** And this holy Thirst is spoken of, as a great Thing in the Condition of a Participation of the Blessings of eternal Life, Revelation 21. 6. **I will give unto him that is athirst, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely.**

The Scriptures speak of holy **Joy**, as a great Part of true Religion. So is it represented in the Text. And as an important Part of Religion, it is often exhorted to, and pressed, with great Earnestness; Psalm 37. 4. **Delight thy self in the Lord, and he shall give thee the Desires of thine Heart.** Psalm 97. 12. **Rejoice in the Lord, ye Righteous.** So Psalm 33. 1. **Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous.** Matthew 5. 12. **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.** Philippians 3. 1. **Finally Brethren, rejoice in the Lord.** And Chapter 4. 4. **Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.** 1 Thessalonians 5. 16. **Rejoice evermore.** Psalm 149. 2. **Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King.** This is mentioned among the principal Fruits of the Spirit of Grace, Galatians 5. 22. **The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, etc.** The Psalmist men-

tions his holy Joy, as an Evidence of his Sincerity, Psalm 119. 14. **I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all Riches.**

Religious **Sorrow**, Mourning, and Brokenness of Heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great Part of true Religion. These Things are often mentioned as distinguishing Qualities of the true Saints, and a great Part of their Character; Matthew 5. 4. **Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.** Psalm 34. 18. **The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit.** Isaiah 61. 1, 2. **The Lord hath anointed me to bind up the Broken-hearted, to comfort all that mourn.** This godly Sorrow, and Brokenness of Heart is often spoken of, not only, as a great Thing in the distinguishing Character of the Saints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; Psalm 51. 17. **The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.** Isaiah 57. 15. **Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy Place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones.** Chapter 66. 2. **To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit.**

Another Affection often mentioned, as that in the Exercise of which much of true Religion appears, is **Gratitude**; especially as exercised in Thankfulness and Praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the Book of Psalms, and other Parts of the holy Scriptures, I need not mention particular Texts.

Again, The holy Scriptures frequently speak of **Mercy**, as a very great and essential Thing in true Religion; insomuch that good Men are in Scripture denominated from it, and a merciful Man, and a good Man, are equivalent Terms in Scripture; Isaiah 57. 1. **The Righteous perisheth, and merciful Men are taken away.** And the Scripture speaks of this Quality, as that by which, in a peculiar Manner, a Man is distinguished; Psalm 37. 21. **The Righteous showeth Mercy, and giveth;** and Verse 26, **He is ever merciful, and lendeth.** Psalm 112. 4. **He is gracious, and full of Compassion, and Righteous.** Colossians 3. 12. **Put ye on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of Mercy,** etc. This is one of those great Things, by which those that are truly Blessed are described by our Saviour, Matthew 5. 7. **Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.** And this Christ speaks of, as one of the weightier Matters of the Law. Matthew 23. 23 **Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of Mint, and Anise, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.** To the like Purpose is that, Micah 6. 8. **He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good; And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love Mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?** And also that, Hosea 6. 6. **For I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice.** Which seems to have been a Text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his Manner of citing it once and again; Matthew 9. 13. and 12. 7.

Zeal is also spoken of, as a very essential Part of the Religion of true Saints. 'Tis spoken of as a great Thing Christ had in view, in giving himself for our Redemption; Titus 2. 14. **Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and**

purify with himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works. And this is spoken of, as the great Thing wanting in the luke-warm **Laodiceans**, Revelation 3. 15, 16, 19.

I have mentioned but a few Texts, out of an innumerable multitude, all over the Scripture, which place Religion very much in the Affections. But what has been observed, may be sufficient to show that they who would deny that much of true Religion lies in the Affections, and maintain the Contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other Rule, by which to judge of the Nature of Religion.

5. The Scriptures do represent true Religion, as being summarily comprehended in **Love**, the Chief of the Affections, and Fountain of all other Affections.

So our blessed Saviour represents the Matter, in answer to the Lawyer, who asked him, which was the great Commandment of the Law. Matthew 22. 37, 38, 39, 40. **Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.** Which words signify as much, as that those two Commandments comprehend the Duty prescribed, and the Religion taught in the Law and the Prophets. And the Apostle Paul does from Time to Time make the same Representation of the Matter; as in Romans 13. 8. **He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law.** So likewise in 1 Timothy 1. 5. **Now the End of the Commandment is Charity, of a pure Heart,** etc. So the same Apostle speaks of Love, as the greatest Thing in Religion, and as the Vitals, Essence and Soul of it; without which, the greatest Knowledge and Gifts, and the most glaring Profession, and every thing else which appertains to Religion, are vain and worthless; and represents it as the Fountain from whence

proceeds all that is good, in 1 Corinthians 13. throughout; for that which is there rendered **charity**, in the Original, is **Agape**, the proper English of which is **Love**.

Now although it be true, that the Love thus spoken of, includes the whole of a sincerely benevolent Propensity of the Soul, towards God and Man; yet it may be considered, that it is evident from what has been before observed, that this Propensity or Inclination of the Soul, when in sensible and vigorous Exercise, becomes **Affection**, and is no other than affectionate Love. And surely it is such vigorous and fervent Love which Christ speaks of, as the Sum of all Religion, when he speaks of Loving God with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Minds, and our Neighbour as ourselves, as the Sum of all that was taught and prescribed in the Law and the Prophets.

Indeed it cannot be supposed, when this affection of love is here, and in other scriptures, spoken of as the sum of all religion, that hereby is meant the act, exclusive of the habit, or that the exercise of the understanding is excluded, which is implied in all reasonable affection. But it is doubtless true, and evident from these scriptures, that the **Essence** of all true religion lies in holy love; and that in this divine affection, and an habitual disposition to it, and that light which is the foundation of it, and those things which are the fruits of it, consists the **Whole** of religion.

From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great part of true religion consists in the affections. For love is not only one of the affections, but it is the first and chief of the affections, and the fountain of all the affections. From **Love** arises **Hatred** of those things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppose and thwart us in those things that we delight in. And from the various

exercises of love and hatred, according to the circumstances of the objects of these affections, as present or absent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable [...] affections of **Desire**, [...] **Fear**, **Joy**, [...] **Gratitude**, [...] etcetera [...] a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent **Love to God**, [...] other **religious** affections: hence [...] **Fear of Sin**, [...] and joy in God when God is [...] and sensibly present, and **Grief** when he is absent, and a joyful [...] when a future enjoyment [of] God is expected, and fervent [...] for the glory of God. And in like manner, from a fervent **Love to Men**, will arise all other virtuous affections towards men.

6. The religion of the most eminent saints we have an account of in the scripture, consisted much in holy **Affections**.

I shall take particular notice of three eminent saints, who have expressed the frame and sentiments of their own hearts, and so described their own religion, and the manner of their intercourse with God, in the writings which they have left us, that are a part of the sacred canon.

The **first** instance I shall take notice of, is **David**, that **Man after God's own Heart**; who has given us a lively portraiture of his religion, in the Book of **Psalms**. Those holy songs of his, he has there left us, are nothing else but the expressions and breathings of devout and **holy Affections**; such as an humble and fervent **Love** to God, **Admiration** of his glorious perfections and wonderful works, earnest **Desires**, thirstings and pantings of soul after God, **Delight** and **Joy** in God, a sweet and melting **Gratitude** to God for his great goodness, an holy **Exultation** and triumph of soul in the favor, sufficiency and faithfulness of God, his **Love** to, and **Delight** in the saints, the excellent of the earth, his great **Delight** in the word and ordinance of God, his **Grief** for

his own and others sins, and his fervent **Zeal** for God, and against the enemies of God and his church. And these expressions of holy affection, which the Psalms of **David** are every where full of, are the more to our present purpose, because those Psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint that God speaks of as so agreeable to his mind; but were also, by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being fitted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the Psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that **David**, in the Book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the **Psalmist of Israel**, as the subordinate head of the church of God, and leader in their worship and praises; and in many of the Psalms, speaks in the name of Christ, as personating him in these breathings forth of holy affection, and in many other Psalms, he speaks in the name of the church.

Another instance I shall observe, is the Apostle [Paul] who was, in many respects, the chief of all the ministers of the New Testament; being above all others, a chosen [vessel] unto Christ, to bear his name before the [Gentiles], and made the chief instrument of propagating and establishing the [Christian] church in the world, and of distinctly revealing the glorious [mysteries] of the [Gospel] for the instruction of the church in all ages; and as has not been [im]probably thought by some the most eminent servant of [God] that ever lived, received to the highest rewards in the heavenly kingdom of his Master. By what is said of him in the scripture, he appears to have been a person that was full of affection. And [it is] very manifest that the religion he expresses in his [Epistles consists] very much in holy affections. It appears by all

his [writings that he] was, in the course of his life, [wholly] actuated and [swallowed] up, by a most [ardent] **Love** to his glorious Lord, esteeming all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of him, and esteeming them but dung that he might win him. He represents himself, as overpowered by this holy affection, and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his service, through all difficulties and sufferings, 2 [Corinthians] 5:14. And his epistles are full of expressions of an overflowing [affection] towards the people of Christ: He speaks of his **dear Love** to them, [2] **Corinthians** 12:15; **Philippians** 4:1, 2; [...] 1:2. Of his **abundant Love**, 2 Corinthians 2:4. And of his **affectionate and [tender] Love**, as of a Nurse towards her children, 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 8. [So] being affectionately [desirous] of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of [God only], but also [our own souls]. So also he speaks of his bowels of love, Philippians 1:8, Philemon verse 12 and 20. So he speaks of his [earnest] care for others, 2 **Corinthians** 8:16. And of his **Bowels of Pity** or **Mercy** towards them, **Philippians** 2:1. And of his concern for others, even to **Anguish of Heart**, 2 Corinthians 2:4. **For out of much Affection, and Anguish of Heart, I wrote unto you, with many Tears; not that you should be grieved; but that you might know the Love which I have more abundantly unto you.** He speaks of the **great [conflict]** of his soul for them, **Colossians** 2:1. He speaks of **great and [continual] Grief** that he had **in his Heart** from [love] to the **Jews**, Romans [9]:2. He speaks of **his Mouth's being opened, and his Heart enlarged** towards Christians, 2 Corinthians 6:11. **O you Corinthians, our Mouth is open unto you, our Heart is enlarged! He often speaks of his affectionate**

and longing Desires, **1 Thessalonians 2:8; Romans 1:11; Philippians 1:8; and chapter 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:4. The same Apostle is very often, in his epistles, expressing the affection of Joy, 2 Corinthians 1:12; and chapter 7:7; and verse 9 and 16; Philippians [1]:4; and chapter 2:1, 2; and chapter 3:3; Colossians 1:24; 1 Thessalonians 3:9. He speaks of his rejoicing with great Joy, Philippians 4:10; Philemon 1:7. Of his joying and rejoicing, Philippians 2:17. And of his rejoicing exceedingly, [2 Corinthians] 7:13. And of his being filled with Comfort, and [exceeding joyful]. He speaks of himself as always [rejoicing], 2 Corinthians [6:10]. So he speaks of the Triumphs of his Soul, 2 Corinthians 2:14. And of his glorying in [tribulations], 2 Thessalonians 1:4 and Romans 5:3. He also expresses the affection of Hope; in Philippians 1:20 he speaks of his [earnest expectation], and his Hope. He likewise expresses [an] affection of [Zeal], 2 Corinthians 11:2, 3. And it appears by [his whole life], after his conversion, in the [Acts of the Apostles], and also by all his [Epistles], and the accounts he gives of himself there, that the affection of [Zeal], as having the cause of his Master, and the interest and prosperity of his church, for its object, was mighty in [him], continually inflaming his heart, strongly engaging to those great and constant labors he went through, instructing, exhorting, warning and reproofing others, travelling in birth with them; contending with those powerful and innumerable enemies who continually opposed him, wrestling with principalities and powers, not [fighting] as one who beats the air, running the race set before him, continually pressing forwards through all**

manner of difficulties and sufferings: so that others thought him quite beside himself. And how full he was of affection, does further appear by his being so full of tears: In 2 Corinthians 2:4 he speaks of his [many] Tears, and to Acts 20:19. And of his Tears that he shed continually, Night and Day, verse 31.**

Now if any one can consider these accounts given in the scripture of this great Apostle, and which he gives of himself, and yet not see that his religion consisted much in affection, must have a strange faculty of managing his eyes, to shut out the light which shines most full in his face.

The other instance I shall mention, is of the Apostle **John**, that beloved disciple, who was the nearest and dearest to his Master of any of the twelve, and was by him admitted to the greatest privileges of any of them: Being not only one of the three who were admitted to be present with him in the mount at his transfiguration, and at the raising of **Jairus's** daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his agony, and one of the three spoken of by the Apostle **Paul**, as the three main pillars of the christian church; but was favored above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's bosom, at his last supper, and in being chosen by Christ, as the disciple to whom he would reveal his wonderful dispensation towards his church, to the end of time; as we have an account in the Book of **Revelation**: And to shut up the canon of the New Testament, and of the whole scripture; being preserved much longer than all the rest of the apostles, to set all things in order in the christian church, after their death.

It is evident by all his writings, (as is generally observed by divines) that he was a person remarkably full of affection: His addresses to those whom he wrote to, being inexpressibly tender and pathetical, breathing nothing but the most fervent love; as though he were all made up of sweet and holy affection. The proofs of which cannot be given without disadvantage, unless we should transcribe his whole writings.

7. He whom God sent into the World, to be the Light of the World, and Head of the whole Church, and the perfect Example of true Religion and Virtue, for the Imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole Flock should follow wherever he goes, even the Lord Jesus Christ, was a Person who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate Heart; and his Virtue was expressed very much in the Exercises of holy Affections. He was the greatest Instance of Ardency, Vigour and Strength of **Love**, to both God and Man, that ever was. It was these Affections which got the Victory, in that mighty Struggle and Conflict of his Affections, in his Agonies, when **he prayed more earnestly, and offered strong Crying and Tears**, and wrestled in Tears and in Blood. Such was the Power of the Exercises of his holy Love, that they were stronger than Death, and in that great Struggle, overcame those strong Exercises of the natural Affections of Fear and Grief, when he was sore amazed, and his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death. And he also appeared to be full of Affection, in the Course of his Life. We read of his great **Zeal**, fulfilling that in the sixty-ninth Psalm, **The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up**, John 2:17. We read of his **Grief** for the Sins of Men, Mark 3:5. **He looked round about on them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts**. And his breaking forth in

Tears and Exclamations, from the Consideration of the Sin and Misery of ungodly Men, and on the Sight of the City of **Jerusalem**, which was full of such Inhabitants, Luke 19:41, 42. **And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, If you had known, even you, at least in this your Day, the Things which belong unto your Peace! but now they are hidden from your Eyes.** With Chapter 13:34. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the Prophets, and stones them that are sent unto you, How often would I have gathered your Children together, as a Hen does gather her Brood under her Wings, and you would not!** We read of Christ's earnest **Desire**, Luke 22:15. **With Desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer.** We often read of the Affection of **Pity** or **Compassion** in Christ, **Matthew** 15:32 and 18:34; **Luke** 7:13; and of his **being moved with Compassion**, **Matthew** 9:36 and 14:14; and **Mark** 6:34. And how tender did his Heart appear to be, on occasion of **Mary's** and **Martha's** Mourning for their Brother, and coming to him with their Complaints and Tears: Their Tears soon drew Tears from his Eyes: He was affected with their Grief, and **wept** with them; though he knew their Sorrow should so soon be turned into Joy, by their Brother's being raised from the Dead; see **John** 11. And how ineffably affectionate was that last and dying Discourse, which Jesus had with his eleven Disciples the Evening before he was crucified? When he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great Difficulties and Sufferings they should meet with in the World, when he was gone; and comforted and counseled them, as his dear little Children, and bequeathed to them his holy Spirit, and therein his Peace, and his Comfort and

Joy, as it were in his last Will and Testament, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth Chapters of **John**; and concluded the Whole with that affectionate intercessory Prayer for them, and his whole Church, in Chapter 17. Of all the Discourses ever penned, or uttered by the Mouth of any Man, this seems to be the most affectionate, and affecting.

8. The Religion of Heaven consists very much in Affection.

There is doubtless true Religion in Heaven, and true Religion in its utmost Purity and Perfection. But according to the Scripture Representation of the heavenly State, the Religion of Heaven consists chiefly in holy and mighty **Love** and **Joy**, and the Expression of these in most fervent and exalted Praises. So that the Religion of the Saints in Heaven, consists in the same Things with that Religion of the Saints on Earth, which is spoken of in our Text, namely **Love**, and **Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory**. Now it would be very foolish to pretend, that because the Saints in Heaven are not united to Flesh and Blood, and have no animal Fluids to be moved, (through the Laws of Union of Soul and Body) with those great Emotions of their Souls, that therefore their exceeding Love and Joy are no Affections. We are not speaking of the Affections of the Body, but of the Affections of the Soul, the chief of which are **Love** and **Joy**. When these are in the Soul, whether that be in the Body or out of it, the Soul is affected and moved. And when they are in the Soul, in that Strength in which they are in the Saints in Heaven, the Soul is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the same Thing, has great Affections. 'Tis true, we do not experimentally know what Love and Joy are in a Soul out of a Body, or in a glorified Body; that is we have not had Experience of Love and Joy in a Soul in these Circumstances; but the Saints on

Earth do know what divine Love and Joy in the Soul are and they know what Love and Joy are of the same Kind, with the Love and Joy which are in Heaven, in separate Souls there. The Love and Joy of the Saints on Earth, is the Beginning and Dawning of the Light, Life, and Blessedness of Heaven, and is like their Love and Joy there; or rather, the same in Nature, though not the same with it, or like to it, in Degree and Circumstances. This is evident by many Scriptures, as **Proverbs** 4:18; **John** 4:14; and **Chapter** 6:40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 58; First **John** 3:15; First **Corinthians** 13:8, 9, 10, 11, 12. 'Tis unreasonable therefore to suppose, that the Love and Joy of the Saints in Heaven, not only differ in Degree and Circumstances, from the holy Love and Joy of the Saints on Earth, but is so entirely different in Nature, that they are no Affections; and merely because they have no Blood and animal Spirits to be set in Motion by them, which Motion of the Blood and animal Spirits is not of the Essence of these Affections, in Men on the Earth, but the Effect of them; although by their Reaction they may make some circumstantial Difference in the Sensation of the Mind. There is a Sensation of the Mind which loves and rejoices, that is antecedent to any Effects on the Fluids of the Body; and this Sensation of the Mind, therefore does not depend on these Motions in the Body, and so may be in the Soul without the Body. And wherever there are the Exercises of Love and Joy, there is that Sensation of the Mind, whether it be in the Body, or out; and that inward Sensation, or kind of spiritual Sense, or Feeling, and Motion of the Soul, is what is called Affection; The Soul when it thus feels, (if I may so say) and is thus moved, is said to be affected, and especially when this inward Sensation and Motion, are to a very high Degree, as they are in the Saints in Heaven. If we can

learn any thing of the State of Heaven from the Scripture, the Love and Joy that the Saints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impressing the Heart with the strongest and most lively Sensation, of inexpressible Sweetness, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like to a Flame of Fire. And if such Love and Joy are not Affections, then the Word **Affection** is of no Use in Language. Will any say, that the Saints in Heaven, in beholding the Face of their Father, and the Glory of their Redeemer, and contemplating his wonderful Works, and particularly his laying down his Life for them, have their Hearts nothing moved and affected, by all which they behold or consider?

Hence therefore the **Religion of Heaven**, consisting chiefly in holy Love and Joy, consists very much in Affection: And therefore undoubtedly, **true Religion** consists very much in Affection. The Way to learn the true Nature of any Thing, is to go where that Thing is to be found in its Purity and Perfection. If we would know the Nature of true Gold, we must view it, not in the Ore, but when it is refined. If we would learn what true Religion is, we must go where there is true Religion, and nothing but true Religion, and in its highest Perfection, without any Defect or Mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this World, they are Strangers here, and belong to Heaven; they are born from above, Heaven is their native Country, and the Nature which they receive by this heavenly Birth, is a heavenly Nature, they receive **an Anointing from Above**; that Principle of true Religion which is in them, is a Communication of the Religion of Heaven; their Grace is the Dawn of Glory; and God fits them for that World by conforming them to it.

9. This appears from the Nature and Design of the Ordinances and Duties, which God hath appointed, as Means and Expressions of true Religion.

To instance in the Duty of Prayer: 'Tis manifest, we are not appointed, in this Duty, to declare God's Perfections, his Majesty, Holiness, Goodness, and All-sufficiency, and our own Meanness, Emptiness, Dependence, and Unworthiness, and our Wants and Desires, to inform God of these Things, or to incline his Heart, and prevail with him to be willing to show us Mercy; but suitably to affect our own Hearts with the Things we express, and so to prepare us to receive the Blessings we ask. And such Gestures, and Manner of external Behaviour in the Worship of God, which Custom has made to be Significations of Humility and Reverence, can be of no further Use, than as they have some Tendency to affect our own Hearts, or the Hearts of others.

And the Duty of singing Praises to God, seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious Affections. No other Reason can be assigned, why we should express ourselves to God in Verse, rather than in Prose, and do it with Music, but only, that such is our Nature and Frame, that these Things have a Tendency to move our Affections.

The same thing appears in the Nature and Design of the Sacraments, which God hath appointed. God, considering our Frame, hath not only appointed that we should be told of the great Things of the Gospel, and of the Redemption of Christ, and instructed in them by his Word; but also that they should be, as it were, exhibited to our View, in sensible Representations, in the Sacraments, the more to affect us with them.

And the impressing divine Things on the Hearts and Affections of Men, is evidently one great and main End for which God has ordained, that his Word delivered in the holy Scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon Men, in Preaching. And therefore it does not answer the Aim which God had in this Institution, merely for Men to have good Commentaries and Expositions on the Scripture, and other good Books of Divinity; because, although these may tend, as well as Preaching, to give Men a good doctrinal or speculative Understanding of the Work of God, yet they have not an equal Tendency to impress them on Men's Hearts and Affections. God hath appointed a particular, and lively Application of his Word, to Men, in the Preaching of it, as a fit Means to affect Sinners, with the Importance of the Things of Religion, and their own Misery, and Necessity of a Remedy, and the Glory and Sufficiency of a Remedy provided; and to stir up the pure Minds of the Saints, and quicken their Affections, by often bringing the great Things of Religion to their Remembrance, and setting them before them in their proper Colours, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already; Second **Peter** 1:12, 13. And particularly, to promote those two Affections in them, which are spoken of in the Text, **Love** and **Joy: Christ gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, that the Body of Christ might be edified in Love**, Ephesians 4:11, 12, 16. The Apostle, in instructing and counselling **Timothy**, concerning the Work of the Ministry, informs him that the great End of that Word which a Minister is to preach, is **Love** or **Charity**, First Timothy 1:3, 4, 5. And another Affection which God has ap-

pointed Preaching as a Means to promote in the Saints, is **Joy**; and therefore Ministers are called **Helpers of their Joy**, Second Corinthians 1:24.

10. It is an evidence that true religion, or holiness of heart, lies very much in the affection of the heart, that the Scriptures place the sin of the heart very much in **hardness of heart**. Thus the Scriptures do everywhere. It was hardness of heart, which excited grief and displeasure in Christ towards the **Jews**, Mark 3:5. **He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.** It is from men's having such a heart as this, that they treasure up wrath for themselves. Romans 2:5. **After thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.** The reason given why the house of **Israel** would not obey God, was that they were hard-hearted, Ezekiel 3:7. **But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: For all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.** The wickedness of that perverse rebellious generation in the wilderness, is ascribed to the hardness of their hearts; Psalm 95:7-10, **Today, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness; when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work: Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said it is a people that do err in their heart,** etc. This is spoken of as what prevented **Zedekiah's** turning to the Lord, 2 Chronicles 36:13. **He stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart, from turning to the Lord God of Israel.** This principle is spoken of, as that from whence men are

without the fear of God, and depart from God's ways. Isaiah 63:17. **O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?** And men's rejecting Christ, and opposing Christianity, is laid to this principle; Acts 19:9. **But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude;** God's leaving men to the power of the sin and corruption of the heart, is often expressed by God's [hardening] their hearts; Romans 9:18. **Therefore hath he mercy [on whom] he will [have] mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.** John 12:40. **He hath [blinded] their mind, and hardened their hearts.** And the Apostle seems to speak of **an evil heart, that departs from the living God, and a hard heart,** as the same thing. Hebrews 3:8. **Harden not your heart, as in the provocation,** etc. Verse 12, 13. **Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.** And that great work of God in conversion, which consists in delivering a person from the power of sin, and mortifying corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's **taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh,** Ezekiel 11:10 and Chapter 36:26.

Now by a hard heart, is plainly meant an unaffected heart, or a heart not easy to be moved with virtuous affections, like a stone, insensible, stupid, unmoved and hard to be impressed. Hence the hard heart is called a **[stony] heart,** and is opposed to an **heart of flesh,** that has feeling, and is sensibly touched and moved. We read in Scripture of a **hard heart,** and a **tender heart:** And

doubtless we are to understand these, as contrary the one to the other. But what is a tender heart, but a heart which is easily impressed with what ought to affect it? God commends **Josiah**, because his heart was tender; and it is evident by those things which are mentioned as expressions and evidences of this tenderness of heart, that by his heart being tender is meant, his heart being easily moved with religious and pious affection; 2 Kings 22:19. **Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation, and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and hast wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord.** And this is one thing, wherein it is necessary we should **become as little children, in order to our entering into the kingdom of God**, even that we should have our hearts tender, and easily affected and moved in spiritual and divine things, as little children have in other things.

It is very plain in some places, in the texts themselves, that by hardness of heart is meant a heart void of affection. So to signify the **Ostrich's** being without natural affection to her young, it is said, Job 39:16. **She hardeneth her heart against her young ones, as though they were not hers.** So a person having a heart unaffected in time of danger, is expressed by his hardening his heart, Proverbs 28:14. **Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.**

Now therefore since it is so plain, that by a hard heart, in Scripture, is meant a heart destitute of pious affections, and since also the Scriptures do so frequently place the sin and corruption of the heart in hardness of heart; it is evident, that the grace and holiness of the heart, on the contrary, must, in a great measure, consist in its having pious affections, and being easily susceptible of such affection. Divines are generally agreed, that sin radically and fundamentally consists in what is negative, or privative, having its root and foundation in a privation or want of holiness. And therefore undoubtedly, if it be so that sin does very much consist in hardness of heart, and so in the want of pious affections of heart; holiness does consist very much **in those pious affections**.

I am far from supposing that all affections do show a tender heart: Hatred, anger, vain-glory, and other selfish and self-exalting affections, may greatly prevail in the hardest heart. But yet it is evident that **hardness of heart**, and **tenderness of heart**, are expressions that relate to the affections of the heart, and denote the heart's being susceptible of, or shut up against, **certain affections**, of which I shall have occasion to speak more afterwards.

Upon the whole, I think it clearly and abundantly evident, that true religion lies very much in the affections. Not that I think these arguments prove, that religion in the hearts of the truly godly, is ever in exact proportion to the degree of affection, and present emotion of the mind. For undoubtedly, there is much affection in the true saints which is not spiritual: Their religious affections are often mixed; all is not from grace, but much from nature. And though the affections have not their seat in the body, yet the constitution of the body, may very much contribute to the present emotion of the mind. And the degree of religion is rather to be

judged of by the fixedness and strength of the habit that is exercised in affection, whereby holy affection is habitual, than by the degree of the present exercise: And the strength of that habit is not always in proportion to outward effects and manifestations, or inward effects, in the hurry and vehemence, and sudden changes of the course of the thoughts of the mind. But yet it is evident, that religion consists so much in affection, as that without holy affection there is no true religion. And no light in the understanding is good, which does not produce holy affection in the heart; no habit or principle in the heart is good, which has no such exercise; and no external fruit is good, which does not proceed from such exercises.

Having thus considered the evidence of the proposition laid down, I proceed to some inferences.

1. We may hence learn how great their error is, who are for discarding all religious affections, as having nothing solid or substantial in them.

There seems to be too much of a disposition this way, prevailing in this land at this time. Because many who, in the late extraordinary season, appeared to have great religious affections, did not manifest a right temper of mind, and run into many errors, in the time of their affection, and the heat of their zeal; and because the high affections of many seem to be so soon come to nothing, and some who seemed to be mightily raised and swallowed with joy and zeal, for a while, seem to have returned like the dog to his vomit: Hence religious affections in general are grown out of credit, with great numbers, as though true religion did not at all consist in them. Thus we easily, and naturally run from one extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other extreme;

there was a prevalent disposition to look upon all high religious affections, as eminent exercises of true grace, without much inquiring into the nature and source of those affections, and the manner in which they arose: If persons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raised, so as to be full of religious talk, and express themselves with great warmth and earnestness, and to be **filled**, or to be **very full**, as the phrases were; it was too much the manner, without further examination, to conclude such persons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent experience of his gracious influences. This was the extreme which was prevailing three or four years ago. But of late, instead of **esteeming** and **admiring** all religious **affections**, **without distinction**, it is a thing much more prevalent, to **reject** and **discard** all **without distinction**. Herein appears the subtlety of **Satan**. While he saw that **affections** were much in vogue, knowing the greater part of the land were not versed in such things, and had not had much experience of great **religious affections**, to enable them to judge well of them, and distinguish between true and false; then he knew he could best play his game, by sowing tares amongst the wheat, and mingling **false affections** with the works of God's Spirit: He knew this to be a likely way to delude and eternally ruin many souls, and greatly to wound religion in the saints, and entangle them in a dreadful wilderness, and by and by, to bring all religion into disrepute. But now, when the ill consequences of these **false affections** appear, and it is become very apparent, that some of those emotions which made a glaring show, and were by many greatly admired, were in reality nothing; the Devil sees it to be for his interest to go another way to work, and to endeavour to his utmost to propagate and establish a persuasion, that all affections

and sensible emotions of the mind, in things of religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided, and carefully guarded against, as things of a pernicious tendency. This he knows is the way to bring all religion to a mere lifeless formality, and effectually shut out the power of godliness, and every thing which is spiritual, and to have all true Christianity turned out of doors. For although to true religion, there must indeed be something else besides affection; yet true religion consists so much in the affections, that there can be no true religion without them. He who has no religious affection, is in a state of spiritual death, and is wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening, saving influences of the Spirit of God upon his heart. As there is no true religion, where there is nothing else but affection; so there is no true religion where there is no **religious affection**. As on the one hand, there must be light in the understanding, as well as an **affected** fervent heart, where there is heat without light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that heart; so on the other hand, where there is a kind of light without heat, a head stored with notions and speculations, with a cold and unaffected heart, there can be nothing divine in that light, that knowledge is no true spiritual knowledge of divine things. If the great things of religion are rightly understood, they will affect the heart. The reason why men are not affected by such infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful things, as they often hear and read of, in the word of God, is undoubtedly because they are blind; if they were not so, it would be impossible, and utterly inconsistent with human nature, that their hearts should be otherwise, than strongly impressed, and greatly moved by such things.

This manner of slighting all religious **Affections**, is the way exceedingly to harden the hearts of men, and to encourage them in their stupidity and senselessness, and to keep them in a state of spiritual death as long as they live, and bring them at last to death eternal. The prevailing prejudice against **religious Affections** at this day, in the land, is apparently of awful effect, to harden the hearts of sinners, and damp the graces of many of the saints, and stunt the life and power of religion, and preclude the effect of ordinances, and hold us down in a state of dullness and apathy, and undoubtedly causes many persons greatly to offend God, in entertaining mean and low thoughts of the extraordinary work he has lately wrought in this land.

And for persons to despise and cry down all religious **Affections**, is the way to shut all religion out of their own hearts, and to make thorough work in ruining their souls.

They who condemn high affections in others, are certainly not likely to have high affections themselves. And let it be observed, that they who have but little religious affection, have certainly but little religion. And they who condemn others for their **religious Affections**, and have none themselves, have no religion.

There are false **Affections**, and there are true. A man's having **much Affection**, does not prove that he has any true religion: but if he has **no Affection**, it proves that he has no true religion. The right way, is not to reject all affections, nor to approve all; but to distinguish between affections, approving some, and rejecting others; separating between the wheat and the chaff, the gold and the dross, the precious and the vile.

Secondly, if it be so, that true religion lies much in the **Affections**, hence we may infer, that such means are to be desired, as have much of a tendency to move the affections. Such books, and such a way of preaching the word, and administration of ordinances, and such a way of worshipping God in prayer, and singing praises, is much to be desired, as has a tendency deeply to affect the hearts of those who attend these means.

Such a kind of means, would formerly have been highly approved of and applauded by the generality of the people of the land, as the most excellent and profitable, and having the greatest tendency to promote the ends of the means of grace. But the prevailing taste seems of late strangely to be altered: that pathetical manner of praying and preaching, which would formerly have been admired and approved, and that for this reason, because it had such a tendency to move the affections, now, in great multitudes, immediately excites disgust, and moves no other affections, than those of displeasure and contempt.

Perhaps, formerly the generality (at least of the common people) were in the extreme, of looking too much to an affectionate address, in public performances: but now, a very great part of the people, seem to have gone far into a contrary extreme. Indeed there may be such means, as may have a great tendency to stir up the passions of weak and ignorant persons, and yet have no great tendency to benefit their souls. For though they may have a tendency to excite affections, they may have little or none to excite gracious affections, or any affections tending to grace. But undoubtedly, if the things of religion, in the means used, are treated

according to their nature, and exhibited truly, so as tends to convey just apprehensions, and a right judgment of them; the more they have a tendency to move the affections, the better.

Thirdly, if true religion lies much in the affections, hence we may learn, what great cause we have to be ashamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great things of religion. It appears from what has been said, that this arises from our having so little true religion.

God has given to mankind affections, for the same purpose which he has given all the faculties and principles of the human soul for, **namely** that they might be subservient to man's chief end, and the great business for which God has created him, that is the business of religion. And yet how common is it among mankind, that their affections are much more exercised and engaged in other matters, than in religion! In things which concern men's worldly interest, their outward delights, their honour and reputation, and their natural relations, they have their desires eager, their appetites vehement, their love warm and affectionate, their zeal ardent; in these things their hearts are tender and sensible, easily moved, deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with grief at worldly losses, and highly raised with joy at worldly successes and prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most men, about the great things of another world! How dull are their affections! How heavy and hard their hearts in these matters! Here their love is cold, their desires languid, their zeal low, and their gratitude small. How they can sit and hear of the infinite height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God in Christ Jesus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a sacrifice for the

sins of men, and of the unparalleled love of the innocent, holy and tender Lamb of God, manifested in his dying agonies, his bloody sweat, his loud and bitter cries, and bleeding heart, and all this for enemies, to redeem them from deserved, eternal burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting joy and glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, insensible, and regardless! Where are the exercises of our affections proper, if not here? What is it that does more require them? And what can be a fit occasion of their lively and vigorous exercise, if not such an one as this? Can any thing be set in our view, greater and more important? Any thing more wonderful and surprising? Or more nearly concerning our interest? Can we suppose the wise Creator implanted such principles in the human nature as the affections, to be of use to us, and to be exercised on certain proper occasions, but to lie still on such an occasion as this? Can any Christian, who believes the truth of these things, entertain such thoughts?

If we ought ever to exercise our affections at all, and if the Creator has not unwisely constituted the human nature, in making these principles a part of it, when they are vain and useless; then they ought to be exercised about those objects which are most worthy of them. But is there any thing, which Christians can find in heaven or earth, so worthy to be the objects of their admiration and love, their earnest and longing desires, their hope, and their rejoicing, and their fervent zeal, as those things that are held forth to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ? In which, not only are things declared most worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the most affecting manner. The glory and beauty of the blessed Jehovah, which is most worthy in itself, to be the object of our admiration and love, is there exhibited in the most affecting manner

that can be conceived of, as it appears shining in all its lustre, in the face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compassionate, dying Redeemer. All the virtues of the Lamb of God, his humility, patience, meekness, submission, obedience, love and compassion, are exhibited to our view, in a manner the most tending to move our affections, of any that can be imagined; as they all had their greatest trial, and their highest exercise, and so their brightest manifestation, when he was in the most affecting circumstances; even when he was under his last sufferings, those unutterable and unparalleled sufferings, he endured, from his tender love and pity to us. There also, the hateful nature of our sins is manifested in the most affecting manner possible; as we see the dreadful effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to answer for us, suffered for them. And there we have the most affecting manifestations of God's hatred of sin, and his wrath and justice in punishing it; as we see his justice in the strictness and inflexibleness of it, and his wrath in its terribleness, in so dreadfully punishing our sins, in One who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us. So has God disposed things, in the affair of our redemption, and in his glorious dispensations, revealed to us in the gospel, as though every thing were purposely contrived in such a manner, as to have the greatest, possible tendency to reach our hearts in the most tender part, and move our affections most sensibly and strongly. How great cause have we therefore to be humbled to the dust, that we are no more affected!

PART 1.

In these words, the apostle represents the state of the minds of the Christians he wrote to, under the persecutions they were then the subjects of. These persecutions are what he has respect to, in the two preceding verses, when he speaks of **the trial of their faith**, and of **their being in heaviness through manifold temptations**.

Such trials are of threefold benefit to true religion: Hereby the truth of it is manifested, and it appears to be indeed **true religion**: They, above all other things, have a tendency to distinguish between true religion and false, and to cause the difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the name of **trials**, in the verse next preceding the text, and in innumerable other places: They try the faith and religion of professors, of what sort it is, as apparent gold is tried in the fire, and manifested, whether it be true gold or no. And the faith of true Christians being thus tried and proved to be true, is **found to praise, and honor, and glory**; as in that preceding verse.

And then, these trials are of further benefit to true religion; they not only manifest the **truth** of it, but they make its genuine **beauty** and **amiableness** remarkably to appear. True virtue never appears so lovely, as when it is most oppressed: And the divine excellency of real Christianity, is never exhibited with such advantage, as when under the greatest trials: Then it is that true faith appears much more precious than gold; and upon this account, is [reconstructed: found] **to praise, and honor, and glory**.

And again, another benefit that such trials are of to true religion, is, that they purify and increase it. They not only manifest it to be true, but also tend to refine it, and deliver it from those mix-

tures of that which is false, which encumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They tend to cause the amiableness of true religion to appear to the best advantage, as was before observed; and not only so, but they tend to increase its beauty, by establishing and confirming it, and making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from those things that obscured its luster and glory. As gold that is tried in the fire, is purged from its alloy, and all remainders of dross, and comes forth more solid and beautiful; so true faith being tried as gold is tried in the fire, becomes more precious; and thus also is **found unto praise, and honor, and glory**. The apostle seems to have respect to each of these benefits, that persecutions are of to true religion, in the verse preceding the text.

And in the text, the apostle observes how true religion operated in the Christians he wrote to, under their persecutions, whereby these benefits of persecution appeared in them; or what manner of operation of true religion, in them, it was, whereby their religion, under persecution, was manifested to be **true** religion, and eminently appeared in the genuine **beauty** and **amiableness** of true religion, and also appeared to be **increased** and **purified**, and so was like to be **found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ**. And there were two kinds of operation, or exercise of true religion, in them, under their sufferings, that the apostle takes notice of in the text, wherein these benefits appeared.

1. **Love to Christ; Whom having not seen, you love.** The world was ready to wonder, what strange principle it was, that influenced them to expose themselves to so great sufferings, to forsake the things that were seen, and renounce all that was dear and

pleasant, which was the object of sense: They seemed to the men of the world about them, as though they were beside themselves, and to act as though they hated themselves; there was nothing in their view, that could induce them thus to suffer, and support them under, and carry them through such trials. But although there was nothing that was seen, nothing that the world saw, or that the Christians themselves ever saw with their bodily eyes, that thus influenced and supported them; yet they had a supernatural principle of love to something **unseen**; they loved Jesus Christ, for they saw him spiritually, whom the world saw not, and whom they themselves had never seen with bodily eyes.

2. Joy in Christ. Though their outward sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward spiritual joys were greater than their sufferings, and these supported them, and enabled them to suffer with cheerfulness.

There are two things which the apostle takes notice of in the text concerning this joy. 1. The manner in which it rises, the way in which Christ, though unseen, is the foundation of it, namely, by faith; which is the evidence of things not seen; **In whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice.** 2. The nature of this joy; **unspeakable, and full of glory.** **Unspeakable** in the **kind** of it; very different from worldly joys, and carnal delights; of a vastly more pure, sublime and heavenly nature, being something supernatural, and truly divine, and so ineffably excellent; the sublimity, and exquisite sweetness of which, there were no words to set forth. **Unspeakable** also in **degree**; it pleasing God to give them this holy joy, with a liberal hand, and in large measure, in their state of persecution.

Their joy was **full of glory**: Although the joy was unspeakable, and no words were sufficient to describe it; yet something might be said of it, and no words more fit to represent its excellency, than these, that it was **full of glory**; or, as it is in the original, **glorified joy**. In rejoicing with this joy, their minds were filled, as it were, with a glorious brightness, and their natures exalted and perfected: It was a most worthy, noble rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debase the mind, as many carnal joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it: It was a prelibation of the joy of heaven, that raised their minds to a degree of heavenly blessedness: It filled their minds with the light of God's glory, and made them themselves to shine with some communication of that glory.

Hence the proposition or doctrine, that I would raise from these words is this,

DOCTRINE. True religion, in great part, consists in holy affections.

We see that the apostle, in observing and remarking the operations and exercises of religion, in the Christians he wrote to, wherein their religion appeared to be true and of the right kind, when it had its greatest trial of what sort it was, being tried by persecution as gold is tried in the fire, and when their religion not only proved true, but was more pure, and cleansed from its dross and mixtures of that which was not true, and when religion appeared in them most in its genuine excellency and native beauty, and was found to praise, and honor, and glory; he singles out the religious affections of **love** and **joy**, that were then in exercise in them: These are the exercises of religion he takes notice of, wherein their religion did thus appear true and pure, and in its proper glory.

Here I would,

1. Show what is intended by the **affections**,

2. Observe some things which make it evident, that a great part of true religion lies in the affections.

1. It may be inquired, what the affections of the mind are?

I answer, the affections are no other, than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul.

God has endued the soul with two faculties: One is that by which it is capable of perception and speculation, or by which it discerns and views and judges of things; which is called the understanding. The other faculty is that by which the soul does not merely perceive and view things, but is some way inclined with respect to the things it views or considers; either is inclined **to them**, or is disinclined, and averse **from them**; or is the faculty by which the soul does not behold things, as an indifferent unaffected spectator, but either as liking or disliking, pleased or displeased, approving or rejecting. This faculty is called by various names: It is sometimes called the **inclination**: And, as it has respect to the actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the **will**: And the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, is often called the **heart**.

The exercises of this faculty are of two sorts; either those by which the soul is carried out towards the things that are in view, in **approving** of them, being pleased with them, and inclined to them; or those in which the soul opposes the things that are in view, in **disapproving** them, and in being displeased with them, averse from them, and rejecting them.

And as the exercises of the inclination and will of the soul are various in their **kinds**, so they are much more various in their **degrees**. There are some exercises of pleasedness or displeasedness, inclination or disinclination, wherein the soul is carried but a little beyond a state of perfect indifference. And there are other degrees above this, wherein the approbation or dislike, pleasedness or aversion, are stronger; wherein we may rise higher and higher, till the soul comes to act vigorously and sensibly, and the actings of the soul are with that strength that (through the laws of the union which the Creator has fixed between soul and body) the motion of the blood and animal spirits begins to be sensibly altered; whence oftentimes arises some bodily sensation, especially about the heart and vitals, that are the fountain of the fluids of the body: From whence it comes to pass, that the mind, with regard to the exercises of this faculty, perhaps in all nations and ages, is called **the heart**. And it is to be noted, that they are these more vigorous and sensible exercises of this faculty, that are called the **affections**.

The **will**, and the **affections** of the soul, are not two faculties; the affections are not essentially distinct from the will, nor do they differ from the mere actings of the will and inclination of the soul, but only in the liveliness, and sensibleness of exercise.

It must be confessed, that language is here somewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words in a considerable measure loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by custom, which governs the use of language. In some sense, the affection of the soul differs nothing at all from the will and inclination, and the will never is in any exercise any further than it is **affected**; it is not moved out of a state of perfect indifference, any otherwise than as it is **affected** one way or other, and acts nothing voluntarily any further. But yet

there are many actings of the will and inclination, that are not so commonly called **affections**: In every thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an exercise of the will and inclination, it is our inclination that governs us in our actions: But all the actings of the inclination and will, in all our common actions of life, are not ordinarily called affections. Yet, what are commonly called affections are not essentially different from them, but only in the degree and manner of exercise. In every act of the will whatsoever, the soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view: These are not essentially different from those affections of **love** and **hatred**: That liking or inclination of the soul to a thing, if it be in a high degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same thing with the affection of **love**: And that disliking and disinclining, if in a great degree, is the very same with **hatred**. In every act of the will **for**, or **towards** something not present, the soul is in some degree inclined to that thing; and that inclination, if in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of **desire**. And in every degree of the act of the will, wherein the soul approves of something present, there is a degree of pleasedness; and that pleasedness, if it be in a considerable degree, is the very same with the affection of **joy** or **delight**. And if the will disapproves of what is present, the soul is in some degree displeased, and if that displeasedness be great, it is the very same with the affection of **grief** or **sorrow**.

Such seems to be our Nature, and such the Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, that there never is in any Case whatsoever, any lively and vigorous Exercise of the Will or Inclination of the Soul, without some Effect upon the Body, in some Alteration of the Motion of its Fluids, and especially of the animal Spirits. And on

the other Hand, from the same Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, the Constitution of the Body, and the Motion of its Fluids, may promote the Exercise of the Affections. But yet, it is not the Body, but the Mind only, that is the proper Seat of the Affections. The Body of Man is no more capable of being really the Subject of Love or Hatred, Joy or Sorrow, Fear or Hope, than the Body of a Tree, or than the same Body of Man is capable of thinking and understanding. As it is the Soul only that has Ideas, so it is the Soul only that is pleased or displeased with its Ideas. As it is the Soul only that thinks, so it is the Soul only that loves or hates, rejoices or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are these Motions of the animal Spirits, and Fluids of the Body, any thing properly belonging to the Nature of the Affections; though they always accompany them, in the present State: but are only Effects or Concomitants of the Affections, that are entirely distinct from the Affections themselves, and no Way essential to them; so that an unbodied Spirit may be as capable of Love and Hatred, Joy or Sorrow, Hope or Fear, or other Affections, as one that is united to a Body.

The **Affections** and **Passions** are frequently spoken of as the same; and yet, in the more common Use of Speech, there is in some Respect a Difference; and **Affection** is a Word, that in its ordinary Signification, seems to be something more extensive than **Passion**; being used for all vigorous lively Actings of the Will or Inclination; but **Passion** for those that are more sudden, and whose Effects on the animal Spirits are more violent, and the Mind more overpowered, and less in its own Command.

As all the Exercises of the Inclination and Will, are either in approving and liking, or disapproving and rejecting; so the Affections are of two Sorts. They are those by which the Soul is carried out to

what is in view, cleaving **to** it, or **seeking** it; or those by which it is averse **from** it, and **opposes** it.

Of the former Sort are **Love, Desire, Hope, Joy, Gratitude, Complacence**. Of the latter Kind, are **Hatred, Fear, Anger, Grief**, and such like; which it is needless now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some Affections wherein there is a Composition of each of the aforementioned Kinds of Actings of the Will; as in the Affection of **Pity**, there is something of the **former Kind**, towards the Person suffering, and something of the **Latter**; towards what he suffers. And so in **Zeal**, there is in it high **Approbation** of some Person or Thing, together with vigorous **Opposition** to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

There are other mixed Affections that might be also mentioned, but I hasten to the

2. Thing proposed, Which was to observe some Things that render it evident, that true Religion, in great Part, consists in the Affections. And here,

1. What has been said of the Nature of the Affections, makes this evident, and may be sufficient, without adding any thing further, to put this Matter out of Doubt: For who will deny that true Religion consists, in a great Measure, in vigorous and lively Actings of the **Inclination** and **Will** of the Soul, or the fervent Exercises of the **Heart**.

That Religion which God requires, and will accept, do not consist in weak, dull and lifeless Wouldings, raising us but a little above a State of Indifference. God, in his Word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good Earnest, **fervent in Spirit**, and our

Hearts vigorously engaged in Religion: Romans 12. 11. **Be ye fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.** Deuteronomy 10. 12. **And now Israel, What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his Ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul?** And Chapter 6. 4, 5. **Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might.** It is such a fervent, vigorous Engagedness of the Heart in Religion, that is the Fruit of a real Circumcision of the Heart, or true Regeneration, and that has the Promises of Life; Deuteronomy 30. 6. **And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayest live.**

If we be not in good earnest in Religion, and our Wills and Inclinations be not strongly exercised, we are nothing. The Things of Religion are so great, that there can be no Suitableness in the Exercises of our Hearts, to their Nature and Importance, unless they be lively and powerful. In nothing, is Vigour in the Actings of our Inclinations so requisite, as in Religion; and in nothing is Lukewarmness so odious. True Religion is evermore a powerful Thing; and the Power of it appears, in the first Place, in the inward Exercises of it in the Heart, where is the principal and original Seat of it. Hence true Religion is called the **Power of Godliness**, in Distinction from the external Appearances of it, that are **the Form** of it, 2 Timothy 3. 5. **Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it.** The Spirit of God, in those that have sound and solid Religion, is a Spirit of powerful holy Affection; and

therefore, God is said **to have given them the Spirit of Power, and of Love, and of a sound Mind**, 2 Timothy 1. 7. And such, when they receive the Spirit of God, in his sanctifying and saving Influences, are said to be **baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire**; by reason of the Power and Fervour of those Exercises the Spirit of God excites in their Hearts, whereby their Hearts, when Grace is in exercise, may be said to **burn within them**; as is said of the Disciples, **Luke 24. 32.**

The Business of Religion is, from Time to Time, compared to those Exercises, wherein Men are wont to have their Hearts and Strength greatly exercised and engaged; such as Running, Wrestling or Agonizing for a great Prize or Crown, and Fighting with strong Enemies that seek our Lives, and Warring as those that by Violence take a City or Kingdom.

And though true Grace has various Degrees, and there are some that are but Babes in Christ, in whom the Exercise of the Inclination and Will towards divine and heavenly Things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the Power of Godliness in his Heart, has his Inclinations and Heart exercised towards God and divine Things, with such Strength and Vigour, that these holy Exercises do prevail in him above all carnal or natural Affections, and are effectual to overcome them. For every true Disciple of Christ, **loves him above Father or Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Sisters, Houses and Lands; yea, than his own Life.** From hence it follows, that wherever true Religion is, there are vigorous Exercises of the Inclination and Will, towards divine Objects. But by what was said before, the vigorous, lively and sensible Exercises of the Will, are no other than the Affections of the Soul.

2. The Author of the human Nature has not only given Affections to Men, but has made them very much the Spring of Men's Actions. As the Affections do not only necessarily belong to the human Nature, but are a very great Part of it; so (inasmuch as by Regeneration, Persons are renewed in the whole Man, and sanctified throughout) holy Affections do not only necessarily belong to true Religion, but are a very great Part of that. And as true Religion is of a practical Nature, and God hath so constituted the human Nature, that the Affections are very much the Spring of Men's Actions, this also shows, that true Religion must consist very much in the Affections.

Such is Man's Nature, that he is very inactive, any otherwise than he is influenced by some Affection, either **Love** or **Hatred**, **Desire**, **Hope**, **Fear** or some other. These Affections we see to be the Springs that set Men a going, in all the Affairs of Life, and engage them in all their Pursuits. These are the Things that put Men forward, and carry them along, in all their worldly Business; and especially are Men excited and animated by these, in all Affairs, wherein they are earnestly engaged, and which they pursue with Vigour. We see the World of Mankind to be exceeding busy and active; and the Affections of Men are the Springs of the Motion. Take away all **Love** and **Hatred**, all **Hope** and **Fear**, all **Anger**, **Zeal** and affectionate **Desire**, and the World would be, in a great Measure, motionless and dead; there would be no such Thing as Activity amongst Mankind, or any earnest Pursuit whatsoever. It is Affection that engages the covetous Man, and him that is greedy of worldly Profits, in his Pursuits; and it is by the Affections, that the ambitious Man is put forward in his Pursuit of worldly Glory; and it is the Affections also that actuate the voluptuous Man, in his

Pursuit of Pleasure and sensual Delights. The World continues, from Age to Age, in a continual Commotion and Agitation, in a Pursuit of these Things; but take away all Affection, and the Spring of all this Motion would be gone, and the Motion itself would cease. And as in worldly Things, worldly Affections are very much the Spring of Men's Motion and Action; so in religious Matters, the Spring of their Actions are very much religious Affections. He that has doctrinal Knowledge and Speculation only, without Affection, never is engaged in the Business of Religion.

3. Nothing is more manifest **in Fact**, than that the Things of Religion take hold of Men's Souls, no further than they **affect** them. There are Multitudes that often hear the Word of God, and therein hear of those Things that are infinitely great and important, and that most nearly concern them, and all that is heard seems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no Alteration in their Disposition or Behavior; and the Reason is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious Perfections of God, his almighty Power, and boundless Wisdom, his infinite Majesty, and that Holiness of God, by which he is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look on Iniquity, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight, and of God's infinite Goodness and Mercy, and hear of the great Works of God's Wisdom, Power and Goodness, wherein there appear the admirable Manifestations of these Perfections; they hear particularly of the unspeakable Love of God and Christ, and of the great Things that Christ has done and suffered, and of the great Things of another World, of eternal Misery, in bearing the Fierceness and Wrath of almighty God, and of endless Blessedness and Glory in the Presence of God, and the Enjoyment of his dear Love; they also

hear the peremptory Commands of God, and his gracious Counsels and Warnings, and the sweet Invitations of the Gospel. I say, they often hear these Things, and yet remain as they were before, with no sensible Alteration on them, either in Heart or Practice, because they are not affected with what they hear; and never will be so until they are affected. I am bold to assert, that there never was any considerable Change wrought in the Mind or Conversation of any one Person, by anything of a religious Nature, that ever he read, heard or saw, that had not his Affections moved. Never was a natural Man engaged earnestly to seek his Salvation. Never were any such brought to cry after Wisdom, and lift up their Voice for Understanding, and to wrestle with God in Prayer for Mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the Foot of God, from any thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own Unworthiness and Deservings of God's Displeasure; nor was ever one induced to fly for Refuge unto Christ, while his Heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a Saint awakened out of a cold, lifeless Frame, or recovered from a declining State in Religion, and brought back from a lamentable Departure from God, without having his Heart affected. And in a Word, there never was any Thing considerable brought to pass in the Heart or Life of any Man living, by the Things of Religion, that had not his Heart deeply affected by those Things.

4. The holy Scriptures do everywhere place Religion very much in the Affections; such as Fear, Hope, Love, Hatred, Desire, Joy, Sorrow, Gratitude, Compassion and Zeal.

The Scriptures place much of Religion in godly **Fear**; inso-much that it is often spoken of as the Character of those that are truly religious Persons, that **they tremble at God's Word**, that

they **fear before him**, that **their Flesh trembles for Fear of him**, and that **they are afraid of his Judgments**, that **his Excellency makes them afraid**, and **his Dread falls upon them**; and the like: And a compellation commonly given the Saints in Scripture, is, **Fearers of God**, or **they that fear the Lord**. And because the Fear of God is a great Part of true Godliness, hence true Godliness in general, is very commonly called by the Name of **the Fear of God**; as everyone knows, that knows anything of the Bible.

So **Hope** in God and in the Promises of his Word, is often spoken of in the Scripture, as a very considerable Part of true Religion. It is mentioned as one of the three great Things of which Religion consists, 1 **Corinthians** 13:13. Hope in the Lord is also frequently mentioned as the Character of the Saints: Psalm 146:5. **Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his Help, whose Hope is in the Lord his God**. Jeremiah 17:7. **Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the Lord, whose Hope the Lord is**. Psalm 31:24. **Be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen your Heart, all ye that Hope in the Lord**. And the like in many other Places. Religious Fear and Hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly constituting the Character of the true Saints. Psalm 33:18. **Behold the Eye of the Lord is upon them that Fear him, upon them that Hope in his Mercy**. Psalm 147:11. **The Lord taketh Pleasure in them that Fear him, in those that Hope in his Mercy**. Hope is so great a Part of true Religion, that the Apostle says we are **saved by Hope**. Romans 8:24. And this is spoken of as the Helmet of the Christian Soldier. 1 Thessalonians 5:8. **And for an Helmet the Hope of Salvation**; and the sure and steadfast Anchor of the Soul, which

preserves it from being cast away by the Storms of the evil World. **Which Hope we have as an Anchor** of the Soul; a Benefit which true Saints receive by it.

The Scriptures place Religion very much in the Affection of Love, in Love to God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and Love to the People of God, and to Mankind. The Texts in which this is manifest, both in the Old Testament, and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

The contrary Affection of **Hatred** also, as having Sin for its Object, is spoken of in Scripture, as no inconsiderable Part of true Religion. It is spoken of as that by which true Religion may be known and distinguished, Proverbs 8:13. **The fear of the Lord is to hate Evil.** And accordingly the Saints are called upon to give Evidence of their Sincerity by this, Psalm 97:10. **Ye that fear the Lord hate Evil.** And the Psalmist often mentions it as an Evidence of his Sincerity; Psalm 101:2-3. **I will walk within my House with a perfect Heart; I will set no wicked Thing before mine Eyes: I hate the Work of them that turn aside.** Psalm 119:104. **I hate every false Way.** See Verse 128. Again Psalm 139:21. **Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee.**

So holy **Desire**, exercised in Longings, Hungerings and Thirstings after God and Holiness, is often mentioned in Scripture as an important Part of true Religion; Isaiah 26:8. **The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee.** Psalm 27:4. **One Thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.** Psalm 42:1-2. **As the Heart 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? Psalm 63:1-2. **My Soul thirsteth for thee; my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, to see thy Power and thy Glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary.** Psalm 84:1-2. **How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord; my Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the living God.** Psalm 119:20. **My Soul breaketh for the Longing it hath unto thy Judgments, at all Times.** So Psalm 73:25 and 143:6 and 130:6. Song of Solomon 3:1-2 and 6:8. Such a holy Desire and Thirst of Soul is mentioned, as one of those great Things which renders or denotes a Man truly blessed, in the Beginning of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:6. **Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled.** And this holy Thirst is spoken of, as a great Thing in the Condition of a Participation of the Blessings of eternal Life, Revelation 21:6. **I will give unto him that is athirst, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely.**

The Scriptures speak of holy **Joy**, as a great Part of true Religion. So is it represented in the Text. And as an important Part of Religion, it is often exhorted to, and pressed, with great Earnestness; Psalm 37:4. **Delight thy self in the Lord, and he shall give thee the Desires of thine Heart.** Psalm 97:12. **Rejoice in the Lord, ye Righteous.** So Psalm 33:1. **Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous.** Matthew 5:12. **Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.** Philippians 3:1. **Finally Brethren, rejoice in the Lord.** And Chapter 4:4. **Rejoice in the Lord alway, and**

again I say rejoice. 1 Thessalonians 5:16. **Rejoice evermore.** Psalm 149:2. **Let Israel rejoice in him that made him; let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King.** This is mentioned among the principal Fruits of the Spirit of Grace, Galatians 5:22. **The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy,** etc. The Psalmist mentions his holy Joy, as an Evidence of his Sincerity, Psalm 119:14. **I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all Riches.**

Religious **Sorrow**, Mourning, and Brokenness of Heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great Part of true Religion. These Things are often mentioned as distinguishing Qualities of the true Saints, and a great Part of their Character; Matthew 5:4. **Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.** Psalm 34:18. **The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit.** Isaiah 61:1-2. **The Lord hath anointed me—to bind up the Broken-hearted,—to comfort all that mourn.** This godly Sorrow, and Brokenness of Heart is often spoken of, not only, as a great Thing in the distinguishing Character of the Saints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; Psalm 51:17. **The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.** Isaiah 57:15. **Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy Place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones.** Chapter 66:2. **To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit.**

Another Affection often mentioned, as that in the Exercise of which much of true Religion appears, is **Gratitude**; especially as exercised in Thankfulness and Praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the Book of Psalms, and other Parts of the holy Scriptures, I need not mention particular Texts.

Again, The holy Scriptures do frequently speak of **Mercy**, as a very great and essential Thing in true Religion; insomuch that good Men are in Scripture denominated from it; and a merciful Man, and a good Man, are equivalent Terms in Scripture; Isaiah 57:1. **The Righteous perisheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart: and merciful Men are taken away.** And the Scripture speaks of this Quality, as that by which, in a peculiar Manner, a righteous Man is distinguished; Psalm 37:21. **The Righteous sheweth Mercy, and giveth; and Verse 26, He is ever merciful, and lendeth.** Psalm 112:4. Colossians 3:12. **Put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies,** etc. This is one of those great Things, by which those that are truly Blessed are described by our Saviour, Matthew 5:7. **Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.** And this our Saviour speaks of, as one of the weightier Matters of the Law. Matthew 23:23. **Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites! for ye pay Tithe of Mint, and Anise, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.** To the like Purpose is that, Micah 6:8. **He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good; And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and love Mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?** And also that, Hosea 6:6. **For I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice.** Which seems to have been a Text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his Manner of citing it once and again; Matthew 9:13 and 12:7.

Zeal is also spoken of, as a very essential Part of the Religion of true Saints. It is spoken of as a great Thing Christ had in view, in giving himself for our Redemption; Titus 2:14. **Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.** And this is spoken of, as the great Thing wanting in the lukewarm **Laodiceans**, Revelation 3:15, 16, 19.

I have mentioned but a few Texts, out of an innumerable multitude, all over the Scripture, which place Religion very much in the Affections. But what has been observed, may be sufficient to show that they who would deny that much of true Religion lies in the Affections, and maintain the Contrary, must throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get some other Rule, by which to judge of the Nature of Religion.

5. The Scriptures do represent true Religion, as being summarily comprehended in **Love**, the Chief of the Affections, and Fountain of all other Affections.

So our blessed Saviour represents the Matter, in answer to the Lawyer, who asked him, which was the great Commandment of the Law. Matthew 22:37, 38, 39, 40. **Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind.** Which words signify as much, as that those two Commandments comprehend the Duty prescribed, and the Religion taught in the Law and the Prophets. And the Apostle **Paul** does from Time to Time make the same Representation of the Matter; as in Romans 13:8. He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law. So likewise in 1 Timothy 1:5. **Now the End of the Commandment is Charity out of a pure Heart**, etc. So the same Apostle speaks of Love, as the greatest

Thing in Religion, and as the Vitals, Essence and Soul of it; without which, the greatest Knowledge and Gifts, and the most glaring Profession, and every thing else which appertains to Religion, are vain and worthless; and represents it as the Fountain from whence proceeds all that is good, in 1 **Corinthians** 13 throughout; for that which is there rendered **charity**, in the Original, is *Agape*, the proper English of which is **Love**.

Now although it be true, that the Love thus spoken of, includes the whole of a sincerely benevolent Propensity of the Soul, towards God and Man; yet it may be considered, that it is evident from what has been before observed, that this Propensity or Inclination of the Soul, when in sensible and vigorous Exercise, becomes **Affection**, and is no other than affectionate Love. And surely it is such vigorous and fervent Love which Christ speaks of, as the Sum of all Religion, when he speaks of Loving God with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Minds, and our Neighbour as ourselves, as the Sum of all that was taught and prescribed in the Law and the Prophets.

Indeed it cannot be supposed, when this Affection of Love is here, and in other Scriptures, spoken of as the Sum of all Religion, that hereby is meant the Act, exclusive of the Habit, or that the Exercise of the Understanding is excluded, which is implied in all reasonable Affection. But it is doubtless true, and evident from these Scriptures, that the **Essence** of all true Religion lies in holy Love; and that in this divine Affection, and an habitual Disposition to it, and that Light which is the Foundation of it, and those Things which are the Fruits of it, consists the **Whole** of Religion.

From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great Part of true Religion consists in the Affections. For Love is not only one of the Affections, but it is the first and chief of the Affections, and the Fountain of all the Affections. From **Love** arises **Hatred** of those Things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppose and thwart us in those Things that we delight in: And from the various Exercises of Love and Hatred, according to the Circumstances of the Objects of these Affections, as present or absent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable Affections of **Desire**, **Fear**, **Joy**, **Gratitude**, etc. a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent **Love to God**, other **religious** Affections: hence **Fear of Sin**, and Joy in God when God is and sensibly present, and **Grief** when he is absent, and a joyful when a future Enjoyment God is expected, and fervent for the Glory of God. And in like Manner, from a fervent **Love to Men**, will arise all other virtuous Affections towards Men.

6. The Religion of the most eminent Saints we have an Account of in the Scripture, consisted much in holy **Affections**.

I shall take particular Notice of three eminent Saints, which have expressed the Frame and Sentiments of their own Hearts, and so described their own Religion, and the Manner of their Intercourse with God, in the Writings which they have left us, that are a Part of the sacred Canon.

The **first** Instance I shall take notice of, is **David**, that **Man after God's own Heart**; who has given us a lively Portraiture of his Religion, in the Book of **Psalms**. Those holy Songs of his, he has there left us, are nothing else but the Expressions and Breathings of devout and **holy Affections**; such as an humble and fervent **Love** to God, **Admiration** of his glorious Perfections

and wonderful Works, earnest **Desires**, Thirstings and Pantings of Soul after God, **Delight** and **Joy** in God, a sweet and melting **Gratitude** to God for his great Goodness, an holy **Exultation** and Triumph of Soul in the Favour, Sufficiency and Faithfulness of God, his **Love** to, and **Delight** in the Saints the excellent of the Earth, his great **Delight** in the Word and Ordinance of God, his **Grief** for his own and others Sins, and his fervent **Zeal** for God, and against the Enemies of God and his Church. And these Expressions of holy Affection, which the Psalms of **David** are every where full of, are the more to our present Purpose, because those Psalms are not only the Expressions of the Religion of so eminent a Saint that God speaks of as so agreeable to his Mind; but were also, by the Direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the Use of the Church of God in its public Worship, not only in that Age, but in after Ages; as being fitted to express the Religion of all Saints, in all Ages, as well as the Religion of the Psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that **David**, in the Book of Psalms, speaks not as a private Person, but as the **Psalmist of Israel**, as the subordinate Head of the Church of God, and Leader in their Worship and Praises; and in many of the Psalms, speaks in the Name of Christ, as personating him in these Breathings forth of holy Affection, and in many other Psalms, he speaks in the Name of the Church.

Another Instance I shall observe, is the Apostle **Paul** who was, in many Respects, the Chief of all the Ministers of the New Testament; being above all others, a chosen vessel unto Christ, to bear his Name before the Gentiles, and made the chief Instrument of propagating and establishing the Christian Church in the World, and of distinctly revealing the glorious Mysteries of the Gospel for

the Instruction of the Church in all Ages; and as has not been improbably thought by some the most eminent Servant of Christ that ever lived, received to the highest Rewards in the heavenly Kingdom of his Master. By what is said of him in the Scripture, he appears to have been a Person that was full of Affection. And it appears by very many Things that the Religion he expresses in his Epistles consisted very much in holy Affections. It appears by all his Life he was, in the Course of his Life, actuated and swallowed up, by a most fervent **Love** to his glorious Lord, esteeming all Things as Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of him, and esteeming them but Dung that he might win him. He represents himself, as overpowered by this holy Affection, and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his Service, through all Difficulties and Sufferings, 2 Corinthians 5. 14. And his Epistles are full of Expressions of an overflowing Affection towards the People of Christ: He speaks of his **dear Love** to them 2 **Corinthians** 12. 19. **Philippians** 4. 1. 2. **Timothy** 1. 2. Of his **abundant Love**, 2 Corinthians 2. 4. And of his **affectionate and tender Love**, as of a Nurse towards her Children, 1 Thessalonians 2. 7. 8. We were gentle among you; even as a Nurse affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own Souls. So also he speaks of his Bowels of Love, Philippians 1. 8. Philemon verse 12. and 20. So he speaks of his earnest Care for others, 2 **Corinthians** 8. 16. and of his **Bowels of Pity or Mercy** towards them, **Philippians** 2. 1. and of his Concern for others, even to **Anguish of Heart**, 2 Corinthians 2. 4. **For out of much Affection, and Anguish of Heart, I wrote unto you, with many Tears; not that ye should be grieved; but that ye might know the Love which**

I have more abundantly unto you. He speaks of the **great Conflict** of his Soul for them, **Colossians 2. 1.** He speaks of **great and continual Grief** that he had **in his Heart** from Love to the **Jews**, **Romans 9. 2.** He speaks of **his Mouth's being opened, and his Heart enlarged** towards Christians, **2 Corinthians 6. 11.** **O ye Corinthians, our Mouth is open unto you, our Heart is enlarged!** **He often speaks of his** affectionate and longing Desires, **1 Thessalonians 2. 8.** **Romans 1. 11.** **Philippians 1. 8. and Chapter 4. 1. 2 Timothy 1. 4.** **The same Apostle is very often, in his Epistles, expressing the Affection of Joy, 2 Corinthians 1. 12. and Chapter 7. 7. and verse 9. and 16. Philippians 1. 4. and Chapter 2. 1. 2. and Chapter 3. 3. Colossians 1. 24. 1 Thessalonians 3. 9.** **He speaks of his** rejoicing with great Joy, **Philippians 4. 10. Philemon 1, 7. of his** joying and rejoicing, **Philippians 2. 17. and of his** rejoicing exceedingly, **2 Corinthians 7. 13.** **And of his being** filled with Comfort, and exceeding joyful **2 Corinthians 7. 4.** **He speaks of himself as** always rejoicing, **2 Corinthians 6. 10.** **So he speaks of the Triumphs of his Soul, 2 Corinthians 2. 14.** **And of his** glorying in Tribulations, **2 Thessalonians 1. 4. and Romans 5. 3.** **He also expresses the Affection of Hope; in Philippians 1. 20. he speaks of his** earnest Expectation, and his Hope. **He likewise expresses an Affection of Godly Zeal 2 Corinthians 11. 2, 3.** **And it appears by all his History, after his Conversion, in the Acts, and also by all his Epistles, and the Accounts he gives of himself there, That the Affection of Love, as having the Cause of his Master, and the Interest and Prosperity of his Church, for its Object, was mighty in him, continually**

inflaming his Heart, strongly engaging to those great and constant Labours he went through, instructing, exhorting, warning and reproofing Others, travelling in Birth with them; conflicting with these powerful and innumerable Enemies who continually opposed him, wrestling with Principalities and Powers, not fighting as one who beats the Air, running the Race set before him, continually pressing forwards through all Manner of Difficulties and Sufferings: so that others thought him quite beside himself. And how full he was of Affection, does further appear by his being so full of Tears: In 2 Corinthians 2. 4. he speaks of his many Tears, and to Acts 20. 19. And of his Tears that he shed continually, Night and Day, verse 31.**

Now if any one can consider these Accounts given in the Scripture of this great Apostle, and which he gives of himself, and yet not see that his Religion consisted much in Affection, must have a strange Faculty of managing his Eyes, to shut out the Light which shines most full in his Face.

The other Instance I shall mention, is of the Apostle **John**, that beloved Disciple, who was the nearest and dearest to his Master of any of the Twelve, and was by him admitted to the greatest Privileges of any of them: Being not only one of the three who were admitted to be present with him in the Mount at his Transfiguration, and at the raising of **Jairus's** Daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his Agony, and one of the three spoken of by the Apostle **Paul**, as the three main Pillars of the christian Church; but was favoured above all, in being admitted to lean on his Master's Bosom, at his last Supper, and in being chosen by Christ, as the Disciple to whom he would reveal his won-

derful Dispensation towards his Church, to the End of Time; as we have an Account in the Book of **Revelation**: And to shut up the Canon of the New Testament, and of the whole Scripture; being preserved much longer than all the rest of the Apostles, to set all Things in Order in the christian Church, after their Death.

It is evident by all his Writings, (as is generally observed by Divines) that he was a Person remarkably full of Affection: His Addresses to those whom he wrote to, being inexpressibly tender and pathetical, breathing nothing but the most fervent Love; as though he were all made up of sweet and holy Affection. The Proofs of which cannot be given without Disadvantage, unless we should transcribe his whole Writings.

7. He whom God sent into the World, to be the Light of the World, and Head of the whole Church, and the perfect Example of true Religion and Virtue, for the Imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole Flock should follow wherever he goes, even the Lord Jesus Christ, was a Person who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate Heart; and his Virtue was expressed very much in the Exercises of holy Affections. He was the greatest Instance of Ardency, Vigour and Strength of **Love**, to both God and Man, that ever was. It was these Affections which got the Victory, in that mighty Struggle and Conflict of his Affections, in his Agonies, when **he prayed more earnestly, and offered strong Crying and Tears**, and wrestled in Tears and in Blood. Such was the Power of the Exercises of his holy Love, that they were stronger than Death, and in that great Struggle, overcame those strong Exercises of the natural Affections of Fear and Grief, when he was sore amazed, and his Soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death. And he also appeared to be full of Affection, in the Course

of his Life. We read of his great **Zeal**, fulfilling that in the sixty-ninth Psalm, **The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up**, John 2. 17. We read of his **Grief** for the Sins of Men, Mark 3. 5. **He looked round about on them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts.** And his breaking forth in Tears and Exclamations, from the Consideration of the Sin and Misery of ungodly Men, and on the Sight of the City of **Jerusalem**, which was full of such Inhabitants, Luke 19. 41, 42. **And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.** With Chapter 13. 34. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, How often would I have gathered thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her Brood under her Wings, and ye would not!** We read of Christ's earnest **Desire**, Luke 22. 15. **With Desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you, before I suffer.** We often read of the Affection of **Pity** or **Compassion** in Christ, **Matthew** 15. 32. and 18. 34. **Luke** 7. 13. and of his **being moved with Compassion**, **Matthew** 9. 36 and 14. 14. and **Mark** 6. 34. And how tender did his Heart appear to be, on occasion of **Mary's** and **Martha's** Mourning for their Brother, and coming to him with their Complaints and Tears: Their Tears soon drew Tears from his Eyes: He was affected with their Grief, and **wept** with them; though he knew their Sorrow should so soon be turned into Joy, by their Brother's being raised from the Dead; see **John** 11. And how ineffably affectionate was that last and dying Discourse, which Jesus had with his eleven

Disciples the Evening before he was crucified? when he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great Difficulties and Sufferings they should meet with in the World, when he was gone; and comforted and counseled them, as his dear little Children, and bequeathed to them his holy Spirit, and therein his Peace, and his Comfort and Joy, as it were in his last Will and Testament, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth Chapters of **John**; and concluded the Whole with that affectionate intercessory Prayer for them, and his whole Church, in Chapter 17. Of all the Discourses ever penned, or uttered by the Mouth of any Man, this seems to be the most affectionate, and affecting.

8. The Religion of Heaven consists very much in Affection.

There is doubtless true Religion in Heaven, and true Religion in its utmost Purity and Perfection. But according to the Scripture Representation of the heavenly State, the Religion of Heaven consists chiefly in holy and mighty **Love** and **Joy**, and the Expression of these in most fervent and exalted Praises. So that the Religion of the Saints in Heaven, consists in the same Things with that Religion of the Saints on Earth, which is spoken of in our Text, namely **Love**, and **Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory**. Now it would be very foolish to pretend, that because the Saints in Heaven are not united to Flesh and Blood, and have no animal Fluids to be moved, (through the Laws of Union of Soul and Body) with those great Emotions of their Souls, that therefore their exceeding Love and Joy are no Affections. —We are not speaking of the Affections of the Body, but of the Affections of the Soul, the chief of which are **Love** and **Joy**. When these are in the Soul, whether that be in the Body or out of it, the Soul is affected and moved. And when they are in the Soul, in that Strength in which

they are in the Saints in Heaven, the Soul is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the same Thing, has great Affections. It is true, we do not experimentally know what Love and Joy are in a Soul out of a Body, or in a glorified Body; **that is** we have not had Experience of Love and Joy in a Soul in these Circumstances; but the Saints on Earth do know what divine Love and Joy in the Soul are and they know what Love and Joy are of the same Kind, with the Love and Joy which are in Heaven, in separate Souls there. The Love and Joy of the Saints on Earth, is the Beginning and Dawning of the Light, Life, and Blessedness of Heaven, and is like their Love and Joy there; or rather, the same in Nature, though not the same with it, or like to it, in Degree and Circumstances. This is evident by many Scriptures, as **Proverbs** 4. 18. **John** 4. 14. and **Chapter** 6. 40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 58. 1 **John** 3. 15. 1 **Corinthians** 13. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. It is unreasonable therefore to suppose, that the Love and Joy of the Saints in Heaven, not only differ in Degree and Circumstances, from the holy Love and Joy of the Saints on Earth, but is so entirely different in Nature, that they are no Affections; and merely because they have no Blood and animal Spirits to be set in Motion by them, which Motion of the Blood and animal Spirits is not of the Essence of these Affections, in Men on the Earth, but the Effect of them; although by their Reaction they may make some circumstantial Difference in the Sensation of the Mind. There is a Sensation of the Mind which loves and rejoices, that is antecedent to any Effects on the Fluids of the Body; and this Sensation of the Mind, therefore does not depend on these Motions in the Body, and so may be in the Soul without the Body. And wherever there are the Exercises of Love and Joy, there is that Sensation of the Mind, whether it be in the Body, or out; and that

inward Sensation, or kind of spiritual Sense, or Feeling, and Motion of the Soul, is what is called Affection; The Soul when it thus feels, (if I may so say) and is thus moved, is said to be affected, and especially when this inward Sensation and Motion, are to a very high Degree, as they are in the Saints in Heaven. If we can learn any thing of the State of Heaven from the Scripture, the Love and Joy that the Saints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impressing the Heart with the strongest and most lively Sensation, of inexpressible Sweetness, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like to a Flame of Fire. And if such Love and Joy be not Affections, then the Word **Affection** is of no Use in Language. —Will any say, that the Saints in Heaven, in beholding the Face of their Father, and the Glory of their Redeemer, and contemplating his wonderful Works, and particularly his laying down his Life for them, have their Hearts nothing moved and affected, by all which they behold or consider?

Hence therefore the **Religion of Heaven**, consisting chiefly in holy Love and Joy, consists very much in Affection: And therefore undoubtedly, **true Religion** consists very much in Affection. The Way to learn the true Nature of any Thing, is to go where that Thing is to be found in its Purity and Perfection. If we would know the Nature of true Gold, we must view it, not in the Ore, but when it is refined. If we would learn what true Religion is, we must go where there is true Religion, and nothing but true Religion, and in its highest Perfection, without any Defect or Mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this World, they are Strangers here, and belong to Heaven; they are born from above, Heaven is their native Country, and the Nature which they receive by this heavenly Birth, is an heavenly Nature, they receive **an Anointing from Above**;

that Principle of true Religion which is in them, is a Communication of the Religion of Heaven; their Grace is the Dawn of Glory; and God fits them for that World by conforming them to it.

9. This appears from the Nature and Design of the Ordinances and Duties, which God hath appointed, as Means and Expressions of true Religion.

To instance in the Duty of Prayer: It is manifest, we are not appointed, in this Duty, to declare God's Perfections, his Majesty, Holiness, Goodness, and All-sufficiency, and our own Meanness, Emptiness, Dependence, and Unworthiness, and our Wants and Desires, to inform God of these Things, or to incline his Heart, and prevail with him to be willing to show us Mercy; but suitably to affect our own Hearts with the Things we express, and so to prepare us to receive the Blessings we ask. And such Gestures, and Manner of external Behaviour in the Worship of God, which Custom has made to be Significations of Humility and Reverence, can be of no further Use, than as they have some Tendency to affect our own Hearts, or the Hearts of others.

And the Duty of singing Praises to God, seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious Affections. No other Reason can be assigned, why we should express ourselves to God in Verse, rather than in Prose, and do it with Music, but only, that such is our Nature and Frame, that these Things have a Tendency to move our Affections.

The same thing appears in the Nature and Design of the Sacraments, which God hath appointed. God, considering our Frame, hath not only appointed that we should be told of the great

Things of the Gospel, and of the Redemption of Christ, and instructed in them by his Word; but also that they should be, as it were, exhibited to our View, in sensible Representations, in the Sacraments, the more to affect us with them.

And the impressing divine Things on the Hearts and Affections of Men, is evidently one great and main End for which God has ordained, that his Word delivered in the holy Scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon Men, in Preaching. And therefore it does not answer the Aim which God had in this Institution, merely for Men to have good Commentaries and Expositions on the Scripture, and other good Books of Divinity; because, although these may tend, as well as Preaching, to give Men a good doctrinal or speculative Understanding of the Work of God, yet they have not an equal Tendency to impress them on Men's Hearts and Affections. God hath appointed a particular, and lively Application of his Word, to Men, in the Preaching of it, as a fit Means to affect Sinners, with the Importance of the Things of Religion, and their own Misery, and Necessity of a Remedy, and the Glory and Sufficiency of a Remedy provided; and to stir up the pure Minds of the Saints, and quicken their Affections, by often bringing the great Things of Religion to their Remembrance, and setting them before them in their proper Colours, though they know them, and have been fully instructed in them already; 2 **Peter** 1. 12, 13. And particularly, to promote those two Affections in them, which are spoken of in the Text, **Love and Joy: Christ gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, that the Body of Christ might be edified in Love**, Ephesians 4. 11, 12, 16. The Apostle, in instructing and counselling **Timothy**, concern-

ing the Work of the Ministry, informs him that the great End of that Word which a Minister is to preach, is **Love** or **Charity**, 1 Timothy 1. 3, 4, 5. And another Affection which God has appointed Preaching as a Means to promote in the Saints, is **Joy**; and therefore Ministers are called **Helpers of their Joy**, 2 Corinthians 1. 24.

10. It is an Evidence that true Religion, or Holiness of Heart, lies very much in the Affection of the Heart, that the Scriptures place the Sin of the Heart very much in **Hardness of Heart**. Thus the Scriptures do everywhere. It was Hardness of Heart, which excited Grief and Displeasure in Christ towards the **Jews**, Mark 3. 5. **He looked round about on them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardness of their Hearts**. It is from Men's having such a Heart as this, that they treasure up Wrath for themselves. Romans 2. 5. **After your Hardness and impenitent Heart, you treasure up unto yourself Wrath, against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God**. The Reason given why the House of **Israel** would not obey God, was that they were hard-hearted, Ezekiel 3. 7. **But the House of Israel will not listen to you; for they will not listen to me: For all the House of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted**. The Wickedness of that perverse rebellious Generation in the Wilderness, is ascribed to the Hardness of their Hearts; Psalm 95. 7, 10, **Today, if you will hear my Voice, harden not your Heart, as in the Provocation, and as in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderness; when your Fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my Work: Forty Years long was I grieved with this Generation, and said it is a People that do err in their Heart**, and so forth. This is

spoken of as what prevented **Zedekiah's** turning to the Lord, 2 Chronicles 36. 13. **He stiffened his Neck, and hardened his Heart, from turning to the Lord God of Israel.** This Principle is spoken of, as that from whence Men are without the Fear of God, and depart from God's Ways; Isaiah 63. 17. **O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy Ways, and hardened our Heart from thy Fear?** And Men's rejecting Christ, and opposing Christianity, is laid to this Principle; Acts 19. 9. **But when various were hardened, and believed not, but spoke Evil of that Way before the Multitude;** God's leaving Men to the Power of the Sin and Corruption of the Heart, is often expressed by God's hardening their Hearts; Romans 9, 18. **Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.** John 12. 40. **He hath blinded their Mind, and hardened their Hearts.** And the Apostle seems to speak of an evil Heart, that departs from the living God, and a hard Heart, as the same Thing. Hebrews 3. 8. **Harden not your Heart, as in the Provocation,** and so forth. Verse 12, 13. **Take heed Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin.** And that great Work of God in Conversion, which consists in delivering a Person from the Power of Sin, and mortifying Corruption, is expressed, once and again, by God's **taking away the Heart of Stone, and giving an Heart of Flesh,** Ezekiel 11. 10. and Chapter 36. 26.

Now by a hard Heart, is plainly meant an unaffected Heart, or a Heart not easy to be moved with virtuous Affections, like a Stone, insensible, stupid, unmoved and hard to be impressed. Hence the

hard Heart is called a **stony Heart**, and is opposed to an **Heart of Flesh**, that has feeling, and is sensibly touched and moved. We read in Scripture of a **hard Heart**, and a **tender Heart**: And doubtless we are to understand these, as contrary the one to the other. But what is a tender Heart, but a Heart which is easily impressed with what ought to affect it? God commends **Josiah**, because his Heart was tender; and it is evident by those Things which are mentioned as Expressions and Evidences of this Tenderness of Heart, that by his Heart being tender is meant, his Heart being easily moved with religious and pious Affection; 2 Kings 22. 19. **Because your Heart was tender, and you have humbled yourself before the Lord, when you heard what I spoke against this Place, and against the Inhabitants thereof, that they should become a Desolation, and a Curse, and have torn your Clothes, and have wept before me; I also have heard you, says the Lord.** And this is one thing, wherein it is necessary we should **become as little Children, in order to our entering into the Kingdom of God**, even that we should have our Hearts tender, and easily affected and moved in spiritual and divine Things, as little Children have in other Things.

It is very plain in some Places, in the Texts themselves, that by Hardness of Heart is meant a Heart void of Affection. So to signify the **Ostrich's** being without natural Affection to her Young, it is said, Job 39. 16. **She hardens her Heart against her young ones, as though they were not hers.** So a Person having a Heart unaffected in Time of Danger, is expressed by his hardening his Heart, Proverbs 28. 14. **Happy is the Man that fears always; but he that hardens his Heart shall fall into Mischief.**

Now therefore since it is so plain, that by a hard Heart, in Scripture, is meant a Heart destitute of pious Affections, and since also the Scriptures do so frequently place the Sin and Corruption of the Heart in Hardness of Heart; it is evident, that the Grace and Holiness of the Heart, on the contrary, must, in a great Measure, consist in its having pious Affections, and being easily susceptible of such Affection. Divines are generally agreed, that Sin radically and fundamentally consists in what is negative, or privative, having its Root and Foundation in a Privation or Want of Holiness. And therefore undoubtedly, if it be so that Sin does very much consist in Hardness of Heart, and so in the Want of pious Affections of Heart; Holiness does consist very much **in those pious Affections.**

I am far from supposing that all Affections do show a tender Heart: Hatred, Anger, Vain-glory, and other selfish and self-exalting Affections, may greatly prevail in the hardest Heart. But yet it is evident that **Hardness of Heart**, and **Tenderness of Heart**, are Expressions that relate to the Affections of the Heart, and denote the Heart's being susceptible of, or shut up against, **certain Affections**, of which I shall have Occasion to speak more afterwards.

Upon the Whole, I think it clearly and abundantly evident, that true Religion lies very much in the Affections. Not that I think these Arguments prove, that Religion in the Hearts of the truly Godly, is ever in exact Proportion to the Degree of Affection, and present Emotion of the Mind. For undoubtedly, there is much Affection in the true Saints which is not spiritual: Their religious Affections are often mixed; all is not from Grace, but much from Nature. And though the Affections have not their Seat in the Body,

yet the Constitution of the Body, may very much contribute to the present Emotion of the Mind. And the Degree of Religion is rather to be judged of by the Fixedness and Strength of the Habit that is exercised in Affection, whereby holy Affection is habitual, than by the Degree of the present Exercise: And the Strength of that Habit is not always in Proportion to outward Effects and Manifestations, or inward Effects, in the Hurry and Vehemence, and sudden Changes of the Course of the Thoughts of the Mind. But yet it is evident, that Religion consists so much in Affection, as that without holy Affection there is no true Religion. And no Light in the Understanding is good, which does not produce holy Affection in the Heart; no Habit or Principle in the Heart is good, which has no such Exercise; and no external Fruit is good, which does not proceed from such Exercises.

Having thus considered the Evidence of the Proposition laid down, I proceed to some Inferences.

1. We may hence learn how great their Error is, who are for discarding all religious Affections, as having nothing solid or substantial in them.

There seems to be too much of a Disposition this Way, prevailing in this Land at this Time. Because many who, in the late extraordinary Season, appeared to have great religious Affections, did not manifest a right Temper of Mind, and run into many Errors, in the Time of their Affection, and the Heat of their Zeal; and because the high Affections of many seem to be so soon come to nothing, and some who seemed to be mightily raised and swallowed with Joy and Zeal, for a While, seem to have returned like the Dog to his Vomit: Hence religious Affections in general are grown out of Credit, with great Numbers, as though true Religion did not at all

consist in them. Thus we easily, and naturally run from one Extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other Extreme; there was a prevalent Disposition to look upon all high religious Affections, as eminent Exercises of true Grace, without much inquiring into the Nature and Source of those Affections, and the Manner in which they arose: If Persons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raised, so as to be full of religious Talk, and express themselves with great Warmth and Earnestness, and to be **filled**, or to be **very full**, as the Phrases were; it was too much the Manner, without further Examination, to conclude such Persons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent Experience of his gracious Influences. This was the Extreme which was prevailing three or four Years ago. But of late, instead of **esteeming** and **admiring** all religious **Affections, without Distinction**, it is a Thing much more prevalent, to **reject** and **discard** all **without Distinction**. Herein appears the Subtlety of **Satan**. While he saw that **Affections** were much in Vogue, knowing the greater Part of the Land were not versed in such Things, and had not had much Experience of great **religious Affections**, to enable them to judge well of them, and distinguish between true and false; then he knew he could best play his Game, by sowing Tares amongst the Wheat, and mingling **false Affections** with the Works of God's Spirit: He knew this to be a likely Way to delude and eternally ruin many Souls, and greatly to wound Religion in the Saints, and entangle them in a dreadful Wilderness, and by and by, to bring all Religion into Disrepute. But now, when the ill Consequences of these **false Affections** appear, and it is become very apparent, that some of those Emotions which made a glaring Show, and were by many greatly admired, were in Reality Nothing; the Devil sees it

to be for his Interest to go another Way to work, and to endeavour to his utmost to propagate and establish a Persuasion, that all Affections and sensible Emotions of the Mind, in Things of Religion, are nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be avoided, and carefully guarded against, as Things of a pernicious Tendency. This he knows is the Way to bring all Religion to a mere lifeless Formality, and effectually shut out the Power of Godliness, and every Thing which is spiritual, and to have all true Christianity turned out of Doors. For although to true Religion, there must indeed be something else besides Affection; yet true Religion consists so much in the Affections, that there can be no true Religion without them. He who has no religious Affection, is in a State of spiritual Death, and is wholly destitute of the powerful, quickening, saving Influences of the Spirit of God upon his Heart. As there is no true Religion, where there is nothing else but Affection; so there is no true Religion where there is no **religious Affection**. As on the one Hand, there must be Light in the Understanding, as well as an **affected** fervent Heart, where there is Heat without Light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that Heart; so on the other Hand, where there is a Kind of Light without Heat, a Head stored with Notions and Speculations, with a cold and unaffected Heart, there can be nothing divine in that Light, that Knowledge is no true spiritual Knowledge of divine Things. If the great Things of Religion are rightly understood, they will affect the Heart. The Reason why Men are not affected by such infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful Things, as they often hear and read of, in the Word of God, is undoubtedly because they are blind; if they were not so, it would be impossible, and utterly

inconsistent with human Nature, that their Hearts should be otherwise, than strongly impressed, and greatly moved by such Things.

This Manner of slighting all religious **Affections**, is the Way exceedingly to harden the Hearts of Men, and to encourage them in their Stupidity and Senselessness, and to keep them in a State of spiritual Death as long as they live, and bring them at last to Death eternal. The prevailing Prejudice against **religious Affections** at this Day, in the Land, is apparently of awful Effect, to harden the Hearts of Sinners, and damp the Graces of many of the Saints, and stunt the Life and Power of Religion, and preclude the Effect of Ordinances, and hold us down in a State of Dullness and Apathy, and undoubtedly causes many Persons greatly to offend God, in entertaining mean and low Thoughts of the extraordinary Work he has lately wrought in this Land.

And for Persons to despise and cry down all religious **Affections**, is the Way to shut all Religion out of their own Hearts, and to make thorough Work in ruining their Souls.

They who condemn high Affections in others, are certainly not likely to have high Affections themselves. And let it be observed, that they who have but little religious Affection, have certainly but little Religion. And they who condemn others for their **religious Affections**, and have none themselves, have no Religion.

There are false **Affections**, and there are true. A Man's having **much Affection**, does not prove that he has any true Religion: But if he has **no Affection**, it proves that he has no true Religion. The right Way, is not to reject all Affections, nor to approve all; but

to distinguish between Affections, approving some, and rejecting others; separating between the Wheat and the Chaff, the Gold and the Dross, the Precious and the Vile.

2. If it be so, that true Religion lies much in the **Affections**, hence we may infer, that such Means are to be desired, as have much of a Tendency to move the Affections. Such Books, and such a Way of Preaching the Word, and Administration of Ordinances, and such a Way of worshipping God in Prayer, and singing Praises, is much to be desired, as has a Tendency deeply to affect the Hearts of those who attend these Means.

Such a Kind of Means, would formerly have been highly approved of and applauded by the Generality of the People of the Land, as the most excellent and profitable, and having the greatest Tendency to promote the Ends of the Means of Grace. But the prevailing Taste seems of late strangely to be altered: That pathetic Manner of Praying and Preaching, which would formerly have been admired and esteemed, and that for this Reason, because it had such a Tendency to move the Affections, now, in great Multitudes, immediately excites Disgust, and moves no other Affections, than those of Displeasure and Contempt.

Perhaps, formerly the Generality (at least of the common People) were in the Extreme, of looking too much to an affectionate Address, in public Performances: But now, a very great Part of the People, seem to have gone far into a contrary Extreme. Indeed there may be such Means, as may have a great Tendency to stir up the Passions of weak and ignorant Persons, and yet have no great Tendency to Benefit their Souls. For though they may have a Tendency to excite Affections, they may have little or none to excite gracious Affections, or any Affections tending to Grace. But

undoubtedly, if the Things of Religion, in the Means used, are treated according to their Nature, and exhibited truly, so as tends to convey just Apprehensions, and a right Judgment of them; the more they have a Tendency to move the Affections, the better.

3. If true Religion lies much in the Affections, hence we may learn, what great Cause we have to be ashamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great Things of Religion. It appears from what has been said, that this arises from our having so little true Religion.

God has given to Mankind Affections, for the same Purpose which he has given all the Faculties and Principles of the human Soul for, **namely** that they might be subservient to Man's chief End, and the great Business for which God has created him, that is the Business of Religion. And yet how common is it among Mankind, that their Affections are much more exercised and engaged in other Matters, than in Religion! In Things which concern Men's worldly Interest, their outward Delights, their Honour and Reputation, and their natural Relations, they have their Desires eager, their Appetites vehement, their Love warm and affectionate, their Zeal ardent; in these Things their Hearts are tender and sensible, easily moved, deeply impressed, much concerned, very sensibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depressed with Grief at worldly Losses, and highly raised with Joy at worldly Successes and Prosperity. But how insensible and unmoved are most Men, about the great Things of another World! How dull are their Affections! How heavy and hard their Hearts in these Matters! Here their Love is cold, their Desires languid, their Zeal low, and their Gratitude small. How they can sit and hear of the infinite Height and Depth and Length and Breadth of the Love of God in

Christ Jesus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men, and of the unparalleled Love of the innocent, holy and tender Lamb of God, manifested in his dying Agonies, his bloody Sweat, his loud and bitter Cries, and bleeding Heart, and all this for Enemies, to redeem them from deserved, eternal Burnings, and to bring to unspeakable and everlasting Joy and Glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, insensible, and regardless! Where are the Exercises of our Affections proper, if not here? What is it that does more require them? And what can be a fit Occasion of their lively and vigorous Exercise, if not such an one as this? Can any Thing be set in our View, greater and more important? Any Thing more wonderful and surprising? Or more nearly concerning our Interest? Can we suppose the wise Creator implanted such Principles in the human Nature as the Affections, to be of Use to us, and to be exercised on certain proper Occasions, but to lie still on such an Occasion as this? Can any Christian, who believes the Truth of these Things, entertain such Thoughts?

If we ought ever to exercise our Affections at all, and if the Creator has not unwisely constituted the human Nature, in making these Principles a Part of it, when they are vain and useless; then they ought to be exercised about those Objects which are most worthy of them. But is there any Thing, which Christians can find in Heaven or Earth, so worthy to be the Objects of their Admiration and Love, their earnest and longing Desires, their Hope, and their Rejoicing, and their fervent Zeal, as those Things that are held forth to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ? In which, not only are Things declared most worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the most affecting Manner. The Glory and Beauty of the blessed Jehovah, which is most worthy in itself, to be the

Object of our Admiration and Love, is there exhibited in the most affecting Manner that can be conceived of, as it appears shining in all its Lustre, in the Face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compassionate, dying Redeemer. All the Virtues of the Lamb of God, his Humility, Patience, Meekness, Submission, Obedience, Love and Compassion, are exhibited to our View, in a manner the most tending to move our Affections, of any that can be imagined; as they all had their greatest Trial, and their highest Exercise, and so their brightest Manifestation, when he was in the most affecting Circumstances; even when he was undergoing his last Sufferings, those unutterable and unparalleled Sufferings, he endured, from his tender Love and Pity to us. There also, the hateful Nature of our Sins is manifested in the most affecting Manner possible; as we see the dreadful Effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to answer for us, suffered for them. And there we have the most affecting Manifestations of God's Hatred of Sin, and his Wrath and Justice in punishing it; as we see his Justice in the Strictness and Inflexibleness of it, and his Wrath in its Terribleness, in so dreadfully punishing our Sins, in One who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us. So has God disposed Things, in the Affair of our Redemption, and in his glorious Dispensations, revealed to us in the Gospel, as though every Thing were purposely contrived in such a Manner, as to have the greatest, possible Tendency to reach our Hearts in the most tender Part, and move our Affections most sensibly and strongly. How great Cause have we therefore to be humbled to the Dust, that we are no more affected!

PART 2



PART 2.

If any one, on the reading of what has been just now said, is ready to acquit himself, and say, I am not one of those who have no religious affections; I am often greatly moved with the consideration of the great things of religion; Let him not content himself with this, that he has religious affections. For (as was observed before) as we ought not to reject and condemn all affections, as though true religion did not at all consist in affection; so on the other hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiously affected, had true grace, and was therein the subject of the saving influences of the Spirit of God: and that therefore the right way is to distinguish among religious affections, between one sort and another. Therefore let us now endeavor to do this: And in order to it, I would do two things.

1. I would mention some things, which are no signs one way or the other, either that affections are such as true religion consists in, or that they are otherwise; that we may be guarded against judging of affections by false signs.

2. I would observe some things, wherein those affections which are spiritual and gracious, differ from those which are not so, and may be distinguished and known.

First, I would take notice of some things, which are no signs that affections are gracious, or that they are not.

1. It is no sign one way or the other, that religious affections are very great, or raised very high.

Some are ready to condemn all high affections: If persons appear to have their religious affections [reconstructed: raised to an] extraordinary pitch, they are prejudiced against them, and determine that they are delusions, without further inquiry. But if it be as has been proved, that true religion [reconstructed: lies] very much in religious affections, then it follows, that if there be a great [reconstructed: deal] of true religion, there will be great religious affections; if true religion in the hearts of men, be raised to a great height, divine and holy affections will be raised to a great height.

Love is an affection; but will any Christian say, men ought not to love God and Jesus Christ in a high degree? And will any say, we ought not to have a very great hatred of sin, and a very deep sorrow for it? Or that we ought not to exercise a high degree of gratitude to God, for the mercies we receive of him, and the great things he has done for the salvation of fallen men? Or that we should not have very great and strong desires after God and holiness? Is there any who will profess, that his affections in religion are great enough; and will say, I have no cause to be humbled, that I am no more affected with the things of religion than I am, I have no reason to be ashamed, that I have no greater exercises of love of God, and sorrow for sin, and gratitude for the mercies which I have re-

ceived? Who is there that will go and bless God, that he is affected enough with what he has read and heard, of the wonderful love of God to worms and rebels, in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher degree, because high affections are improper, and very unlovely in Christians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true religion?

Our text plainly speaks of great and high affections, when it speaks of **rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory**: Here the most superlative expressions are used, which language will afford. And the Scriptures often require us to exercise very high affections: Thus in the first and great commandment of the law, there is an accumulation of expressions, as though words were wanting to express the degree, in which we ought to love God; **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength**. So the saints are called upon to exercise high degrees of joy: **Rejoice**, says Christ to his disciples, **and be exceeding glad**, Matthew 5:12. So it is said, Psalm 68:3. **Let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice**. So in the same book of Psalms, the saints are often called upon **to [reconstructed: shout] for joy**; and in Luke 6:23. **[reconstructed: Leap] for joy**. So they are abundantly called upon to **[reconstructed: exercise] high degrees of gratitude for mercies, to praise God with all their hearts, with hearts lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and their souls magnifying the Lord, singing his praises, talking of his wondrous work, [reconstructed: declaring] his doings, etc.**

And we find the most [reconstructed: eminent saints] in Scripture, often professing high affections. Thus the Psalmist **speaks** of his love, as if it were **unspeakable**; Psalm 119:9[reconstructed: 7]. **Oh [reconstructed: how love I] thy law!** So he expresses a great degree of [reconstructed: hatred] of sin; Psalm 13[reconstructed: 9]:21, 22. **Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? And am I not grieved with those that [reconstructed: rise] up against Thee? I hate them [reconstructed: with] perfect hatred.** He also expresses a high degree of sorrow for sin: He speaks of his sin **going over his head, as a heavy [reconstructed: burden, too] heavy for him; and of his roaring all the day, and his [reconstructed: moisture being turned] into the drought of summer, and his bones being** as it were **broken** with sorrow. So he often expresses great degrees of spiritual desires, in a multitude of the strongest expressions which can be conceived of; such as **his longing, his soul [reconstructed: thirsting as in a] dry and thirsty land where no water is, his pantings, his flesh and heart crying out, his soul [reconstructed: breaking] for the longing it [reconstructed: has],** etc. He expresses the exercises of great and extreme grief for the sins of others. Psalm 119:136. **Rivers of water run down my eyes, because they keep not Thy law.** And verse 53. **Horror has taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.** He expresses high exercises of joy, Psalm 21:1. **The king shall [reconstructed: joy] in Thy strength; and in Thy salvation, how greatly shall he rejoice.** Psalm 71:23. **My lips shall greatly rejoice, when I sing unto Thee.** Psalm 63:3[reconstructed: -7]. **Because Thy loving kindness is bet-**

ter than life, my lips shall praise Thee. Thus will I bless Thee, while I live: I will lift up my hands in Thy name: My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: When I remember [reconstructed: Thee] upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night [reconstructed: watches]; because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice.

The apostle **Paul** expresses high exercises of affection. Thus he expresses the exercises of pity and concern for others' good, even to **anguish of heart; a great, fervent and abundant love,** and **earnest and longing desires,** and **exceeding joy;** and speaks of the [reconstructed: exultation] and **triumphs** of his soul, and his **earnest expectation** and **hope,** and his **abundant tears,** and the **travails of his soul,** in pity, grief, earnest desires, godly jealousy and fervent zeal, in many places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat. **John the Baptist** expressed **great joy,** John 3:29. Those blessed **women** that anointed the body of Jesus [reconstructed: are] represented as in a very high exercise of religious affection, on occasion of Christ's resurrection; Matthew 28:8. **And they departed from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy.**

It is often foretold of the church of God, in her future happy seasons here on earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice; Psalm 8[reconstructed: 9]:15, 1[reconstructed: 6]. **They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy [reconstructed: countenance]: In Thy name [illegible] daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy king [reconstructed: comes],** etc. The same is represented in innumerable other places. And because high degrees of joy are the

proper and [reconstructed: natural fruit] of the Gospel of Christ, therefore the angel [reconstructed: called] this Gospel, [reconstructed: good] **tidings of great joy, that [reconstructed: shall be to all] people.**

The saints and angels in heaven, that have religion in its highest perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate, of God's perfections and works. They are all as a pure heavenly flame of fire, in their love, and in the greatness and strength of their joy and gratitude: Their praises are represented, **as the [reconstructed: voice] of many waters, and as the [reconstructed: voice] of a great thunder.** Now the only reason why their affections are so much higher than the holy affections of saints on earth, is, they see the things they are affected by, more according to their truth, and have their affections more conformed to the nature of things. And therefore, if religious affections in men here below, are but of the same nature and kind with theirs, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to theirs in degree, the better; because therein they will be so much the more conformed to truth, as theirs are.

From these things it certainly appears, that religious affections being in a very high degree, is no evidence that they are not such as have the nature of true religion. Therefore they do greatly err, who condemn persons as enthusiasts, merely because their affections are very high.

And on the other hand, it is no evidence that religious affections are of a spiritual and gracious nature, because they are great. It is very manifest by the holy Scripture, our sure and infallible rule to judge of things of this nature, that there are religious affections which are very high, that are not spiritual and saving. The

apostle **Paul** speaks of affections in the **Galatians**, which had been exceedingly elevated, and which yet he manifestly speaks of, as fearing that they were vain, and had come to nothing. Galatians 4:15. **Where is the blessedness you [reconstructed: spoke of]? For I bear you record, that if it had been possible, you would have [reconstructed: plucked] out your own eyes, and have given them to me.** And in the 11th verse he tells them, **he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them labor in vain.** So the children of **Israel** were greatly affected with God's mercy to them, when they had seen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the Red Sea, where they **sang God's praise**; though they soon forgot his works. So they were greatly affected again, at Mount **Sinai**, when they saw the marvelous manifestations God made of himself there; and seemed mightily engaged in their minds, and with great forwardness made answer, when God proposed his holy covenant to them, saying, **All that the Lord has spoken [reconstructed: will] we do, and be [reconstructed: obedient].** But how soon was there an end to all this mighty forwardness and engagedness of affection? How quickly were they turned aside after other gods, rejoicing and shouting around their golden calf? So great multitudes who were affected with the miracle of raising **Lazarus** from the dead, were elevated to a high degree, and made a mighty ado, when Jesus presently after entered into **Jerusalem**, exceedingly magnifying Christ, as though the ground were not good enough for the ass he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut down branches of palm-trees, and strewed them in the way; yea pulled off their garments, and spread them in the way; and cried with loud voices, **Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is he that comes in the name**

of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest; so as to make the whole city ring again, and put all into an uproar. We learn by the evangelist **John**, that the reason why the people made this ado, was because they were affected with the miracle of raising **Lazarus**; **John** 12:18. Here was a vast multitude crying **Hosanna** on this occasion, so that it gave occasion to the Pharisees to say, **Behold the world is gone after him**, John 12:19, but Christ had at that time but few true disciples. And how quickly was this ado at an end? All of this nature is quelled and dead, when this **Jesus** stands bound, with a mock robe and a crown of thorns, to be derided, spit upon, scourged, condemned and executed. Indeed there was a great and loud outcry concerning him, among the multitude then, as well as before; but of a very different kind: It is not then, **Hosanna, Hosanna**, but **Crucify, Crucify**.

And it is the concurring voice of all orthodox divines, that there may be religious affections, which are raised to a very high degree, and yet there be nothing of true religion.

2. It is no sign that affections have the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they have great effects on the body.

All Affections whatsoever, have in some Respect or Degree, an Effect on the Body. As was observed before, such is our Nature, and such are the Laws of Union of Soul and Body, that the Mind can have no lively or vigorous Exercise, without some Effect upon the Body. So subject is the Body to the Mind, and so much do its Fluids, especially the animal Spirits, attend [the] Motions and Exercises of the Mind, that there cannot be so much as an intense Thought, without an Effect upon them. Yea, it is questionable, whether an embodied Soul ever so much as thinks one Thought, or has any Exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding

Motion or Alteration of Motion, in some Degree, of the Fluids, in some Part of the Body. But universal Experience shows, that the Exercise of the Affections, have in a special Manner a Tendency, to some sensible Effect upon the Body. And if this be so, that all Affections have some Effect on the Body, we may then well suppose, the greater those Affections be, and the more vigorous their Exercise (other Circumstances being equal) the greater will be the Effect on the Body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very **great** and strong Exercises of the Affections, should have **great** Effects on the Body. And therefore, seeing there are very great Affections, both common and spiritual; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great Effects on the Body, should arise from both these Kinds of Affections. And consequently these Effects are no Signs, that the Affections they arise from, are of one Kind or the other.

Great Effects on the Body certainly are no sure Evidences that Affections are spiritual; for we see that such Effects oftentimes arise from great Affections about temporal Things, and when Religion is no Way concerned in them. And if great Affections about secular Things, are purely natural, may have these Effects, I know not by what Rule we should determine, that high Affections about religious Things, which arise in like Manner from Nature, cannot have the like Effect.

Nor on the other Hand, do I know of any Rule any have to determine, that gracious and holy Affections, when raised as high [as] any natural Affections, and have equally strong and vigorous Exercises, cannot have a great Effect on the Body. No such Rule can be drawn from Reason: I know of no Reason, why a being affected with a View of God's Glory should not cause the Body to

faint, as well as a being affected with a View of **Solomon's** Glory. And no such Rule has as yet been produced from the Scripture: None has ever been found in all the late Controversies which have been about Things of this Nature. There is a great Power in spiritual Affections; we read of the Power which worketh in Christians, and of the Spirit of God being in them, as the Spirit of Power, and of the effectual working of his Power in them yea of the working of God's mighty Power in them. But Man's Nature is weak: Flesh and Blood are represented in Scripture as exceeding weak; and particularly with Respect to its Unfitness for great spiritual and heavenly Operations and Exercises, **Matthew** 26:41. **1 Corinthians** 15:43, and 50. The Text we are upon speaks of **Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory**. And who that considers what Man's Nature is, and what the Nature of the Affections are, can reasonably doubt but that such unutterable and glorious Joys, may be too great and mighty for weak Dust and Ashes, so as to be considerably overbearing to it? It is evident by the Scripture, that true divine Discoveries, or Ideas of God's Glory, when given in a great Degree, have a Tendency, by affecting the Mind, to overbear the Body; because the Scripture teaches us often, that if these Ideas or Views should be given to such a Degree, as they are given in Heaven, the weak Frame of the Body could not subsist under it, and that no Man can, in that Manner, see God and live. The Knowledge which the Saints have of God's Beauty and Glory in this World, and those holy Affections that arise from it, are of the same Nature and Kind with what the Saints are the Subjects of in Heaven, differing only in Degree and Circumstances: What God gives them here, is a Foretaste of heavenly Happiness, and an Earnest of their future Inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this Earnest, or

say he shall give so much of the Inheritance, such a Part of the future Reward, as an Earnest of the Whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his Word, that the whole Reward is such, that it would at once destroy the Body, is it not too bold a Thing for us, so to set Bounds to the sovereign God, as to say, that in giving the Earnest of this Reward in this World, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the Strength of the Body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

The Psalmist speaking of vehement religious Affections he had, speaks of an Effect in his Flesh or Body, besides what was in his Soul, expressly distinguishing one from the other, once and again, Psalm 84:2. **My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the living God.** Here is a plain Distinction between the Heart and the Flesh, as being each affected. So Psalm 63:1. **My Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is.** Here also is an evident designed Distinction between the Soul and the Flesh.

The Prophet **Habakkuk** speaks of his Body's being overborne, by a Sense of the Majesty of God, Habakkuk 3:16. **When I heard, my Belly trembled, my Lips quivered at the Voice, Rottenness entered into my Bones, and I trembled in myself.** So the Psalmist speaks expressly of his Flesh trembling, Psalm 119:120. **My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee.**

That such Ideas of God's Glory, are sometimes given in this World, have a Tendency to overbear the Body, is evident, because the Scripture gives us an Account, that this has sometimes actually been the Effect of those external Manifestations God has made of himself, to some of the Saints, which were made to that End,

namely to give them an Idea of God's Majesty and Glory. Such Instances we have in the Prophet **Daniel**, and the Apostle **John**. **Daniel** giving an Account of an external Representation of the Glory of Christ, says, Daniel 10:8. **And there remained no Strength in me, for my Comeliness was turned into Corruption, and I retained no Strength.** And the Apostle **John** giving an Account of a like Manifestation made to him, says, Revelation 1:17. **And when I saw him, I fell at his Feet as dead.** It is in vain to say here these were only external Manifestations or Symbols of the Glory of Christ, which these Saints behold: For though it be true, that they were outward Representations of Christ's Glory, which they behold with their [own] Eyes; yet the End and Use of these external Symbols or Representations, was to give to these Prophets an Idea of the Thing represented, and that was the true divine Glory and Majesty [of] Christ, which is his spiritual Glory; they were made Use of only as Significations of this spiritual Glory, and thus undoubtedly they received them, and improved them, and were affected by them. According to the End, for which God intended these outward Signs, they received by them a great and lively Apprehension of the real Glory and Majesty of God's Nature, which they were Signs of; and thus were greatly affected, their Souls swallowed up, and their Bodies overborne. And I think, they are very bold and daring, who will say God cannot, or shall not give the like clear and affecting Ideas and Apprehensions of the same real Glory and Majesty of his Nature, to none of his Saints, without the Intervention of any such external Shadows of it.

Before I leave this Head, I would farther observe, that it is plain the Scripture often makes Use of bodily Effects, to express the Strength of holy and spiritual Affections; such as **trembling, groaning, being [sick], crying out panting, and fainting.** Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative Expressions, to represent the Degree of Affection; yet I hope all will allow, that they are fit and suitable Figures to represent the high Degree of those spiritual Affections, which the Spirit of God makes Use of them to represent. Which I do not see how they would be, if those spiritual Affections, let them be in never so high a Degree, have no Tendency to any such Things; but that on the contrary, they are the proper Effects, and sad Tokens of false Affections, and the Delusion of the Devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make Use of Things which are very alien from spiritual Affections, and are shrewd Marks of the Hand of **Satan**, and smell strong of the bottomless Pit, as beautiful Figures, to represent the high Degree of holy and heavenly Affections.

3. It is no Sign that Affections are truly gracious Affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent and abundant, in talking of the Things of Religion.

There are many Persons, who if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being so full of Talk, is with them, a sufficient Ground to condemn them, as Pharisees, and ostentatious Hypocrites. On the other Hand, there are many, who if they see this Effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true Children of God, and are under the saving Influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great Evidence of a new Creature: They say **such an one's Mouth is now [open]: He used to be slow to speak; but**

now he is full and free: He is free now to open his Heart, and tell his Experiences, and declare the Praises of God; it comes from him, as free as Water from a Fountain, and the like. And especially are they captivated into a confident and undoubting Persuasion that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their Talk.

But this is the Fruit of but little Judgment, a scanty and short Experience; as Events do abundantly show: and is a Mistake, Persons often run into, through their trusting to their own Wisdom and Discerning, and making their own Notions their Rule, instead of the holy Scripture. Though the Scripture be full of Rules, both how we should judge of our own State, and also how we should be conducted in our Opinion of others; yet we have no where any Rule, by which to judge ourselves or others to be in a good Estate, from any such Effect: For this is but the Religion of the Mouth and of the Tongue, and what is in the Scripture represented by the Leaves of a Tree, which though the Tree ought not to be without them, yet are no where given as an Evidence of the Goodness of the Tree.

That Persons are disposed to be abundant in talking of Things of Religion, may be from a good Cause, and it may be from a bad one. It may be because their Hearts are very full of holy Affections; for **out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaks:** And it may be because Persons Hearts are very full of religious Affection which is not holy; for still out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaks. It is very much the Nature of the Affections, of whatever Kind they be, and whatever Objects they are exercised about, if they are strong, to dispose Persons to be

very much in speaking of that which they are affected with; and not only to speak much, but to speak very earnestly and fervently. And therefore Persons talking abundantly and very fervently about the Things of Religion, can be an Evidence of no more than this, that they are very much affected with the Things of Religion; but this may be, (as has been already shown) and there be no Grace. That which Men are greatly affected with, while the high Affection lasts, they will be earnestly engaged about, and will be likely to show that Earnestness in their Talk and Behaviour; as the greater Part of the **Jews**, in all **Judea** and **Galilee**, did for a while, about **John the Baptist's** Preaching and Baptism, when they were willing for a Season to rejoice in his Light: A mighty ado was made, all over the Land, and among all sorts of Persons, about this great Prophet and his Ministry. And so the Multitude in like Manner, often manifested a great Earnestness, and mighty Engagedness of Spirit, in every Thing that was external, about Christ and his Preaching and Miracles, **being [astonished] at his Doctrine, [and] with Joy receiving the Word**, following him, sometimes Night and Day, leaving Meat, Drink and Sleep to hear him; once following him into the Wilderness, fasting three Days going, to hear him; sometimes crying him up to the Clouds, saying, **Never Man spoke like this Man!** being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these Things come to, in the greater Part of them?

A Person may be over-full of Talk of his own Experiences; commonly falling upon it, everywhere, and in all Companies: and when it is so, it is rather a dark Sign than a good one. As a Tree that is over-full of Leaves seldom bears much Fruit: And as a Cloud, though to Appearance very pregnant and full of Water, if it brings

with it overmuch Wind, seldom affords much Rain to the dry and thirsty Earth: Which very Thing the holy Spirit is pleased several Times to make use of, to represent a great Show of Religion with the Mouth, without answerable Fruit in the Life: Proverbs 25:14. **Whoso boasts himself of a false Gift, is like Clouds and Wind without Rain.** And the Apostle **Jude**, speaking of some in the primitive Times, that **crept in unawares** among the Saints, and having a great Show of Religion, were for a While not suspected, **These are Clouds** (says he) **without Water, carried about of Winds**, Jude verses 4, and 12. And the Apostle **Peter**, speaking of the same, says, 2 Peter 2:17. **These are Clouds without Water, carried with a Tempest.**

False Affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to declare themselves, than true. Because it is the Nature of false Religion, to affect Show and Observation; as it was with the Pharisees.

4. It is no Sign that Affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that Persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own Contrivance, and by their own Strength.

There are many in these Days, that condemn all Affections which are excited in a Way that the Subjects of them can give no Account of, as not seeming to be the Fruit of any of their own Endeavours, or the natural Consequence of the Faculties and Principles of human Nature, in such Circumstances, and under such Means; but to be from the Influence of some extrinsic and supernatural Power upon their Minds. How greatly has the Doctrine of the inward Experience or sensible Perceiving of the immediate Power and Operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late. They say the Manner of the Spirit of

God, is to cooperate in a silent, secret and undiscernible Way, with the Use of Means, and our own Endeavours; so that there is no distinguishing by Sense, between the Influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural Operations of the Faculties of our own Minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the saving Influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent Improvement of the appointed Means of Grace, is unreasonable Presumption. And to expect that the Spirit of God will savingly operate upon their Minds, without the Spirit's making Use of Means, as subservient to the Effect, is enthusiastic. It is also undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the Manner and Circumstances of his Operations, and that sometimes he operates in a Way more secret and gradual, and from smaller Beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a Power, entirely different from and beyond our Power, or the Power of all Means and Instruments, and above the Power of Nature, which is requisite in order to the Production of saving Grace in the Heart, according to the general Profession of the Country; Then certainly, it is in no wise unreasonable to suppose, that this Effect should very frequently be produced after such a Manner, as to make it very manifest, apparent, and sensible that it is so. If Grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious Operation of an extrinsic Agent, or divine Efficient out of ourselves, why is it unreasonable to suppose, it should seem to be so, to them who are the Subjects of it? Is it a strange Thing, that it should seem to be as it is? When Grace in the Heart, indeed is not produced by our Strength, nor is the Effect of the natural Power of our own Faculties, or any Means or Instruments, but is properly the Workmanship and Production of the Spirit of the

Almighty, Is it a strange and unaccountable Thing, that it should seem to them who are Subjects of it agreeable to Truth, and not right contrary to Truth, so that if Persons tell of Effects that they are conscious to in their own Minds, that seem to them not to be from the natural Power or Operation of their Minds, but from the supernatural Power of some other Agent, it should at once be looked upon as a sure Evidence of their being under a Delusion, because Things seem to them to be as they are? For this is the Objection which is made: It is looked upon as a clear Evidence that the Apprehensions and Affections that many Persons have, are not really from such a Cause, because they seem to them to be from that Cause: They declare that what they are conscious of, seems to them evidently not to be from themselves, but from the mighty Power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine what they experience is not from the Spirit of God, but from themselves, or from the Devil. Thus unreasonably are Multitudes treated at this Day, by their Neighbours.

If it be indeed so, as the Scripture abundantly teaches, that Grace in the Soul, is so the Effect of God's Power, that it is fitly compared to those Effects, which are farthest from being owing to any Strength in the Subject, such as a **Generation**, or a **being begotten**, and **Resurrection**, or a **being raised from the Dead**, and **Creation**, or a **being brought out of nothing into Being**, and that it is an Effect wherein the mighty Power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding Greatness of his Power is manifested; then what Account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in so great a Work of his Power, should so carefully hide his Power, that the Subjects of it should be able to discern nothing of it? Or what Reason or Revelation have any to determine that he does so?

If we may judge by the Scripture, this is not agreeable to God's Manner, in his Operations and Dispensations; but on the contrary, it is God's Manner, in the great Works of his Power and Mercy which he works for his People, to order Things so, as to make his Hand visible, and his Power conspicuous, and Men's Dependence on him most evident, that no Flesh should glory in his Presence, that God alone might be exalted, and that the Excellency of the Power might be of God and not of Man, and that Christ's Power might be manifested in our Weakness, and none might say mine own Hand has saved me. So it was in most of those temporal Salvations which God wrought for **Israel** of old, which were Types of the Salvation of God's People from their spiritual Enemies. So it was in the Redemption of **Israel**, from their **Egyptian** Bondage; he redeemed them with a strong Hand, and an outstretched Arm; and that his Power might be the more conspicuous, he suffered **Israel** first to be brought into the most helpless and forlorn Circumstances. So it was in the great Redemption by **Gideon**; God would have his Army diminished to a Handful, and they without any other Arms, than Trumpets, and Lamps, and earthen Pitchers. So it was in the Deliverance of **Israel** from **Goliath**, by a Stripling, with a Sling and a Stone. So it was in that great Work of God, his calling the **Gentiles**, and converting the heathen World, after Christ's Ascension, after that the World by Wisdom knew not God, and all the Endeavours of Philosophers had proved in vain, for many Ages, to reform the World, and it was by every Thing, become abundantly evident that the World was utterly helpless, by any Thing else, but the mighty Power of God. And so it was in most of the Conversions of particular Persons, we have an Account of in the History of the New Testament: They were not wrought on in

that silent, secret, gradual and insensible Manner, which is now insisted on; but with those manifest Evidences of a supernatural Power, wonderfully and suddenly causing a great Change, which in these Days are looked upon as certain Signs of Delusion and Enthusiasm.

The Apostle in Ephesians 1:18, 19 speaks of God's enlightening the Minds of Christians, and so bringing them to believe in Christ, to the End, that they **might know** the exceeding Greatness of his Power to them who believe. The Words are, **The Eyes of your Understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us-ward, who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power,** etcetera. Now when the Apostle speaks of their being thus the Subjects of his Power, in their enlightening and effectual Calling, to the End, that they might know what his mighty Power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing else, than **that they might know by Experience.** But if the Saints know this Power by Experience, then they feel it, and discern it, and are conscious of it; as sensibly distinguishable from the natural Operations of their own Minds, which is not agreeable to a Notion of God's operating so secretly, and undiscernibly, that it cannot be known that they are the Subjects of the Influence of any extrinsic Power at all, any otherwise than as they may argue it from Scripture Assertions; which is a different Thing from knowing it by Experience.

So that it is very unreasonable and unscriptural, to determine that Affections are not from the gracious Operations of God's Spirit, because they are sensibly not from the Persons themselves,

that are the Subjects of them.

On the other Hand, it is no Evidence that Affections are gracious, that they are not purposely produced by those who are the Subjects of them, or that they arise in their Minds in a Manner they cannot account for.

There are some who make this an argument in their own favor, when speaking of what they have experienced, they say, I am sure I did not make it myself: It was a fruit of no contrivance or endeavor of mine; it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might have the world for it, I cannot make it again when I please. And hence they determine, that what they have experienced, must be from the mighty influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a saving nature; but very ignorantly, and without grounds. What they have been the subjects of, may indeed, not be from themselves directly, but may be from the operation of an invisible agent, some spirit besides their own: But it does not thence follow, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other spirits who have influence on the minds of men, besides the Holy Ghost. We are directed not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, whether they be of God. There are many false spirits, exceeding busy with men, who often transform themselves into angels of light, and do in many wonderful ways, with great subtlety and power, mimic the operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of **Satan's** operations, which are very distinguishable from the voluntary exercises of men's own minds. They are so, in those dreadful and horrid suggestions, and blasphemous injections with which he follows many persons; and in vain and fruitless frights and terrors, which he is the author of. And the power of **Satan** may be as immediate, and as evident in false comforts and joys, as in terrors and horrid suggestions; and

oftentimes is so in fact. It is not in men's power to put themselves into such raptures, as the **Anabaptists** in **Germany**, and many other raving enthusiasts like them, have been the subjects of.

And besides, it is to be considered, that persons may have those impressions on their minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil spirit, but from the Spirit of God, and yet not be from any saving, but a common operation of the Spirit of God: And the subjects of such impressions, may be of the number of those we read of, Hebrews 6:4-5. **That are [once] enlightened, and [tasted] of the heavenly Gift, and are made [partakers] of the Holy [Ghost], and [tasted] the good Word of God, and the Power of the World [to come]** and yet may be wholly unacquainted with those **latter Things that accompany Salvation**, spoken of verse 9.

And where neither a good nor evil spirit have any immediate hand, persons, especially such as are of a weak and vapory habit of body, and the brain weak, and easily susceptible of impressions, may have strange apprehensions and imaginations, and strong affections attending them, unaccountably arising, which are not voluntarily produced by themselves. We see that such persons are liable to such impressions, about temporal things; and there is equal reason, why they should about spiritual things. As a person who is asleep, has dreams, that he is not the voluntary author of; so many such persons, in like manner, be the subjects of involuntary impressions, when they are awake.

5. It is no sign that religious affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come with texts of Scripture, remarkably brought to the mind.

It is no sign that affections are not gracious, that they are occasioned by Scriptures so coming to mind; provided it be the Scripture itself, or the truth which the Scripture so brought contains and teaches, that is the foundation of the affection, and not merely or mainly, the sudden and unusual manner of its coming to the mind.

But on the other hand, neither is it any sign that affections are gracious, that they arise on occasion of Scriptures brought suddenly and wonderfully to the mind; whether those affections be fear, or hope, joy, or sorrow, or any other. Some seem to look upon this, as a good evidence that their affections are saving; especially if the affections excited are hope or joy, or any other which are pleasing and delightful. They will mention it as an evidence that all is right, that their experience **came with the Word**, and will say, There were such and such sweet promises brought to my mind. They came suddenly, as if they were spoken to me. I had no hand in bringing such a text to my own mind; I was not thinking of anything leading to it: it came all at once, so that I was surprised. I had not thought of it a long time before; I did not know at first that it was Scripture; I did not remember that ever I had read it. And it may be, they will add, One Scripture came flowing in after another, and so texts all over the Bible, the most sweet and pleasant, and the most apt and suitable, which could be devised; and filled me full as I could hold. I could not but stand and admire. The tears flowed; I was full of joy, and could not doubt any longer. And thus, they think they have undoubted evidence, that their affections must be from God, and of the right kind, and their state good: But without any manner of grounds. How come they by any such rule, as that if any affections or experiences arise with promises, and

comfortable texts of Scripture, unaccountably brought to mind, without their recollection, or if a great number of sweet texts follow one another in a chain, that this is a certain evidence their experiences are saving? Where is any such rule to be found in the Bible, the great and only sure directory in things of this nature?

What deceives many of the less understanding and considerate sort of people, in this matter, seems to be this; That the Scripture is the word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect: And therefore, those experiences which come from the Scripture must be right. But then it should be considered, affections may arise on **occasion** of the Scripture, and not properly come **from** the Scripture, as the genuine fruit of the Scripture, and by a right use of it; but from an abuse of it. All that can be argued from the purity and perfection of the word of God, with respect to experiences, is this, that those experiences which are **agreeable** to the word of God, are right, and cannot be otherwise; and not that those affections must be right, which arise **on Occasion** of the word of God, coming to the mind.

What evidence is there that the Devil cannot bring texts of Scripture to the mind, and misapply them, to deceive persons? There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the power of **Satan**. It is no work of such mighty power, to bring sounds or letters to persons' minds, that we have any reason to suppose; nothing short of Omnipotence can be sufficient for it. If **Satan** has power to bring any words or sounds at all to persons' minds, he may have power to bring words contained in the Bible. There is no higher sort of power required in men, to make the sounds which express the words of a text of Scripture, than to make the sounds which express the words of an idle story or song. And so the same

power in **Satan**, which is sufficient to renew one of those kinds of sounds in the mind, is sufficient to renew the other: The different signification, which depends wholly on custom, alters not the case, as to ability to make or revive the sounds or letters. Or will any suppose, that texts of Scripture are such sacred things, that the Devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither, into the wilderness, and into an high mountain, and to a pinnacle of the temple, is not afraid to touch the Scripture, and abuse that for his own purposes. As he showed at the same time that he was so bold with Christ, he then brought one Scripture and another, to deceive and tempt him. And if **Satan** did presume, and was permitted, to put Christ himself in mind of texts of Scripture to tempt **Him**, what reason have we to determine, that he dare not, or will not be permitted, to put wicked men in mind of texts of Scripture, to tempt and deceive **them**? And if **Satan** may thus abuse one text of Scripture, so he may another. Its being a very excellent place of Scripture, a comfortable and precious promise, alters not the case, as to his courage or ability. And if he can bring one comfortable text to the mind, so he may a thousand; and may choose out such Scriptures as tend most to serve his purpose; and may heap up Scripture promises, tending, according to the perverse application he makes of them, wonderfully to remove the rising doubts, and to confirm the false joy and confidence of a poor deluded sinner.

We know the Devil's instruments, corrupt and heretical teachers, can and do pervert the Scripture, to their own and others' damnation; 2 **Peter** 3:16. We see they have the free use of Scripture, in every part of it. There is no text so precious and sa-

cred, but they are permitted to abuse it, to the eternal ruin of multitudes of souls. And there are no weapons they make use of with which they do more execution. And there is no manner of reason to determine, that the Devil is not permitted thus to use the Scripture, as well as his instruments. For when the latter do it, they do it as his instruments and servants, and through his instigation and influence. And doubtless he does the same he instigates others to do. The Devil's servants do but follow their master, and do the same work that he does himself.

And as the Devil can abuse the Scripture, to deceive and destroy men, so may men's own folly and corruptions, as well. The sin which is in men, acts like its father. Men's own hearts are deceitful like the Devil, and use the same means to deceive.

So that it is evident, that persons may have high affections of hope and joy, arising on occasion of texts of Scripture, yea precious promises of Scripture coming suddenly and remarkably to their minds, as though they were spoken to them, yea a great multitude of such texts, following one another in a wonderful manner, and yet all this be no argument that these affections are divine, or that they are any other than the effects of **Satan's** delusions.

And I would further observe, that persons may have raised and joyful affections, which may come with the word of God, and not only so, but from the word, and those affections not be from **Satan**, nor yet properly from the corruptions of their own hearts, but from some influence of the Spirit of God with the word, and yet have nothing of the nature of true and saving religion in them. Thus the stony-ground hearers had great joy from the word; yea which is represented as arising from the word, as growth from a seed; and their affections had, in their appearance, a very great

and exact resemblance with those represented by the growth on the good ground, the difference not appearing, until it was discovered by the consequences, in a time of trial. And yet there was no saving religion in these affections.

6. It is no evidence that religious affections are saving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an appearance of love in them.

There are no professing Christians who pretend, that this is an Argument against the Truth and saving Nature of religious Affections. But on the other Hand, there are some who suppose, it is a good Evidence that Affections are from the sanctifying and saving Influences of the Holy Ghost. Their Argument is, that **Satan cannot Love**; this Affection being directly contrary to the Devil, whose very Nature is Enmity and Malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excellent, heavenly and divine than a Spirit of true Christian Love to God and Men: It is more excellent than **Knowledge**, or **Prophecy**, or **Miracles**, or **speaking with the Tongue of Men and Angels**. It is the chief of the Graces of God's Spirit, and the Life, Essence and Sum of all true Religion; and that by which we are most conformed to Heaven, and most contrary to Hell and the Devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no Counterfeits of it. It may be observed, that the more excellent any thing is, the more will be the Counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more Counterfeits of Silver and Gold, than of Iron and Copper: There are many false Diamonds and Rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common Stones? Though the more excellent Things are, the more difficult it is to make any Thing that shall be like them, in their essential Nature and internal Virtue; yet the more manifold will the Counterfeits be, and the more will Art and Subtlety be exercised and displayed, in an exact Imitation of

the outward Appearance. Thus there is the greatest Danger of being cheated in buying of Medicines that are most excellent and sovereign, though it be most difficult to imitate them, with any thing of the like Value and Virtue, and their Counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian Virtues and Graces; the Subtlety of **Satan**, and Men's deceitful Hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest Repute. So there are perhaps no Graces that have more Counterfeits than Love and Humility; these being Virtues wherein the Beauty of a true Christian does especially appear.

But with Respect to Love; it is plain by the Scripture, that Persons may have a Kind of religious Love, and yet have no saving Grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians that have such Love, whose Love will not continue, and so shall fail of Salvation, Matthew 24:12, 13. **And because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the End, the same shall be saved.** Which latter Words plainly show, that those spoken of before, whose Love should not **endure to the End**, but **wax cold**, should not be saved.

Persons may seem to have Love to God and Christ, yea to have very strong and violent Affections of this Nature, and yet have no Grace. For this was evidently the Case with many graceless **Jews**, such as cried him up so high, following him Day and Night, without Meat, Drink or Sleep; such as said, **Lord I will follow thee whither soever thou goest**, and cried **Hosanna to the Son of David**.

The Apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his Days, who had a counterfeit Love to Christ, in Ephesians 6:24. **Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in**

Sincerity. The last Word, in the Original, signifies **in Incorruption**; which shows that the Apostle was sensible that there were many who had a Kind of Love to Christ, whose Love was not pure and spiritual.

So also Christian Love to the People of God may be counterfeited. It is evident by the Scripture, that there may be strong Affections of this Kind, without saving Grace; as there were in the **Galatians** towards the Apostle **Paul**, when they were ready to pluck out their Eyes and give them to him; although the Apostle expresses his Fear that their Affections were come to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them Labour in vain, **Galatians** 4:11, 15.

7. Persons having religious Affections of many Kinds, accompanying one another, is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious Affections or no.

Though false Religion is wont to be maimed and monstrous, and not to have that Entireness and Symmetry of Parts, which is to be seen in true Religion; yet there may be a great Variety of false Affections together, that may resemble gracious Affections.

It is evident that there are Counterfeits of all Kinds of gracious Affections; as of **Love to God**, and **Love to the Brethren**, as has been just now observed: so of **godly Sorrow for Sin**, as in **Pharaoh**, **Saul**, and **Ahab**, and the Children of **Israel** in the Wilderness; **Exodus** 9:27; **1 Samuel** 24:16, 17 and 26:21; **1 Kings** 21:27; **Numbers** 14:39, 40. And of the **Fear of God**, as in the **Samaritans, who feared the Lord, and served their own Gods** at the same Time; **2 Kings** 17:32, 33. And those Enemies of God we read of Psalm 66:3 who **through the Greatness of**

God's Power, submit themselves to him, or, as it is in the Hebrew, **lie unto him**, that is, yield a counterfeit Reverence and Submission: so of a **gracious Gratitude**, as in the Children of **Israel**, who sang God's Praise at the Red Sea, Psalm 106:12; and **Naaman the Syrian**, after his miraculous Cure of his Leprosy, 2 **Kings** 5:15, and so forth.

So of **spiritual Joy**, as in the stony-ground Hearers, **Matthew** 13:20; and particularly many of **John the Baptist's** Hearers, **John** 5:35. So of **Zeal**, as in **Jehu**, 2 **Kings** 10:16; and in **Paul** before his Conversion, **Galatians** 1:14; **Philippians** 3:6; and the unbelieving **Jews**, **Acts** 22:3; **Romans** 10:2. So graceless Persons may have earnest religious **Desires**, which may be like **Balaam's** Desires, which he expresses under an extraordinary View that he had of the happy State of God's People, as distinguished from all the rest of the World, **Numbers** 23:9, 10. They may also have a strong **Hope** of eternal Life, as the Pharisees had.

And as Men, while in a State of Nature, are capable of a Resemblance of all Kinds of religious Affections, so nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in Fact does abundantly evince that it is very often so indeed. It seems commonly to be so, that when false Affections are raised high, there are many false Affections attend each other. The Multitude that attended Christ into **Jerusalem**, after that great Miracle of raising **Lazarus**, seem to be moved with many religious Affections at once, and all in a high Degree. They seem to be filled with **Admiration**, and there was a Show of an high Affection of **Love**, and also of a great Degree of **Reverence**, in their laying their Garments on the Ground, for Christ to tread upon; and also of great **Gratitude** to him, for the great and good Works he had

wrought, praising him with loud Voices for his Salvation; and earnest **Desires** of the Coming of God's Kingdom, which they supposed **Jesus** was now about to set up, and showed great **Hopes** and raised Expectations of it, **expecting it would immediately appear**, and hence were filled with **Joy**, by which they were so animated in their Acclamations, as to make the whole City ring with the Noise of them; and appeared great in their **Zeal** and Forwardness to attend Jesus, and assist him without further Delay, now in the Time of the great Feast of the **Passover**, to set up his Kingdom. And it is easy, from Nature, and the Nature of the Affections, to give an Account why, when one Affection is raised very high, that it should excite others; especially if the Affection which is raised high, be that of counterfeit **Love**, as it was in the Multitude who cried **Hosanna**. This will naturally draw many other Affections after it. For, as was observed before, Love is the Chief of the Affections, and as it were the Fountain of them. Let us suppose a Person who has been for some Time in great Exercise and Terror through Fear of Hell, and his Heart weakened with Distress and dreadful Apprehensions, and upon the Brink of Despair, and is all at once delivered, by being firmly made to believe, through some Delusion of **Satan**, that God has pardoned him, and accepts him as the Object of his dear Love, and promises him eternal Life: as suppose through some Vision, or strong Idea or Imagination, suddenly excited in him, of a Person with a beautiful Countenance, smiling on him, and with Arms open, and with Blood dropping down, which the Person conceives to be Christ, without any other Enlightening of the Understanding, to give a View of the spiritual divine Excellency of Christ and his Fulness, and of the Way of Salvation revealed in the Gospel; or perhaps by

some Voice or Words coming as if they were spoke to him, such as those, **Son, be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee, or, Fear not, it is the Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom,** which he takes to be immediately spoken by God to him, though there was no preceding Acceptance of Christ, or closing of the Heart with him: I say, if we should suppose such a Case, what various Passions would naturally crowd at once, or one after another, into such a Person's Mind? It is easy to be accounted for, from mere Principles of Nature, that a Person's Heart, on such an Occasion, should be raised up to the Skies with Transports of Joy, and be filled with fervent Affection, to that imaginary God or Redeemer, who he supposes has thus rescued him from the Jaws of such dreadful Destruction, that his Soul was so amazed with the Fears of, and has received him with such Endearment, as a peculiar Favourite; and that now he should be filled with Admiration and Gratitude, and his Mouth should be opened, and be full of Talk about what he has experienced; and that, for a while, he should think and speak of scarce any Thing else, and should seem to magnify that God who has done so much for him, and call upon others to rejoice with him, and appear with a cheerful Countenance, and talk with a loud Voice: and however, before his Deliverance, he was full of quarrellings against the Justice of God, that now it should be easy for him to submit to God, and own his Unworthiness, and cry out against himself, and appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his Feet as tame as a Lamb; and that he should now confess his Unworthiness, and cry out, **Why me? Why me?** (Like **Saul**, who when **Samuel** told him that God had appointed him to be King, makes answer, **Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the Tribes of Israel, and my Family the**

least of all the Families of the Tribe of Benjamin? Wherefore then speakest thou so to me? Much in the Language of **David**, the true Saint, 2 Samuel 7:18. **Who am I, and what is my Father's House, that thou hast brought me hitherto!**) Nor is it to be wondered at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy Circumstances, and should love all such as esteem and admire him and what he has experienced, and have violent Zeal against all such as would make nothing of such Things, and be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim War with all who are not of his Party, and should now glory in his Sufferings, and be very much for condemning and censuring all who seem to doubt, or make any Difficulty of these Things; and while the Warmth of his Affections last, should be mighty forward to take Pains, and deny himself, to promote the Interest of the Party who he imagines favour such Things, and seem earnestly desirous to increase the Number of them, as the **Pharisees** compassed Sea and Land to make one **Proselyte**. And so I might go on, and mention many other Things, which will naturally arise in such Circumstances. He must have but slightly considered human Nature, who thinks such Things as these can't arise in this Manner, without any supernatural Interposition of divine Power.

As from true divine Love flow all christian Affections, so from a counterfeit Love in like Manner, naturally flow other false Affections. In both Cases, Love is the Fountain, and the other Affections are the Streams. The various Faculties, Principles and Affections of the human Nature, are as it were many Channels from one Fountain: If there be sweet Water in the Fountain, sweet Water will from thence flow out into those various Channels; but if

the Water in the Fountain be poisonous, then poisonous Streams will also flow out into all those Channels. So that the Channels and Streams will be alike, corresponding one with another; but the great Difference will lie in the Nature of the Water. Or, Man's Nature may be compared to a Tree, with many Branches, coming from one Root: If the Sap in the Root be good, there will also be good Sap distributed throughout the Branches, and the Fruit that is brought forth will be good and wholesome; but if the Sap in the Root and Stock be poisonous, so it will be in many Branches, (as in the other Case) and the Fruit will be deadly. The Tree in both Cases may be alike; there may be an exact Resemblance in Shape; but the Difference is found only in eating the Fruit. It is thus (in some Measure at least) oftentimes, between Saints and Hypocrites. There is sometimes a very great Similitude between true and false Experiences, in their Appearance, and in what is expressed and related by the Subjects of them: and the Difference between them is much like the Difference between the Dreams of **Pharaoh's** chief Butler and Baker; they seemed to be much alike; insomuch that when **Joseph** interpreted the chief Butler's Dream, that he should be delivered from his Imprisonment, and restored to the King's Favour, and his honourable Office in the Palace, the chief Baker had raised Hopes and Expectations, and told his Dream also; but he was woefully disappointed; and though his Dream was so much like the happy and well-boding Dream of his Companion, yet it was quite contrary in its issue.

8. Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the Nature of the Affections by this, that Comforts and Joys seem to follow Awakenings and Convictions of Conscience, in a **certain Order**.

Many Persons seem to be prejudiced against Affections and Experiences, that come in such a Method, as has been much insisted on by many Divines; first, such Awakenings, Fears and awful Apprehensions followed with such legal Humblings, in a Sense of total Sinfulness and Helplessness, and then, such and such Light and Comfort: they look upon all such Schemes, laying down such Methods and Steps, to be of Men's devising: And particularly if high Affections of Joy follow great Distress and Terror, it is made by many an Argument against those Affections. But such Prejudices and Objections are without Reason or Scripture. Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers Persons from a State of Sin and Exposedness to eternal Destruction, he should give them some considerable Sense of the Evil he delivers from; that they may be delivered sensibly, and understand their own Salvation, and know something of what God does for them. As Men that are saved are in two exceeding different States, first a State of Condemnation, and then in a State of Justification and Blessedness; and as God in the Work of the Salvation of Mankind, deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational Nature; so it seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's Wisdom, that Men who are saved, should be in these two States sensibly, first, that they should sensibly to themselves, be in a State of Condemnation, and so in a State of woeful Calamity and dreadful Misery, and so afterwards sensibly in a State of Deliverance and Happiness; and that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme Necessity, and afterwards of Christ's Sufficiency and God's Mercy through him.

And that it is God's Manner of dealing with Men, to **lead them into a Wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them**, and so to order it, that they shall be brought into Distress, and made to see their own Helplessness, and absolute Dependence on his Power and Grace, before he appears to work any great Deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the Scripture. Then is God wont to **repent himself for his professing People, when their Strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left**, and when they are brought to see that their false Gods cannot help them, and that the Rock in whom they trusted is vain; **Deuteronomy 32:36, 37**. Before God delivered the Children of **Israel** out of **Egypt**, they were prepared for it, by being made to **see that they were in an evil Case, and to cry unto God, because of their hard Bondage**; **Exodus 2:23 and 5:19**. And before God wrought that great Deliverance for them at the Red Sea, they were brought into great Distress, **the Wilderness had shut them in**, they could not turn to the right Hand nor the left, and the **Red Sea** was before them, and the great **Egyptian** Host behind, and they were brought to see that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up; and then God appeared and turned their Cries into Songs. So before they were brought to their Rest, and to enjoy the Milk and Honey of **Canaan**, God **led them through a great and terrible Wilderness, that he might humble them, and teach them what was in their Heart, and so do them Good in their latter End**; **Deuteronomy 8:2, 16**. The Woman that had the Issue of Blood twelve Years, was not delivered, till she had first **spent all her Living on earthly Physicians, and could not be healed of any**, and so was left

helpless, having no more Money to spend; and then she came to the great Physician, without any Money or Price, and was healed by him; **Luke** 8:43, 44. Before Christ would answer the Request of the Woman of **Canaan**, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herself worthy to be called a Dog; and then he showed her Mercy, and received her as a dear Child; **Matthew** 15:22, et cetera. The Apostle **Paul**, before a remarkable Deliverance, was **pressed out of Measure, above Strength, insomuch that he despaired even of Life; but had the Sentence of Death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the Dead;** 2 Corinthians 1:8, 9, 10. There was first a great Tempest, and the Ship was covered with the Waves, and just ready to sink, and the Disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, **Lord, save us, we perish;** and then the Winds and Seas were rebuked, and there was a great Calm; **Matthew** 8:24, 25, 26. The Leper, before he is cleansed, must have his Mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper Lip, and was to acknowledge his great Misery and utter Uncleaness, by rending his Clothes, and crying, **Unclean, unclean:** Leviticus 13:45. And backsliding **Israel**, before God heals them, are brought to **acknowledge that they have sinned, and have not obeyed the Voice of the Lord,** and to see that **they lie down in their Shame, and that Confusion covers them, and that in vain is Salvation hoped for from the Hills, and from the Multitude of Mountains,** and that God only can save them; **Jeremiah** 3:23, 24, 25. **Joseph**, who was sold by his Brethren, and therein was a Type of Christ, brings his Brethren into great Perplexity and Distress, and brings them to re-

flect on their Sin, and to say we are verily guilty; and at last to resign up themselves entirely into his Hands for Bondmen; and then reveals himself to them, as their Brother and their Saviour.

And if we consider those extraordinary Manifestations which God made of himself to Saints of Old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a Way which was terrible, and then by those Things that were comfortable. So it was with **Abraham**; first a **Horror of great Darkness fell upon him**, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet Promises; **Genesis** 15:12, 13. So it was with **Moses** at Mount **Sinai**; first, God appeared to him in all the Terrors of his dreadful Majesty, so that **Moses** said, I exceedingly fear and quake, and then he made all his Goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his Name, **the Lord God gracious and merciful**, et cetera. So it was with **Elijah**; first, there is a stormy Wind, and Earthquake, and devouring Fire, and then a still, small, sweet Voice; **1 Kings** 19. So it was with **Daniel**; he first saw Christ's Countenance as Lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable Words as these, **O Daniel, a Man greatly beloved**, **Daniel** 10. So it was with the Apostle **John**, **Revelation** 1. And there is an Analogy observable in God's Dispensations and Deliverances which he works for his People, and the Manifestation which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many Things in Scripture which do more directly show, that this is God's ordinary Manner in working Salvation for the Souls of Men, and in the Manifestations God makes of himself and of his Mercy in Christ, in the ordinary Works of his Grace on the Hearts of Sinners. The Servant that owed his Prince ten thou-

sand Talents, is first held to his Debt, and the King pronounces Sentence of Condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his Wife and Children, and Payment to be made; and thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole Debt to be just, and then forgives him all. The prodigal Son spends all he has, and is brought to see himself in extreme Circumstances, and to humble himself, and own his Unworthiness, before he is relieved and feasted by his Father; **Luke** 15. Old inveterate Wounds must be searched to the Bottom, in order to Healing. And the Scripture compares Sin, the Wound of the Soul, to this, and speaks of healing this Wound without thus searching of it, as vain and deceitful; **Jeremiah** 8:11. Christ, in the Work of his Grace on the Hearts of Men, is compared to Rain on the mown Grass, Grass that is cut down with a Scythe, **Psalms** 72:6, representing his refreshing, comforting Influences on the wounded Spirit. Our first Parents, after they had sinned, were first terrified with God's Majesty and Justice, and had their Sin, with its Aggravations, set before them by their Judge, before they were relieved, by the Promise of the Seed of the Woman. Christians are spoken of as those **that have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before them**, Hebrews 6:18, which Representation implies great Fear, and Sense of Danger preceding. To the like Purpose, Christ is called **a hiding Place from the Wind, and a Covert from the Tempest, and as Rivers of Water in a dry Place, and as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land**; Isaiah 32 at the Beginning. And it seems to be the natural Import of the Word **Gospel**, glad Tidings, that it is News of Deliverance and Salvation, after great Fear and Distress. There is all Reason to suppose, that God deals with particular Believers, as he dealt with his Church, which he first made

to hear his Voice in the Law, with terrible Thunders and Lightnings, and kept her under that School Master, to prepare her for Christ; and then comforted her with the joyful Sound of the Gospel from Mount **Zion**. So likewise **John the Baptist** came to prepare the Way for Christ, and prepare Men's Heart for his Reception, by showing them their Sins, and by bringing the self-righteous **Jews** off from their own Righteousness, telling them that they were a **Generation of Vipers**, and showing them their Danger of **the Wrath to come**, telling them that **the Ax was laid at the Root of the Trees**, et cetera.

And if it be indeed God's Manner (as I think the foregoing Considerations show that it undoubtedly is) before he gives Men the Comfort of a Deliverance from their Sin and Misery, to give them a considerable Sense of the Greatness and Dreadfulness of those Evils, and their extreme Wretchedness by Reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that Persons, at least oftentimes, while under these Views, should have great Distress and terrible Apprehensions of Mind: Especially if it be considered what these Evils are, that they have a View of; which are no other than great and manifold Sins, against the infinite Majesty of the great Jehovah, and the Suffering of the Fierceness of his Wrath to all Eternity. And the more so still, when we have many plain Instances in Scripture, of Persons that have actually been brought into extreme Distress, by such Convictions, before they have received saving Consolations: As the Multitude at **Jerusalem**, who were **pricked in their Heart, and said unto Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, What shall we do?** And the Apostle **Paul**, who **trembled and was astonished**, before he was comforted; and the **Jailor**, when **he called**

for a Light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

From these Things it appears to be very unreasonable in professing Christians, to make this an Objection against the Truth and spiritual Nature of the comfortable and joyful Affections which any have, that they follow such awful Apprehensions and Distresses, as have been mentioned.

And on the other Hand, It is no Evidence that Comforts and Joys are right, because they succeed great Terrors, and amazing Fears of Hell. This seems to be what some Persons lay great Weight upon; esteeming great Terrors an Evidence of a great Work of the Law wrought on the Heart, well preparing the Way for solid Comfort: Not considering that Terror, and a Conviction of Conscience, are different Things. For though Convictions of Conscience do often cause Terror; yet they do not consist in it; and Terrors do often arise from other Causes. Convictions of Conscience, through the Influences of God's Spirit, consist in Conviction of Sinfulness of Heart and Practice, and of the Dreadfulness of Sin, as committed against a God of terrible Majesty, infinite Holiness and Hatred of Sin, and strict Justice in punishing of it. But there are some Persons that have frightful Apprehensions of Hell, a dreadful Pit ready to swallow them up, and Flames just ready to lay hold of them, and Devils around them, ready to seize them; who at the same Time seem to have very little proper Enlightenings of Conscience, really convincing them of their Sinfulness of Heart and Life. The Devil, if permitted, can terrify Men as well as the Spirit of God: 'Tis a Work natural to him, and he has many Ways of doing it, in a Manner tending to no

Good. He may exceedingly frighten Persons, by impressing on them many external Images and Ideas, of a Countenance frowning, a Sword drawn, black Clouds of Vengeance, Words of an awful Doom pronounced, Hell gaping, Devils coming, and the like; not to convince Persons of Things that are true, and revealed in the Word of God, but to lead them to vain and groundless Determinations; as that their Day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a Resolution immediately to cut them off, **et cetera**.

And the Terrors which some Persons have, are very much owing to the particular **constitution** and **temper** they are of. Nothing is more manifest, than that some Persons are of such a Temper and Frame, that their **minds** are more strongly impressed with every Thing they are **affected** with, than others; and the Impression on the Imagination **works** on the Affection, and **raises** that still higher; and so Affection and Imagination act reciprocally, one on another, till their Affection is **raised** to a vast Height, and the Person is swallowed up, and **loses** all Possession of himself.

And some speak of a great Sight they have of their Wickedness, which really, when the Matter comes to be well examined into and thoroughly weighed, are found to have little or no Convictions of Conscience. They tell of a dreadful hard Heart, and how their Heart lies like a Stone; when truly they have none of those Things in their Minds or Thoughts, wherein the Hardness of Men's Heart does really consist. They tell of a dreadful Load and Sink of Sin, a Heap of black and loathsome Filthiness within them; when, if the Matter be carefully enquired into, they have not in View any Thing wherein the Corruption of Nature does truly consist, nor have they

any Thought of any particular Thing wherein their Hearts are sinfully defective, or fall short of what ought to be in them, or any Exercises at all of Corruption in them. And many think also they have great Convictions of their actual Sins, who truly have none. They tell how their Sins are set **in** Order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round in a **circle**, with a dreadful frightful Appearance; when really they have not so much **idea** of the Sins they have been guilty of in the Course of their Lives, coming into View, that they are affected with the Aggravations of.

And if Persons have had great Terror, which really have been from the awakening and convincing Influences of the Spirit of God, it don't thence follow that their Terrors must needs issue in true Comfort. The **native** Corruption of the Heart may quench the Spirit of God (after he has been striving) by leading Men to presumptuous, and self-exalting Hopes and Joys, as well as otherwise. 'Tis not every Woman who is really in Travail, that brings forth a real Child; but it may be a monstrous Production, without any Thing of the Form or Properties of human Nature belonging to it. **Pharaoh's** chief Baker, after he had **lain** in the Dungeon with **Joseph**, had a Vision that raised his Hopes, and he was lifted up out of the Dungeon, as well as the chief Butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if Comforts and Joys do not only come after great Terrors and Awakenings, but there be an Appearance of **such** preparatory Convictions and Humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by **such** Steps, and in **such** a Method, as has frequently been observable in true Converts; this is no certain Sign that the Light and Comforts which follow are true and saving. And for these following Reasons,

First, As the Devil can counterfeit all the saving Operations and Graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those Operations that are preparatory to Grace. If Satan can counterfeit those Effects of God's Spirit which are special, divine and sanctioning; so that there shall be a very great Resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those Works of God's Spirit which are common, and which Men, while that are yet his own Children, are the Subjects of. These Works are in no wise so much above him as the other. There are no Works of God that are so high and divine, and above the Powers of Nature, and out of the Reach of the Power of all Creatures, as those Works of his Spirit, whereby he forms the Creature in his own Image, and makes it to be a Partaker of the divine Nature. But if the Devil can be the Author of such Resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferior Kind. And it is abundantly evident in Fact, that there are false Humiliations, and false Submissions, as well as false Comforts. How far was **Saul** brought, though a very wicked Man, and of a haughty Spirit, when he (though a great King) was brought, in Conviction of his Sin, as it were to fall down, all in Tears, weeping aloud, before **David** his own Subject, (and one that he had for a long Time mortally hated, and openly treated as an Enemy) and condemn himself before him, crying out, **You are more Righteous than I. You have rewarded me Good, whereas I have rewarded you Evil?** And at another Time, **I have sinned, I have played the Fool, I have erred exceedingly,** 1 Samuel 24:16, 17 and Chapter 26:21. And yet **Saul** seems then to have had very little of the Influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and given him up, and

an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud Monarch, in a Pang of Affection, was brought to humble himself so low, before a Subject that he hated, and still continued an Enemy to; there doubtless may be Appearances of great Conviction and Humiliation in Men, before God, while they yet remain Enemies to him, and though they finally continue so. There is oftentimes in Men who are terrified through Fears of Hell, a great Appearance of their being brought off from their own Righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in all Ways, although they are in many Ways that are more plain and visible. They have only exchanged some Ways of trusting in their own Righteousness, for others that are more secret and subtle. Oftentimes a great Degree of Discouragement, as to many Things they used to depend upon, is taken for Humiliation: And that is called a Submission to God, which is no absolute Submission, but has some secret Bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

Secondly, If the Operations and Effects of the Spirit of God, in the Convictions and Comforts of true Converts may be sophisticated, then the Order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the Things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain Order. If the Devil can make A, B, and C, 'tis as easy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary Order. The Nature of divine Things is harder for the Devil to imitate, than their Order. He cannot **exactly** imitate divine Operations in their Nature, though his Counterfeits may be very much like them in external Appearance; but he can exactly imitate their Order. When Counterfeits are made, there is no divine Power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no Order or Method of Operations

and Experiences, is any certain Sign of their Divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain Evidence of Grace, which Satan cannot do, and which it is impossible should be brought to pass by any Power short of divine.

Thirdly, We have no certain Rule to determine how far God's own Spirit may go in those Operations and Convictions which in themselves are not spiritual and saving, and yet the Person that is the Subject of them, never be converted, but fall short of Salvation at last. There is no necessary Connection in the Nature of Things, between any Thing that a natural Man may experience, while in a State of Nature, and the saving Grace of God's Spirit. And if there be no Connection in the Nature of Things, then there can be no known and certain Connection at all, unless it be by divine Revelation. But there is no revealed certain Connection between a State of Salvation, and any Thing that a natural Man can be the Subject of, before he believes in Christ. God has revealed no certain Connection between Salvation, and any Qualifications in Men, but only Grace and its Fruits. And therefore we don't find any legal Convictions, or Comforts following those legal Convictions, in any certain Method or Order, ever once mentioned in the Scripture, as certain Signs of Grace, or Things peculiar to the Saints; although we do find gracious Operations and Effects themselves, so mentioned, Thousands of Times. Which should be enough with Christians, who are willing to have the Word of God, rather than their own Philosophy, and Experiences, and Conjectures, as their sufficient and sure Guide in Things of this Nature.

Fourthly, Experience does greatly confirm, that Persons seeming to have Convictions & Comforts following one another in such a Method and Order, as is frequently observable in true

Converts, is no certain Sign of Grace. I appeal to all those Ministers in this Land, who have had much Occasion of dealing with Souls, in the late extraordinary Season, whether there have not been many who don't prove well, that have given a fair Account of their Experiences, and have seemed to be converted according to Rule, **that is** with Convictions and Affections, succeeding distinctly and exactly, in that Order and Method, which has been ordinarily insisted on, as the Order of the Operations of the Spirit of God in Conversion.

And as a Seeming to have this Distinctness as to Steps and Method, is no certain Sign that a Person is converted; so a being without it, is no Evidence that a Person is not converted. For though it might be made evident to a Demonstration, on Scripture Principles, that a Sinner can't be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his Sin and Misery, and of his own Emptiness and Helplessness, and his just desert of eternal Condemnation; and that therefore such Convictions must be some Way **implied** in what is wrought in his Soul; yet nothing proves it to be necessary, that all those Things which are implied or presupposed in an Act of Faith in Christ must be plainly and distinctly wrought in the Soul, in so many successive and separate Works of the Spirit that shall be, each one, plain and manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the contrary, (as Mr. **Shepard** observes) sometimes the Change made in a Saint, at first Work, is like a confused Chaos; so that the Saints know not what to make of it. The Manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unsearchable: We, as it were, hear the Sound of it, the Effect of it is discernable; but no Man can tell whence it came, or whither it went. And 'tis often-

times as difficult to know the Way of the Spirit in the new Birth, as in the first Birth: **Ecclesiastes 11. 5. Thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit, or how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child: Even so thou knowest not the Work of God, that worketh all.** The ingenerating of a Principle of Grace in the Soul, seems in Scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the Womb: **Galatians 4. 19.** And therefore the Church is called Christ's Mother, **Canticles 3. 11.** And so is every particular Believer, **Matthew 12. 49, 50.** And the Conception of Christ in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, by the Power of the holy Ghost, seems to be a designed Resemblance of the Conception of Christ in the Soul of a Believer, by the Power of the same holy Ghost. And we know not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow, either in the Womb, or Heart that conceives this holy Child. The new Creature may use that Language in **Psalms 139. 14, 15. I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy Works: And that my Soul knoweth right well. My Substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret.** Concerning the Generation of Christ, both in his Person, and also in the Hearts of his People, it may be said, as in **Isaiah 53. 8. Who can declare his Generation.** We know not the Works of God, that worketh all. **'Tis the Glory of God to conceal a Thing,** (**Proverbs 25. 2.**) and to have **his Path as it were in the mighty Waters, that his Footsteps may not be known:** And especially in the Works of his Spirit on the Hearts of Men, which are the highest and chief of his Works. And therefore it is said, **Isaiah 40. 13. Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his Counsellor hath taught him.** 'Tis to be feared that some have gone too far towards

directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his Footsteps for him, and limiting him to certain Steps and Methods. Experience plainly shows, that God's Spirit is unsearchable and untraceable, in some of the best of Christians, in the Method of his Operations, in their Conversion. Nor does the Spirit of God proceed discernably in the Steps of a particular established Scheme, one half so often as is imagined. A Scheme of what is necessary, and according to a Rule already received and established by common Opinion, has a vast (though to many a very insensible) Influence in forming Persons Notions of the Steps and Method of their own Experiences. I know very well what their Way is; for I have had much Opportunity to observe it. Very often, at first, their Experiences appear like a confused **Chaos**, as Mr. **Shepard** expresses it: But then those Passages of their Experience are picked out, that have most of the Appearance of such particular Steps that are insisted on; and these are dwelt upon in the Thoughts, and these are told of from Time to Time, in the Relation they give: These Parts grow brighter and brighter in their View; and others, being neglected, grow more and more obscure: And what they have experienced is insensibly strained to bring all to an exact Conformity to the Scheme that is established. And it becomes natural for Ministers, who have to deal with them and direct them that insist upon Distinctness and Clearness of Method, to do so too. But yet there has been so much to be seen of the Operations of the Spirit of God, of late, that they who have had much to do with Souls, and are not blinded with a seven-fold Veil of Prejudice, must know that the Spirit is so exceeding various in the Manner of his operating, that in many Cases it is impossible to trace him, or find out his Way.

What we have principally to do with, in our Enquiries into our own State, or Directions we give to others, is the **Nature** of the Effect that God has brought to pass in the Soul. As to the Steps which the Spirit of God took to bring that Effect to pass, we may leave them to him. We are often in Scripture expressly directed to try ourselves by the **Nature** of the Fruits of the Spirit; but nowhere by the Spirit's **Method** of producing them. Many do greatly err in their Notions of a clear Work of Conversion; calling that a clear Work, where the successive Steps of Influence, and Method of Experience is clear: Whereas that indeed is the clearest Work, (not where the Order of **doing** is clearest, but) where the spiritual and divine Nature of the Work **done**, and Effect **wrought**, is most clear.

9. 'Tis no certain Sign that the religious Affections which Persons have are such as have in them the Nature of true Religion, or that they have not, that they dispose Persons to spend much Time in Religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external Duties of Worship.

This has, very unreasonably, of late been looked upon as an Argument against the religious Affections which some have had, that they spend so much Time in reading, praying, singing, hearing Sermons, and the like. 'Tis plain from the Scripture that it is the Tendency of true Grace to cause Persons very much to delight in such religious Exercises. True Grace had this Effect on **Anna** the Prophetess; Luke 1. 37. **She departed not from the Temple; but served God with Fastings and Prayers, Night and Day.** And Grace had this Effect upon the primitive Christians in **Jerusalem**; Acts 2. 46, 47. **And they continuing daily, with one Accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from**

House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart, praising God. Grace made **Daniel** delight in the Duty of Prayer, and solemnly to attend it three Times a Day: As it also did **David**; Psalms 55. 17. **Evening, Morning and at Noon** will I pray. Grace makes the Saints delight in singing Praises to God: Psalms 135. 3. **Sing Praises unto his Name, for it is pleasant.** And 147. 1. **Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing Praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely.** It also causes them to delight to hear the Word of God preached: It makes the Gospel a joyful Sound to them; Psalms 89. 15. And makes the Feet of those who publish these good Tidings, to be beautiful; Isaiah 52. 7. **How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings,** etc! It makes them love God's public Worship; Psalms 26. 8. **Lord I have loved the Habitation of thy House, and the Place where thine Honour dwelleth.** And 27. 4. **One Thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, all the Days of my Life; to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.** Psalms 84. 1, 2, etc.—**How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord. —Yea the Sparrow hath found an House, and the Swallow a Nest for herself, where she may lay her Young, even thine Altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thine House; they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the Man in whose Heart are the Ways of them, who passing through the Valley of Baca,—go from**

Strength to Strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. —Verse 10. A Day in thy Courts is better than a thousand.

This is the Nature of true Grace. But yet, on the other Hand, Persons being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external Exercises of Religion, and to spend much Time in them, is no sure Evidence of Grace; because such a Disposition is found in many that have no Grace. So it was with the **Israelites** of old, whose Services were abominable to God; they attended the **new Moons, and Sabbaths, and calling of Assemblies, and spread forth their Hands, and made many Prayers;** Isaiah 1. 12,—15. So it was with the **Pharisees;** they **made long Prayers, and fasted twice a Week.** False Religion may cause Persons to be loud and earnest in Prayer: Isaiah 58. 4. **Ye shall not fast as ye do this Day, to cause your Voice to be heard on high.** That Religion which is not spiritual and saving, may cause Men to delight in religious Duties and Ordinances: Isaiah 58. 2. **Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my Ways; as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their God. They ask of me the Ordinances of Justice, they take Delight in approaching to God.** It may cause them to take Delight in hearing the Word of God preached; as it was with **Ezekiel's** Hearers, Ezekiel 33. 31, 32. **And they come unto thee as my People cometh, and they sit before thee as my People, and they hear thy Words; but they will not do them: for with their Mouth they show much Love; but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness. And Lo, thou art unto them, as a very lovely Song, of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can**

play well on an Instrument: For they hear thy Words, but they do them not. So it was with **Herod**; he **heard** John the Baptist **gladly**: Mark 6. 20. So it was with others of his Hearers, **for a Season, they rejoiced in his Light**; John 5. 35. So the stony ground Hearers **heard the Word with Joy**.

Experience shows that Persons, from false Religion, may be inclined to be exceeding abundant in the external Exercises of Religion; yea, to give themselves up to them, and devote almost their whole Time to them. Formerly a Sort of People were very numerous in the **Romish** Church, called **Recluses**; who forsook the World, and utterly abandoned the Society of Mankind, and shut themselves up close, in a narrow Cell, with a Vow never to stir out of it, nor to see the Face of any of Mankind any more; (unless that they might be visited in Case of Sickness) to spend all their Days in the Exercises of Devotion and Converse with God. There were also in old Time, great Multitudes called **Hermits** and **Anchorites**, that left the World to spend all their Days in lonesome Deserts, to give themselves up to religious Contemplations and Exercises of Devotion; some Sorts of them having no Dwellings, but the Caves and Vaults of the Mountains, and no Food, but the spontaneous Productions of the Earth. —I once lived, for many Months, next Door to a **Jew**, (the Houses adjoining one to another) and had much Opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest Person that ever I saw in my Life; great Part of his Time being spent in Acts of Devotion, at his eastern Window, which opened next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the Day-time, but sometimes whole Nights.

10. Nothing can be certainly known of the nature of religious affections by this, that they much dispose persons with their mouths to praise and glorify God. This indeed is implied in what has been just now observed, of abounding and spending much time in the external exercises of religion, and was also hinted before; but because many seem to look upon it as a bright evidence of gracious affection, when persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God, to have their mouths full of his praises, and affectionately to be calling on others to praise and extol him, I thought it deserved a more particular consideration.

No Christian will make it an argument against a person, that he seems to have such a disposition. Nor can it reasonably be looked upon as an evidence for a person, if these things that have been already observed and proved, be duly considered, **namely** that persons, without grace, may have high affections towards God and Christ, and that their affections, being strong, may fill their mouths, and incline them to speak much, and very earnestly, about the things they are affected with, and that there may be counterfeits of all kinds of gracious affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly, that this is no certain sign of grace, if we consider what instances the Scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an account of this, in the multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought miracles; Mark 2:12. **And immediately he arose, took up his bed, and went forth before them all: Insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion!** So Matthew 9:8 and Luke 5:26. Also Matthew 15:31. **Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, and the maimed to be whole, the**

lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel. So we are told, that on occasion of Christ's raising the son of the widow of **Nain**, Luke 7:16. **There came a great fear on all; and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his people.** So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him, Luke 4:15. **And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.** And how did they praise him with loud voices, crying, **Hosanna to the son of David, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,** a little before he was crucified! And after Christ's ascension, when the apostles had healed the impotent man, we are told, that **all men glorified God for that which was done**, Acts 4:21. When the **Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia**, heard from **Paul and Barnabas**, that God would reject the **Jews**, and take the **Gentiles** to be his people in their room, they were affected with this goodness of God to the **Gentiles, and glorified the word of the Lord:** But all that did so were not true believers; but only a certain elect number of them; as is intimated in the account we have of it, Acts 13:48. **And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.** So of old, the children of Israel at the Red Sea, sang his praise; but soon forgot his works. And it is foretold of false professors, and real enemies of religion, that they should show a forwardness to glorify God; Isaiah 66:5. **Hear ye the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word: Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified.**

It is no certain sign that a person is graciously affected, if in the midst of his hopes and comforts, he is greatly affected with God's unmerited kindness to him that is so unworthy, and seems greatly to extol and magnify grace. Those that yet remain with unmortified pride and enmity against God, may, when they imagine that they have received extraordinary kindness from God, cry out of their unworthiness, and magnify God's undeserved goodness to them, from no other sense of their ill deservings, and from no higher principle, than **Saul** had who while he yet remained with subdued pride and enmity against **David**, was brought, though a King, to acknowledge his sin, and **cry out, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly**, and with great affection and admiration, to magnify and extol **David's** unmerited and unexampl'd kindness to him, 1 Samuel 25:16-19 and 26:21. And from no higher principle, than that from whence **Nebuchadnezzar** was affected with God's dispensation, that he saw and was the subject of, and praises, extols and honors the King of Heaven, and both he, and **Darius**, in the like affections, call upon all Nations to praise God. **Daniel** 3:28, 29, 30 and 4:1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37 and 6:25, 26, 27.

11. It is no sign that affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make persons that have them, exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good estate.

It is an argument with some, against persons, that they are deluded if they pretend to be assured of their good estate, and to be carried beyond all doubting of the favor of God; supposing that there is no such thing to be expected in the church of God, as a full and absolute assurance of hope; unless it be in some very extraordinary circumstances; as in the case of martyrdom: Contrary to the doctrine of Protestants, which has been maintained by their most

celebrated writers against the Papists; and contrary to the plain Scripture evidence. It is manifest that it was a common thing for the saints that we have a history, or particular account of in Scripture, to be assured. God in the plainest and most positive manner, revealed and testified his special favor to **Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel**, and others. **Job** often speaks of his sincerity and uprightness with the greatest imaginable confidence and assurance, often calling God to witness to it; and says plainly, **I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall see him for myself, and not another**, Job 19:25 etc. **David**, throughout the Book of Psalms, almost everywhere speaks without any hesitancy, and in the most positive manner of God as his God; glorying in him as his portion and heritage, his rock and confidence, his shield, salvation, and high tower, and the like. **Hezekiah** appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in truth and with a perfect heart, 2 **Kings** 20:3. Jesus Christ, in his dying discourse with his eleven disciples, in the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of **John**, (which was as it were Christ's last will and testament to his disciples, and to his whole church) often declares his special and everlasting love to them, in the plainest and most positive terms; and promises them a future participation with him in his glory, in the most absolute manner; and tells them at the same time, that he does so, to the end, that their joy might be full; John 15:11. **These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full**. See also at the conclusion of his whole discourse, Chapter 16:33. **These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world**. Christ

was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them: He did not desire to hold them in the least suspense. And he concluded that last discourse of his, with a prayer in their presence, wherein he speaks positively to his Father of those eleven disciples, as having all of them savingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his word; and that they were not of the world; and that for their sakes he sanctified himself; and that his will was that they should be with him in his glory: And tells his Father, that he spoke these things in his prayer, to the end, that his joy might be fulfilled in them, Verse 13. By these things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's designs, and the continued ordering and disposition Christ makes of things in his church, that there should be sufficient and abundant provision made, that his saints might have full assurance of their future glory.

The Apostle **Paul**, through all his epistles, speaks in an assured strain; ever speaking positively of his special relation to Christ, his Lord and Master and Redeemer, and his interest in, and expectation of the future reward. It would be endless to take notice of all places that might be enumerated; I shall mention but three or four, Galatians 2:20. **Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me.** Philippians 1:21. **For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.** 2 Timothy 1:12. **I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that day.** 2 Timothy 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, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that Day.

And the nature of the covenant of grace, and God's declared ends in the appointment and constitution of things in that covenant, do plainly show it to be God's design to make ample provision for the saints having an assured hope of eternal life, while living here upon Earth. For so are all things ordered and contrived in that covenant, that every thing might be made sure on God's part. **The covenant is ordered in all things, and sure:** The promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various ways exhibited; and there are many witnesses, and many seals; and God has confirmed his promises with an oath. And God's declared design in all this is, that the heirs of the promises might have an undoubting hope, and full joy, in an assurance of their future glory. Hebrews 6:17, 18. **Wherein God willing, more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us.** But all this would be in vain, to any such purpose, as the saints strong consolation, and hope of their obtaining future glory, if their interest in those sure promises in ordinary cases, was not attainable. For God's promises and oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong hope and comfort to any particular person, any further than he can know that those promises are made to him. And in

vain is provision made in Jesus Christ, that believers might be perfect as pertaining to the conscience, as is signified, **Hebrews 9:9** if assurance of freedom from the guilt of sin is not attainable.

It further appears that assurance is not only attainable in some very extraordinary cases, that **all** Christians are directed to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, and are told how they may do it, **2 Peter 1:5-8**. And it is spoken of as a thing very unbecoming of Christians, and an argument of something very blamable in them, not to know whether Christ is in them or no; **2 Corinthians 13:5**. **Do you not know your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you are reprobates?** And it is implied that it is an argument of a very blamable negligence in Christians, if they practice Christianity after such a manner as to remain uncertain of the reward, in that **1 Corinthians 9:26**. **I therefore so run, as not uncertainly.** And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians knowing their interests in the saving benefits of Christianity is a thing ordinarily attainable, because the Apostles tell us by what means **Christians** (and not only **apostles** and **martyrs**) were wont to know this; **1 Corinthians 2:12**. **Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.** And **1 John 2:3**. **And hereby do we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.** And verse 5. **Hereby know we that we are in Him.** Chapter **3:14**. **We know that we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.** Verse 19. **Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and**

shall assure our hearts before Him. Verse 24. **Hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit that He has given us.** So Chapter 4:13 and Chapter 5:2 and verse 19.

Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that persons are hypocrites, and their affections wrong, because they seem to be out of doubt of their own salvation, and the affections they are the subjects of seem to banish all fears of hell.

On the other hand, it is no sufficient reason to determine that men are saints, and their affections gracious, because the affections they have are attended with an exceeding confidence that their state is good, and their affections divine. Nothing can be certainly argued from their confidence, how great and strong soever it seems to be. If we see a man that boldly calls God his Father, and commonly speaks in the most bold, familiar and appropriating language in prayer, **My Father, my dear Redeemer, my sweet Savior, my Beloved,** and the like,—and it is a common thing for him to use the most confident expressions before men, about the goodness of his state; such as, **I know certainly that God is my Father; I know so surely as there is a God in heaven, that He is my God; I know I shall go to heaven, as well as if I were there; I know that God is now manifesting Himself to my soul, and is now smiling upon me:** And seems to have done forever with any inquiry or examination into his state, as a thing sufficiently known, and out of doubt, and to condemn all that so much as intimate or suggest that there is some reason to doubt or fear whether all is right; such things are no signs at all that it is indeed so as he is confident it is. Such an overbearing, high-handed and violent sort of confidence as this, so affecting to declare itself with a most glaring show, in the sight of

men, which is to be seen in many, has not the countenance of a true Christian assurance: It favors more of the spirit of the Pharisees, who never doubted but that they were saints, and the most eminent of saints, and were bold to go to God, and come up near to Him, and lift up their eyes, and thank Him for the great distinction He had made between them and other men; and when Christ intimated that they were blind and graceless, despised the suggestion; John 9:40. **And some of the Pharisees who were with Him, heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also?** If they had more of the spirit of the **Publican**, with their confidence, who in a sense of his exceeding unworthiness, stood afar off, and durst not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, and cried out of himself as a sinner, their confidence would have more of the aspect of the confidence of one that humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the hearts of natural men are, what principles they are under the dominion of, what blindness and deceit, what self-flattery, self-exaltation and self-confidence reigns there, we need not at all wonder that their high opinion of themselves, and confidence of their happy circumstances, be as high and strong as mountains, and as violent as a tempest, when once conscience is blinded, and convictions killed, with false, high affections, and those forementioned principles let loose, fed up and prompted by false joys and comforts, excited by some pleasing imaginations impressed by **Satan**, transforming himself into an angel of light.

When once a hypocrite is thus established in a false hope, he has not those things to cause him to call his hope in question, that oftentimes are the occasion of the doubting of true saints; as **First**, He has not that cautious spirit, that great sense of the vast importance of a sure foundation, and that dread of being deceived. The comforts of the true saints increase awakening and caution, and a lively sense how great a thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just and omniscient Judge. But false comforts put an end to these things, and dreadfully stupify the mind. **Secondly**, The hypocrite has not the knowledge of his own blindness, and the deceitfulness of his own heart, and that mean opinion of his own understanding, that the true saint has. Those that are deluded with false discoveries and affections, are evermore highly conceited of their light and understanding. **Thirdly**, The Devil does not assault the hope of the hypocrite, as he does the hope of a true saint. The Devil is a great enemy to a true Christian hope, not only because it tends greatly to the comfort of him that has it, but also because it is a thing of a holy, heavenly nature, greatly tending to promote and cherish grace in the heart, and a great incentive to strictness and diligence in the Christian life. But he is no enemy to the hope of a hypocrite, which above all things establishes his interest in him that has it. A hypocrite may maintain his hope without opposition, as long as he lives, the Devil never disturbing it, nor attempting to disturb it. But there is perhaps no true Christian but what has his hope assaulted by him. **Satan** assaulted Christ Himself, upon this, whether He was the Son of God or no: And the servant is not above his master, nor the disciple above his Lord; it is enough for the disciple, that is most privileged in this world, to be as his master. **Fourthly**, He who has a false hope has not that

sight of his own corruptions, which the saint has. A true Christian has ten times so much to do with his heart, and its corruptions, as a hypocrite: And the sins of his heart and practice, appear to him in their blackness; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious thing that any grace can be consistent with such corruption, or should be in such a heart. But a false hope hides corruption, covers it all over, and the hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own eyes.

There are two sorts of hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward morality and external religion; many of which are professed **Arminians**, in the doctrine of justification: And the other, are those that are deceived with false discoveries and elevations; which often cry down works, and men's own righteousness, and talk much of free grace; but at the same time make a righteousness of their discoveries, and of their humiliation, and exalt themselves to heaven with them. These two kinds of hypocrites Mr. **Shepard**, in his exposition of the parable of the ten virgins, distinguishes by the names of **legal** and **evangelical** hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their hope, and with the most difficulty brought off from it: I have scarcely known the instance of such an one, in my life, that has been undeceived. The chief grounds of the confidence of many of them, are the very same kind of impulses and supposed revelations, (sometimes with texts of scripture, and sometimes without) that so many of late have had concerning future events; calling these impulses about their good estate, the witness of the Spirit; entirely misunderstanding the nature of the witness of the Spirit, as I shall show hereafter. Those that have had visions and impulses about other

things, it has generally been to reveal such things as they are desirous and fond of: And no wonder that persons who give heed to such things, have the same sort of visions or impressions about their own eternal salvation, to reveal to them that their sins are forgiven them, that their names are written in the book of life, that they are in high favor with God, **etc.** and especially when they earnestly seek, expect and wait for evidence of their election and salvation this way, as the surest and most glorious evidence of it. Neither is it any wonder, that when they have such a supposed revelation of their good estate, it raises in them the highest degree of confidence of it. It is found by abundant experience that those who are led away by impulses and imagined revelations, are extremely confident: They suppose that the great Jehovah has declared these and those things to them; and having His immediate testimony, a strong confidence is the highest virtue. Hence they are bold to say, **I know this or that;—I know certainly;—I am as sure as that I have a being,** and the like: And they despise all argument and inquiry in the case. And above all things else, it is easy to be accounted for, that impressions and impulses about that which is so pleasing, so suiting their self-love and pride, as their being the dear children of God, distinguished from most in the world in His favor, should make them strongly confident: Especially when with their impulses and revelations they have high affections, which they take to be the most eminent exercises of grace. I have known of several persons, that have had a fond desire of something of a temporal nature, through a violent passion that has possessed them, and they have been earnestly pursuing the thing they have desired should come to pass, and have met with great difficulty and many discouragements in it, but at last have had an impres-

sion or supposed revelation that they should obtain what they sought; and they have looked upon it as a sure promise from the Most High, which has made them most ridiculously confident, against all manner of reason to convince them to the contrary, and all events working against them. And there is nothing hinders, but that persons who are seeking their salvation, may be deceived by the like delusive impressions, and be made confident of that, the same way.

The confidence of many of this sort of hypocrites, that Mr. **Shepard** calls **evangelical hypocrites**, is like the confidence of some mad men, who think they are kings: They will maintain it against all manner of reason and evidence. And in one sense, it is much more immovable than a truly gracious assurance; a true assurance is not upheld, but by the soul's being kept in a holy frame, and grace maintained in lively exercise. If the actings of grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless frame, he loses his assurance: But this kind of confidence of hypocrites will not be shaken by sin: They, (at least some of them) will maintain their boldness in their hope, in the most corrupt frames and wicked ways: Which is a sure evidence of their delusion.

And here I can't but observe, that there are certain Doctrines often preached to the People, which need to be delivered with more Caution and Explanation than they frequently are; for as they are by many understood, they tend greatly to establish this Delusion and false Confidence of Hypocrites. The Doctrines I speak of are those of **Christians living by Faith, not by Sight; their giving Glory to God, by trusting him in the Dark; living upon Christ, and not upon Experiences; not making their good Frames the Foundation of their Faith:** Which

are excellent and important Doctrines indeed, rightly understood, but corrupt and destructive, as many understand them. The Scripture speaks of living or walking by Faith, and not by Sight, in no other Way than these, **namely** a being governed by a Respect to eternal Things, that are the Objects of Faith, and are not seen, and not by a Respect to temporal Things, which are seen; and believing Things revealed that we never saw with bodily Eyes; and also living by Faith in the Promise of future Things; without yet seeing or enjoying the Things promised, or knowing the Way how they can be fulfilled. This will be easily evident to any one that looks over the Scriptures which speak of **Faith** in Opposition to **Sight**; as **2 Corinthians** 4. 18. and 5. 7. **Hebrews** 11. 1, 8, 13, 17, 27, 29. **Romans** 8. 24. **John** 20. 29. But this Doctrine, as it is understood by many, is that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ, without spiritual Sight or Light, and although they are in a dark dead Frame, and, for the present, have no spiritual Experiences or Discoveries. And it is truly the Duty of those who are thus in Darkness, to come out of Darkness into Light, and believe. But that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual Light or Sight, is an antisciptural and absurd Doctrine. The Scripture is ignorant of any such Faith in Christ of the Operation of God, that is not founded in a spiritual Sight of Christ. That believing on Christ, which accompanies a Title to everlasting Life, is a **seeking the Son, and believing on him**, **John** 6. 40. True Faith in Christ is never exercised, any further than Persons **behold as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord**, and have **the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ**; **2 Corinthians** 3. 18. and 4. 6. They into whose Minds **the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ**,

who is the Image of God, does not shine: They believe not; 2 Corinthians 4. 4. That Faith, which is without spiritual Light, is not the Faith of the Children of the Light, and of the Day; but the Presumption of the Children of Darkness. And therefore to press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual Light or Sight, tends greatly to help forward the Delusions of the Prince of Darkness. Men not only can't exercise Faith without some spiritual Light, but they can exercise Faith only just in such Proportion as they have spiritual Light. Men will trust in God no further than they know him: And they can't be in the Exercise of Faith in him one Ace further than they have a Sight of his Fulness and Faithfulness **in Exercise**. Nor can they have the Exercise of Trust in God, any further than they are in a **gracious Frame**. They that are in a dead carnal Frame, doubtless ought to trust in God; because that would be the same Thing as coming out of their bad Frame, and turning to God: But to exhort Men confidently to trust in God, and so hold up their Hope and Peace, though they are not in a gracious Frame, and continue still to be so, is the same Thing in Effect, as to exhort them confidently to trust in God, but not with a gracious Trust: And what is that but a wicked Presumption? It is just so impossible for Men to have a strong or lively trust in God, when they have no lively Exercises of Grace, or sensible Christian Experiences, as it is for them to be in the lively Exercises of Grace, without the Exercises of Grace.

It is true that it is the Duty of God's People to trust in him, when in Darkness, and though they remain still in Darkness, in that Sense, that they ought to trust in God when the Aspects of his Providence are dark, and look as though God had forsaken them, and did not hear their Prayers, and many Clouds gather, and many

Enemies surround them, with a formidable Aspect, threatening to swallow them up, and all Events of Providence seem to be against them, all Circumstances seem to render the Promises of God difficult to be fulfilled, and God must be trusted out of Sight, **that is** when we can't see which Way it is possible for him to fulfill his Word, every Thing but God's mere Word makes it look unlikely, so that if Persons believe, they must Hope against Hope. Thus the ancient **Patriarchs**, and **Job**, and the Psalmist, and **Jeremiah**, **Daniel**, **Shadrach**, **Meshech** and **Abednego**, and the Apostle **Paul** gave Glory to God by trusting in God in Darkness. And we have many Instances of such a glorious victorious Faith in the Eleventh of the **Hebrews**. But how different a Thing is this, from trusting in God without spiritual Sight, and being at the same Time in a dead and carnal Frame!

There is also such a Thing as spiritual Light's being let into the Soul in one Way, when it is not in another; and so there is such a Thing as the Saints trusting in God, and also knowing their good Estate, when they are destitute of some Kinds of Experience. As for Instance, they may have clear Views of God's Sufficiency and Faithfulness, and so confidently trust in him, and know that they are his Children; and at the same Time, not have those clear and sweet Ideas of his Love, as at other Times: For it was thus with Christ himself in his last Passion. And they may have Views of much of God's Sovereignty, Holiness and All-sufficiency, enabling them quietly to submit to him, and exercise a sweet and most encouraging Hope in God's Fulness, when they are not satisfied of their own good Estate. But how different Things are these, from confidently trusting in God, without spiritual Light or Experience!

Those that thus insist on Persons living by Faith, when they have no Experience, and are in very bad Frames, are also very absurd in their Notions of Faith. What they mean by Faith is, believing that they are in a good Estate. Hence they count it a dreadful Sin for them to doubt of their State, whatever Frames they are in, and whatever wicked Things they do, because it is the great and heinous Sin of Unbelief; and he is the best Man, and puts most Honour upon God, that maintains his Hope of his good Estate the most confidently and immovably, when he has the least Light or Experience; that is to say, when he is in the worst and wickedest Frame and Way; because, forsooth, that is a Sign that he is strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, and against Hope believes in Hope. But what Bible do they learn this Notion of Faith out of, that it is a Man's confidently believing that he is in a good Estate? If this be Faith, the Pharisees had Faith in an eminent Degree; some of which, Christ teaches, committed the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. The Scripture represents Faith, as that by which Men are **brought into** a good Estate; and therefore it can't be the same Thing, as believing that they **are already** in a good Estate. To suppose that Faith consists in Persons believing that they are in a good Estate, is in effect the same Thing, as to suppose that Faith consists in a Person's believing that he has Faith, or in believing that he believes.

Indeed Persons doubting of their good Estate, may in several Respects **arise from** Unbelief. It may be from Unbelief, or because they have so little Faith, that they have so little **Evidence** of their good Estate: If they had more Experience of the Actings of Faith, and so more Experience of the Exercise of Grace, they would have clearer Evidence that their State was good; and so their

Doubts would be removed. And then their doubting of their State may be from Unbelief thus, When though there be many Things that are good Evidences of a Work of Grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a State of Favour with God, because it is **they**, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to Anger against them. Their Doubts in such a Case arise from Unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient Sense **of**, and reliance **on** the infinite Riches of God's Grace, and the Sufficiency of Christ for the Chief of Sinners. They may also be from Unbelief, when they doubt of their State, because of the Mystery of God's Dealings with them. They are not able to reconcile such Dispensations with God's Favour to them. Or when they doubt whether they have any Interest in the Promises, because the Promises from the Aspects of Providence, appear so unlikely to be fulfilled; the Difficulties that are in the Way, are so many and great. Such Doubting arises from want of Dependence upon God's Almighty Power, and his Knowledge and Wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such Persons, their Unbelief, and their Doubting of their State, are not the same Thing; though one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their State, on such Grounds as [are] last mentioned; and they may be to blame, that they have no more Grace, and no more of the present Exercises and Experiences of it, to be an Evidence to them of the Goodness of their State: Men are doubtless to blame for being in a dead carnal Frame; but when they are in such a Frame, and have no sensible Experience of the Exercises of Grace, but on the contrary, are very much under the Prevalence of their Lusts, and an unchristian Spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their

State. It is as impossible, in the Nature of Things, that a holy and christian Hope, should be kept alive, in its Clearness and Strength, in such Circumstances, as it is to keep the Light in the Room, when the Candle is put out; or to maintain the bright Sun-shine in the Air, when the Sun is gone down. Distant Experiences, when darkened by present prevailing Lust and Corruption, will never keep alive a gracious Confidence and Assurance; but that Sickens and Decays upon it, as necessarily as a little Child by repeated Blows on the Head with the [hammer]. Nor is it at all to be lamented that Persons doubt of their State in such Circumstances; but on the contrary, it is desirable and every Way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wise and [gracious] Constitution of Things, which God has established, that it should be so. For so has God contrived and constituted Things, in his Dispensations towards his own People, that when their **Love** decays, and the Exercises of it fail, or become weak, **Fear** [will] arise; [for] then they need it to restrain them from Sin, and to exercise them to care for the Good of their Souls, and so to stir them up to Watchfulness and Diligence in Religion: But God has so ordered that when Love rises, and is in vigorous Exercise, then Fear should vanish, and be driven away; for then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent Principle in exercise, to restrain them from Sin, and stir them up to their Duty. There are no other Principles, which human Nature is under the Influence of, that will ever [be conscientious], but one of these two, **Fear** or **Love**: And therefore, if one of these should not prevail, as the other decayed, God's People when fallen into dead and carnal Frames, when Love is asleep, would be lamentably exposed indeed. And therefore God has wisely ordained, that these two opposite Principles of Love and Fear, should rise and fall, like

the two opposite Scales of a Balance when one [rises], the other sinks. As Light and Darkness, necessarily and unavoidably succeed each other; if Light prevails, so much does Darkness cease, and no more; and if Light decays, so much [does] Darkness prevail; so it is in the Heart of a Child of God. If divine [Love] falls asleep, and Lust prevails, the Light and Joy [vanish], and dark Fear and Doubting arises; and if on the contrary, divine Love prevails, and comes into lively Exercise, this [brings] in the Brightness of Hope, and drives away black Lust, and Fear with it. Love is the **Spirit of Adoption**, or the Childlike Principle; if that Slumbers, Men fall under Fear, which is the **Spirit of [Bondage]**, of the [legal] Principle: And [on] the contrary. And if [it be] so, [that] the Spirit of Adoption, be carried to a great Height, it quite drives away all Fear, and [gives] full Assurance; agreeable to that of the Apostle, 1 John 4:18. **There is no Fear in Love, but [perfect] Love [casts out] Fear.** These two opposite Principles of Lust and holy Love [cast] Hope and Fear into the Hearts of God's Children, in Proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural Influence, without something adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the Distemper of Melancholy, [or] Ignorance, Prejudices of Education, wrong Instruction, [or] peculiar Temptations, **et cetera.**

[Driven] out by the Spirit of God, no other Way than by the prevailing of Love: [nor is it] ever maintained by his Spirit, when Love is asleep. At such a Time, in vain is all the Saint's Self-examinations, and poring on past Experience, in order to establish his Peace and [get] Assurance. For it is contrary to the Nature of Things, as God has constituted them, that he should have Assurance at such a [Time].

[They] do directly thwart God's wise and gracious Constitution of Things, [who exhort] others to be confident in their [Hope] in [Darkness] under a Notion of **Living by [Faith], and not by [Sight], and trusting God in the Dark, and Living upon [Christ], and [not experiences]** and [warn] them not to Doubt of their good Estate, [lest they] be guilty of the dreadful Sin of Unbelief. And it [has a] Tendency to establish the most presumptuous Hypocrites, and to [prevent] their ever calling their State in Question, how much [soever] Wickedness [rages], and reigns in their Hearts, and prevails in their [Lives] under a Notion of honoring God, by **hoping against [Hope]**, and [trusting] in God, when Things look very dark. And doubtless vast has been the [Mischief], that has been done this [Way].

[Persons] can't be [said to live upon] Christ, for the sake of Christ, and live on their Experiences of the [Grace] of [God], merely because they take them and [use them as evidences]; for there are no other Evidences that they [can have]. But then may [they] be said to live upon their Experiences, when they make a Righteousness of them; and instead of keeping their Eye of God's Glory, and Christ's Excellency, they turn their [Eyes on] these Objects without them, on to themselves, to entertain their Minds, by viewing their own Attainments, and high Experiences, and the great Things they have met [with], and are bright and beautiful in their own Eyes, and are rich and [increased] with Goods, in their own Apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an Esteem of them, on the same Account, as they have [of] themselves: This is living on Experiences, and not on Christ; and is more abominable in the Sight of God, than the gross Immoralities

of those who make no Pretenses to Religion. But this is a far different Thing from a mere improving Experiences as Evidences of an Interest in a glorious Redeemer.

But to return from this Digression, I would mention one Thing more under the general Head that I am upon.

12. Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the Nature of religious Affections, that any are the Subjects of, from this, that the outward Manifestations of them, and the Relation Persons give of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the truly Godly, and such as greatly gain their Charity, and win their Hearts.

The true Saints have not such a spirit of discerning, that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For though they know experimentally what true Religion is, in the internal Exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither feel, nor see, in the Heart of another. There is nothing in others, that comes within their View, but outward Manifestations and Appearances; but the Scripture plainly intimates that this Way of judging what is in Men by outward Appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to Deceit; 1 Samuel 16:7. **The Lord seeth not as Man seeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart.** Isaiah 11:3. **He shall not judge after the Sight of [his Eyes], neither reprove after the Hearing of his Ears** They commonly [are] but poor Judges, and dangerous Counselors in Soul Cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining Persons' States, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary Faculty of discerning and distinguishing, in these great Affairs; as though all was open and clear to them. They betray one of these three Things; either that they have had but little Experience; or are Persons of a weak Judgment; or that they have a great Degree of

Pride and Self-confidence, and so Ignorance of themselves. Wise and experienced Men will proceed with great Caution in such an Affair.

When there are many probable Appearances of Piety in others, it is the Duty of the Saints to receive them cordially into their Charity, and to love them and rejoice in them, as their Brethren in Christ Jesus. But yet the best of Men may be deceived, when the Appearances seem to them exceedingly fair and bright, even so as entirely to gain their Charity, and conquer their Hearts. It has been a common Thing in the Church of God, for such bright Professors, that are received as eminent Saints, among the Saints, to fall away and come to nothing. And this we need not wonder at, if we consider the Things that have been already observed; what Things it has been shown, may appear in Men who are altogether graceless. Nothing hinders but that all these Things may meet together in Men, and yet they be without a Spark of Grace in their Hearts. They may have religious Affections of many Kinds together; they may have a Sort of Affection towards God, that bears a great Resemblance of dear Love to him; and so a kind of Love to the Brethren, and great Appearances of Admiration of God's Perfections and Works, and Sorrow for Sin, and Reverence, Submission, Self-abasement, Gratitude, Joy, religious Longings, and Zeal for the Interest of Religion and the Good of Souls. And these Affections may come after great Awakenings and Convictions of Conscience; and there may be great Appearances of a Work of Humiliation; and counterfeit Love and Joy, and other Affections may seem to follow these, and one another, just in the same Order, that is commonly observable in the holy Affections of true Converts. And these religious Affections may be carried to a great

Height, and may cause Abundance of Tears, yea, may overcome the Nature of those who are the Subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, and fervent, and fluent in speaking of the Things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it; and may be attended with many sweet Texts of Scripture, and precious Promises, brought with great Impression on their Minds; and may dispose them with their Mouths to praise and glorify God, in a very ardent Manner, and fervently to call upon others to praise him, crying out of their Unworthiness, and extolling free Grace. And may, moreover, dispose them to abound in the external Duties of Religion, such as Prayer, hearing the Word preached, Singing, and religious Conference: and these Things attended with a great Resemblance of a christian Assurance, in its greatest Height, when the Saints mount on Eagles' Wings, above all Darkness and Doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all these Things, and yet there be nothing more than the common Influences of the Spirit of God, joined with the Delusions of **Satan**, and the wicked and deceitful Heart. To which I may add, that all these Things may be attended with a sweet natural Temper, and a good doctrinal Knowledge of Religion, and a long Acquaintance with the Saints' Way of talking and of expressing their Affections and Experiences, and a natural Ability and Subtlety in accommodating their Expressions and Manner of speaking to the Dispositions and Notions of the Hearers, and a taking Decency of Expression and Behavior, formed by a good Education. How great therefore may the Resemblance be, as to all outward Expressions and Appearances, between an Hypocrite and a true Saint! Doubtless it is the glorious Prerogative of the omniscient God, as the great Searcher of Hearts, to be able well to sepa-

rate between Sheep and Goats. And what an indecent, Self-exaltation, and Arrogance is it, in poor fallible dark Mortals, to pretend that they can determine and know, who are really sincere and upright before God, and who are not!

Many seem to lay great Weight on that, and to suppose it to be what may determine them with respect to others real Piety, when they not only tell a plausible Story, but when, in giving an Account of their Experiences, they make such a Representation, and speak after such a Manner, that they **feel** their Talk; that is to say, when their Talk seems to harmonize with their own Experience, and their Hearts are touched and affected and delighted, by what they hear them say, and drawn out by it, in dear Love to them. But there is not that Certainty in such Things, and that full Dependence to be had upon them, which many imagine. A true Saint greatly delights in Holiness: It is a most beautiful Thing in his Eyes; And God's Work, in savingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before perishing Soul, appears to him a most glorious Work. No wonder therefore, that his Heart is touched, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable Account of this Work, wrought on his own Heart, and when he sees in him probable Appearances of Holiness; whether those pleasing Appearances have any Thing real to answer them, or no. And if he uses the same Words, which are commonly made use of, to express the Affections of true Saints, and tells of many Things following one another in an Order, agreeable to the Method of the Experience of him that hears him, and also speaks freely and boldly, and with an Air of Assurance: No wonder that the other thinks his Experiences harmonize with his own. And if besides all this, in giving his Relation, he speaks with much Affection; and

above all, if in speaking, he seems to show much Affection to him, to whom he speaks, such an Affection as the **Galatians** did to the Apostle **Paul**; these Things will naturally have a powerful Influence, to affect and draw his Hearers Heart, and open wide the Doors of his Charity towards him. **David** speaks as one who had felt **Ahithophel's** Talk, and had once a sweet Savor and Relish of it. And therefore exceeding great was his Surprise and Disappointment, when he fell; it was almost too much for him. Psalm 55:12, 13, 14. **It was not an Enemy—then I could have borne it,—but it was thou, a Man, mine Equal, my Guide, and my Acquaintance; we took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in Company.**

It is with Professors of Religion, especially such as become so in a Time of out-pouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with the Blossoms in the Spring; there are vast Numbers of them upon the Trees, which all look fair and promising; but yet very many of them never come to any Thing. And many of those, that in a little Time wither up, and drop off, and not under the Trees; yet for a while, look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only so, but smell Sweet, and send forth a pleasant Odor: So that we cannot, by any of our Senses, certainly distinguish those Blossoms which have in them that secret Virtue, which will afterwards appear in the Fruit, and that inward Solidity and Strength which shall enable them to bear, and cause them to be perfected by the hot Summer Sun, that will dry up the others. It is the mature Fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful Colors and Smell of the Blossom, that we must judge by. So new Converts, (professedly so) in their Talk about Things of Religion, may appear fair, and be very savory,

and the Saints may think they talk feelingly. They may relish their Talk, and imagine they perceive a divine Savor in it; and yet all may come to nothing.

It is strange how hardly Men are brought to be contented with the Rules and Directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other Rules, of their own inventing, that seem to them wiser and better. I know of no Directions or Counsels which Christ ever delivered more plainly, than the Rules he has given us, to guide us in our judging of others Sincerity; **namely** that we should judge of the Tree chiefly by the Fruit: But yet this will not do; but other Ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and certain. And woeful have been the mischievous Consequences, of setting up Men's Wisdom above the Wisdom of Christ. I believe many Saints have gone much out of the Way of Christ's Word, in this Respect: And some of them have been scourged with Whips, and (I had almost said) Scorpions, to bring them back again. But many Things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince, that ordinarily, those who have gone farthest this Way, that have been most highly conceited of their Faculty of discerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptorily and suddenly to determine the State of Mens Souls, have been Hypocrites, who have known nothing of true Religion.

In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, it is said, Matthew 13:26. **When the Blade was sprang up, and brought forth fruit then appeared the Tares also.** As though the Tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the Wheat, **until then**, as Mister **Flavel** observes; he mentions it as an Observation of **Jerome's**, That **Wheat and Tares are so much alike, until the Blade of the Wheat comes to bring forth the Ear, that**

it is next to impossible to distinguish them. And then, Mister **Flavel** adds, How difficult soever it be to discern the Difference between Wheat and Tares; yet doubtless the Eye of Sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing Eye of Man, can discern the Difference between special and common Grace. For all saving Graces in the Saints, have their Counterfeits in Hypocrites; there are similar Works in those, which a spiritual and very judicious Eye may easily mistake, for the saving and genuine Effects of a sanctifying Spirit.

As it is the Ear or the Fruit which distinguishes the Wheat from the Tares, so this is the true **Shibboleth**, that he who stands as Judge at the Passages of **Jordan**, makes use of to distinguish those that shall pass over **Jordan** into the true **Canaan**, from those that should be slain at the Passages. For the Hebrew Word **Shibboleth**, signifies an Ear of Corn. And perhaps the more full Pronunciation of **Jephthah's** Friends, **Shibboleth**, may represent a full Ear with Fruit in it, typifying the Fruits of the Friends of Christ, the Antitype of **Jephthah**; and the more lean Pronunciation of the **Ephraimites** his Enemies, may represent their empty Ears, typifying the Show of Religion in Hypocrites, without Substance and Fruit. This is agreeable to the Doctrine we are abundantly taught in Scripture, **namely** That he who is set to judge those that pass through Death, whether they have a Right to enter into the heavenly **Canaan** or no, or whether they should not be slain, will judge every Man according to his Works.

We seem to be taught the same Things, by the Rules given for the Priests discerning the Leprosy. In many Cases it was impossible for the Priest to determine whether a Man had the Leprosy, or whether he were clean, by the most narrow Inspection of the

Appearances that were upon him, until he had waited to see what the Appearances would come to, and had shut up the Person who showed himself to him, one seven Days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the Hair, which grew out of the Spot that was showed him, which was as it were the Fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finish what I have to say under this Head, I would say something to a strange Notion some have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good Estate that others are in, as though it were immediately revealed to them from Heaven, by their Love flowing out to them in an extraordinary Manner. They argue thus, that their Love being very sensible and great, it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true Christian Love: And if it be a true Christian Love, the Spirit of God must be the Author of it: And inasmuch as the Spirit of God, who knows certainly, whether others are the Children of God or no, and is a Spirit of Truth, is pleased, by an uncommon Influence upon them, to cause their Love to flow out, in an extraordinary Manner, towards such a Person, as a Child of God; it must needs be that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows that that Person is a Child of God. But such Persons might be convinced of the Falseness of their Reasoning, if they would consider whether or no it be not their Duty, and what God requires of them, to love those as the Children of God, who they think are the Children of God, and whom they have no Reason to think otherwise of, from all that they can see in them.

Though God, who searches the Hearts, knows them not to be his Children. If it be their Duty, then it is Good, and the Want of it Sin; and therefore, surely the Spirit of God may be the Author of it:

The Spirit of God, without being a Spirit of Falsehood, may in such a Case assist a Person to do his Duty, and keep him from Sin. But then they argue from the uncommon Degree and special Manner, in which their Love flows out to the Person; which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the Object to be a Child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their Duty to love all such as they are bound to think are the Children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a very great Degree, though God, from other Things which he sees, that are out of Sight to them, knows them not to be so. It is Men's Duty to love all whom they are bound in Charity to look upon as the Children of God, with a vastly dearer Affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost Capacity of our Nature, so it is our Duty to love those who we think are so near and dear to him as his Members, with an exceeding dear Affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is Sin in us not to love them so. We ought to pray to God that he would, by his Spirit keep us from Sin, and enable us to do our Duty: And may not his Spirit answer our Prayers, and enable us to do our Duty, in a particular Instance, without lying? If he cannot, then the Spirit of God is bound not to help his People to do their Duty in some Instances, because he cannot do it without being a Spirit of Falsehood. But surely God is so sovereign as that comes to, that he may enable us to do our Duty when he pleases, and on what Occasion he pleases. When Persons think others are his Children, God may have other Ends in causing their exceedingly endeared Love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them whether their Opinion of them be right or no: He may have that merciful End in it, to enable them to do their Duty, and to keep them from that dreadful infinite Evil, Sin. And will they say

God shall not show them that Mercy in such a Case? If I am at a Distance from Home, and hear, that in my Absence, my House is burnt, but my Family have, in some extraordinary Manner, all escaped the Flames; and every Thing in the Circumstances of the Story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible; It would be Sin in me, in such a Case, not to feel a very great Degree of Gratitude to God, though the Story indeed be not true. And is not God so sovereign, that he may if he pleases, show me that Mercy on that Occasion, and enable me to do my Duty in a much further Degree than I used to do it, and yet not incur the Charge of Deceitfulness, in confirming a Falsehood?

It is exceeding manifest, that Error or Mistake may be the Occasion of a gracious Exercise, and consequently a gracious Influence of the Spirit of God, by Romans 14:6. **He that eateth to the Lord, he eateth, and giveth God Thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God Thanks.** The Apostle is speaking of those, who through erroneous and needless Scruples, avoided eating legally unclean Meats. By this it is very evident, that there may be true Exercises of Grace, a true Respect **to the Lord**, and particularly, a true Thankfulness, which may be occasioned, both by an erroneous Judgment and Practice. And consequently, an Error may be the Occasion of those truly holy Exercises that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if so, it is certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a Degree the Spirit of God may give this holy Exercise, on such an Occasion.

This Notion, of certainly discerning another's State, by Love flowing out, is not only not founded on Reason or Scripture, but it is antiscriptural, it is against the Rules of Scripture; which say not

a Word of any such Way of judging the State of others as this, but direct us to judge chiefly by the Fruits that are seen in them. And it is against the Doctrines of Scripture, which do plainly teach us that the State of others Souls towards God, cannot be known by us, as in Revelation 2:17. **To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden Manna; and I will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which** no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. And Romans 2:29. **He is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart; in the Spirit, and not in the Letter; whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.** That by this last Expression, **whose Praise is not of Men, but of God**, the Apostle has Respect to the Insufficiency of Men to judge concerning him, whether he be inwardly a **Jew** or no (as they could easily see by outward Marks, whether Men were outwardly **Jews**) and would signify, that it belongs to God alone to give a determining Voice in this Matter, is confirmed by the same Apostle's Use of the Phrase, in 1 Corinthians 4:5. **Therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Counsels of the Hearts;** and then shall every Man have Praise of God. The Apostle, in the two foregoing Verses, says, **But with me, it is a very small Thing, that I should be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment: Yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.** And again, it is further confirmed, because the Apostle in this second Chapter to the **Romans**, directs his Speech especially to those who had a high Conceit of their own Holiness, made their Boast of God, and

were confident of their own Discerning, and that they knew God's Will, and approved the Things which were excellent, or tried the Things that differ (as it is in the Margin). Verse 18. **And were confident that they were Guides of the Blind, and a Light to them which are in Darkness, Instructors of the Foolish, Teachers of Babes;** and so took upon them to judge others, see Verse 1 and 17, 18, 19, 20.

And how arrogant must the Notion be, that they have, who imagine they can certainly know others Godliness, when that great Apostle **Peter** pretends not to say any more concerning **Silvanus**, than that he was **a faithful Brother, as he supposed;** 1 Peter 5:12. Though this **Sylvanus** appears to have been a very eminent Minister of Christ, and an Evangelist, and a famous Light in God's Church at that Day, and an intimate Companion of the Apostles. See 2 Corinthians 1:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, and 2 Thessalonians 1:1.

PART 2.

IF any one, on the Reading of what has been just now said, is ready to acquit himself, and say, I am not one of those who have no religious Affections; I am often greatly moved with the Consideration of the great Things of Religion; Let him not content himself with this, that he has religious Affections. For (as was observed before) as we ought not to reject and condemn all Affections, as though true Religion did not at all consist in Affection; so on the other Hand, we ought not to approve of all, as though every one that was religiously affected, had true Grace, and was therein the Subject of the saving Influences of the Spirit of God: and that therefore the

right Way is to distinguish among religious Affections, between one sort and another. Therefore let us now endeavor to do this: And in order to it, I would do two Things.

1. I would mention some Things, which are no Signs one Way or the other, either that Affections are such as true Religion consists in, or that they are otherwise; that we may be guarded against judging of Affections by false Signs.

2. I would observe some Things, wherein those Affections which are spiritual and gracious, differ from those which are not so, and may be distinguished and known.

FIRST, I would take Notice of some Things, which are no Signs that Affections are gracious, or that they are not.

1. It is no Sign one Way or the other, that religious Affections are very great, or raised very high.

Some are ready to condemn all high Affections: If Persons appear to have their religious Affections raised to an extraordinary Pitch, they are prejudiced against them, and determine that they are Delusions, without further Inquiry. But if it be as has been proved, that true Religion consists very much in religious Affections, then it follows, that if there be a great deal of true Religion, there will be great religious Affections; if true Religion in the Hearts of Men, be raised to a great Height, divine and holy Affections will be raised to a great Height.

Love is an Affection; but will any Christian say, Men ought not to love God and Jesus Christ in a high Degree? And will any say, we ought not to have a very great Hatred of Sin, and a very deep Sorrow for it? Or that we ought not to exercise a high Degree of Gratitude to God, for the Mercies we receive of him, and the great

Things he has done for the Salvation of fallen Men? Or that we should not have very great and strong Desires after God and Holiness? Is there any who will profess, that his Affections in Religion are great enough; and will say, I have no Cause to be humbled, that I am no more affected with the Things of Religion than I am, I have no Reason to be ashamed, that I have no greater Exercises of Love of God, and Sorrow for Sin, and Gratitude for the Mercies which I have received? Who is there that will go and bless God, that he is affected enough with what he has read and heard, of the wonderful Love of God to Worms and Rebels, in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying Love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher Degree, because high Affections are improper, and very unlovely in Christians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true Religion?

Our Text plainly speaks of great and high Affections, when it speaks of **rejoicing with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory**: Here the most superlative Expressions are used, which Language will afford. And the Scriptures often require us to exercise very high Affections: Thus in the first and great Commandment of the Law, there is an Accumulation of Expressions, as though Words were wanting to express the Degree, in which we ought to love God; **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength**. So the Saints are called upon to exercise high Degrees of Joy: **Rejoice**, says Christ to his Disciples, **and be exceeding glad**, Matthew 5:12. So it is said, Psalm 68:3. **Let the Righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice**. So in the same Book of Psalms, the Saints are often called upon **to shout for Joy**; and in Luke 6:23. **leap for Joy**.

So they are abundantly called upon to exercise high Degrees of Gratitude for Mercies, to **Praise God with all their Hearts, with Hearts lifted up in the Ways of the Lord, and their Souls magnifying the Lord, singing his praises, talking of his wondrous Work, declaring his Doings. etc.**

And we find the most eminent Saints in Scripture, often professing high Affections. Thus the Psalmist **speaks** of his Love, as if it were **unspeakable**; Psalm 119:97. **Oh how love I thy Law!** So he expresses a great Degree of Hatred of Sin; Psalm 139:21, 22. **Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect Hatred.** He also expresses a high Degree of Sorrow for Sin: He speaks of his Sin **going over his Head, as an heavy Burden too heavy for him; and of his roaring all the Day, and his Moisture being turned into the Draught of Summer, and his Bones being as it were broken** with Sorrow. So he often expresses great Degrees of spiritual Desires, in a Multitude of the strongest Expressions which can be conceived of; such as **his longing, his Soul's thirsting in a dry and thirsty Land where no Water is, his Pantings, his Flesh and Heart crying out, his Soul breaking for the Longing it hath,** etc. He expresses the Exercises of great and extreme Grief for the Sins of others. Psalm 119:136. **Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy Law.** And Verse 53. **Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the Wicked that forsake thy Law.** He expresses high Exercises of Joy, Psalm 21:1. **The King shall joy in thy Strength; and in thy Salvation, how greatly shall he rejoice.** Psalm 71:23. **My Lips shall greatly rejoice, when I sing unto thee.** Psalm

63:3-6. Because thy loving Kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee, while I live: I will lift up my Hands in thy Name: My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips: When I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night Watches; because thou hast been my Help, therefore in the Shadow of thy Wings will I rejoice.

The Apostle **Paul** expresses high Exercises of Affection. Thus he expresses the Exercises of Pity and Concern for others' Good, even to **Anguish of Heart; a great, fervent and abundant Love**, and **earnest and longing Desires**, and **exceeding Joy**; and speaks of the **Conflicts** and **Triumphs** of his Soul, and his **earnest Expectation** and **Hope**, and his **abundant Tears**, and the **Travails of his Soul**, in Pity, Grief, earnest Desires, godly Jealousy and fervent Zeal, in many Places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat. **John the Baptist** expressed **great Joy**, John 3:29. Those blessed **Women** that anointed the Body of Jesus are represented as in a very high Exercise of religious Affection, on Occasion of Christ's Resurrection; Matthew 28:8. **And they departed from the Sepulchre, with Fear and great Joy.**

It is often foretold of the Church of God, in her future happy Seasons here on Earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice; Psalm 89:15, 16. **They shall walk, O Lord, in the Light of thy Countenance: In thy Name shall they rejoice all the Day: and in thy Righteousness shall they be exalted. Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Jerusalem: Behold thy King cometh unto thee.** etc. The same is represented in innumerable other

Places. And because high Degrees of Joy are the proper and genuine Fruits of the Gospel of Christ, therefore the Angel that proclaimed this Gospel, called it good Tidings of great Joy, that shall be to all People.

The Saints and Angels in Heaven, that have Religion in its highest Perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate, of God's Perfections and Works. They are all as a pure heavenly Flame of Fire, in their Love, and in the Greatness and Strength of their Joy and Gratitude: Their Praises are represented, **as the Voice of many Waters, and as the Voice of a great Thunder.** Now the only Reason why their Affections are so much higher than the holy Affections of Saints on Earth, is, they see the Things they are affected by, more according to their Truth, and have their Affections more conformed to the Nature of Things. And therefore, if religious Affections in Men here below, are but of the same Nature and Kind with theirs, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to theirs in Degree, the better; because therein they will be so much the more conformed to Truth, as theirs are.

From these Things it certainly appears, that religious Affections being in a very high Degree, is no Evidence that they are not such as have the Nature of true Religion. Therefore they do greatly err, who condemn Persons as Enthusiasts, merely because their Affections are very high.

And on the other Hand, It is no Evidence that religious Affections are of a spiritual and gracious Nature, because they are great. It is very manifest by the holy Scripture, our sure and infallible Rule to judge of Things of this Nature, that there are religious Affections which are very high, that are not spiritual and saving. The Apostle **Paul** speaks of Affections in the **Galatians**, which

had been exceedingly elevated, and which yet he manifestly speaks of, as fearing that they were vain, and had come to nothing. Galatians 4:15. **Where is the Blessedness you spake of? For I bear you Record, that if it had been possible, you would have plucked out your own Eyes, and have given them to me.** And in the eleventh Verse he tells them, **he was afraid of them, lest he had bestowed upon them Labour in vain.** So the Children of **Israel** were greatly affected with God's Mercy to them, when they had seen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the Red Sea, where they **sang God's Praise**; though they soon forgot his Works. So they were greatly affected again, at Mount **Sinai**, when they saw the marvelous Manifestations God made of himself there; and seemed mightily engaged in their Minds, and with great Forwardness made Answer, when God proposed his holy Covenant to them, saying, **All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient.** But how soon was there an End to all this mighty Forwardness and Engagedness of Affection? How quickly were they turned aside after other Gods, rejoicing and shouting around their golden Calf? So great Multitudes who were affected with the Miracle of raising **Lazarus** from the Dead, were elevated to a high Degree, and made a mighty ado, when Jesus presently after entered into **Jerusalem**, exceedingly magnifying Christ, as though the Ground were not good enough for the Ass he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut down Branches of Palm-trees, and strewed them in the Way; yea pulled off their Garments, and spread them in the Way; and cried with loud Voices, **Hosanna to the Son of David, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord, Hosanna in the Highest**; so as to make the whole City ring again, and put all into an Uproar. We

learn by the Evangelist **John**, that the Reason why the People made this ado, was because they were affected with the Miracle of raising **Lazarus**; **John** 12:18. Here was a vast Multitude crying **Hosanna** on this Occasion, so that it gave Occasion to the Pharisees to say, **Behold the World is gone after him**, **John** 12:19. But Christ had at that Time but few true Disciples. And how quickly was this ado at an End? All of this Nature is quelled and dead, when this **Jesus** stands bound, with a mock Robe and a Crown of Thorns, to be derided, spit upon, scourged, condemned and executed. Indeed there was a great and loud Outcry concerning him, among the Multitude then, as well as before; but of a very different Kind: It is not then, **Hosanna, Hosanna**, but **Crucify, Crucify**.

And it is the concurring Voice of all orthodox Divines, that there may be religious Affections, which are raised to a very high Degree, and yet there be nothing of true Religion.

2. It is no Sign that Affections have the Nature of true Religion, or that they have not, that they have great Effects on the Body.

All Affections whatsoever, have in some Respect or Degree, an Effect on the Body. As was observed before, such is our Nature, and such are the Laws of Union of Soul and Body, that the Mind can have no lively or vigorous Exercise, without some Effect upon the Body. So subject is the Body to the Mind, and so much do its Fluids, especially the animal Spirits, attend the Motions and Exercises of the Mind, that there cannot be so much as an intense Thought, without an Effect upon them. Yea, it is questionable, whether an embodied Soul ever so much as thinks one Thought, or has any Exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding Motion or Alteration of Motion, in some Degree, of the Fluids, in

some Part of the Body. But universal Experience shows, that the Exercise of the Affections, have in a special Manner a Tendency, to some sensible Effect upon the Body. And if this be so, that all Affections have some Effect on the Body, we may then well suppose, the greater those Affections be, and the more vigorous their Exercise (other Circumstances being equal) the greater will be the Effect on the Body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very **great** and strong Exercises of the Affections, should have **great** Effects on the Body. And therefore, seeing there are very great Affections, both common and spiritual; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great Effects on the Body, should arise from both these Kinds of Affections. And consequently these Effects are no Signs, that the Affections they arise from, are of one Kind or the other.

Great Effects on the Body certainly are no sure Evidences that Affections are spiritual; for we see that such Effects oftentimes arise from great Affections about temporal Things, and when Religion is no Way concerned in them. And if great Affections about secular Things, are purely natural, may have these Effects, I know not by what Rule we should determine, that high Affections about religious Things, which arise in like Manner from Nature, cannot have the like Effect.

Nor on the other Hand, do I know of any Rule any have to determine, that gracious and holy Affections, when raised as high as any natural Affections, and have equally strong and vigorous Exercises, cannot have a great Effect on the Body. No such Rule can be drawn from Reason: I know of no Reason, why a being affected with a View of God's Glory should not cause the Body to faint, as well as a being affected with a View of **Solomon's** Glory.

And no such Rule has as yet been produced from the Scripture: None has ever been found in all the late Controversies which have been about Things of this Nature. There is a great Power in spiritual Affections; we read of the Power which worketh in Christians, and of the Spirit of God being in them, as the Spirit of Power, and of the effectual working of his Power in them yea of the working of God's mighty Power in them. But Man's Nature is weak: Flesh and Blood are represented in Scripture as exceedingly weak; and particularly with Respect to its Unfitness for great spiritual and heavenly Operations and Exercises, **Matthew** 26:41, 1 **Corinthians** 15:43, and 50. The Text we are upon speaks of **Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory**. And who that considers what Man's Nature is, and what the Nature of the Affections are, can reasonably doubt but that such unutterable and glorious Joys, may be too great and mighty for weak Dust and Ashes, so as to be considerably overbearing to it? It is evident by the Scripture, that true divine Discoveries, or Ideas of God's Glory, when given in a great Degree, have a Tendency, by affecting the Mind, to overbear the Body; because the Scripture teaches us often, that if these Ideas or Views should be given to such a Degree, as they are given in Heaven, the weak Frame of the Body could not subsist under it, and that no Man can, in that Manner, see God and live. The Knowledge which the Saints have of God's Beauty and Glory in this World, and those holy Affections that arise from it, are of the same Nature and Kind with what the Saints are the Subjects of in Heaven, differing only in Degree and Circumstances: What God gives them here, is a Foretaste of heavenly Happiness, and an Earnest of their future Inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this Earnest, or say he shall give so much of the Inheritance, such a Part of the fu-

ture Reward, as an Earnest of the Whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his Word, that the whole Reward is such, that it would at once destroy the Body, is it not too bold a Thing for us, so to set Bounds to the sovereign God, as to say, that in giving the Earnest of this Reward in this World, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the Strength of the Body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

The Psalmist speaking of vehement religious Affections he had, speaks of an Effect in his Flesh or Body, besides what was in his Soul, expressly distinguishing one from the other, once and again, Psalm 84:2. **My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my Heart and my Flesh crieth out for the living God.** Here is a plain Distinction between the Heart and the Flesh, as being each affected. So Psalm 63:1. **My Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is.** Here also is an evident designed Distinction between the Soul and the Flesh.

The Prophet **Habakkuk** speaks of his Body's being overborne, by a Sense of the Majesty of God, Habakkuk 3:16. **When I heard, my Belly trembled, my Lips quivered at the Voice, Rottenness entered into my Bones, and I trembled in myself.** So the Psalmist speaks expressly of his Flesh trembling, Psalm 119:120. **My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee.**

That such Ideas of God's Glory, are sometimes given in this World, have a Tendency to overbear the Body, is evident, because the Scripture gives us an Account, that this has sometimes actually been the Effect of those external Manifestations God has made of himself, to some of the Saints, which were made to that End, **namely** to give them an Idea of God's Majesty and Glory. Such

Instances we have in the Prophet **Daniel**, and the Apostle **John**. **Daniel** giving an Account of an external Representation of the Glory of Christ, says, Daniel 10:8. **And there remained no Strength in me, for my Comeliness was turned into Corruption, and I retained no Strength.** And the Apostle **John** giving an Account of a like Manifestation made to him, says, Revelation 1:17. **And when I saw him, I fell at his Feet as dead.** 'Tis in vain to say here these were only external Manifestations or Symbols of the Glory of Christ, which these Saints beheld: For though it be true, that they were outward Representations of Christ's Glory, which they beheld with their bodily Eyes; yet the End and Use of these external Symbols or Representations, was to give to these Prophets an Idea of the Thing represented, and that was the true divine Glory and Majesty of Christ, which is his spiritual Glory; they were made Use of only as Significations of this spiritual Glory, and thus undoubtedly they received them, and improved them, and were affected by them. According to the End, for which God intended these outward Signs, they received by them a great and lively Apprehension of the real Glory and Majesty of God's Nature, which they were Signs of; and thus were greatly affected, their Souls swallowed up, and their Bodies overborne. And I think, they are very bold and daring, who will say God cannot, or shall not give the like clear and affecting Ideas and Apprehensions of the same real Glory and Majesty of his Nature, to none of his Saints, without the Intervention of any such external Shadows of it.

Before I leave this Head, I would farther observe, that it is plain the Scripture often makes Use of bodily Effects, to express the Strength of holy and spiritual Affections; such as **trembling**,

groaning, being sick, crying out panting, and fainting. Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative Expressions, to represent the Degree of Affection; yet I hope all will allow, that they are fit and suitable Figures to represent the high Degree of those spiritual Affections, which the Spirit of God makes Use of them to represent. Which I do not see how they would be, if those spiritual Affections, let them be in ever so high a Degree, have no Tendency to any such Things; but that on the contrary, they are the proper Effects, and sad Tokens of false Affections, and the Delusion of the Devil. I cannot think, God would commonly make Use of Things which are very alien from spiritual Affections, and are shrewd Marks of the Hand of **Satan**, and smell strong of the bottomless Pit, as beautiful Figures, to represent the high Degree of holy and heavenly Affections.

3. It is no Sign that Affections are truly gracious Affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent and abundant, in talking of the Things of Religion.

There are many Persons, who if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being so full of Talk, is with them, a sufficient Ground to condemn them, as Pharisees, and ostentatious Hypocrites. On the other Hand, there are many, who if they see this Effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true Children of God, and are under the saving Influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great Evidence of a new Creature: They say **such an one's Mouth is now open: He used to be slow to speak; but now he is full and free: He is free now to open his Heart, and tell his Experiences, and declare the Praises of God; it comes from him, as free as Water from a Fountain,** and

the like. And especially are they captivated into a confident and undoubting Persuasion that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their Talk.

But this is the Fruit of but little Judgment, a scanty and short Experience; as Events do abundantly show: and is a Mistake, Persons often run into, through their trusting to their own Wisdom and Discerning, and making their own Notions their Rule, instead of the holy Scripture. Though the Scripture be full of Rules, both how we should judge of our own State, and also how we should be conducted in our Opinion of others; yet we have no where any Rule, by which to judge ourselves or others to be in a good Estate, from any such Effect: For this is but the Religion of the Mouth and of the Tongue, and what is in the Scripture represented by the Leaves of a Tree, which though the Tree ought not to be without them, yet are no where given as an Evidence of the Goodness of the Tree.

That persons are disposed to be abundant in talking of things of religion, may be from a good cause, and it may be from a bad one. It may be because their hearts are very full of holy affections; for **out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh**: And it may be because persons' hearts are very full of religious affection which is not holy; for still out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. It is very much the nature of the affections, of whatever kind they be, and whatever objects they are exercised about, if they are strong, to dispose persons to be very much in speaking of that which they are affected with; and not only to speak much, but to speak very earnestly and fervently. And therefore persons talking abundantly and very fervently about the

things of religion, can be an evidence of no more than this, that they are very much affected with the things of religion; but this may be, (as has been already shown) and there be no grace. That which men are greatly affected with, while the high affection lasts, they will be earnestly engaged about, and will be likely to show that earnestness in their talk and behavior; as the greater part of the **Jews**, in all **Judea** and **Galilee**, did for a while, about **John the Baptist's** preaching and baptism, when they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light: A mighty ado was made, all over the land, and among all sorts of persons, about this great prophet and his ministry. And so the multitude in like manner, often manifested a great earnestness, and mighty engagedness of spirit, in every thing that was external, about Christ and his preaching and miracles, **being astonished at his doctrine, and with joy receiving the word**, following him, sometimes night and day, leaving meat, drink and sleep to hear him; once following him into the wilderness, fasting three days going, to hear him; sometimes crying him up to the clouds, saying, **Never man spake like this man!** being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these things come to, in the greater part of them?

A person may be over-full of talk of his own experiences; commonly falling upon it, every where, and in all companies: and when it is so it is rather a dark sign than a good one. As a tree that is over-full of leaves seldom bears much fruit: And as a cloud, though to appearance very pregnant and full of water, if it brings with it overmuch wind, seldom affords much rain to the dry and thirsty earth: Which very thing the holy Spirit is pleased several times to make use of, to represent a great show of religion with the mouth, without answerable fruit in the life: Proverbs 25:14. **Whoso**

boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain. And the Apostle **Jude**, speaking of some in the primitive times, that **crept in unawares** among the saints, and having a great show of religion, were for a while not suspected, **These are clouds** (says he) **without water, carried about of winds**, Jude verse 4, and 12. And the Apostle **Peter**, speaking of the same, says, 2 Peter 2:17. **These are clouds without water, carried with a tempest.**

False affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to declare themselves, than true. Because it is the nature of false religion, to affect show and observation; as it was with the Pharisees.

4. It is no sign that affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that persons did not make them themselves, or excite them of their own contrivance, and by their own strength.

There are many in these days, that condemn all affections which are excited in a way that the subjects of them can give no account of, as not seeming to be the fruit of any of their own endeavors, or the natural consequence of the faculties and principles of human nature, in such circumstances, and under such means; but to be from the influence of some extrinsic and supernatural power upon their minds. How greatly has the doctrine of the inward experience or sensible perceiving of the immediate power and operation of the Spirit of God, been reproached and ridiculed by many of late. They say the manner of the Spirit of God, is to co-operate in a silent, secret and undiscernable way, with the use of means, and our own endeavors; so that there is no distinguishing by sense, between the influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural operations of the faculties of our own minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the saving influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent improvement of the appointed means of grace, is unreasonable presumption. And to expect that the Spirit of God will savingly operate upon their minds, without the Spirit's making use of means, as subservient to the effect, is enthusiastical. It is also undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the manner and circumstances of his operations, and that sometimes he operates in a way more secret and gradual, and from smaller beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a power, entirely different from and beyond our power, or the power of all means and instruments, and above the power of nature, which is requisite in order to the production of saving grace in the heart, according to the general profession of the country; Then certainly, it is in no wise unreasonable to suppose, that this effect should very frequently be produced after such a manner, as to make it very manifest, apparent, and sensible that it is so. If grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious operation of an extrinsic agent, or divine efficient out of ourselves, why is it unreasonable to suppose, it should seem to be so, to them who are the subjects of it? Is it a strange thing, that it should seem to be as it is? When grace in the heart, indeed is not produced by our strength, nor is the effect of the natural power of our own faculties, or any means or instruments, but is properly the workmanship and production of the Spirit of the Almighty, Is it a strange and unaccountable thing, that it should seem to them who are subjects of it agreeable to truth, and not right contrary to truth, so that if persons tell of effects that they are conscious to in their own minds, that seem to them not to be from the natural power or

operation of their minds, but from the supernatural power of some other agent, it should at once be looked upon as a sure evidence of their being under a delusion, because things seem to them to be as they are? For this is the objection which is made: It is looked upon as a clear evidence that the apprehensions and affections that many persons have, are not really from such a cause, because they seem to them to be from that cause: They declare that what they are conscious of, seems to them evidently not to be from themselves, but from the mighty power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine what they experience is not from the Spirit of God, but from themselves, or from the Devil. Thus unreasonably are multitudes treated at this day, by their neighbors.

If it be indeed so, as the Scripture abundantly teaches, that grace in the soul, is so the effect of God's power, that it is fitly compared to those effects, which are farthest from being owing to any strength in the subject, such as a **generation**, or a **being begotten**, and **resurrection**, or a **being raised from the dead**, and **creation**, or a **being brought out of nothing into being**, and that it is an effect wherein the mighty power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding greatness of his power is manifested; then what account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in so great a work of his power, should so carefully hide his power, that the subjects of it should be able to discern nothing of it? Or what reason or revelation have any to determine that he does so? If we may judge by the Scripture, this is not agreeable to God's manner, in his operations and dispensations; but on the contrary, it is God's manner, in the great works of his power and mercy which he works for his people, to order things so, as to make his hand visible, and his

power conspicuous, and men's dependence on him most evident, that no flesh should glory in his presence, that God alone might be exalted, and that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of man, and that Christ's power might be manifested in our weakness, and none might say mine own hand hath saved me. So it was in most of those temporal salvations which God wrought for **Israel** of old, which were types of the salvation of God's people from their spiritual enemies. So it was in the redemption of **Israel**, from their **Egyptian** bondage; he redeemed them with a strong hand, and an outstretched arm; and that his power might be the more conspicuous, he suffered **Israel** first to be brought into the most helpless and forlorn circumstances. So it was in the great redemption by **Gideon**; God would have his army diminished to a handful, and they without any other arms, than trumpets, and lamps, and earthen pitchers. So it was in the deliverance of **Israel** from **Goliath**, by a stripling, with a sling and a stone. So it was in that great work of God, his calling the **Gentiles**, and converting the heathen world, after Christ's ascension, after that the world by wisdom knew not God, and all the endeavors of philosophers had proved in vain, for many ages, to reform the world, and it was by every thing, become abundantly evident that the world was utterly helpless, by any thing else, but the mighty power of God. And so it was in most of the conversions of particular persons, we have an account of in the history of the New Testament: They were not wrought on in that silent, secret, gradual and insensible manner, which is now insisted on; but with those manifest evidences of a supernatural power, wonderfully and suddenly causing a great change, which in these days are looked upon as certain signs of delusion and enthusiasm.

The Apostle in Ephesians 1:18, 19 speaks of God's enlightening the minds of Christians, and so bringing them to believe in Christ, to the end, that they **might know** the exceeding greatness of his power to them who believe. The words are, **The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,** etc. Now when the Apostle speaks of their being thus the subjects of his power, in their enlightening and effectual calling, to the end, that they might know what his mighty power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing else, than **that they might know by experience.** But if the saints know this power by experience, then they feel it, and discern it, and are conscious of it; as sensibly distinguishable from the natural operations of their own minds, which is not agreeable to a notion of God's operating so secretly, and undiscernably, that it cannot be known that they are the subjects of the influence of any extrinsic power at all, any otherwise than as they may argue it from Scripture assertions; which is a different thing from knowing it by experience.

So that it is very unreasonable and unscriptural, to determine that affections are not from the gracious operations of God's Spirit, because they are sensibly not from the persons themselves, that are the subjects of them.

On the other hand, it is no evidence that affections are gracious, that they are not purposely produced by those who are the subjects of them, or that they arise in their minds in a manner they cannot account for.

There are some who make this an Argument in their own Favour, when speaking of what they have experienced, they say, I am sure I did not make it myself: It was a Fruit of no Contrivance or Endeavour of mine; it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might have the World for it, I can't make it again when I please. And hence they determine, that what they have experienced, must be from the mighty Influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a saving Nature; but very ignorantly, and without Grounds. What they have been the Subjects of, may indeed, not be from themselves directly, but may be from the Operation of an invisible Agent, some Spirit besides their own: But it does not thence follow, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other Spirits who have Influence on the Minds of Men, besides the Holy Ghost. We are directed not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits, whether they be of God. There are many false Spirits, exceeding busy with Men, who often transform themselves into Angels of Light, and do in many wonderful Ways, with great Subtlety and Power, mimic the Operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of **Satan's** Operations, which are very distinguishable from the voluntary Exercises of Men's own Minds. They are so, in those dreadful and horrid Suggestions, and blasphemous Injections with which he follows many Persons; and in vain and fruitless Frights and Terrors, which he is the Author of. And the Power of **Satan** may be as immediate, and as evident in false Comforts and Joys, as in Terrors and horrid Suggestions; and oftentimes is so in Fact. It is not in Men's Power to put themselves into such Raptures, as the **Anabaptists in Germany**, and many other raving Enthusiasts like them, have been the Subjects of.

And besides, it is to be considered, that Persons may have those Impressions on their Minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil Spirit, but from the Spirit of God, and yet not be from any saving, but a common work of the Spirit of God: And the Subjects of such Impressions, may be of the Number of those we read of, Hebrews 6:4, 5. **That are once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Power of the World to come** and yet may be wholly unacquainted with those **latter Things that accompany Salvation**, spoken of verse 9.

And where neither a good nor evil Spirit have any immediate Hand, Persons, especially such as are of a weak and vapory Habit of Body, and the Brain weak, and easily susceptible of Impressions, may have strange Apprehensions and Imaginations, and strong Affections attending them, unaccountably arising, which are not voluntarily produced by themselves. We see that such Persons are liable to such Impressions, about temporal Things; and there is equal Reason, why they should about spiritual Things. As a Person who is asleep, has Dreams, that he is not the voluntary Author of; so many such Persons, in like Manner, be the Subjects of involuntary Impressions, when they are awake.

5. It is no Sign that religious Affections are truly holy and spiritual, or that they are not, that they come with Texts of Scripture, remarkably brought to the Mind.

It is no Sign that Affections are not gracious, that they are occasioned by Scriptures so coming to Mind; provided it be the Scripture itself, or the Truth which the Scripture so brought con-

tains and teaches, that is the Foundation of the Affection, and not merely or mainly, the sudden and unusual Manner of its coming to the Mind.

But on the other Hand, neither is it any Sign that Affections are gracious, that they arise on Occasion of Scriptures brought suddenly and wonderfully to the Mind; whether those Affections be Fear, or Hope, Joy, or Sorrow, or any other. Some seem to look upon this, as a good Evidence that their Affections are saving; especially if the Affections excited are Hope or Joy, or any other which are pleasing and delightful. They will mention it as an Evidence that all is right, that their Experience **came with the Word**, and will say, There were such and such sweet Promises brought to my Mind: They came suddenly, as if they were spoke to me: I had no Hand in bringing such a Text to my own Mind; I was not thinking of any Thing leading to it: it came all at once, so that I was surprised. I had not thought of it a long Time before; I did not know at first that it was Scripture; I did not remember that ever I had read it. And it may be, they will add, One Scripture came flowing in after another, and so Texts all over the Bible, the most sweet and pleasant, and the most apt and suitable, which could be devised; and filled me full as I could hold: I could not but stand and admire: The Tears flowed; I was full of Joy, and could not doubt any longer. And thus, they think they have undoubted Evidence, that their Affections must be from God, and of the right Kind, and their State good: But without any Manner of Grounds. How come they by any such Rule, as that if any Affections or Experiences arise with Promises, and comfortable Texts of Scripture, unaccountably brought to Mind, without their Recollection, or if a great Number of sweet Texts follow one another in a Chain, that this is a

certain Evidence their Experiences are saving? Where is any such Rule to be found in the Bible, the great and only sure Directory in Things of this Nature?

What deceives many of the less understanding and considerate Sort of People, in this Matter, seems to be this; That the Scripture is the Word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect: And therefore, those Experiences which come from the Scripture must be right. But then it should be considered, Affections may arise on **occasion** of the Scripture, and not properly come **from** the Scripture, as the genuine Fruit of the Scripture, and by a right Use of it; but from an Abuse of it. All that can be argued from the Purity and Perfection of the Word of God, with Respect to Experiences, is this, that those Experiences which are **agreeable** to the Word of God, are right, and can't be otherwise; and not that those Affections must be right, which arise **on Occasion** of the Word of God, coming to the Mind.

What Evidence is there that the Devil can't bring Texts of Scripture to the Mind, and misapply them, to deceive Persons? There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the Power of **Satan**. It is no Work of such mighty Power, to bring Sounds or Letters to Persons Minds, that we have any Reason to suppose; nothing short of Omnipotence can be sufficient for it. If **Satan** has Power to bring any Words or Sounds at all to Persons Minds, he may have Power to bring Words contained in the Bible. There is no higher Sort of Power required in Men, to make the Sounds which express the Words of a Text of Scripture, than to make the Sounds which express the Words of an idle Story or Song. And so the same Power in **Satan**, which is sufficient to renew one of those Kinds of Sounds in the Mind, is sufficient to renew the other: The different

Signification, which depends wholly on Custom, alters not the Case, as to Ability to make or revive the Sounds or Letters. Or will any suppose, that Texts of Scripture are such sacred Things, that the Devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither, into the Wilderness, and into an high Mountain, and to a Pinnacle of the Temple, is not afraid to touch the Scripture, and abuse that for his own Purposes: As he showed at the same Time that he was so bold with Christ, he then brought one Scripture and another, to deceive and tempt him. And if **Satan** did presume, and was permitted, to put Christ himself in Mind of Texts of Scripture to tempt **Him**, what Reason have we to determine, that he dare not, or will not be permitted, to put wicked Men in mind of Texts of Scripture, to tempt and deceive **them**? And if **Satan** may thus abuse one Text of Scripture, so he may another. Its being a very excellent Place of Scripture, a comfortable and precious Promise, alters not the Case, as to his Courage or Ability. And if he can bring one comfortable Text to the Mind, so he may a Thousand; and may choose out such Scriptures as tend most to serve his Purpose; and may heap up Scripture Promises, tending, according to the perverse Application he makes of them, wonderfully to remove the rising Doubts, and to confirm the false Joy and Confidence of a poor deluded Sinner.

We know the Devil's Instruments, corrupt and heretical Teachers, can and do pervert the Scripture, to their own and others Damnation; 2 **Peter** 3:16. We see they have the free Use of Scripture, in every Part of it: There is no Text so precious and sacred, but they are permitted to abuse it, to the eternal Ruin of Multitudes of Souls: And there are no Weapons they make Use of

with which they do more Execution. And there is no Manner of Reason to determine, that the Devil is not permitted thus to use the Scripture, as well as his Instruments. For when the Latter do it, they do it as his Instruments and Servants, and through his Instigation and Influence: And doubtless he does the same he instigates others to do: The Devil's Servants do but follow their Master, and do the same Work that he does himself.

And as the Devil can abuse the Scripture, to deceive and destroy Men, so may Men's own Folly and Corruptions, as well. The Sin which is in Men, acts like its Father. Men's own Hearts are deceitful like the Devil, and use the same Means to deceive.

So that it is evident, that Persons may have high Affections of Hope and Joy, arising on occasion of Texts of Scripture, yea precious Promises of Scripture coming suddenly and remarkably to their Minds, as though they were spoke to them, yea a great Multitude of such Texts, following one another in a wonderful Manner, and yet all this be no Argument that these Affections are divine, or that they are any other than the Effects of **Satan's** Delusions

And I would further observe, that Persons may have raised and joyful Affections, which may come with the Word of God, and not only so, but from the Word, and those Affections not be from **Satan**, nor yet properly from the Corruptions of their own Hearts, but from some Influence of the Spirit of God with the Word, and yet have nothing of the Nature of true and saving Religion in them. Thus the stony-ground Hearers had great Joy from the Word; yea which is represented as arising from the Word, as Growth from a Seed; and their Affections had, in their Appearance, a very great and exact Resemblance with those represented by the Growth on

the good Ground, the Difference not appearing, until it was discovered by the Consequences, in a Time of Trial: And yet there was no saving Religion in these Affections.

6. It is no Evidence that religious Affections are saving, or that they are otherwise, that there is an Appearance of Love in them.

There are no professing Christians who pretend, that this is an Argument against the Truth and saving Nature of religious Affections. But on the other Hand, there are some who suppose, it is a good Evidence that Affections are from the sanctifying and saving Influences of the Holy Ghost. Their Argument is, that **Satan cannot Love**; this Affection being directly contrary to the Devil, whose very Nature is Enmity and Malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excellent, heavenly and divine than a Spirit of true Christian Love to God and Men: It is more excellent than **Knowledge**, or **Prophecy**, or **Miracles**, or **speaking with the Tongue of Men and Angels**. It is the chief of the Graces of God's Spirit, and the Life, Essence and Sum of all true Religion; and that by which we are most conformed to Heaven, and most contrary to Hell and the Devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no Counterfeits of it. It may be observed, that the more excellent any Thing is, the more will be the Counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more Counterfeits of Silver and Gold, than of Iron and Copper: There are many false Diamonds and Rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common Stones? Though the more excellent Things are, the more difficult it is to make any Thing that shall be like them, in their essential Nature and internal Virtue; yet the more manifold will the Counterfeits be, and the more will Art and Subtlety be exercised and displayed, in an exact Imitation of the outward Appearance. Thus there is the greatest Danger of be-

ing cheated in buying of Medicines that are most excellent and sovereign, though it be most difficult to imitate them, with any thing of the like Value and Virtue, and their Counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian Virtues and Graces; the Subtlety of **Satan**, and Men's deceitful Hearts, are accustomed chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest Repute. So there are perhaps no Graces that have more Counterfeits than Love and Humility; these being Virtues wherein the Beauty of a true Christian does especially appear.

But with Respect to Love; it is plain by the Scripture, that Persons may have a Kind of religious Love, and yet have no saving Grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians that have such Love, whose Love will not continue, and so shall fail of Salvation, Matthew 24:12, 13. **And because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the End, the same shall be saved.** Which latter Words plainly show, that those spoken of before, whose Love should not **endure to the End**, but **wax cold**, should not be saved.

Persons may seem to have Love to God and Christ, yes to have very strong and violent Affections of this Nature, and yet have no Grace. For this was evidently the Case with many graceless **Jews**, such as cried him up so high, following him Day and Night, without Meat, Drink or Sleep; such as said, **Lord I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest**, and cried **Hosanna to the Son of David**.

The Apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his Days, who had a counterfeit Love to Christ, in Ephesians 6:24. **Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in Sincerity.** The last Word, in the Original, signifies **in**

Incorruption; which shows that the Apostle was sensible that there were many who had a Kind of Love to Christ, whose Love was not pure and spiritual.

So also Christian Love to the People of God may be counterfeited. It is evident by the Scripture, that there may be strong Affections of this Kind, without saving Grace; as there were in the **Galatians** towards the Apostle **Paul**, when they were ready to pluck out their Eyes and give them to him; although the Apostle expresses his Fear that their Affections were come to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them Labour in vain, Galatians 4:11, 15.

7. Persons having religious Affections of many Kinds, accompanying one another, is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious Affections or not.

Though false Religion is accustomed to be maimed and monstrous, and not to have that Entireness and Symmetry of Parts, which is to be seen in true Religion; yet there may be a great Variety of false Affections together, that may resemble gracious Affections.

It is evident that there are Counterfeits of all Kinds of gracious Affections; as of **Love to God**, and **Love to the Brethren**, as has been just now observed: So of **godly Sorrow for Sin**, as in **Pharaoh, Saul, and Ahab**, and the Children of **Israel** in the Wilderness; Exodus 9:27, 1 Samuel 24:16, 17, and 26:21, 1 Kings 21:27, Numbers 14:39, 40. And of the **Fear of God**, as in the **Samaritans, who feared the Lord, and served their own Gods** at the same Time; 2 Kings 17:32, 33. And those Enemies of God we read of Psalm 66:3, who **through the Greatness of God's Power, submit themselves to him**, or, as it is in the

Hebrew, **lie unto him**, that is, yield a counterfeit Reverence and Submission: So of a **gracious Gratitude**, as in the Children of **Israel**, who sang God's Praise at the Red Sea, Psalm 106:12, and **Naaman the Syrian**, after his miraculous Cure of his Leprosy, 2 Kings 5:15, etcetera.

So of **spiritual Joy**, as in the stony-ground Hearers, Matthew 13:20, and particularly many of **John the Baptist's** Hearers, John 5:35. So of **Zeal**, as in **Jehu**, 2 Kings 10:16, and in **Paul** before his Conversion, Galatians 1:14, Philippians 3:6, and the unbelieving **Jews**, Acts 22:3, Romans 10:2. So graceless Persons may have earnest religious **Desires**, which may be like **Balaam's** Desires, which he expresses under an extraordinary View that he had of the happy State of God's People, as distinguished from all the rest of the World, Numbers 23:9, 10. They may also have a strong **Hope** of eternal Life, as the Pharisees had.

And as Men, while in a State of Nature, are capable of a Resemblance of all Kinds of religious Affections, so nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in Fact does abundantly evince that it is very often so indeed. It seems commonly to be so, that when false Affections are raised high, there are many false Affections attend each other. The Multitude that attended Christ into **Jerusalem**, after that great Miracle of raising **Lazarus**, seem to be moved with many religious Affections at once, and all in a high Degree. They seem to be filled with **Admiration**, and there was a Show of an high Affection of **Love**, and also of a great Degree of **Reverence**, in their laying their Garments on the Ground, for Christ to tread upon; and also of great **Gratitude** to him, for the great and good Works he had wrought, praising him with loud Voices for his Salvation; and

earnest **Desires** of the Coming of God's Kingdom, which they supposed **Jesus** was now about to set up, and showed great **Hopes** and raised Expectations of it, **expecting it would immediately appear**, and hence were filled with **Joy**, by which they were so animated in their Acclamations, as to make the whole City ring with the Noise of them; and appeared great in their **Zeal** and Forwardness to attend Jesus, and assist him without further Delay, now in the Time of the great Feast of the **Passover**, to set up his Kingdom. And it is easy, from Nature, and the Nature of the Affections, to give an Account why, when one Affection is raised very high, that it should excite others; especially if the Affection which is raised high, be that of counterfeit **Love**, as it was in the Multitude who cried **Hosanna**. This will naturally draw many other Affections after it. For, as was observed before, Love is the Chief of the Affections, and as it were the Fountain of them. Let us suppose a Person who has been for some Time in great Exercise and Terror through Fear of Hell, and his Heart weakened with Distress and dreadful Apprehensions, and upon the Brink of Despair, and is all at once delivered, by being firmly made to believe, through some Delusion of **Satan**, that God has pardoned him, and accepts him as the Object of his dear Love, and promises him eternal Life: As suppose through some Vision, or strong Idea or Imagination, suddenly excited in him, of a Person with a beautiful Countenance, smiling on him, and with Arms open, and with Blood dropping down, which the Person conceives to be Christ, without any other Enlightening of the Understanding, to give a View of the spiritual divine Excellency of Christ and his Fullness, and of the Way of Salvation revealed in the Gospel; or perhaps by some Voice or Words coming as if they were spoke to him, such as

those, **Son, be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee**, or, **Fear not, it is the Father's good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom**, which he takes to be immediately spoken by God to him, though there was no preceding Acceptance of Christ, or closing of the Heart with him: I say, if we should suppose such a Case, what various Passions would naturally crowd at once, or one after another, into such a Person's Mind? It is easy to be accounted for, from mere Principles of Nature, that a Person's Heart, on such an Occasion, should be raised up to the Skies with Transports of Joy, and be filled with fervent Affection, to that imaginary God or Redeemer, who he supposes has thus rescued him from the Jaws of such dreadful Destruction, that his Soul was so amazed with the Fears of, and has received him with such Endearment, as a peculiar Favourite; And that now he should be filled with Admiration and Gratitude, and his Mouth should be opened, and be full of Talk about what he has experienced; and that, for a while, he should think and speak of scarce any Thing else, and should seem to magnify that God who has done so much for him, and call upon others to rejoice with him, and appear with a cheerful Countenances, and talk with a loud Voice: And however, before his Deliverance, he was full of quarrellings against the Justice of God, that now it should be easy for him to submit to God, and own his Unworthiness, and cry out against himself, and appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his Feet as tame as a Lamb; And that he should now confess his Unworthiness, and cry out, **Why me? Why me?** (Like **Saul**, who when **Samuel** told him that God had appointed him to be King, makes answer, **Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the Tribes of Israel, and my Family the least of all the Families of the Tribe of Benjamin?**

Wherefore then speakest thou so to me? Much in the Language of **David**, the true Saint, 2 Samuel 7:18. **Who am I, and what is my Father's House, that thou hast brought me hitherto!**) Nor is it to be wondered at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy Circumstances, and should love all such as esteem and admire him and what he has experienced, and have violent Zeal against all such as would make nothing of such Things, and be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim War with all who are not of his Party, and should now glory in his Sufferings, and be very much for condemning and censuring all who seem to doubt, or make any Difficulty of these Things; and while the Warmth of his Affections last, should be mighty forward to take Pains, and deny himself, to promote the Interest of the Party who he imagines favour such Things, and seem earnestly desirous to increase the Number of them, as the **Pharisees** compassed Sea and Land to make one **Proselyte**. And so I might go on, and mention many other Things, which will naturally arise in such Circumstances. He must have but slightly considered human Nature, who thinks such Things as these cannot arise in this Manner, without any supernatural Interposition of divine Power.

As from true divine love flow all Christian affections, so from a counterfeit love in like manner, naturally flow other false affections. In both cases, love is the fountain, and the other affections are the streams. The various faculties, principles and affections of the human nature, are as it were many channels from one fountain: If there be sweet water in the fountain, sweet water will from thence flow out into those various channels; but if the water in the fountain be poisonous, then poisonous streams will also flow out

into all those channels. So that the channels and streams will be alike, corresponding one with another; but the great difference will lie in the nature of the water. Or, man's nature may be compared to a tree, with many branches, coming from one root: If the sap in the root be good, there will also be good sap distributed throughout the branches, and the fruit that is brought forth will be good and wholesome; but if the sap in the root and stock be poisonous, so it will be in many branches, (as in the other case) and the fruit will be deadly. The tree in both cases may be alike; there may be an exact resemblance in shape; but the difference is found only in eating the fruit. It is thus (in some measure at least) oftentimes, between saints and hypocrites. There is sometimes a very great similitude between true and false experiences, in their appearance, and in what is expressed and related by the subjects of them: and the difference between them is much like the difference between the dreams of **Pharaoh's** chief butler and baker; they seemed to be much alike; insomuch that when **Joseph** interpreted the chief butler's dream, that he should be delivered from his imprisonment, and restored to the King's favor, and his honourable office in the palace, the chief baker had raised hopes and expectations, and told his dream also; but he was woefully disappointed; and though his dream was so much like the happy and well-boding dream of his companion, yet it was quite contrary in its issue.

8. Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections by this, that comforts and joys seem to follow awakenings and convictions of conscience, in a **certain order**.

Many persons seem to be prejudiced against affections and experiences, that come in such a method, as has been much insisted on by many divines; first, such awakenings, fears and awful appre-

hensions followed with such legal humblings, in a sense of total sinfulness and helplessness, and then, such and such light and comfort: they look upon all such schemes, laying down such methods and steps, to be of men's devising: And particularly if high affections of joy follow great distress and terror, it is made by many an argument against those affections. But such prejudices and objections are without reason or Scripture. Surely it cannot be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers persons from a state of sin and exposedness to eternal destruction, he should give them some considerable sense of the evil he delivers from; that they may be delivered sensibly, and understand their own salvation, and know something of what God does for them. As men that are saved are in two exceeding different states, first a state of condemnation, and then in a state of justification and blessedness; and as God in the work of the salvation of mankind, deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational nature; so it seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's wisdom, that men who are saved, should be in these two states sensibly, first, that they should sensibly to themselves, be in a state of condemnation, and so in a state of woeful calamity and dreadful misery, and so afterwards sensibly in a state of deliverance and happiness; and that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme necessity, and afterwards of Christ's sufficiency and God's mercy through him.

And that it is God's manner of dealing with men, to **lead them into a wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them**, and so to order it, that they shall be brought into distress, and made to see their own helplessness, and absolute dependence on his power and grace, before he appears to work any great deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the Scripture. Then is

God wont to **repent himself for his professing people, when their strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left**, and when they are brought to see that their false gods cannot help them, and that the rock in whom they trusted is vain; **Deuteronomy 32:36, 37.** Before God delivered the children of **Israel** out of **Egypt**, they were prepared for it, by being made to **see that they were in an evil case, and to cry unto God, because of their hard bondage**; Exodus 2:23 and 5:19. And before God wrought that great deliverance for them at the Red Sea, they were brought into great distress, **the wilderness had shut them in**, they could not turn to the right hand nor the left, and the **Red Sea** was before them, and the great **Egyptian** host behind, and they were brought to see that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up; and then God appeared and turned their cries into songs. So before they were brought to their rest, and to enjoy the milk and honey of **Canaan**, God **led them through a great and terrible wilderness, that he might humble them, and teach them what was in their heart, and so do them good in their latter end**; Deuteronomy 8:2, 16. The woman that had the issue of blood twelve years, was not delivered, until she had first **spent all her living on earthly physicians, and could not be healed of any**, and so was left helpless, having no more money to spend; and then she came to the great Physician, without any money or price, and was healed by him; **Luke 8:43, 44.** Before Christ would answer the request of the woman of **Canaan**, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herself worthy to be called a dog; and then he showed her mercy, and received her as a dear

child; **Matthew** 15:22, et cetera. The Apostle **Paul**, before a remarkable deliverance, was **pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that he despaired even of life; but had the sentence of death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the dead;** 2 Corinthians 1:8, 9, 10. There was first a great tempest, and the ship was covered with the waves, and just ready to sink, and the disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, **Lord, save us, we perish;** and then the winds and seas were rebuked, and there was a great calm; **Matthew** 8:24, 25, 26. The leper, before he is cleansed, must have his mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper lip, and was to acknowledge his great misery and utter uncleanness, by rending his clothes, and crying, **Unclean, unclean:** Leviticus 13:45. And backsliding **Israel**, before God heals them, are brought to **acknowledge that they have sinned, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord,** and to see that **they lie down in their shame, and that confusion covers them, and that in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains,** and that God only can save them; **Jeremiah** 3:23, 24, 25. **Joseph**, who was sold by his brothers, and therein was a type of Christ, brings his brothers into great perplexity and distress, and brings them to reflect on their sin, and to say we are verily guilty; and at last to resign up themselves entirely into his hands for bondmen; and then reveals himself to them, as their brother and their Savior.

And if we consider those extraordinary manifestations which God made of himself to saints of old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a way which was terrible, and then by those things that were comfortable. So it was with

Abraham; first a **horror of great darkness fell upon him**, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet promises; **Genesis** 15:12, 13. So it was with **Moses** at Mount **Sinai**; first, God appeared to him in all the terrors of his dreadful majesty, so that **Moses** said, I exceedingly fear and quake, and then he made all his goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his name, **the Lord God gracious and merciful**, et cetera. So it was with **Elijah**; first, there is a stormy wind, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and then a still, small, sweet voice; **1 Kings** 19. So it was with **Daniel**; he first saw Christ's countenance as lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable words as these, **O Daniel, a man greatly beloved**, **Daniel** 10. So it was with the Apostle **John**, **Revelation** 1. And there is an analogy observable in God's dispensations and deliverances which he works for his people, and the manifestation which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many things in Scripture which do more directly show, that this is God's ordinary manner in working salvation for the souls of men, and in the manifestations God makes of himself and of his mercy in Christ, in the ordinary works of his grace on the hearts of sinners. The servant that owed his Prince ten thousand talents, is first held to his debt, and the King pronounces sentence of condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his wife and children, and payment to be made; and thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole debt to be just, and then forgives him all. The prodigal son spends all he has, and is brought to see himself in extreme circumstances, and to humble himself, and own his unworthiness, before he is relieved and

feasted by his father; **Luke** 15. Old inveterate wounds must be searched to the bottom, in order to healing. And the Scripture compares sin, the wound of the soul, to this, and speaks of healing this wound without thus searching of it, as vain and deceitful; **Jeremiah** 8:11. Christ, in the work of his grace on the hearts of men, is compared to rain on the mown grass, grass that is cut down with a scythe, **Psalms** 72:6 representing his refreshing, comforting influences on the wounded spirit. Our first parents, after they had sinned, were first terrified with God's majesty and justice, and had their sin, with its aggravations, set before them by their Judge, before they were relieved, by the promise of the seed of the woman. Christians are spoken of as those **that have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them**, Hebrews 6:18 which representation implies great fear, and sense of danger preceding. To the like purpose, Christ is called **a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land**; Isaiah 32 at the beginning. And it seems to be the natural import of the word **Gospel**, glad tidings, that it is news of deliverance and salvation, after great fear and distress. There is all reason to suppose, that God deals with particular believers, as he dealt with his Church, which he first made to hear his voice in the law, with terrible thunders and lightnings, and kept her under that schoolmaster, to prepare her for Christ; and then comforted her with the joyful sound of the Gospel from Mount **Zion**. So likewise **John the Baptist** came to prepare the way for Christ, and prepare men's heart for his reception, by showing them their sins, and by bringing the self-righteous **Jews** off from their own righteousness, telling them that they were a **generation of**

vipers, and showing them their danger of **the wrath to come**, telling them that **the axe was laid at the root of the trees**, et cetera.

And if it be indeed God's Manner (as I think the foregoing Considerations show that it undoubtedly is) before he gives Men the Comfort of a Deliverance from their Sin and Misery, to give them a considerable Sense of the Greatness and Dreadfulness of those Evils, and their extreme Wretchedness by Reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that Persons, at least oftentimes, while under these Views, should have great Distress and terrible Apprehensions of Mind: Especially if it be considered what these Evils are, that they have a View of; which are no other than great and manifold Sins, against the infinite Majesty of the great Jehovah, and the Suffering of the Fierceness of his Wrath to all Eternity. And the more so still, when we have many plain Instances in Scripture, of Persons that have actually been brought into extreme Distress, by such Convictions, before they have received saving Consolations: As the Multitude at **Jerusalem**, who were **pricked in their Heart, and said unto Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, What shall we do?** And the Apostle **Paul**, who **trembled and was astonished**, before he was comforted; and the **Jailor**, when **he called for a Light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?**

From these Things it appears to be very unreasonable in professing Christians, to make this an Objection against the Truth and spiritual Nature of the comfortable and joyful Affections which any

have, that they follow such awful Apprehensions and Distresses, as have been mentioned.

And on the other Hand, It is no Evidence that Comforts and Joys are right, because they succeed great Terrors, and amazing Fears of Hell. This seems to be what some Persons lay great Weight upon; esteeming great Terrors an Evidence of a great Work of the Law wrought on the Heart, well preparing the Way for solid Comfort: Not considering that Terror, and a Conviction of Conscience, are different Things. For though Convictions of Conscience do often cause Terror; yet they do not consist in it; and Terrors do often arise from other Causes. Convictions of Conscience, through the Influences of God's Spirit, consist in Conviction of Sinfulness of Heart and Practice, and of the Dreadfulness of Sin, as committed against a God of terrible Majesty, infinite Holiness and Hatred of Sin, and strict Justice in punishing of it. But there are some Persons that have frightful Apprehensions of Hell, a dreadful Pit ready to swallow them up, and Flames just ready to lay hold of them, and Devils around them, ready to seize them; who at the same Time seem to have very little proper Enlightenings of Conscience, really convincing them of their Sinfulness of Heart and Life. The Devil, if permitted, can terrify Men as well as the Spirit of God: It is a Work natural to him, and he has many Ways of doing it, in a Manner tending to no Good. He may exceedingly affright Persons, by impressing on them many external Images and Ideas, of a Countenance frowning, a Sword drawn, black Clouds of Vengeance, Words of an awful Doom pronounced, Hell gaping, Devils coming, and the like; not to convince Persons of Things that are true, and revealed in the Word of God, but to lead them to vain and groundless Determinations;

as that their Day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a Resolution immediately to cut them off, **etcetera**

And the Terrors which some Persons have, are very much owing to the particular constitution and temper they are of. Nothing is more manifest, than that some Persons are of such a Temper and Frame, that their imaginations are more strongly impressed with every Thing they are affected with, than others; and the Impression on the Imagination reacts on the Affection, and heightens that still higher; and so Affection and Imagination act reciprocally, one on another, till their Affection is raised to a vast Height, and the Person is swallowed up, and loses all Possession of himself.

And some speak of a great Sight they have of their Wickedness, which really, when the Matter comes to be well examined into and thoroughly weighed, are found to have little or no Convictions of Conscience. They tell of a dreadful hard Heart, and how their Heart lies like a Stone; when truly they have none of those Things in their Minds or Thoughts, wherein the Hardness of Men's Heart does really consist. They tell of a dreadful Load and Sink of Sin, a Heap of black and loathsome Filthiness within them; when, if the Matter be carefully enquired into, they have not in View any Thing wherein the Corruption of Nature does truly consist, nor have they any Thought of any particular Thing wherein their Hearts are sinfully defective, or fall short of what ought to be in them, or any Exercises at all of Corruption in them. And many think also they have great Convictions of their actual Sins, who truly have none. They tell how their Sins are set in Order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round in a row, with a dreadful

frightful Appearance; when really they have not so much an idea of the Sins they have been guilty of in the Course of their Lives, coming into View, that they are affected with the Aggravations of.

And if Persons have had great Terror, which really have been from the awakening and convincing Influences of the Spirit of God, it does not thence follow that their Terrors must needs issue in true Comfort. The unmortified Corruption of the Heart may quench the Spirit of God (after he has been striving) by leading Men to presumptuous, and self-exalting Hopes and Joys, as well as otherwise. It is not every Woman who is really in Travail, that brings forth a real Child; but it may be a monstrous Production, without any Thing of the Form or Properties of human Nature belonging to it. **Pharaoh's** chief Baker, after he had lain in the Dungeon with **Joseph**, had a Vision that raised his Hopes, and he was lifted up out of the Dungeon, as well as the chief Butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if Comforts and Joys do not only come after great Terrors and Awakenings, but there be an Appearance of **such** preparatory Convictions and Humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by **such** Steps, and in **such** a Method, as has frequently been observable in true Converts; this is no certain Sign that the Light and Comforts which follow are true and saving. And for these following Reasons,

First, As the Devil can counterfeit all the saving Operations and Graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those Operations that are preparatory to Grace. If Satan can counterfeit those Effects of God's Spirit which are special, divine and sanctioning; so that there shall be a very great Resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those

Works of God's Spirit which are common, and which Men, while that are yet his own Children, are the Subjects of. These Works are in no wise so much above him as the other. There are no Works of God that are so high and divine, and above the Powers of Nature, and out of the Reach of the Power of all Creatures, as those Works of his Spirit, whereby he forms the Creature in his own Image, and makes it to be a Partaker of the divine Nature. But if the Devil can be the Author of such Resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferior Kind. And it is abundantly evident in Fact, that there are false Humiliations, and false Submissions, as well as false Comforts . How far was **Saul** brought, though a very wicked Man, and of a haughty Spirit, when he (though a great King) was brought, in Conviction of his Sin, as it were to fall down, all in Tears, weeping aloud, before **David** his own Subject, (and one that he had for a long Time mortally hated, and openly treated as an Enemy) and condemn himself before him, crying out, **Thou art more Righteous than I. Thou hast rewarded me Good, whereas I have rewarded thee Evil?** And at another Time, **I have sinned, I have played the Fool, I have erred exceedingly,** 1 Samuel 24:16, 17 and Chapter 26:21. And yet **Saul** seems then to have had very little of the Influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and given him up, and an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud Monarch, in a Pang of Affection, was brought to humble himself so low, before a Subject that he hated, and still continued an Enemy to; there doubtless may be Appearances of great Conviction and Humiliation in Men, before God, while they yet remain Enemies to him, and though they finally continue so. There is oftentimes in

Men who are terrified through Fears of Hell, a great Appearance of their being brought off from their own Righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in all Ways, although they are in many Ways that are more plain and visible. They have only exchanged some Ways of trusting in their own Righteousness, for others that are more secret and subtle. Oftentimes a great Degree of Discouragement, as to many Things they used to depend upon, is taken for Humiliation: And that is called a Submission to God, which is no absolute Submission, but has some secret Bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

Secondly, If the Operations and Effects of the Spirit of God, in the Convictions and Comforts of true Converts may be sophisticated, then the Order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the Things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain Order. If the Devil can make A, B, and C, it is as easy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary Order. The Nature of divine Things is harder for the Devil to imitate, than their Order. He cannot **exactly** imitate divine Operations in their Nature, though his Counterfeits may be very much like them in external Appearance; but he can exactly imitate their Order. When Counterfeits are made, there is no divine Power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no Order or Method of Operations and Experiences, is any certain Sign of their Divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain Evidence of Grace, which Satan cannot do, and which it is impossible should be brought to pass by any Power short of divine.

Thirdly, We have no certain Rule to determine how far God's own Spirit may go in those Operations and Convictions which in themselves are not spiritual and saving, and yet the Person that is the Subject of them, never be converted, but fall short of Salvation at last. There is no necessary Connection in the Nature of Things, between any Thing that a natural Man may experience, while in a State of Nature, and the saving Grace of God's Spirit. And if there be no Connection in the Nature of Things, then there can be no known and certain Connection at all, unless it be by divine Revelation. But there is no revealed certain Connection between a State of Salvation, and any Thing that a natural Man can be the Subject of, before he believes in Christ. God has revealed no certain Connection between Salvation, and any Qualifications in Men, but only Grace and its Fruits. And therefore we do not find any legal Convictions, or Comforts following those legal Convictions, in any certain Method or Order, ever once mentioned in the Scripture, as certain Signs of Grace, or Things peculiar to the Saints; although we do find gracious Operations and Effects themselves, so mentioned, Thousands of Times. Which should be enough with Christians, who are willing to have the Word of God, rather than their own Philosophy, and Experiences, and Conjectures, as their sufficient and sure Guide in Things of this Nature.

Fourthly, Experience does greatly confirm, that Persons seeming to have Convictions and Comforts following one another in such a Method and Order, as is frequently observable in true Converts, is no certain Sign of Grace . I appeal to all those Ministers in this Land, who have had much Occasion of dealing with Souls, in the late extraordinary Season, whether there have

not been many who do not prove well, that have given a fair Account of their Experiences, and have seemed to be converted according to Rule, **that is** with Convictions and Affections, succeeding distinctly and exactly, in that Order and Method, which has been ordinarily insisted on, as the Order of the Operations of the Spirit of God in Conversion.

And as a seeming to have this Distinctness as to Steps and Method, is no certain Sign that a Person is converted; so a being without it, is no Evidence that a Person is not converted. For though it might be made evident to a Demonstration, on Scripture Principles, that a Sinner cannot be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his Sin and Misery, and of his own Emptiness and Helplessness, and his just desert of eternal Condemnation; and that therefore such Convictions must be some Way **implied** in what is wrought in his Soul; yet nothing proves it to be necessary, that all those Things which are implied or presupposed in an Act of Faith in Christ must be plainly and distinctly wrought in the Soul, in so many successive and separate Works of the Spirit that shall be, each one, plain and manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the contrary, (as Mister **Shepard** observes) sometimes the Change made in a Saint, at first Work, is like a confused Chaos; so that the Saints know not what to make of it. The Manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unsearchable: We, as it were, hear the Sound of it, the Effect of it is discernible; but no Man can tell whence it came, or whither it went. And it is oftentimes as difficult to know the Way of the Spirit in the new Birth, as in the first Birth: Ecclesiastes 11:5. **Thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit, or how the Bones do grow**

in the Womb of her that is with Child: Even so thou knowest not the Work of God, that worketh all. The ingenerating of a Principle of Grace in the Soul, seems in Scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the Womb: **Galatians** 4:19. And therefore the Church is called Christ's Mother, **Canticles** 3:11. And so is every particular Believer, **Matthew** 12:49, 50. And the Conception of Christ in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, by the Power of the holy Ghost, seems to be a designed Resemblance of the Conception of Christ in the Soul of a Believer, by the Power of the same holy Ghost. And we know not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow, either in the Womb, or Heart that conceives this holy Child. The new Creature may use that Language in Psalm 139:14, 15. **I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy Works: And that my Soul knoweth right well. My Substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret.** Concerning the Generation of Christ, both in his Person, and also in the Hearts of his People, it may be said, as in Isaiah 53:8. **Who can declare his Generation.** We know not the Works of God, that worketh all. **It is the Glory of God to conceal a Thing,** (Proverbs 25:2.) and to have **his Path as it were in the mighty Waters, that his Footsteps may not be known:** And especially in the Works of his Spirit on the Hearts of Men, which are the highest and chief of his Works. And therefore it is said, Isaiah 40:13. **Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his Counsellor hath taught him.** It is to be feared that some have gone too far towards directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his Footsteps for him, and limiting him to certain Steps and Methods. Experience plainly shows, that God's Spirit is unsearchable and untraceable, in

some of the best of Christians, in the Method of his Operations, in their Conversion. Nor does the Spirit of God proceed discernibly in the Steps of a particular established Scheme, one half so often as is imagined. A Scheme of what is necessary, and according to a Rule already received and established by common Opinion, has a vast (though to many a very insensible) Influence in forming Persons' Notions of the Steps and Method of their own Experiences. I know very well what their Way is; for I have had much Opportunity to observe it. Very often, at first, their Experiences appear like a confused **Chaos**, as Mister **Shepard** expresses it: But then those Passages of their Experience are picked out, that have most of the Appearance of such particular Steps that are insisted on; and these are dwelt upon in the Thoughts, and these are told of from Time to Time, in the Relation they give: These Parts grow brighter and brighter in their View; and others, being neglected, grow more and more obscure: And what they have experienced is insensibly strained to bring all to an exact Conformity to the Scheme that is established. And it becomes natural for Ministers, who have to deal with them and direct them that insist upon Distinctness and Clearness of Method, to do so too. But yet there has been so much to be seen of the Operations of the Spirit of God, of late, that they who have had much to do with Souls, and are not blinded with a seven-fold Veil of Prejudice, must know that the Spirit is so exceeding various in the Manner of his operating, that in many Cases it is impossible to trace him, or find out his Way.

What we have principally to do with, in our Enquiries into our own State, or Directions we give to others, is the **Nature** of the Effect that God has brought to pass in the Soul. As to the Steps which the Spirit of God took to bring that Effect to pass, we may

leave them to him. We are often in Scripture expressly directed to try ourselves by the **Nature** of the Fruits of the Spirit; but no where by the Spirit's **Method** of producing them. Many do greatly err in their Notions of a clear Work of Conversion; calling that a clear Work, where the successive Steps of Influence, and Method of Experience is clear: Whereas that indeed is the clearest Work, (not where the Order of **doing** is clearest, but) where the spiritual and divine Nature of the Work **done**, and Effect **wrought**, is most clear.

9. It is no certain Sign that the religious Affections which Persons have are such as have in them the Nature of true Religion, or that they have not, that they dispose Persons to spend much Time in Religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external Duties of Worship.

This has, very unreasonably, of late been looked upon as an Argument against the religious Affections which some have had, that they spend so much Time in reading, praying, singing, hearing Sermons, and the like. It is plain from the Scripture that it is the Tendency of true Grace to cause Persons very much to delight in such religious Exercises. True Grace had this Effect on **Anna** the Prophetess; Luke 1:37. **She departed not from the Temple; but served God with Fastings and Prayers, Night and Day.** And Grace had this Effect upon the primitive Christians in **Jerusalem**; Acts 2:46, 47. **And they continuing daily, with one Accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart, praising God.** Grace made **Daniel** delight in the Duty of Prayer, and solemnly to attend it three Times a Day: As it also did **David**; Psalm 55:17. **Evening, Morning and**

at Noon will I pray. Grace makes the Saints delight in singing Praises to God: Psalm 135:3. **Sing Praises unto his Name, for it is pleasant.** And 147:1. **Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing Praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely.** It also causes them to delight to hear the Word of God preached: It makes the Gospel a joyful Sound to them; Psalm 89:15. And makes the Feet of those who publish these good Tidings, to be beautiful; Isaiah 52:7. **How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings,** etcetera! It makes them love God's public Worship; Psalm 26:8. **Lord I have loved the Habitation of thy House, and the Place where thine Honour dwelleth.** And 27:4. **One Thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, all the Days of my Life; to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.** Psalm 84:1, 2, etcetera—**How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my Soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord.** —Yea the Sparrow hath found an House, and the Swallow a Nest for herself, where she may lay her Young, even thine Altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thine House; they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the Man in whose Heart are the Ways of them, who passing through the Valley of Baca,—go from Strength to Strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.—Verse 10. **A Day in thy Courts is better than a thousand.**

This is the Nature of true Grace. But yet, on the other Hand, Persons being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external Exercises of Religion, and to spend much Time in them, is no sure Evidence of Grace; because such a Disposition is found in many that have no Grace. So it was with the **Israelites** of old, whose Services were abominable to God; they attended the **new Moons, and Sabbaths, and calling of Assemblies, and spread forth their Hands, and made many Prayers;** Isaiah 1:12—15. So it was with the **Pharisees;** they **made long Prayers, and fasted twice a Week.** False Religion may cause Persons to be loud and earnest in Prayer: Isaiah 58:4. **Ye shall not fast as ye do this Day, to cause your Voice to be heard on high.** That Religion which is not spiritual and saving, may cause Men to delight in religious Duties and Ordinances: Isaiah 58:2. **Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my Ways; as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their God. They ask of me the Ordinances of Justice, they take Delight in approaching to God.** It may cause them to take Delight in hearing the Word of God preached; as it was with **Ezekiel's** Hearers, Ezekiel 33:31, 32. **And they come unto thee as my People cometh, and they sit before thee as my People, and they hear thy Words; but they will not do them: for with their Mouth they show much Love; but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness. And lo, thou art unto them, as a very lovely Song, of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument: For they hear thy Words, but they do them not.** So it was with **Herod;** he **heard** John the Baptist

gladly: Mark 6:20. So it was with others of his Hearers, **for a Season, they rejoiced in his Light;** John 5:35. So the stony ground Hearers **heard the Word with Joy.**

Experience shows that Persons, from false Religion, may be inclined to be exceeding abundant in the external Exercises of Religion; yea, to give themselves up to them, and devote almost their whole Time to them. Formerly a Sort of People were very numerous in the **Romish** Church, called **Recluses;** who forsook the World, and utterly abandoned the Society of Mankind, and shut themselves up close, in a narrow Cell, with a Vow never to stir out of it, nor to see the Face of any of Mankind any more; (unless that they might be visited in Case of Sickness) to spend all their Days in the Exercises of Devotion and Converse with God. There were also in old Time, great Multitudes called **Hermits** and **Anchorites,** that left the World to spend all their Days in lonesome Deserts, to give themselves up to religious Contemplations and Exercises of Devotion; some Sorts of them having no Dwellings, but the Caves and Vaults of the Mountains, and no Food, but the spontaneous Productions of the Earth. —I once lived, for many Months, next Door to a **Jew,** (the Houses adjoining one to another) and had much Opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest Person that ever I saw in my Life; great Part of his Time being spent in Acts of Devotion, at his eastern Window, which opened next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the Day-time, but sometimes whole Nights.

10. Nothing can be certainly known of the Nature of religious Affections by this, that they much dispose Persons with their Mouths to praise and glorify God. This indeed is implied in what has been just now observed, of abounding and spending much

Time in the external Exercises of Religion, and was also hinted before; but because many seem to look upon it as a bright Evidence of gracious Affection, when Persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God, to have their Mouths full of his Praises, and affectionately to be calling on others to praise and extol him, I thought it deserved a more particular Consideration.

No Christian will make it an Argument against a Person, that he seems to have such a Disposition. Nor can it reasonably be looked upon as an Evidence for a Person, if these Things that have been already observed and proved, be duly considered, **namely** that Persons, without Grace, may have high Affections towards God and Christ, and that their Affections, being strong, may fill their Mouths, and incline them to speak much, and very earnestly, about the Things they are affected with, and that there may be Counterfeits of all Kinds of gracious Affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly, that this is no certain Sign of Grace, if we consider what Instances the Scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an Account of this, in the Multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought Miracles; Mark 2:12. **And immediately he arose, took up his Bed, and went forth before them all: Insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this Fashion!** So Matthew 9:8 and Luke 5:26. Also Matthew 15:31. **Insomuch that the Multitude wondered, when they saw the Dumb to speak, and the Maimed to be whole, the Lame to walk, and the Blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.** So we are told, that on Occasion of Christ's raising the Son of the Widow of **Nain**, Luke 7:16. **There came a great Fear on all; and they glorified God, saying,**

that a great Prophet is risen up among us, and that God with visited his People. So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him, Luke 4:15. **And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.** And how did they praise him with loud Voices, crying, **Hosanna to the son of David, Hosanna in the Highest. Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord,** a little before he was crucified! And after Christ's Ascension, when the Apostles had healed the impotent Man, we are told, that **all Men glorified God for that which was done,** Acts 4:21. When the **Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia,** heard from **Paul and Barnabas,** that God would reject the **Jews,** and take the **Gentiles** to be his People in their Room, they were affected with this Goodness of God to the **Gentiles, and glorified the Word of the Lord:** But all that did so were not true Believers; but only a certain elect Number of them; as in intimated in the Account we have of it, Acts 13:48. **And when the Gentiles were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believed.** So of old, the Children of Israel at the Red Sea, sang his Praise; they soon forgot his works. And it is foretold of false Professors, and real Enemies of Religion, that they should show a Forwardness to glorify God; Isaiah 66:5. **Hear you the Word of the Lord, you that tremble at his Word: Your Brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my Name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified.**

It is no certain Sign that a Person is graciously affected, if in the midst of his Hopes and Comforts, he is greatly affected with God's unmerited Kindness to him that is so unworthy, and seems greatly to extol and magnify Grace. Those that yet remain with un-

mortified Pride and Enmity against God, may, when they imagine that they have received extraordinary Kindness from God, cry out of their Unworthiness, and magnify God's undeserved Goodness to them, from no other view of their own deservings, and from no higher Principle, than **Saul** had who while he yet remained with unsubdued Pride and **Enmity against David**, was brought, though a King, to acknowledge his Sin, and **cry out, I have played the Fool, I have erred exceedingly**, and with great Affection and Admiration, to magnify and extol **David's** unmerited and unexampled Kindness to him, 1 Samuel 25:16–19 and 26:21. And from no higher Principle, than that from whence **Nebuchadnezzar** was affected with God's Dispensation, that he saw and was the Subject of, and praises, extols and honours the King of Heaven, and both he, and **Darius**, in the same Affections, call upon all Nations to praise God. **Daniel** 3:28, 29, 30 and 4:1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37 and 6:25, 26, 27.

11. It is no Sign that Affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make Persons that have them, exceeding confident that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good Estate.

It is an Argument with some, against Persons, that they are deluded if they pretend to be assured of their good Estate, and to be carried beyond all Doubting of the Favour of God; supposing that there is no such Thing to be expected in the Church of God, as a full and absolute Assurance of Hope; unless it be in some very extraordinary Circumstances; as in the Case of Martyrdom: Contrary to the Doctrine of Protestants, which has been maintained by their most celebrated Writers against the Papists; and contrary to the plain Scripture Evidence. It is manifest that it was a common

Thing for the Saints that we have a History, or particular Account of in Scripture, to be assured. God in the plainest and most positive Manner, revealed and testified his special Favour to **Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel**, and others. **Job** often speaks of his Sincerity and Uprightness with the greatest imaginable Confidence and Assurance, often calling God to witness to it; and says plainly, **I know that my Redeemer lives, and that I shall see him for my self, and not another**, Job 19:25 etc. **David**, throughout the Book of Psalms, almost every where speaks without any Hesitancy, and in the most positive Manner of God as his God; glorying in him as his Portion and Heritage, his Rock and Confidence, his Shield, Salvation, and high Tower, and the like. **Hezekiah** appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in Truth and with a perfect Heart, 2 **Kings** 20:3. Jesus Christ, in his dying Discourse with his eleven Disciples, in the 14th, 15th and 16th Chapters of **John**, (which was as it were Christ's last Will and Testament to his Disciples, and to his whole Church) often declares his special and everlasting Love to them, in the plainest and most positive Terms; and promises them a future Participation with him in his Glory, in the most absolute Manner; and tells them at the same Time, that he does so, to the End, that their Joy might be **full**; John 15:11. **These Things have I spoken unto you, that my Joy might remain in you, and that your Joy might be full**. See also at the Conclusion of his whole Discourse, Chapter 16:33. **These Things have I spoken unto you, that in me you might have Peace. In the World you shall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World**. Christ was not afraid of speaking too plainly and positively to them: He did not desire to hold them in the least

Suspense. And he concluded that last Discourse of his, with a Prayer in their Presence, wherein he speaks positively to his Father of those eleven Disciples, as having all of them savingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his Word; and that they were not of the World; and that for their Sakes he sanctified himself; and that his Will was that they should be with him in his Glory: And tells his Father, that he spoke these Things in his Prayer, to the End, that his Joy might be fulfilled in them, Verse 13. By these Things it is evident, that it is agreeable to Christ's Designs, and the continued Ordering and Disposition Christ makes of Things in his Church, that there should be sufficient and abundant Provision made, that his Saints might have full Assurance of their future Glory.

The Apostle **Paul**, through all his Epistles, speaks in an assured Strain; ever speaking positively of his special Relation to Christ, his Lord and Master and Redeemer, and his Interest in, and Expectation of the future Reward. It would be endless to take notice of all Places that might be enumerated; I shall mention but three or four, Galatians 2:20. **Christ lives in me, and the Life which I now live in the Flesh I live by the Faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me.** Philippians 1:21. **For me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.** 2 Timothy 1:12. **I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that Day.** 2 Timothy 1:8. **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, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that Day.**

And the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, and God's declared Ends in the Appointment and Constitution of Things in that Covenant, do plainly show it to be God's Design to make ample Provision for the Saints having an assured Hope of eternal Life, while living here upon Earth. For so are all Things ordered and contrived in that Covenant, that every Thing might be made sure on God's Part. **The Covenant is ordered in all Things, and sure:** The Promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various Ways exhibited; and there are many Witnesses, and many Seals; and God has confirmed his Promises with an Oath. And God's declared Design in all this is, that the Heirs of the Promises might have an undoubting Hope, and full Joy, in an Assurance of their future Glory. Hebrews 6:17, 18. **Wherein God willing, more abundantly to show to the Heirs of Promise, the immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath; that by two immutable Things, in which it was impossible for God to Lie, we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before us.** But all this would be in vain, to any such Purpose, as the Saints strong Consolation, and Hope of their obtaining future Glory, if their Interest in those sure Promises in ordinary Cases, was not attainable. For God's Promises and Oaths, let them be as sure as they will, cannot give strong Hope and Comfort to any particular Person, any further than he can know that those Promises are made to him. And in vain is Provision made in Jesus Christ, that Believers might be perfect as pertaining to the Conscience, as is signified, **Hebrews 9:9** if Assurance of Freedom from the Guilt of Sin is not attainable.

It further appears that Assurance is not only attainable in some very extraordinary Cases, that **all** Christians are directed to give all Diligence to make their Calling and Election sure, and are told how they may do it, 2 **Peter** 1:5–8. And it is spoken of as a Thing very unbecoming to Christians, and an Argument of something very blamable in them, not to know whether Christ be in them or not; 2 Corinthians 13:5. **Do you not know your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except you be Reprobates?** And it is implied that it is an Argument of a very blamable Negligence in Christians, if they practice Christianity after such a Manner as to remain uncertain of the Reward, in that 1 Corinthians 9:26. **I therefore so run, as not uncertainly.** And to add no more, it is manifest, that Christians knowing their Interest in the saving Benefits of Christianity is a Thing ordinarily attainable, because the Apostles tell us by what Means **Christians** (and not only **Apostles** and **Martyrs**) were accustomed to know this; 1 Corinthians 2:12. **Now we have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God.** And 1 John 2:3. **And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.** And Verse 5. **Hereby we know that we are in him.** Chapter 3:14. **We know that we are passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren.** Verse 19. **Hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him.** Verse 24. **Hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.** So Chapter 4:13 and Chapter 5:2 and Verse 19.

Therefore it must necessarily be very unreasonable to determine, that Persons are Hypocrites, and their Affections wrong, because they seem to be out of Doubt of their own Salvation, and the Affections they are the Subjects of seem to banish all Fears of Hell.

On the other Hand, it is no sufficient Reason to determine that Men are Saints, and their Affections gracious, because the Affections they have are attended with an exceeding Confidence that their State is good, and their Affections divine. Nothing can be certainly argued from their Confidence, however great and strong soever it seems to be. If we see a Man that boldly calls God his Father, and commonly speaks in the most bold, familiar and appropriating Language in Prayer, **My Father, my dear Redeemer, my sweet Savior, my Beloved**, and the like,—and it is a common Thing for him to use the most confident Expressions before Men, about the Goodness of his State; such as, **I know certainly that God is my Father; I know so surely as there is a God in Heaven, that he is my God; I know I shall go to Heaven, as well as if I were there; I know that God is now manifesting himself to my Soul, and is now smiling upon me:** And seems to have done forever with any Enquiry or Examination into his State, as a Thing sufficiently known, and out of Doubt, and to despise all that so much as intimate or suggest that there is some Reason to Doubt or Fear whether all is right; such Things are no Signs at all that it is indeed so as he is confident it is. Such an over-bearing, high-handed and violent Sort of Confidence as this, so affecting to declare itself with a most glaring Show, in the Sight of Men, which is to be seen in many, has not the Countenance of a true Christian Assurance: It favors more of the Spirit of the Pharisees, who never doubted but

that they were Saints, and the most eminent of Saints, and were bold to go to God, and come up near to him, and lift up their Eyes, and thank him for the great Distinction he had made between them and other Men; and when Christ intimated that they were blind and graceless, despised the Suggestion; John 9:40. **And some of the Pharisees which were with him, heard these Words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?** If they had more of the Spirit of the **Publican**, with their Confidence, who in a Sense of his exceeding Unworthiness, stood afar off, and dared not so much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but struck on his Breast, and cried out of himself as a Sinner, their Confidence would have more of the Aspect of the Confidence of one that humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no Confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the Hearts of natural Men are, what Principles they are under the Dominion of, what Blindness and Deceit, what Self-flattery, Self-exaltation and Self-confidence reigns there, we need not at all wonder that their high Opinion of themselves, and Confidence of their happy Circumstances, be as high and strong as Mountains, and as violent as a Tempest, when once Conscience is blinded, and Convictions killed, with false, high Affections, and those forementioned Principles let loose, fed up and prompted by false Joys and Comforts, excited by some pleasing Imaginations impressed by **Satan**, transforming himself into an Angel of Light.

When once a Hypocrite is thus established in a false Hope, he has not those Things to cause him to call his Hope in Question, that oftentimes are the Occasion of the Doubting of true Saints; as **First**, He has not that cautious Spirit, that great Sense of the vast Importance of a sure Foundation, and that Dread of being de-

ceived. The Comforts of the true Saints increase Awakening and Caution, and a lively Sense how great a Thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just and omniscient Judge. But false Comforts put an End to these Things, and dreadfully stupefy the Mind. **Secondly**, The Hypocrite has not the Knowledge of his own Blindness, and the Deceitfulness of his own Heart, and that mean Opinion of his own Understanding, that the true Saint has. Those that are deluded with false Discoveries and Affections, are evermore highly conceited of their Light and Understanding. **Thirdly**, The Devil does not assault the Hope of the Hypocrite, as he does the Hope of a true Saint. The Devil is a great Enemy to a true Christian Hope, not only because it tends greatly to the Comfort of him that has it, but also because it is a Thing of a holy, heavenly Nature, greatly tending to promote and cherish Grace in the Heart, and a great Incentive to Strictness and Diligence in the Christian Life. But he is no Enemy to the Hope of a Hypocrite, which above all Things establishes his Interest in him that has it. A Hypocrite may maintain his Hope without Opposition, as long as he lives, the Devil never disturbing it, nor attempting to disturb it. But there is perhaps no true Christian but what has his Hope assaulted by him. **Satan** assaulted Christ himself, upon this, whether he were the Son of God or not: And the Servant is not above his Master, nor the Disciple above his Lord; it is enough for the Disciple, that is most privileged in this World, to be as his Master. **Fourthly**, He who has a false Hope has not that Sight of his own Corruptions, which the Saint has. A true Christian has ten Times so much to do with his Heart, and its Corruptions, as an Hypocrite: And the Sins of his Heart and Practice, appear to him in their Blackness; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very mysterious Thing that

any Grace can be consistent with such Corruption, or should be in such a Heart. But a false Hope hides Corruption, covers it all over, and the Hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own Eyes.

There are two Sorts of Hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward Morality and external Religion; many of which are professed **Arminians**, in the Doctrine of Justification: And the other, are those that are deceived with false Discoveries and Elevations; which often cry down Works, and Men's own Righteousness, and talk much of free Grace; but at the same Time make a Righteousness of their Discoveries, and of their Humiliation, and exalt themselves to Heaven with them. These two Kinds of Hypocrites Mister **Shepard**, in his Exposition of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, distinguishes by the Names of **legal** and **evangelical** Hypocrites; and often speaks of the latter as the worst. And it is evident that the latter are commonly by far the most confident in their Hope, and with the most Difficulty brought off from it: I have scarcely known the Instance of such an one, in my Life, that has been undeceived. The chief Grounds of the Confidence of many of them, are the very same Kind of Impulses and supposed Revelations, (sometimes with Texts of Scripture, and sometimes without) that so many of late have had concerning future Events; calling these Impulses about their good Estate, the Witness of the Spirit; entirely misunderstanding the Nature of the Witness of the Spirit, as I shall show hereafter. Those that have had Visions and Impulses about other Things, it has generally been to reveal such Things as they are desirous and fond of: And no wonder that Persons who give heed to such Things, have the same Sort of Visions or Impressions about their own eternal Salvation, to reveal to them that their Sins are forgiven them, that their

Names are written in the Book of Life, that they are in high Favor with God, **etc.** and especially when they earnestly seek, expect and wait for Evidence of their Election and Salvation this Way, as the surest and most glorious Evidence of it. Neither is it any Wonder, that when they have such a supposed Revelation of their good Estate, it raises in them the highest Degree of Confidence of it. It is found by abundant Experience that those who are led away by Impulses and imagined Revelations, are extremely confident: They suppose that the great Jehovah has declared these and those Things to them; and having his immediate Testimony, a strong Confidence is the highest Virtue. Hence they are bold to say, **I know this or that;—I know certainly;—I am as sure as that I have a Being,** and the like: And they despise all Argument and Enquiry in the Case. And above all Things else, it is easy to be accounted for, that Impressions and Impulses about that which is so pleasing, so suiting their Self-love and Pride, as their being the dear Children of God, distinguished from most in the World in his Favor, should make them strongly confident: Especially when with their Impulses and Revelations they have high Affections, which they take to be the most eminent Exercises of Grace. I have known of several Persons, that have had a fond Desire of something of a temporal Nature, through a violent Passion that has possessed them, and they have been earnestly pursuing the Thing they have desired should come to pass, and have met with great Difficulty and many Discouragements in it, but at last have had an Impression or supposed Revelation that they should obtain what they sought; and they have looked upon it as a sure Promise from the most High, which has made them most ridiculously confident, against all Manner of Reason to convince them to the contrary,

and all Events working against them. And there is nothing hinders, but that Persons who are seeking their Salvation, may be deceived by the like delusive Impressions, and be made confident of that, the same Way.

The Confidence of many of this Sort of Hypocrites, that Mister **Shepard** calls **evangelical Hypocrites**, is like the Confidence of some mad Men, who think they are Kings: They will maintain it against all Manner of Reason and Evidence. And in one Sense, it is much more immovable than a truly gracious Assurance; a true Assurance is not upheld, but by the Soul's being kept in a holy Frame, and Grace maintained in lively Exercise. If the Actings of Grace do much decay in the Christian, and he falls into a lifeless Frame, he loses his Assurance: But this Kind of Confidence of Hypocrites will not be shaken by Sin: They, (at least some of them) will maintain their Boldness in their Hope, in the most corrupt Frames and wicked Ways: Which is a sure Evidence of their Delusion.

And here I can't but observe, that there are certain Doctrines often preached to the People, which need to be delivered with more Caution and Explanation than they frequently are; for as they are by many understood, they tend greatly to establish this Delusion and false Confidence of Hypocrites. The Doctrines I speak of are those of **Christians living by Faith, not by Sight; their giving Glory to God, by trusting him in the Dark; living upon Christ, and not upon Experiences; not making their good Frames the Foundation of their Faith:** Which are excellent and important Doctrines indeed, rightly understood, but corrupt and destructive, as many understand them. The Scripture speaks of living or walking by Faith, and not by Sight, in

no other Way than these, **namely** a being governed by a Respect to eternal Things, that are the Objects of Faith, and are not seen, and not by a Respect to temporal Things, which are seen; and believing Things revealed that we never saw with bodily Eyes; and also living by Faith in the Promise of future Things; without yet seeing or enjoying the Things promised, or knowing the Way how they can be fulfilled. This will be easily evident to any one that looks over the Scriptures which speak of **Faith** in Opposition to **Sight**; as 2 **Corinthians** 4. 18. and 5. 7. **Hebrews** 11. 1, 8, 13, 17, 27, 29. **Romans** 8. 24. **John** 20. 29. But this Doctrine, as it is understood by many, is that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ, without spiritual Sight or Light, and although they are in a dark dead Frame, and, for the present, have no spiritual Experiences or Discoveries. And it is truly the Duty of those who are thus in Darkness, to come out of Darkness into Light, and believe. But that they should confidently believe and trust, while they yet remain without spiritual Light or Sight, is an antisciptural and absurd Doctrine. The Scripture is ignorant of any such Faith in Christ of the Operation of God, that is not founded in a spiritual Sight of Christ. That believing on Christ, which accompanies a Title to everlasting Life, is a **seeking the Son, and believing on him**, John 6. 40. True Faith in Christ is never exercised, any further than Persons **behold as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord**, and have **the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ**; 2 **Corinthians** 18. and 4. 6. They into whose Minds **the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, does not shine: They believe not**; 2 **Corinthians** 4. 4. That Faith, which is without spiritual Light, is not the Faith of the Children of the Light, and of the Day;

but the Presumption of the Children of Darkness. And therefore to press and urge them to believe, without any spiritual Light or Sight, tends greatly to help forward the Delusions of the Prince of Darkness. Men not only can't exercise Faith without some spiritual Light, but they can exercise Faith only just in such Proportion as they have spiritual Light. Men will trust in God no further than they know him: And they can't be in the Exercise of Faith in him one Ace further than they have a Sight of his Fulness and Faithfulness **in Exercise**. Nor can they have the Exercise of Trust in God, any further than they are in a **gracious Frame**. They that are in a dead carnal Frame, doubtless ought to trust in God; because that would be the same Thing as coming out of their bad Frame, and turning to God: But to exhort Men confidently to trust in God, and so hold up their Hope and Peace, though they are not in a gracious Frame, and continue still to be so, is the same Thing in Effect, as to exhort them confidently to trust in God, but not with a gracious Trust: And what is that but a wicked Presumption? It is just so impossible for Men to have a strong or lively trust in God, when they have no lively Exercises of Grace, or sensible Christian Experiences, as it is for them to be in the lively Exercises of Grace, without the Exercises of Grace.

It is true that it is the Duty of God's People to trust in him, when in Darkness, and though they remain still in Darkness, in that Sense, that they ought to trust in God when the Aspects of his Providence are dark, and look as though God had forsaken them, and did not hear their Prayers, and many Clouds gather, and many Enemies surround them, with a formidable Aspect, threatening to swallow them up, and all Events of Providence seem to be against them, all Circumstances seem to render the Promises of God diffi-

cult to be fulfilled, and God must be trusted out of Sight, **that is** when we can't see which Way it is possible for him to fulfill his Word, every Thing but God's mere Word makes it look unlikely, so that if Persons believe, they must Hope against Hope. Thus the ancient **Patriarchs**, and **Job**, and the Psalmist, and **Jeremiah**, **Daniel**, **Shadrach**, **Meshech** and **Abednego**, and the Apostle **Paul** gave Glory to God by trusting in God in Darkness. And we have many Instances of such a glorious victorious Faith in the Eleventh of the **Hebrews**. But how different a Thing is this, from trusting in God without spiritual Sight, and being at the same Time in a dead and carnal Frame!

There is also such a Thing as spiritual Light's being let into the Soul in one Way, when it is not in another; and so there is such a Thing as the Saints trusting in God, and also knowing their good Estate, when they are destitute of some Kinds of Experience. As for Instance, they may have clear Views of God's Sufficiency and Faithfulness, and so confidently trust in him, and know that they are his Children; and at the same Time, not have those clear and sweet Ideas of his Love, as at other Times: For it was thus with Christ himself in his last Passion. And they may have Views of much of God's Sovereignty, Holiness and All-sufficiency, enabling them quietly to submit to him, and exercise a sweet and most encouraging Hope in God's Fulness, when they are not satisfied of their own good Estate. But how different Things are these, from confidently trusting in God, without spiritual Light or Experience!

Those that thus insist on Persons living by Faith, when they have no Experience, and are in very bad Frames, are also very absurd in their Notions of Faith. What they mean by Faith is, believing that they are in a good Estate. Hence they count it a dreadful

Sin for them to doubt of their State, whatever Frames they are in, and whatever wicked Things they do, because it is the great and heinous Sin of Unbelief; and he is the best Man, and puts most Honour upon God, that maintains his Hope of his good Estate the most confidently and immoveably, when he has the least Light or Experience; that is to say, when he is in the worst and wickedest Frame and Way; because, forsooth, that is a Sign that he is strong in Faith, giving Glory to God, and against Hope believes in Hope. But what Bible do they learn this Notion of Faith out of, that it is a Man's confidently believing that he is in a good Estate? If this be Faith, the Pharisees had Faith in an eminent Degree; some of which, Christ teaches, committed the unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. The Scripture represents Faith, as that by which Men are **brought into** a good Estate; and therefore it can't be the same Thing, as believing that they **are already** in a good Estate. To suppose that Faith consists in Persons believing that they are in a good Estate, is in effect the same Thing, as to suppose that Faith consists in a Person's believing that he has Faith, or in believing that he believes.

Indeed Persons doubting of their good Estate, may in several Respects **arise from** Unbelief. It may be from Unbelief, or because they have so little Faith, that they have so little **Evidence** of their good Estate: If they had more Experience of the Actings of Faith, and so more Experience of the Exercise of Grace, they would have clearer Evidence that their State was good; and so their Doubts would be removed. And then their doubting of their State may be from Unbelief thus, When though there be many Things that are good Evidences of a Work of Grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a State of Favour with God,

because it is **they**, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to Anger against them. Their Doubts in such a Case arise from Unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient Sense **of**, and reliance **on** the infinite Riches of God's Grace, and the Sufficiency of Christ for the Chief of Sinners. They may also be from Unbelief, when they doubt of their State, because of the Mystery of God's Dealings with them: They are not able to reconcile such Dispensations with God's Favour to them: Or when they doubt whether they have any Interest in the Promises, because the Promises from the Aspects of Providence, appear so unlikely to be fulfilled; the Difficulties that are in the Way, are so many and great. Such Doubting arises from want of Dependance upon God's Almighty Power, and his Knowledge and Wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such Persons, their Unbelief, and their Doubting of their State, are not the same Thing; though one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their state, on such grounds as those last mentioned; and they may be to blame, that they have no more grace, and no more of the present exercises and experiences of it, to be an evidence to them of the goodness of their state. Men are doubtless to blame for being in a dead carnal frame; but when they are in such a frame, and have no sensible experience of the exercises of grace, but on the contrary, are very much under the prevalence of their lusts, and an unchristian spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their state. It is as impossible, in the nature of things, that a holy and christian hope, should be kept alive, in its clearness and strength, in such circumstances, as it is to keep the light in the room, when the candle is put out; or to maintain the bright sunshine in the air, when the sun is gone

down. Distant experiences, when darkened by present prevailing lust and corruption, will never keep alive a gracious confidence and assurance; but that sickens and decays upon it, as necessarily as a little child by repeated blows on the head with the hammer. Nor is it at all to be lamented that persons doubt of their state in such circumstances; but on the contrary, it is desirable and every way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wise and gracious constitution of things, which God hath established, that it should be so. For so hath God contrived and constituted things, in his dispensations towards his own people, that when their **Love** decays, and the exercises of it fail, or become weak, **Fear** should arise; for then they need it to restrain them from sin, and to exercise them to care for the good of their souls, and so to stir them up to watchfulness and diligence in religion. But God hath so ordered that when love rises, and is in vigorous exercise, then fear should vanish, and be driven away; for then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent principle in exercise, to restrain them from sin, and stir them up to their duty. There are no other principles, which human nature is under the influence of, that are ever adventitious, but one of these two, **Fear** or **Love**: And therefore, if one of these should not prevail, as the other decayed, God's people when fallen into dead and carnal frames, when love is asleep, would be lamentably exposed indeed. And therefore God has wisely ordained, that these two opposite principles of love and fear, should rise and fall, like the two opposite scales of a balance when one rises, the other sinks. As light and darkness, necessarily and unavoidably succeed each other; if light prevails, so much does darkness cease, and no more; and if light decays, so much does darkness prevail; so it is in the heart of a child of God. If divine love

slumbers and falls asleep, and lust prevails, the light and joy vanish, and dark fear and doubting arises; and if on the contrary, divine love prevails, and comes into lively exercise, this brings in the brightness of hope, and drives away black lust, and fear with it. Love is the **Spirit of Adoption**, or the childlike principle; if that slumbers, men fall under fear, which is the **Spirit of Bondage**, of the servile principle: And on the contrary. And if so, if the Spirit of Adoption, be carried to a great height, it quite drives away all fear, and brings full assurance; agreeable to that of the Apostle, 1 John 4:18. **There is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love casteth out Fear.** These two opposite principles of lust and holy love bring hope and fear into the hearts of God's children, in proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural influence, without something adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the distemper of melancholy, or ignorance, prejudices of education, wrong instruction, or peculiar temptations, etc.

Fear is driven out by the Spirit of God, no other way than by the prevailing of love: nor ever maintained by his Spirit, when love is asleep. At such a time, in vain is all the saint's self-examinations, and poring on past experience, in order to establish his peace and full assurance. For it is contrary to the nature of things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have assurance at such a time.

They who do so, do directly thwart God's wise and gracious constitution of things, teaching others to be confident in their state in darkness under a notion of **Living by Faith**, and **not by Sight**, and **Trusting God in the Dark**, and **Living upon Christ**, and teaching them not to doubt of their good estate, lest they be guilty of the dreadful sin of unbelief. And it has a tendency

to establish the most presumptuous hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their state in question, how much forever wickedness prevails, and reigns in their hearts, and prevails in their lives under a notion of honoring God, by **hoping against hope**, and trusting in God, when things look very dark. And doubtless vast has been the mischief, that has been done this way.

Men cannot be said to forsake Christ, and live on their experiences of the grace of God, merely because they take them and use them as evidences that they are gracious; for there are no other evidences that they are so. But then may they be said to live upon their experiences, when they make a righteousness of them; and instead of keeping their eye on God's glory, and Christ's excellency, they turn their eyes from these objects without them, on to themselves, to entertain their minds, by viewing their own attainments, and high experiences, and the great things they have met with, and are bright and beautiful in their own eyes, and are rich and increased with goods, in their own apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an esteem of them, on the same account, as they have of themselves. This is living on experiences, and not on Christ; and is more abominable in the sight of God, than the gross immoralities of those who make no pretences to religion. But this is a far different thing from a mere improving experiences as evidences of an interest in a glorious Redeemer.

But to return from this digression, I would mention one thing more under the general head that I am upon.

12. Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the nature of religious affections, that any are the subjects of, from this, that the outward manifestations of them, and the relation persons give

of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the truly godly, and such as greatly gain their charity, and win their hearts.

The true saints have not such a spirit of discerning, that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For though they know experimentally what true religion is, in the internal exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither feel, nor see, in the heart of another. There is nothing in others, that comes within their view, but outward manifestations and appearances; but the Scripture plainly intimates that this way of judging what is in men by outward appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to deceit; 1 Samuel 16:7. **The Lord seeth not as Man seeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart.** Isaiah 11:3. **He shall not judge after the Sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the Hearing of his Ears.** They commonly are but poor judges, and dangerous counsellors in soul cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining persons' states, vaunting themselves in their extraordinary faculty of discerning and distinguishing, in these great affairs; as though all was open and clear to them. They betray one of these three things; either that they have had but little experience; or are persons of a weak judgment; or that they have a great degree of pride and self-confidence, and so ignorance of themselves. Wise and experienced men will proceed with great caution in such an affair.

When there are many probable appearances of piety in others, it is the duty of the saints to receive them cordially into their charity, and to love them and rejoice in them, as their brethren in Christ Jesus. But yet the best of men may be deceived, when the appearances seem to them exceeding fair and bright, even so as

entirely to gain their charity, and conquer their hearts. It has been a common thing in the church of God, for such bright professors, that are received as eminent saints, among the saints, to fall away and come to nothing. And this we need not wonder at, if we consider the things that have been already observed; what things it has been shown, may appear in men who are altogether graceless. Nothing hinders but that all these things may meet together in men, and yet they be without a spark of grace in their hearts. They may have religious affections of many kinds together; they may have a sort of affection towards God, that bears a great resemblance of dear love to him; and so a kind of love to the brethren, and great appearances of admiration of God's perfections and works, and sorrow for sin, and reverence, submission, self-abasement, gratitude, joy, religious longings, and zeal for the interest of religion and the good of souls. And these affections may come after great awakenings and convictions of conscience; and there may be great appearances of a work of humiliation; and counterfeit love and joy, and other affections may seem to follow these, and one another, just in the same order, that is commonly observable in the holy affections of true converts. And these religious affections may be carried to a great height, and may cause abundance of tears, yea, may overcome the nature of those who are the subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, and fervent, and fluent in speaking of the things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it; and may be attended with many sweet texts of Scripture, and precious promises, brought with great impression on their minds; and may dispose them with their mouths to praise and glorify God, in a very ardent manner, and fervently to call upon others to praise him, crying out of their unworthiness, and extolling free grace.

And may, moreover, dispose them to abound in the external duties of religion, such as prayer, hearing the word preached, singing, and religious conference: and these things attended with a great resemblance of a christian assurance, in its greatest height, when the saints mount on eagles' wings, above all darkness and doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all these things, and yet there be nothing more than the common influences of the Spirit of God, joined with the delusions of **Satan**, and the wicked and deceitful heart. To which I may add, that all these things may be attended with a sweet natural temper, and a good doctrinal knowledge of religion, and a long acquaintance with the saints' way of talking and of expressing their affections and experiences, and a natural ability and subtlety in accommodating their expressions and manner of speaking to the dispositions and notions of the hearers, and a taking decency of expression and behaviour, formed by a good education. How great therefore may the resemblance be, as to all outward expressions and appearances, between an hypocrite and a true saint! Doubtless it is the glorious prerogative of the omniscient God, as the great searcher of hearts, to be able well to separate between sheep and goats. And what an indecent, self-exaltation, and arrogance is it, in poor fallible dark mortals, to pretend that they can determine and know, who are really sincere and upright before God, and who are not!

Many seem to lay great Weight on that, and to suppose it to be what may determine them with respect to others' real Piety, when they not only tell a plausible Story, but when, in giving an Account of their Experiences, they make such a Representation, and speak after such a Manner, that they **feel** their Talk; that is to say, when their Talk seems to harmonize with their own Experience, and

their Hearts are touched and affected and delighted, by what they hear them say, and drawn out by it, in dear Love to them. But there is not that Certainty in such Things, and that full Dependence to be had upon them, which many imagine. A true Saint greatly delights in Holiness. It is a most beautiful Thing in his Eyes. And God's Work, in savingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before perishing Soul, appears to him a most glorious Work. No wonder therefore, that his Heart is touched, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable Account of this Work, wrought on his own Heart, and when he sees in him probable Appearances of Holiness; whether those pleasing Appearances have any Thing real to answer them, or no. And if he uses the same Words, which are commonly made use of, to express the Affections of true Saints, and tells of many Things following one another in an Order, agreeable to the Method of the Experience of him that hears him, and also speaks freely and boldly, and with an Air of Assurance: No wonder that the other thinks his Experiences harmonize with his own. And if besides all this, in giving his Relation, he speaks with much Affection; and above all, if in speaking, he seems to show much Affection to him, to whom he speaks, such an Affection as the **Galatians** did to the Apostle **Paul**; these Things will naturally have a powerful Influence, to affect and draw his Hearer's Heart, and open wide the Doors of his Charity towards him. **David** speaks as one who had felt **Ahithophel's** Talk, and had once a sweet Savor and Relish of it. And therefore exceeding great was his Surprise and Disappointment, when he fell; it was almost too much for him. Psalm 55, 12, 13, 14. **It was not an Enemy—then I could have**

borne it,—but it was you, a Man, mine Equal, my Guide, and my Acquaintance; we took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in Company.

It is with Professors of Religion, especially such as become so in a Time of out-pouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with the Blossoms in the Spring; there are vast Numbers of them upon the Trees, which all look fair and promising; but yet very many of them never come to any Thing. And many of those, that in a little Time wither up, and drop off, and not under the Trees; yet for a while, look as beautiful and gay as others; and not only so, but smell Sweet, and send forth a pleasant Odor: So that we cannot, by any of our Senses, certainly distinguish those Blossoms which have in them that secret Virtue, which will afterwards appear in the Fruit, and that inward Solidity and Strength which shall enable them to bear, and cause them to be perfected by the hot Summer Sun, that will dry up the others. It is the mature Fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful Colors and Smell of the Blossom, that we must judge by. So new Converts, (professedly so) in their Talk about Things of Religion, may appear fair, and be very savory, and the Saints may think they talk feelingly. They may relish their Talk, and imagine they perceive a divine Savor in it; and yet all may come to nothing.

It is strange how hardly Men are brought to be contented with the Rules and Directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other Rules, of their own inventing, that seem to them wiser and better. I know of no Directions or Counsels which Christ ever delivered more plainly, than the Rules he has given us, to guide us in our judging of others' Sincerity; **namely** that we should judge of the Tree chiefly by the Fruit. But yet this will not

do; but other Ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and safe in. And woeful have been the mischievous Consequences, of setting up Men's Wisdom above the Wisdom of Christ. I believe many Saints have gone much out of the Way of Christ's Word, in this Respect. And some of them have been scourged with Whips, and (I had almost said) Scorpions, to bring them back again. But many Things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince, that ordinarily, those who have gone farthest this Way, that have been most highly conceited of their Faculty of discerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptory and suddenly to determine the State of Men's Souls, have been Hypocrites, who have known nothing of true Religion.

In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, it is said, Matthew 13:26. **When the Blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit then appeared the Tares also.** As though the Tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the Wheat, **until then**, as Mister **Flavel** observes; he mentions it as an Observation of **Jerome's**, That **Wheat and Tares are so much alike, until the Blade of the Wheat comes to bring forth the Ear, that it is next to impossible to distinguish them.** And then, Mister **Flavel** adds, How difficult so ever it be to discern the Difference between Wheat and Tares; yet doubtless the Eye of Sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing Eye of Man, can discern the Difference between special and common Grace. For all saving Graces in the Saints, have their Counterfeits in Hypocrites; there are similar Works in those, which a spiritual and very judicious Eye may easily mistake, for the saving and genuine Effects of a sanctifying Spirit.

As it is the Ear or the Fruit which distinguishes the Wheat from the Tares, so this is the true **Shibboleth**, that he who stands as Judge at the Passages of **Jordan**, makes use of to distinguish those that shall pass over **Jordan** into the true **Canaan**, from those that should be slain at the Passages. For the Hebrew Word **Shibboleth**, signifies an Ear of Corn. And perhaps the more full Pronunciation of **Jephthah's** Friends, **Shibboleth**, may represent a full Ear with Fruit in it, typifying the Fruits of the Friends of Christ, the Antitype of **Jephthah**; and the more lean Pronunciation of the **Ephraimites** his Enemies, may represent their empty Ears, typifying the Show of Religion in Hypocrites, without Substance and Fruit. This is agreeable to the Doctrine we are abundantly taught in Scripture, **namely**, That he who is set to judge those that pass through Death, whether they have a Right to enter into the heavenly **Canaan** or no, or whether they should not be slain, will judge every Man according to his Works.

We seem to be taught the same Things, by the Rules given for the Priest's discerning the Leprosy. In many Cases it was impossible for the Priest to determine whether a Man had the Leprosy, or whether he were clean, by the most narrow Inspection of the Appearances that were upon him, until he had waited to see what the Appearances would come to, and had shut up the Person who showed himself to him, one seven Days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the Hair, which grew out of the Spot that was showed him, which was as it were the Fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finish what I have to say under this Head, I would say something to a strange Notion some have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good Estate that others are

in, as though it were immediately revealed to them from Heaven, by their Love flowing out to them in an extraordinary Manner. They argue thus, that their Love being very sensible and great, it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true Christian Love. And if it be a true Christian Love, the Spirit of God must be the Author of it: And inasmuch as the Spirit of God, who knows certainly, whether others are the Children of God or no, and is a Spirit of Truth, is pleased, by an uncommon Influence upon them, to cause their Love to flow out, in an extraordinary Manner, towards such a Person, as a Child of God; it must needs be that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows that that Person is a Child of God. But such Persons might be convinced of the Falseness of their Reasoning, if they would consider whether or no it be not their Duty, and what God requires of them, to love those as the Children of God, who they think are the Children of God, and whom they have no Reason to think otherwise of, from all that they can see in them.

Though God, who searches the Hearts, knows them not to be his Children. If it be their Duty, then it is Good, and the Want of it Sin; and therefore, surely the Spirit of God may be the Author of it: The Spirit of God, without being a Spirit of Falsehood, may in such a Case assist a Person to do his Duty, and keep him from Sin. But then they argue from the uncommon Degree and special Manner, in which their Love flows out to the Person; which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the Object to be a Child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their Duty to love all such as they are bound to think are the Children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a very great Degree, though God, from other Things which he sees, that are out

of Sight to them, knows them not to be so. It is Men's Duty to love all whom they are bound in Charity to look upon as the Children of God, with a vastly dearer Affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost Capacity of our Nature, so it is our Duty to love those who we think are so near and dear to him as his Members, with an exceeding dear Affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is Sin in us not to love them so. We ought to pray to God that he would, by his Spirit keep us from Sin, and enable us to do our Duty: And may not his Spirit answer our Prayers, and enable us to do our Duty, in a particular Instance, without lying? If he cannot, then the Spirit of God is bound not to help his People to do their Duty in some Instances, because he cannot do it without being a Spirit of Falsehood. But surely God is so sovereign as that comes to, that he may enable us to do our Duty when he pleases, and on what Occasion he pleases. When Persons think others are his Children, God may have other Ends in causing their exceedingly endeared Love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them whether their Opinion of them be right or no: He may have that merciful End in it, to enable them to do their Duty, and to keep them from that dreadful infinite Evil, Sin. And will they say God shall not show them that Mercy in such a Case? If I am at a Distance from Home, and hear, that in my Absence, my House is burnt, but my Family have, in some extraordinary Manner, all escaped the Flames; and every Thing in the Circumstances of the Story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible; It would be Sin in me, in such a Case, not to feel a very great Degree of Gratitude to God, though the Story indeed be not true. And is not God so sovereign, that he may if he pleases, show me that Mercy on that

Occasion, and enable me to do my Duty in a much further Degree than I used to do it, and yet not incur the Charge of Deceitfulness, in confirming a Falsehood?

It is exceeding manifest, that Error or Mistake may be the Occasion of a gracious Exercise, and consequently a gracious Influence of the Spirit of God, by Romans 14:6. **He that eateth to the Lord, he eateth, and giveth God Thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God Thanks.** The Apostle is speaking of those, who through erroneous and needless Scruples, avoided eating legally unclean Meats. By this it is very evident, that there may be true Exercises of Grace, a true Respect **to the Lord**, and particularly, a true Thankfulness, which may be occasioned, both by an erroneous Judgment and Practice. And consequently, an Error may be the Occasion of those truly holy Exercises that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if so, it is certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a Degree the Spirit of God may give this holy Exercise, on such an Occasion.

This Notion, of certainly discerning another's State, by Love flowing out, is not only not founded on Reason or Scripture, but it is anti-scriptural, it is against the Rules of Scripture; which say not a Word of any such Way of judging the State of others as this, but direct us to judge chiefly by the Fruits that are seen in them. And it is against the Doctrines of Scripture, which do plainly teach us that the State of others' Souls towards God, cannot be known by us, as in Revelation 2:17. **To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden Manna; and I will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which** no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. And Romans 2:29. **He is a Jew, which**

is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart; in the Spirit, and not in the Letter; whose Praise is not of Men, but of God. That by this last Expression, **whose Praise is not of Men, but of God,** the Apostle has Respect to the Insufficiency of Men to judge concerning him, whether he be inwardly a **Jew** or no (as they could easily see by outward Marks, whether Men were outwardly **Jews**) and would signify, that it belongs to God alone to give a determining Voice in this Matter, is confirmed by the same Apostle's Use of the Phrase, in 1 Corinthians 4:5. **Therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Counsels of the Hearts;** and then shall every Man have Praise of God. The Apostle, in the two foregoing Verses, says, **But with me, it is a very small Thing, that I should be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment: Yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.** And again, it is further confirmed, because the Apostle in this second Chapter to the **Romans**, directs his Speech especially to those who had a high Conceit of their own Holiness, made their Boast of God, and were confident of their own Discerning, and that they knew God's Will, and approved the Things which were excellent, or tried the Things that differ (as it is in the Margin.) Verse 18. **And were confident that they were Guides of the Blind, and a Light to them which are in Darkness, Instructors of the Foolish, Teachers of Babes;** and so took upon them to judge others, see Verse 1 and 17, 18, 19, 20.

And how arrogant must the Notion be, that they have, who imagine they can certainly know others' Godliness, when that great Apostle **Peter** pretends not to say any more concerning **Silvanus**, than that he was **a faithful Brother, as he supposed**; 1 Peter 5:12. Though this **Sylvanus** appears to have been a very eminent Minister of Christ, and an Evangelist, and a famous Light in God's Church at that Day, and an intimate Companion of the Apostles. See 2 Corinthians 1:19, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, and 2 Thessalonians 1:1.

PART 3



PART 3.

I come now to the second thing appertaining to the **trial** of religious affections, which was proposed, **namely** to take notice of some things, wherein those affections that are spiritual and gracious, do differ from those that are not so.

But before I proceed directly to the distinguishing characters, I would previously mention some things which I desire may be observed, concerning the marks I shall lay down.

1. That I am far from undertaking to give such signs of gracious affections, as shall be sufficient to enable any certainly to distinguish true affection from false in others; or to determine positively which of their neighbors are true professors, and which are hypocrites. In so doing, I should be guilty of that arrogance which I have been condemning. Though it be plain that Christ has given rules to all Christians, to enable them to judge of professors of religion, whom they are concerned with, so far as is necessary for their own safety, and to prevent their being led into a snare by false teachers, and false pretenders to religion; And though it be also beyond doubt, that the Scriptures do abound with rules, which may be very serviceable to ministers, in counseling and conducting

souls committed to their care, in things appertaining to their spiritual and eternal state; yet, it is also evident, that it was never God's design to give us any rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our fellow-professors are his, and to make a full and clear separation between sheep and goats: But that on the contrary, it was God's design to reserve this to himself, as his prerogative. And therefore no such distinguishing signs as shall enable Christians or ministers to do this, are ever to be expected to the world's end: For no more is ever to be expected from any signs, that are to be found in the word of God, or gathered from it, than Christ designed them for.

2. No such signs are to be expected, that shall be sufficient to enable those saints certainly to discern their own good estate, who are very low in grace, or are such as have much departed from God, and are fallen into a dead, carnal and unchristian frame. It is not agreeable to God's design (as has been already observed) that such should know their good estate: Nor is it desirable that they should; but on the contrary, every way best that they should not; and we have reason to bless God, that he has made no provision that such should certainly know the state that they are in, any other way, than by first coming out of the ill frame and way they are in.

Indeed it is not properly through the defect of the signs given in the word of God, that every saint living, whether strong or weak, and those who are in a bad frame, as well as others, cannot certainly know their good estate by them. For the rules in themselves are certain and infallible, and every saint has, or has had those things in himself, which are sure evidences of grace; for **every**, even the **least** act of grace is so. But it is through his defect to

whom the signs are given. There is a twofold defect in that saint who is very low in grace, or in an ill frame, which makes it impossible for him to know certainly that he has true grace, by the best signs and rules which can be given him. **First**, A defect in the **object**, or the qualification to be viewed and examined. I don't mean an essential defect; because I suppose the person to be a real saint; but a defect in degree: Grace being very small, cannot be clearly and certainly discerned and distinguished. Things that are very small, we cannot clearly discern their form, or distinguish them one from another; though, as they are in themselves, their form may be very different. There is doubtless a great difference between the body of man, and the bodies of other animals, in the first conception in the womb: But yet if we should view the different **embryos**, it might not be possible for us to discern the difference, by reason of the imperfect state of the object; but as it comes to greater perfection, the difference becomes very plain. The difference between creatures of very contrary qualities, is not so plainly to be seen while they are very young, even after they are actually brought forth, as in their more perfect state. The difference between doves and ravens, or doves and vultures, when they first come out of the egg, is not so evident; but as they grow to their perfection, it is exceeding great and manifest. Another defect attending the grace of those I am speaking, is its being mingled with so much corruption, which clouds and hides it, and makes it impossible for it certainly to be known. Though different things that are before us, may have in themselves many marks thoroughly distinguishing them one from another; yet if we see them only in a thick smoke, it may nevertheless be impossible to distinguish them. A fixed star is easily distinguishable from a comet, in a clear

sky; but if we view them through a cloud, it may be impossible to see the difference. When true Christians are in an ill frame, guilt lies on the conscience; which will bring fear, and so prevent the peace and joy of an assured hope.

Secondly, There is in such a case a defect in the **eye**. As the feebleness of grace and prevalence of corruption, obscures the object; so it enfeebles the sight; it darkens the sight as to all spiritual objects, of which grace is one. Sin is like some distempers of the eyes, that make things to appear of different colors from those which properly belong to them, and like many other distempers, that put the mouth out of taste, so as to disenable from distinguishing good and wholesome food from bad, but every thing tastes bitter. Men in a corrupt and carnal frame, have their spiritual senses in but poor light for judging and distinguishing spiritual things.

For these reasons, no signs that can be given, will actually satisfy, persons in such a case: Let the signs that are given, be never so good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not serve them. It is like giving a man rules, how to distinguish visible objects in the dark: The things themselves may be very different, and their difference may be very well and distinctly described to him; yet all is insufficient to enable him to distinguish them, because he is in the dark. And therefore many persons in such a case spend time in a fruitless labor, in poring on past experiences, and examining themselves by signs they hear laid down from the pulpit, or that they read in books; when there is other work for them to do, that is much more expected of them; which, while they neglect, all their self-examinations are like to be in vain, if they should spend never so much time in them. The accursed thing is to be destroyed

from their camp, and **Achan** to be slain; and until this be done they will be in trouble. It is not God's design that men should obtain assurance in any other way, than by mortifying corruption, and increasing in grace, and obtaining the lively exercises of it. And although self-examination be a duty of great use and importance, and by no means to be neglected; yet it is not the principal means, by which the saints do get satisfaction of their good estate. Assurance is not to be obtained so much by **self-examination**, as by **action**. The Apostle **Paul** sought assurance chiefly this way, even by **forgetting the things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those things that were before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead**. And it was by this means chiefly that he obtained assurance, 1 Corinthians 9:26: **I therefore so run, as not uncertainly**. He obtained assurance of winning the prize, more by **running**, than by **considering**. The **swiftness of his pace**, did more towards his assurance of a conquest, than the **strictness of his examination**. Giving all diligence to grow in grace, by adding to faith, virtue, **etcetera** is the direction that the Apostle **Peter** gives us, for **making our calling and election sure**, and having **an entrance ministered to us abundantly, into Christ's everlasting kingdom**; signifying to us, that without this, our eyes will be dim, and we shall be as men in the dark, and cannot plainly see things past or to come, either the forgiveness of our sins past, or our heavenly inheritance that is future, and **far off**, 2 Peter 1:5-11.

Therefore, though good rules to distinguish true grace from counterfeit, may tend to convince hypocrites, and be of great use to the saints, in many respects; and among other benefits, may be very useful to them to remove many needless scruples, and establish their hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any such rules, as shall be sufficient of themselves, without other means, to enable all true saints to see their good estate, or as supposing they should be the principal means of their satisfaction.

3. Nor is there much encouragement, in the experience of present or past times, to lay down rules or marks to distinguish between true and false affections, in hopes of convincing any considerable number of that sort of hypocrites, who have been deceived with great false discoveries and affections, and are once settled in a false confidence, and high conceit of their own supposed great experiences and privileges. Such hypocrites are so conceited of their own wisdom, and so blinded and hardened with a very great self-righteousness, (but very subtle and secret, under the disguise of great humility) and so invincible a fondness of their pleasing conceit, of their great exaltation, that it usually signifies nothing at all, to lay before them the most convincing evidences of their hypocrisy. Their state is indeed deplorable, and next to those that have committed the unpardonable sin. Some of this sort of persons seem to be most out of the reach of means of conviction and repentance. But yet the laying down good rules may be a means of preventing such hypocrites, and of convincing many of other kinds of hypocrites: And God is able to convince even this kind, and his grace is not to be limited, nor means to be neglected. And besides,

such rules may be of use to the true saints, to detect false affections, which they may have mingled with true. And be a means of their religion's becoming more pure, and like gold tried in the fire.

Having premised these things, I now proceed directly to take notice of those things in which true religious affections are distinguished from false.

1. Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious, do arise from those influences and operations on the heart, which are **spiritual, supernatural** and **divine**.

I will explain what I mean by these terms, whence will appear their use to distinguish between those affections which are spiritual, and those which are not so.

We find that true saints, or those persons who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, are in the New Testament called **spiritual** persons. And their being **spiritual** is spoken of as their peculiar character, and that wherein they are distinguished from those who are not sanctified. This is evident because those who are spiritual are set in opposition to natural men, and carnal men. Thus the spiritual man, and the natural man, are set in opposition one to another; 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15. **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. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things.** The Scripture explains itself to mean an ungodly man, or one that has no grace, by a natural man: Thus the Apostle **Jude**, speaking of certain **ungodly men**, that had crept in unawares among the saints, verse 4 of his epistle, says, verse 19. **These are sensual, having not the Spirit.** This the Apostle gives as a reason why

they behaved themselves in such a wicked manner as he had described. Here the word translated **sensual**, in the original is **psychikos**; which is the very same, which in those verses in 1 **Corinthians** chapter 2 is translated **natural**. In the like manner, in the continuation of the same discourse, in the next verse but one, **spiritual men** are opposed to **carnal men**; which the **context** shows mean the same, as **spiritual men** and **natural men** in the **preceding** verses; **And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal**; that is, as in a great measure **unsanctified**. **That** by carnal the Apostle means corrupt and **unsanctified**, appears **not** only **here**, by Romans 7:25 and 8:1, 4-6, **where** in these texts, he intended **the flesh**; **while** spiritual, which is opposed thereto, is **of the Spirit** and **holy**.

And as persons are called spiritual in Scripture, so we also find that there are certain Properties, Qualities, and Principles, that have names given them. So we read of a **spiritual Mind**, spiritual Understanding and **spiritual Wisdom**, Colossians 1:9. And of **spiritual** things.

Now observe that the Epithet **spiritual**, in these and other parallel Texts of the new Testament, is not used to signify the Relation of Persons or Things to the Spirit or Soul of Man, as the spiritual Part: Things are not said to be spiritual, because they have their Seat in the Soul, and not in the Body: For there are some Properties which the Scripture calls **fleshly** or **carnal**, which have their seat much in the Soul, as these Properties that are called **spiritual**. Thus it is with Pride and Self-righteousness, and a Man's trusting to his own Wisdom, which the Apostle calls **fleshly**; Colossians 2:18. Nor are Things called spiritual, because

they are conversant about those Things that are immaterial, and not corporeal. For so was the Wisdom of the wise Men, and Princes of this World, conversant about Spirits, and immaterial Beings; which yet the Apostle speaks of as **natural Men**, totally ignorant of those Things that are **spiritual**, 1 Corinthians chapter 2. But it is with Relation to the **Holy Ghost**, or **Spirit of God**, that Persons or Things are termed spiritual, in the New Testament. **Spirit**, as the Word is used to signify the third Person in the Trinity, is the Substantive, of which is formed the Adjective **spiritual**, in the holy Scriptures. Thus Christians are called spiritual Persons, because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the Indwelling and holy Influences of the Spirit of God in them. And Things are called spiritual as related to the Spirit of God; 1 Corinthians 2:13, 14. **Which Things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual. But the natural Man receives not the Things of the Spirit of God.** Here the Apostle himself expressly signifies, that by **spiritual Things**, he means **the Things of the Spirit of God**, and **Things which the Holy Ghost teacheth**. The same is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole Context. Again, Romans 8:6. **To be carnally minded is Death: But to be spiritually minded is Life and Peace.** The Apostle explains what he means by being carnally and spiritually minded, in what follows in the 9th Verse, and shows that by being spiritually minded, he means a having the Indwelling and holy Influences of the Spirit of God in the Heart. **But you are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any Man** has not

the Spirit of Christ, **he is none of his**. The same is evident by all the Context. But Time would fail to produce all the Evidence there is of this, in the New Testament.

And it must be here observed, that although it is with Relation to the Spirit of God and his Influences, that Persons and Things are called spiritual; yet not all those Persons who are subject to any Kind of Influence of the Spirit of God, are ordinarily called spiritual in the New Testament. They who have only the common Influences of God's Spirit, are not so called, in the Places cited above, but only those, who have the special, gracious and saving Influences of God's Spirit: As is evident, because it has been already proved, that by spiritual Men is meant godly Men, in Opposition to natural, carnal and unsanctified Men. And it is most plain, that the Apostle by spiritually minded, **Romans** 8:6, means graciously minded. And although the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which natural Men might have, are sometimes called spiritual, because they are from the Spirit; yet, natural Men, whatever Gifts of the Spirit they had, were not, in the usual Language of the New Testament, called spiritual Persons. For it was not by Men's having the Gifts of the Spirit, but by their having the Virtues of the Spirit, that they were called spiritual; as is apparent, by Galatians 6:1. **Brethren, if any Man be overtaken in a Fault, you which are spiritual restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness**. Meekness is one of those Virtues which the Apostle had just spoken of, in the Verses next preceding, showing what are the **Fruits of the Spirit**. Those Qualifications are said to be spiritual in the Language of the New Testament, which are truly gracious and holy, and peculiar to the Saints.

Thus when we read of spiritual Wisdom and Understanding (as in Colossians 1:9). **We desire that you may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will**, in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding. Hereby is intended that Wisdom which is gracious, and from the sanctifying Influences of the Spirit of God. For doubtless, by **spiritual Wisdom**, is meant that which is opposite to what the Scripture calls **natural Wisdom**; as the **spiritual Man** is opposed to the **natural Man**. And therefore spiritual Wisdom is doubtless the same with that Wisdom which is from above, that the Apostle **James** speaks of, James 3:17. **The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, etc.** for this the Apostle opposes to natural Wisdom, Verse 15. **This Wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual** - the last Word in the Original is the same that is translated **natural**, in 1 Corinthians 2:14.

So that although natural Men may be the Subjects of many Influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many Scriptures, as **Numbers** 24:2, 1 **Samuel** 10:10, and 11:6, and 16:14, 1 **Corinthians** 13:1, 2, 3, **Hebrews** 6:4, 5, 6, and many others; yet they are not in the Sense of the Scripture, spiritual Persons; neither are any of those Effects, common Gifts, Qualities or Affections, that are from the Influence of the Spirit of God upon them, called spiritual Things. The great Difference lies in these two Things.

1. The Spirit of God is given to the true Saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting Abode; and to influence their Hearts, as a Principle of new Nature, or as a divine supernatural Spring of Life and Action. The Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the Saints, but as dwelling in

them as his Temple, his proper Abode, and everlasting Dwelling-Place; 1 **Corinthians** 3:16, 2 **Corinthians** 6:16, **John** 14:16, 17. And he is represented as being there so united to the Faculties of the Soul, that he becomes there a Principle or Spring of new Nature and Life.

So the Saints are said to live by Christ living in them, **Galatians** 2:20. Christ by his Spirit not only **is** in them, but **lives** in them; and so that they live by his Life; so is his Spirit united to them, as a Principle of Life in them; they do not only drink living Water, but this **living Water becomes a Well or Fountain of Water**, in the Soul, **springing up into spiritual and everlasting Life**, **John** 4:14, and thus becomes a Principle of Life in them; this living Water, this Evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, **Chapter** 7:38, 39. The Light of the Sun of Righteousness does not only shine upon them, but is so communicated to them that they shine also, and become little Images of that Sun which shines upon them; the Sap of the true Vine is not only conveyed into them, as the Sap of a Tree may be conveyed into a Vessel, but is conveyed as Sap is from a Tree into one of its living Branches, where it becomes a Principle of Life. The Spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the Saints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called **spiritual**.

On the other Hand, though the Spirit of God may many Ways influence natural Men; yet because it is not thus communicated to them, as an indwelling Principle, they do not derive any Denomination or Character from it; for there being no Union it is not their own. The Light may shine upon a Body that is very dark or black; and though that Body be the Subject of the Light, yet, because the Light becomes no Principle of Light in it, so as to cause

the Body to shine, hence that Body does not properly receive its Denomination from it, so as to be called a **lightsome Body**. So the Spirit of God acting upon the Soul only, without communicating itself to be an active Principle in it, cannot denominate it **spiritual**. A Body that continues black, may be said **not to have Light**, though the Light shines upon it; so natural Men are said **yet to have the Spirit**, Jude 19. **Sensual**, or **natural** (as the Word is elsewhere rendered) **having not the Spirit**.

2. Another Reason why the Saints and their Virtues are called spiritual, (which is the principal Thing) is that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital Principle in their Souls, there produces those Effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own **proper Nature**. Holiness is the Nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in Scripture the **Holy Ghost**. Holiness, which is as it were the Beauty and Sweetness of the Divine Nature, is as much the proper Nature of the Holy Spirit, as Heat is the Nature of Fire, or Sweetness was the Nature of that holy Ointment, which was the principal Type of the Holy Ghost in the **Mosaic** Dispensation; yea, I may rather say that Holiness is as much the proper Nature of the Holy Ghost, as Sweetness was the Nature of the sweet Odour of that Ointment. The Spirit of God so dwells in the Hearts of the Saints, that he there, as a Seed or Spring of Life, exerts and Communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine Nature, making the Soul a Partaker of God's Beauty and Christ's Joy, so that the Saint has truly Fellowship **with** the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the Communion or Participation **of** the Holy Ghost. The Grace which is in the Hearts of the Saints, is of the same Nature with the divine Holiness, as much as it is possible for that Holiness to be, which is infinitely

less in Degree; as the Brightness that is in a Diamond which the Sun shines upon, is of the same Nature with the Brightness of the Sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in Degree. Therefore Christ says, John 3:6. **That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; that is** the Grace that is begotten in the Hearts of the Saints, is something of the same Nature with that Spirit, and so is properly called a **spiritual Nature**; after the same Manner as that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, or that which is born of corrupt Nature is corrupt Nature.

But the Spirit of God never Influences the Minds of natural Men after this Manner. Though he may influence them many Ways, yet he never, in any of his Influences, communicates himself to them in his own proper Nature. Indeed he never acts disagreeably to his Nature, either on the Minds of Saints or Sinners: But the Spirit of God may act upon Men agreeably to his own Nature, and not exert his proper Nature in the Acts and Exercises of their Minds: The Spirit of God may act so, that his Actions may be agreeable to his Nature, and yet may not at all communicate himself in his proper Nature in the Effect of that Action. Thus, for Instance, the Spirit moved upon the Face of the Waters, and there was nothing disagreeable to his Nature in that Action; but yet he did not at all communicate himself in that Action, there was nothing of the proper Nature of the Holy Spirit in that Motion of the Waters. And so he may act upon the Minds of Men many Ways, and not communicate himself any more than when he acts on inanimate Things.

Thus not only the Manner of the **Relation** of the Spirit, who is the **Operator**, to the Subject of his Operations, is different; as the Spirit operates in the Saints, as dwelling in them, as an abiding

Principle of Action, whereas he does not so operate upon Sinners; but the Influence and **Operation itself** is different, and the **Effect wrought** exceeding different. So that not only the Persons are called **spiritual**, as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them; but those Qualifications, Affections and Experiences that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also **spiritual**, and therein differ vastly in their Nature and Kind from all that a natural Man is or can be the Subject of, while he remains in a natural State; and also from all that Men or Devils can be the Authors of: It is a spiritual Work in this high Sense; and therefore above all other Works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no Work so high and excellent; for there is no Work wherein God does so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere Creature has, in so high a Sense, a Participation of God; so that it is expressed in Scripture by the Saints **being made Partakers of the divine Nature**, 2 Peter 1:4 and **having God dwelling in them, and they in God**, 1 John 4:12, 15, 16 and Chapter 3:21 and **having Christ in them**, John 17:21 Romans 8:10 **being the Temples of the living God**, 2 Corinthians 6:16 **living by Christ's Life**, Galatians 2:20 **being made Partakers of God's Holiness**, Hebrews 12:10 **having Christ's Love dwelling in them**, John 17:26 **having his Joy fulfilled in them**, John 17:13 **seeing Light in God's Light**, and **being made to drink of the River of God's Pleasures**, Psalm 36:8, 9 **having Fellowship with God**, or **communicating and partaking with him** (as the Word signifies) 1 John 1:3. Not that the Saints are made Partakers of the Essence of God, and so are **Godded** with God, and **Christed** with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous Language and Notions of some Heretics; but, to use the Scripture Phrase, they are made Partakers

of God's **Fullness**, **Ephesians** 3:17, 18, 19 **John** 1:16 that is, of God's spiritual Beauty and Happiness, according to the Measure and Capacity of a Creature; for so it is evident the Word **Fullness** signifies in Scripture Language. Grace in the Hearts of the Saints, being therefore the most glorious Work of God, wherein he communicates of the Goodness of his Nature, it is doubtless his peculiar Work, and in an eminent Manner, above the Power of all Creatures. And the Influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a Manner, communicate himself, and makes the Creature Partaker of the divine Nature (the Spirit of God communicating itself in its own proper Nature) This is what I mean by those Influences that are **divine**, when I say that **truly gracious Affections do arise from those Influences that are spiritual and divine.**

The true Saints only have that which is spiritual; others have nothing which is divine, in the Sense that has been spoken of. They not only have not these Communications of the Spirit of God in so high a **Degree** as the Saints, but have nothing of that **Nature** or **Kind**. For the Apostle **James** tells us, that **natural** Men **have not the Spirit**; and Christ teaches the Necessity of a New-Birth, or a being born of the Spirit, from this, that **He that is born of the Flesh, has only Flesh**, and no **Spirit**, **John** 3:6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any Degree; for the Apostle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are some of his, **Romans** 8:9, 10, 11. And an having the Spirit of God is spoken of as a certain Sign that Persons shall have the eternal Inheritance; for it is spoken of as the Earnest of it, 2 **Corinthians** 1:22 and 5:5 **Ephesians** 1:24 and an having any Thing **of the Spirit** is mentioned as a sure Sign of being in Christ,

1 John 4:13. **Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he has given us of his Spirit.** Ungodly Men, not only have not so much of the divine Nature as the Saints, but they are not **Partakers of it**; which implies that they have nothing of it; for a being **Partaker** of the divine Nature is spoken of as the peculiar Privilege of the true Saints, 2 **Peter** 1:4. Ungodly Men are not **Partakers of God's Holiness**, Hebrews 12:10. A natural Man has no Experience of any of those Things that are spiritual: The Apostle teaches us that he is so far from it, that he knows nothing about them, he is a perfect Stranger to them, the Talk about such Things is all Foolishness and Nonsense to him, he knows not what it means, 1 Corinthians 2:14. **The natural Man receives not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Foolishness to him; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.** And to the like Purpose Christ teaches us that the World is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God, John 14:17. **Even the Spirit of Truth, when the World cannot receive; because it sees him not, neither knows him.** And it is further evident, that natural Men have nothing in them of the same Nature with the true Grace of the Saints, because the Apostle teaches us that those of them who go furthest in Religion, have **no Charity**, or true Christian Love, 1 **Corinthians** Chapter 13. So Christ elsewhere reproves the Pharisees, those high Pretenders to Religion, that they **had not the Love of God in them**, John 5:42. Hence natural Men have no Communion or Fellowship with Christ, or Participation with him, (as these Words signify) for this is spoken of as the peculiar Privilege of the Saints, 1 **John** 1:3 together with Verse 6, 7 and 1 **Corinthians** 1:8, 9. And the Scripture speaks of the actual Being of a gracious Principle in the Soul,

though in its first beginning, as a Seed there planted, as inconsistent with a Man's being a Sinner, 1 **John** 3:9. And natural Men are represented in Scripture as having no spiritual Light, no spiritual Life, and no spiritual Being; and therefore Conversion is often compared to opening the Eyes of the Blind, raising the Dead, and a Work of Creation, (wherein Creatures are made entirely new) and becoming new born Children.

From these Things it is evident, that those gracious Influences which the Saints are the Subjects of, and the Effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above Nature, altogether of a different Kind from any Thing that Men find within themselves by Nature, or only in the Exercise of natural Principles; and are Things which no Improvement of those Qualifications, or Principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting them to higher Degrees, and no Kind of Composition of them, will ever bring Men to; because they not only differ from what is natural, and from every Thing that natural Men experience, in Degree and Circumstances; but also in Kind; and are of a Nature vastly more excellent. And this is what I mean by **supernatural**, when I say, that **gracious Affections are from those Influences that are supernatural.**

From hence it follows, that in those gracious Exercises and Affections which are wrought in the Minds of the Saints, through the saving Influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward **Perception** or **Sensation** of their Minds, entirely different in its Nature and Kind, from any Thing that ever their Minds were the Subjects of before they were sanctified. For doubtless if God by his mighty Power produces something that is new, not only in Degree and Circumstances, but in its whole Nature, and that which could

be produced by no exalting, varying or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any Thing of the like Kind; I say, if God produces something thus new in a Mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious Thing; then doubtless something entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the same Thing, there is some new Sensation or Perception of the Mind, which is entirely of a new Sort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying or compounding of that Kind of Perceptions or Sensations which the Mind had before; or there is what some Metaphysicians call a new **simple Idea**. If Grace be, in the Sense above described, an entirely new Kind of Principle; then the Exercises of it are also entirely a new Kind of Exercises. And if there be in the Soul a new Sort of Exercises which it is conscious of, which the Soul knew nothing of before, and which no Improvement, Composition or Management of what it was before conscious or sensible of, could produce, or any Thing like it; then it follows that the Mind has an entirely new Kind of Perception or Sensation; and here is, as it were, a new **spiritual Sense** that the Mind has, or a Principle of new Kind of Perception or spiritual Sensation, which is in its whole Nature different from any former Kinds of Sensation of the Mind, as Tasting is diverse from any of the other Senses; and something is perceived by a true Saint, in the Exercise of this new Sense of Mind, in spiritual and divine Things, as entirely diverse from any Thing that is perceived in them, by natural Men, as the sweet Taste of Honey is diverse from the Ideas Men get of Honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it. So that the spiritual Perceptions which a sanctified and spiritual Person has, are not only diverse from all that natural Men have, after the Manner that the Ideas or Perceptions of the same Sense may differ one from another, but

rather as the Ideas and Sensations of different Senses do differ. Hence the Work of the Spirit of God in Regeneration is often in Scripture compared to the giving a new Sense, giving Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unstopping the Ears of the Deaf, and opening the Eyes of them that were born Blind, and turning from Darkness unto Light. And because this spiritual Sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other Principles of Perception, and all our Faculties are useless and vain; therefore the giving this new Sense, with the blessed Fruits and Effects of it in the Soul, is compared to a raising the Dead, and to a new Creation.

This new spiritual Sense, and the new Dispositions that attend it, are no new **Faculties**, but are new **Principles** of Nature. I use the Word **Principles**, for want of a Word of a more determinate Signification. By a **Principle of Nature** in this Place, I mean that Foundation which is laid in Nature, either old or new, for any particular Manner or Kind of Exercise of the Faculties of the Soul; or a natural Habit or Foundation for Action, giving a Person Ability and Disposition to exert the Faculties in Exercises of such a certain Kind; so that to exert the Faculties in that Kind of Exercises, may be said to be his Nature. So this new spiritual Sense is not a new Faculty of Understanding, but it is a new Foundation laid in the Nature of the Soul, for a new Kind of Exercises of the same Faculty of Understanding. So that new holy Dispositions of Heart that attends this new Sense, is not a new Faculty of Will, but a Foundation laid in the Nature of the Soul, for a new Kind of Exercises of the same Faculty of Will.

The Spirit of God, in all his operations upon the minds of natural men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some way acts upon **natural principles**; but gives no new **spiritual principle**. Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural man visions, as he did **Balaam**, he only impresses a natural principle, **namely** the sense of seeing, immediately exciting ideas of that sense; but he gave no new sense; neither was there any thing supernatural, spiritual or divine in it. So if the Spirit of God impresses on a man's imagination, either in a dream, or when he is awake, any outward ideas of any of the senses, either voices, or shapes and colors, it is only exciting ideas of the same kind that he has by natural principles and senses. So if God reveals to any natural man, any secret fact; as for instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercising any new spiritual principle, or giving the ideas of any new spiritual sense; it is only impressing, in an extraordinary manner, the ideas that will hereafter be received by sight and hearing. So in the more ordinary influences of the Spirit of God on the hearts of sinners, he only assists natural principles to do the same work to a greater degree, which they do of themselves by nature. Thus the Spirit of God by his common influences may assist men's natural ingenuity, as he assisted **Bezaleel** and **Aholiab** in the curious works of the tabernacle: so he may assist men's natural abilities in political affairs, and improve their courage, and other natural qualifications; as he is said to have put his Spirit on the seventy elders, and on **Saul**, so as to **give him another heart**: so God may greatly assist natural men's reason, in their reasoning about secular things, or about the doctrines of religion, and may greatly advance the clearness of their apprehensions and notions of things of religion in many respects, without

giving any spiritual sense. So in those awakenings and convictions that natural men may have, God only assists conscience, which is a natural principle, to do that work in a further degree, which it naturally does. Conscience naturally gives men an apprehension of right and wrong, and suggests the relation there is between right and wrong, and a retribution: The Spirit of God assists men's consciences to do this in a greater degree, helps conscience against the stupefying influence of worldly objects and their lusts. And so there are many other ways might be mentioned wherein the Spirit acts upon, assists and moves natural principles; but after all, it is no more than nature moved, acted and improved; here is nothing supernatural and divine. But the Spirit of God in his spiritual influences on the hearts of his saints, operates by infusing or exercising new, divine and supernatural principles; principles which are indeed a new and spiritual nature, and principles vastly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural men.

From what has been said it follows, that all spiritual and gracious affections are attended with, and do arise from some apprehension, idea or sensation of mind, which is in its whole nature different, yea exceedingly different from all that is or can be in the mind of a natural man; and which the natural man discerns nothing of, and has no manner of idea of, (agreeable to 1 **Corinthians** 2:14) and conceives of no more than a man without the sense of tasting can conceive of the sweet taste of honey, or a man without the sense of hearing can conceive of the melody of a tune, or a man born blind can have a notion of the beauty of the rainbow.

But here two things must be observed in order to the right understanding of this.

1. On the one hand it must be observed, that not every thing which in any respect appertains to spiritual affections, is new and entirely different from what natural men can conceive of, and do experience; some things are common to gracious affections with other affections; many circumstances, appendages and effects are common. Thus a saint's love to God has a great many things appertaining to it, which are common with a man's natural love to a near relation: Love to God makes a man have desires of the honor of God, and a desire to please him; so does a natural man's love to his friend make him desire his honor, and desire to please him: Love to God causes a man to delight in the thoughts of God, and to delight in the presence of God, and to desire conformity to God, and the enjoyment of God; and so it is with a man's love to his friend; and many other things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet that idea which the saint has of the loveliness of God, and that sensation, and that kind of delight he has in that view, which is as it were the marrow and quintessence of his love, is peculiar, and entirely diverse from any thing that a natural man has, or can have any notion of. And even in those things that seem to be common, there is something peculiar: Both spiritual love and natural, cause desires after the object beloved; but they are not the same sort of desires; there is a sensation of soul in the spiritual desires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural desires: Both spiritual love and natural love are attended with delight in the object beloved; but the sensations of delight are not the same, but entirely and exceedingly diverse. Natural men may have conceptions of many things **about** spiritual affections; but

there is something in them which is as it were the **Nucleus**, or kernel of them, that they have no more conceptions of, than one born blind has of colors.

It may be clearly illustrated by this: We will suppose two men; one is born without the sense of tasting, the other has it; the latter loves honey, and is greatly delighted in it because he knows the sweet taste of it; the other loves certain sounds and colors: The love of each has many things that appertain to it, which is common; it causes both to desire and delight in the object beloved, and causes grief when it is absent, **etc.** But yet, that idea or sensation which he who knows the taste of honey, has of its excellence and sweetness, that is the foundation of his love, is entirely different from any thing the other has or can have; and that delight which he has in honey, is wholly diverse from any thing that the other can conceive of; though they both delight in their beloved objects. So both these persons may in some respects love the same object: The one may love a delicious kind of fruit, which is beautiful to the eye, and of a delicious taste; not only because he has seen its pleasant colors, but knows its sweet taste; the other, perfectly ignorant of this, loves it only for its beautiful colors: There are many things seem, in some respect, to be common to both; both love, both desire, and both delight; but the love, and desire, and delight of the one, is altogether diverse from that of the other. The difference between the love of a natural man and spiritual man is like to this; but only it must be observed, that in one respect it is vastly greater, **namely** that the kinds of excellence which are perceived in spiritual objects, by these different kinds of persons, are in themselves vastly more diverse, than the different kinds of excellence perceived in delicious fruit, by a **[tasting]** and a **[seeing]** man; and

in another respect it may not be so great, **namely** as the spiritual man may have a spiritual sense or taste, to perceive that divine and most peculiar excellence, but in small beginnings, and in a very imperfect degree.

2. On the other hand, it must be observed, that a natural man may have those religious apprehensions and affections, which may be in many respects very new and surprising to him, and what before he did not conceive of; and yet what he experiences be nothing like the exercises of a principle of new nature, or the sensations of a new spiritual sense: His affections may be very new, by extraordinarily moving natural principles, in a very new degree, and with a great many new circumstances, and a new co-operation of natural affections, and a new composition of ideas; this may be from some extraordinarily powerful influence of **Satan** and some great delusion; but there is nothing but nature extraordinarily acted. As if a poor man, that had always dwelt in a cottage, and had never looked beyond the obscure village where he was born, should in a jest, be taken to a magnificent city and prince's court, and there arrayed in princely robes, and set on the throne, with the crown royal on his head, peers and nobles bowing before him, and should be made to believe that he was now a glorious monarch; the ideas he would have, and the affections he would experience, would in many respects be very new, and such as he had no imagination of before; but all is no more, than only extraordinarily raising and exciting natural principles, and newly exalting, varying and compounding such sort of ideas, as he has by nature; here is nothing like giving him a new sense.

Upon the whole, I think it is clearly manifest, that all truly gracious affections do arise from special and peculiar influences of the Spirit, working that **sensible effect** or **sensation** in the souls of the saints, which are entirely different from all that it is possible a natural man should experience, not only different in degree and circumstances, but different in its whole nature: So that a natural man not only cannot experience that which is individually the same, but cannot experience any thing but what is exceedingly diverse, and immensely below it, in its kind; and that which the power of men or devils is not sufficient to produce the like of, or any thing of the same nature.

I have insisted largely on this matter, because it is of great importance and use, evidently to discover and demonstrate the delusions of **Satan**, in many kinds of false religious affections, which multitudes are deluded by, and probably have been in all ages of the Christian church; and to settle and determine many articles of doctrine, concerning the operations of the Spirit of God, and the nature of true grace.

Now therefore, to apply these things to the purpose of this discourse.

From hence it appears that impressions which some have made on their imagination, or the imaginary ideas which they have of God, or Christ, or Heaven, or any thing appertaining to religion, have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the nature of true grace. Though such things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they have nothing that is spiritual, nor are they any part of gracious experience.

Here, for the Sake of the common People, I will explain what is intended by **Impressions on the Imagination**, and **imaginary Ideas**. The Imagination is that Power of the Mind, whereby it can have a Conception, or Idea of Things of an external or outward Nature, (that is, of such Sort of Things as are the Objects of the outward Senses) when those Things are not present, and are not perceived by the Senses. It is called Imagination from the Word **Image**; because thereby a Person can have an Image of some external Thing in his Mind, when that Thing is not present in Reality, nor any Thing like it. All such Kind of Things as we perceive by our five external Senses, **Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting** and **Feeling**, are external Things. And when a Person has an Idea, or Image of any of these Sorts of Things in his Mind, when they are not there, and when he does not really see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an **Imagination** of them, and these Ideas are **imaginary Ideas**. And when such Kind of Ideas are strongly impressed upon the Mind, and the Image of them in the Mind is very lively, almost as if one saw them, or heard them, **etcetera** that is called an **Impression on the Imagination**. Thus Colors, and Shapes, and a Form of Countenance, they are outward Things; because they are that Sort of Things which are the Objects of the outward Sense of Seeing. And therefore when any Person has in his Mind a lively Idea of any Shape, or Color, or Form of Countenance; that is to have an Imagination of those Things. So if he has an Idea of such Sort of Light or Darkness, as he perceives by the Sense of Seeing; that is to have an Idea of outward Light, and so is an Imagination. So if he has an Idea of any Marks made on Paper, suppose Letters and Words written in a Book; that is to have an external and imaginary

Idea of such Kind of Things as we sometimes perceive by our bodily Eyes. And when we have the Ideas of that Kind of Things which we perceive by any of the other Senses, as of any Sounds or Voices, or Words spoken; this is only to have Ideas of outward Things, **namely** of such Kind of Things as are perceived by the external Sense of Hearing, and so that also is Imagination. And when these Ideas are livelyly impressed, almost as if they were really heard with the Ears, this is to have an Impression on the Imagination. And so I might go on, and Instance in the Ideas of Things appertaining to the other three Senses of **Smelling, Tasting** and **Feeling**.

Many who have had such Things have very ignorantly supposed them to be of the Nature of spiritual Discoveries. They have had lively Ideas of some external Shape, and beautiful Form of Countenance; and this they call spiritually seeing Christ. Some have had impressed upon them Ideas of a great outward Light; and this they call a spiritual Discovery of God's or Christ's Glory. Some have had Ideas of Christ's hanging on the Cross, and his Blood running from his Wounds; and this they call a spiritual Sight of Christ crucified, and the Way of Salvation by his Blood. Some have seen him with his Arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a Discovery of the Sufficiency of Christ's Grace and Love. Some have had lively Ideas of Heaven, and of Christ on his Throne there, and shining Ranks of Saints and Angels; and this they call seeing Heaven opened to them. Some from Time to Time have had a lively Idea of a Person of a beautiful Countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual Discovery of the Love of Christ to their Souls, and tasting the Love of Christ. And they look upon it a sufficient Evidence that these Things are spiritual Discoveries,

and that they see them spiritually, because they say they do not see these Things with their bodily Eyes, but in their Hearts; for they can see them when their Eyes are shut. And in like Manner, the Imaginations of some have been impressed with Ideas of the Sense of Hearing; they have had Ideas of Words, as if they were spoken to them; sometimes they are the Words of Scripture, and sometimes other Words: They have had Ideas of Christ's speaking comfortable Words to them. These Things they have called having the inward Call of Christ, hearing the Voice of Christ spiritually in their Hearts, having the Witness of the Spirit, and the inward Testimony of the Love of Christ, **etcetera**.

The common, and less considerate and understanding Sort of People, are the more easily led into Apprehensions that these Things are spiritual Things, because spiritual Things being invisible, and not Things that can be pointed forth with the Finger, we are forced to use figurative Expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow Names from external and sensible Objects to signify them by. Thus we call a clear Apprehension of Things spiritual by the Name of **Light**; and an having such an Apprehension of such or such Things, by the Name of **seeing** such Things; and the Conviction of the Judgment, and the Persuasion of the Will, by the Word of Christ in the Gospel, we signify by **spiritually hearing the Call of Christ**: And the Scripture itself abounds with such like figurative Expressions. Persons hearing these often used, and having pressed upon them the Necessity of having their Eyes opened, and having a Discovery of spiritual Things; and seeing Christ in his Glory, and having the inward Call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for some such external Discoveries, and imaginary Views as have been spoken of; and when they have

them, are confident that now their Eyes are opened, now Christ has discovered himself to them, and they are his Children; and hence are exceedingly affected and elevated with their Deliverance and Happiness, and many Kinds of Affections are at once set in a violent Motion in them.

But it is exceeding apparent that such Ideas have nothing in them which is spiritual and divine, in the Sense wherein it has been demonstrated that all gracious Experiences are spiritual and divine. These external Ideas are in no wise of such a Sort, that they are entirely, and in their whole Nature diverse from all that Men have by Nature, perfectly different from, and vastly above any Sensation which it is possible a Man should have by any natural Sense or Principle, so that in order to have them, a Man must have a new spiritual and divine Sense given him, in order to have any Sensations of that Sort. So far from this, that they are Ideas of the same Sort which we have by the external Senses, that are some of the inferior Powers of the human Nature; they are merely Ideas of external Objects, or Ideas of that Nature, of the same outward sensitive Kind; the same Sort of Sensations of Mind (differing not in Degree, but only in Circumstances) that we have by those natural Principles which are common to us, with the Beasts, **namely** the five external Senses. This is a low, miserable Notion of spiritual Sense, to suppose that it is only a conceiving or imagining that Sort of Ideas which we have by our animal Senses, which Senses the Beasts have in as great Perfection as we; it is, as it were, a turning Christ, or the divine Nature in the Soul, into a mere Animal. There is nothing wanting in the Soul, as it is by Nature, to render it incapable of being the Subject of all these external Ideas, without any new Principles. A natural Man is capable of having an Idea, and a

lively Idea of Shapes and Colors and Sounds when they are absent, and as capable as a regenerate Man is: So there is nothing supernatural in them. And it is known by abundant Experience, that it is not the advancing or perfecting human Nature, which makes Persons more capable of having such lively and strong imaginary Ideas, but that on the contrary, the Weakness of Body and Mind, and Distempers of Body, makes Persons abundantly more susceptible of such Impressions.

As to a truly spiritual Sensation, not only is the Manner of its coming into the Mind extraordinary, but the Sensation itself is totally diverse from all that Men have, or can have, in a State of Nature, as has been shown. But as to these external Ideas, though the Way of their coming into the Mind is sometimes unusual, yet the Ideas in themselves are not the better for that; they are still of no different Sort from what Men have by their Senses; they are of no higher Kind, nor a whit better. For Instance, the external Idea a Man has now of Christ hanging on the Cross, and shedding his Blood, is no better in itself, than the external Idea that the **Jews** his Enemies had, who stood round his Cross and saw this with their bodily Eyes. The imaginary Idea which Men have now, of an external Brightness and Glory of God, is no better than the Idea the wicked Congregation in the Wilderness had of the external Glory of the Lord at Mount **Sinai**, when they saw it with bodily Eyes; or any better than that Idea which Millions of cursed Reprobates will have of the external Glory of Christ at the Day of Judgment, who shall see, and have a very lively Idea of ten thousand Times greater external Glory of Christ, than ever yet was conceived in any Man's Imagination. Yea, the Image of Christ, which Men conceive in their Imaginations, is not in its own Nature, of

any superior Kind to the Idea the Papists conceive of Christ, by the beautiful and affecting Images of him which they see in their Churches; (though the Way of their receiving the Idea may not be so bad) nor are the Affections they have, if built primarily on such Imaginations, any better than the Affections raised in the ignorant People, by the Sight of those Images, which oftentimes are very great; especially when these Images, through the Craft of the Priests, are made to move, and speak, and weep, and the like. Merely the Way of Persons receiving these imaginary Ideas, does not alter the Nature of the Ideas themselves that are received: Let them be received in what Way they will, they are still but external Ideas, or Ideas of outward Appearances, and so are not spiritual. Yea, if Men should actually receive such external Ideas by the immediate Power of the most high God upon their Minds, they would not be spiritual, they would be no more than a common Work of the Spirit of God; as is evident in Fact, in the Instance of **Balaam**, who had impressed on his Mind, by God himself, a clear and lively outward Representation or Idea of Jesus Christ, as **the Star rising out of Jacob**, when **he heard the Words of God, and knew the Knowledge of the most High, and saw the Vision of the Almighty, falling into a Trance**, Numbers 24:16, 17. But yet had no Manner of spiritual Discovery of Christ; that Day-Star never spiritually rose in his Heart, he being but a natural Man.

And as these external Ideas have nothing divine or spiritual in their Nature, and nothing but what natural Men, without any new Principles, are capable of; so there is nothing in their Nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable and unparalleled Exercise of the glorious Power of God, in order to their Production, which it has

been shown there is in the Production of true Grace. There appears to be nothing in their Nature above the Power of the Devil. It is certainly not above the Power of **Satan** to suggest Thoughts to Men; because otherwise he could not tempt them to Sin. And if he can suggest any Thoughts or Ideas at all, doubtless imaginary ones, or Ideas of Things external are not above his Power; for the external Ideas Men have are the lowest Sort of Ideas. These Ideas may be raised only by Impressions made on the Body, by moving the animal Spirits, and impressing the Brain. Abundant Experience does certainly show, that Alterations in the Body will excite imaginary or external Ideas in the Mind; as often, in case of a high Fever, Melancholy, **etcetera**. These external Ideas are as much below the more intellectual Exercises of the Soul, as the Body is a less noble Part of Man than the Soul.

And there is not only nothing in the Nature of these external Ideas or Imaginations of outward Appearances, from whence we can infer that they are above the Power of the Devil; but it is certain also that the Devil can excite, and often has excited such Ideas. They were external Ideas which he excited in the Dreams and Visions of the false Prophets of old, who were under the Influence of lying Spirits, that we often read of in Scripture, as **Deuteronomy** 13:1, **1 Kings** 22:22, **Isaiah** 28:7, **Ezekiel** 13:7, **Zechariah** 13:4. And they were external Ideas that he often excited in the Minds of the heathen Priests, Magicians and Sorcerers in their Visions and Ecstasies; and they were external Ideas that he excited in the Mind of the Man Christ Jesus, when he showed him all the Kingdoms of the World with the Glory of them, when those Kingdoms were not really in Sight.

And if **Satan**, or any created Being, has Power to impress the Mind with outward Representations, then no particular Sort of outward Representations can be any Evidence of a divine Power. Almighty Power is no more requisite to represent the Shape of Man to the Imagination, than the Shape of any Thing else: There is no higher Kind of Power necessary to form in the Brain one bodily Shape or Color than another: It needs a no more glorious Power to represent the Form of the Body of Man, than the Form of a Chip or Block; though it be of a very beautiful human Body, with a sweet Smile in his Countenance, or Arms open, or Blood running from Hands, Feet, and Side: That Sort of Power which can represent Black or Darkness to the Imagination, can also represent White and shining Brightness: The Power and Skill which can well and exactly paint a Straw, or a Stick of Wood, on a Piece of Paper or Canvas; the same in Kind, only perhaps further improved, will be sufficient to paint the Body of a Man, with great Beauty and in royal Majesty, or a magnificent City, paved with Gold, full of Brightness, and a glorious Throne, **etc.** So it is no more than the same Sort of Power that is requisite to paint one as the other of these on the Brain. The same Sort of Power that can put Ink upon Paper, can put on Leaf-Gold. So that it is evident to a Demonstration, if we suppose it to be in the Devil's Power to make any Sort of external Representation at all on the Fancy, (as without Doubt it is, and never any one questioned it who believed there was a Devil, that had any Agency with Mankind) I say, if so, it is demonstrably evident that a created Power may extend to all Kinds of external Appearances and Ideas in the Mind.

From hence it again clearly appears, that no such Things have any thing in them that is spiritual supernatural and divine, in the Sense in which it has been proved that all truly gracious Experiences have. And though external Ideas, through Man's Make and Frame, do ordinarily in some Degree attend spiritual Experiences, yet these Ideas are no Part of their spiritual Experience, any more than the Motion of the Blood, and Beating of the Pulse, that attends Experiences, are a Part of spiritual Experience. And though undoubtedly, through Men's Infirmary in the present State, and especially through the weak Constitution of some Persons, gracious Affections which are very strong, do excite lively Ideas in the Imagination; yet it is also undoubted, that when Person's Affections are **founded on** Imaginations, which is often the Case, those Affections are merely natural and common, because they are built on a Foundation that is not spiritual; and so are entirely different from gracious Affections, which, as has been proved, do evermore arise from those Operations that are spiritual and divine.

These Imaginations do oftentimes raise the carnal Affections of Men to an exceeding great Height : And no wonder, when the Subjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting Persuasion, that they are divine Manifestations, which the great Jehovah immediately makes to their Souls, therein giving them Testimonies, in an extraordinary Manner, of his high and peculiar Favor.

Again, it is evident from what has been observed and proved of the Manner in which gracious Operations and Effects in the Heart are spiritual, supernatural and divine, that the immediate suggesting of the Words of Scripture to the Mind, has nothing in it which is spiritual.

I have had Occasion to say something of this already; and what has been said may be sufficient to evince it: But if the Reader bears in Mind what has been said concerning the Nature of spiritual Influences and Effects, it will be more abundantly Manifest that this is no spiritual Effect. For I suppose there is no Person of common Understanding who will say or imagine, that the bringing Words (let them be what Words they will) to the Mind, is an Effect of that Nature which it is impossible the Mind of a natural Man, while he remains in a State of Nature, should be the Subject of, or any thing like it; or that it requires any new divine Sense in the Soul; or that the bringing Sounds or Letters to the Mind, is an Effect of so high, holy and excellent a Nature, that it is impossible any created Power should be the Cause of it.

As the suggesting Words of Scripture to the Mind, is only the exciting in the Mind Ideas of certain Sounds or Letters; so it is only one Way of exciting Ideas in the Imagination; for Sounds and Letters are external Things, that are the Objects of the external Senses of Seeing and Hearing. Ideas of certain Marks upon Paper, such as any of the 24 Letters, in whatever Order, or any Sounds of the Voice, are as much external Ideas, as of any other Shapes or Sounds whatsoever: And therefore, by what has been already said concerning these external Ideas, it is evident they are nothing spiritual; and if at any Time the Spirit of God suggests these Letters or Sounds to the Mind, this is a **common**, and not any **special** or **gracious** Influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those Affections which have this Effect for their Foundation, are no spiritual or gracious Affections. —But let it be observed what it is that I say, **namely** When this Effect, even the immediate and extraordinary **Manner**

of Words of Scripture's coming to the Mind, is that which excites the Affections, and is properly the Foundation of them, then these Affections are not spiritual. It may be so, that Persons may have gracious Affections going with Scriptures which come to their Minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those Scriptures to excite them; when it is some spiritual Sense, Taste or Relish they have of the divine and excellent Things contained in those Scriptures, that is the Thing which excites their Affections, and not the extraordinary and sudden Manner of Words being brought to their Minds. They are affected with the Instruction they receive from the Words, and the View of the glorious Things of God or Christ, and Things appertaining to them, that they contain and teach; and not because the Words came suddenly, as though some Person had spoke them to them, thence concluding that God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this Foundation; the Words of some great and high Promises of Scripture come suddenly to their Minds, and they look upon the Words as directed immediately by God to them, as though the Words that Moment proceeded out of the Mouth of God as spoken to them: So that they take it as a Voice from God, immediately revealing to them their happy Circumstance, and promising such and such great Things to them: And this is that which elevates them. There is no new spiritual understanding **of the Scripture**, or new spiritual view of the glorious Things taught in that Part of the Bible, going before their Affection, and being the Foundation of it: All the new Understanding they have, or think they have, to be the Foundation of their Affection, is this, that the Words **are spoken to them**, because they come so suddenly and extraordinarily. And so this Affection is built wholly on the sand;

because it is built on a Conclusion for which they have no foundation. For, as has been shown, the sudden coming of the Words to their Minds, is no Evidence that the bringing them to their Minds in that Manner, was from God. And if it was true that God brought the Words to their Minds, and they certainly know it, that would not be the spiritual Knowledge; it may be without any spiritual sense. **A person** might know that the Words which God sent to him, were indeed suggested to him by God, and yet have no spiritual Knowledge. So that these Affections which are built on that Notion, that Texts of Scripture are sent immediately from God, are built or no spiritual Foundation, and are vain and delusive. Persons who have their Affections thus raised, if they should be enquired of whether they have any new Sense of the Excellency of Things contained in those Scriptures, would probably say, Yes without Hesitation: But it is true no otherwise than thus, that when they have taken up that Notion, that the Words are spoken immediately to them, that makes them seem sweet to them, and they take the Things, which those Scriptures say to them, for excellent Things, and wonderful Things. As for Instance, supposing these were the Words which were suddenly brought to their Minds, **Fear not,—it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom;** they having confidently taken up a Notion that the Words were as it were immediately spoken from Heaven to them, as an immediate Revelation, that God was their Father, and had given the Kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the Words seem sweet to them; and oh, they say, **they are excellent Things that are contained in those Words!** but the Reason why the Promise seems excellent to them, is only because they think it is made to them immediately: All the Sense they have

of any Glory in them, is only from **Self-Love**, and from their own imagined Interest in the Words: Not that they had any View or Sense of the holy and glorious Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the spiritual Glory of that God who gives it, and or his excellent Grace to sinful Men, in offering and giving them this Kingdom, of his own good Pleasure, preceding their imagined Interest in these Things, and their being affected by them, and being the Foundation of their Affection, and Hope of an Interest in them. On the contrary, they first imagine they are interested, and then are highly affected with that, and then can own these Things to be excellent. So that the sudden and extraordinary Way of the Scriptures coming to their Mind, is plainly the first Foundation of the whole; which is a clear Evidence of the wretched Delusion they are under.

The first Comfort of many Persons, and what they call their Conversion, is after this Manner. After Awakening and Terrors, some comfortable sweet Promise comes suddenly and wonderfully to their Minds; and the Manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God **to them**. And this is the very Thing that is all the Foundation of their Faith, and Hope, and Comfort. From hence they take their first Encouragement to trust in God and in Christ, because they think that God, by some Scripture so brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promised them eternal Life. Which is very absurd; for every one of common Knowledge of the Principles of Religion, knows that it is God's Manner to reveal his Love to Men, and their Interest in the Promises, after they have believed, and not before; because they must first believe, before they have any Interest in the Promises to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of Truth,

and not of Lies. He does not bring Scriptures to Men's Minds to reveal to them that they have an Interest in God's Favour and Promises, when they have none, having not yet believed. Which would be the Case, if God's bringing Texts of Scripture to Men's Minds to reveal to them that their Sins were forgiven, or that it was God's Pleasure to give them the Kingdom, or any Thing of that Nature, went before, and was the Foundation of their first Faith. There is no Promise of the Covenant of Grace belongs to any Man, until he has first believed in Christ; for it is by Faith alone that we become interested in Christ, and the Promises of the new Covenant made in him. And therefore whatever Spirit applies the Promises of that Covenant to a Person who has not first believed, as being already his, must be a lying Spirit; and that Faith which is first built on such an Application of Promises, is built upon a Lie. God's Manner is not to bring comfortable Texts of Scripture to give Men **Assurance** of his Love, and that they shall be happy, before they have had a Faith of **Dependence**. And if the Scripture which comes to a Person's Mind, be not so properly a Promise, as an Invitation; Yet if he makes the sudden or unusual Manner of the Invitation's coming to his Mind, the Ground on which he believes that he is invited, it is not true Faith; because it is built on that which is not the true Ground of Faith. True Faith is built on no precarious Foundation: but a Determination that the Words of such a particular Text were, by the immediate Power of God, suggested to the Mind, at such a Time, as though then spoken and directed by God to [〈◇〉], because the Words came after such a Manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious Determination, as has been now shown; and therefore is a false and sandy Foundation for Faith; and accordingly that Faith which is built

upon it is false. The only certain Foundation which any Person has to believe that he is invited to partake of the Blessings of the Gospel, is that the Word of God declares that Persons so qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it is true and cannot lie. If a Sinner be once convinced of the Veracity of God, and that the Scriptures are his Word, he will need no more to convince and satisfy him that he is invited; for the Scriptures are full of Invitations to Sinners, to the chief of Sinners, to come and partake of the Benefits of the Gospel. He will not want any new speaking of God to him, what he has spoken already will be enough with him.

As the first Comfort of many Persons, and their Affections at the Time of their supposed Conversion, are built on such Grounds as these which have been mentioned; so are their Joys and Hopes, and other Affections, from Time to Time afterwards. They have often particular Words of Scripture, sweet Declarations and Promises suggested to them, which by Reason of the Manner of their coming, they think are **immediately** sent from God to them, **at that Time**; which they look upon as their Warrant to take them; and which they actually make the main Ground of their appropriating them to themselves, and of the Comfort they take in them, and the Confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of Conversation is carried on between God and them; and that God, from Time to Time, does, as it were, immediately speak to them, and satisfy their Doubts and testifies his Love to them, and promises them Supports and Supplies, and his Blessing in such and such Cases, and reveals to them clearly their Interest in eternal Blessings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a Course of a sudden and tumultuous Kind of Joys, mingled with a strong Confidence, and high Opinion of themselves; when indeed

the main Ground of these Joys, and this Confidence is not any Thing **contained in**, or **taught by** these Scriptures, as they lie in the Bible, but the **Manner of their [〈◇〉] to them**; which is a certain Evidence of their Delusion. There is no particular Promise in the Word of God that is the Saint's, or is any otherwise made to him, or spoken to him, than all the Promise of the Covenant of Grace are his, and are made to him, all spoken to him. Though it be true that some of these Promises may be more peculiarly adapted to his Case than others; and God by his spirit may enable him better to understand some than others, and to have a greater Sense of the Preciousness, and Glory, and [〈◇〉] of the Blessings contained in them.

But here, some may be ready to [〈◇〉], What, is there no such Thing as any particular [〈◇〉] Application of the Promises of Scripture by the Spirit of God? I answer, There is doubtless such a Thing as a spiritual and [〈◇〉] Application of the [〈◇〉] as and Promises of Scripture to the Souls of Men. But it is also certain, that the Nature of it is wholly misunderstood by many Persons, to the great [〈◇〉] of their own Souls, and the giving **Satan** a vast Advantage against them, and against the Interest of Religion, and the Church of God. The spiritual Application of a Scripture Promise does not consist in its being immediately suggested to the [〈◇〉] by some [〈◇〉] Agent, and being borne into the Mind with this strong Apprehension, that it is particularly spoken and [〈◇〉] to them at that Time. There is nothing on the Evidence of the Hand of God in this Effect, as Events have proved in many [〈◇〉] Instances; and it is a [〈◇◇〉] of a spiritual Application of Scripture; there is nothing in the Nature of it at all beyond the Power of the Devil, if he [〈◇◇〉] by God; for there is nothing in

the Nature of the Effect that is spiritual, implying any vital Communication of God. A truly spiritual Application of the Word of God is of a vastly higher Nature: as much above the Devil's Power, as it is, so to apply the Word of God to a dead Corpse, as to raise it to Life; or to a Stone, to turn it into an Angel. A spiritual Application of the Word of God consists in **applying it to the Heart**, in spiritually enlightening, sanctifying Influences. A spiritual Application of an Invitation or Offer of the Gospel consists in giving the Soul a spiritual Sense or Relish of the holy and divine Blessings offered, and also the sweet and wonderful Grace of the Offerer, in making so gracious an Offer, and of his holy Excellency and [〈◇〉] to fulfill what he offers, and his glorious Sufficiency for it; so leading and drawing forth the Heart to embrace the Offer; and thus giving the Man Evidence of his Title to the Thing offered. And so [〈◇〉] spiritual, Application of the Promises of Scripture, for the Comfort of the Saints, consists in enlightening their Minds to see the holy Excellency and Sweetness of the Blessings Promised, and also the holy Excellency of the Promiser, and his Faithfulness and Sufficiency, thus drawing forth their Hearts to embrace the Promiser, and Thing promised; and by this Means, giving the sensible Actings of Grace, enabling them to see their Grace, and so their Title to the Promise. An Application not consisting in this divine [〈◇〉] and Enlightening of the Mind, but consisting only in the Words [〈◇〉] borne into the Thoughts, as if immediately then spoken, so making Persons believe, on no other Foundation, that the Promise is theirs; is a blind Application, and belongs to the Spirit of Darkness, and not of Light.

When Persons have their Affections raised after this Manner, those Affections are really not raised by the Word of God; the Scripture is not the Foundation of them; it is not any Thing contained in those Scriptures which come to their Minds, that raise their Affections; but truly that Effect, [〈◇〉] the strange Manner of the Words being suggested to their Minds, and a Proposition from thence taken up by them, which indeed is not contained in that Scripture, nor any other; as that **his** Sins are forgiven him, or that it is the Father's Good Pleasure to give **him in** [〈◇〉] the Kingdom, or the like. There are Propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that Persons of such and such Qualifications are forgiven and beloved of God: But there are no Propositions to be found in the Bible declaring that such and such particular Persons, independent on any precious Knowledge of any Qualifications, are forgiven and beloved of God. And therefore when any Person is comforted, and affected by any such Proposition, it is by another Word, a Word newly coined, and not any Word of God contained in the Bible. And thus many Persons are vainly affected and deluded.

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, **That no Revelation of secret Facts by immediate Suggestion**, is any thing spiritual and divine, in that Sense wherein gracious Effects and Operations are so.

By **secret Facts** I mean Things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which are secret in that Sense that they do not appear to the Senses, nor are known by any Argumentation, or any Evidence to Reason, nor any other Way, but only by that Revelation by immediate Suggestion of the Ideas of them to the Mind. Thus for Instance, if it should be re-

vealed to me that the next Year this Land would be invaded by a Fleet from **France**, or that such and such Persons would then be converted, or that I myself should then be converted; not by enabling me to argue out these Events from any thing which now appears in Providence; but immediately suggesting and bearing in upon my Mind, in an extraordinary Manner, the Apprehension or Ideas of these Facts, with a strong Suggestion or Impression on my Mind, that I had no Hand in myself, that these Things would come to pass. Or if it should be revealed to me, that this Day there is a Battle fought between the Armies of such and such Powers in **Europe**; or that such a Prince in **Europe** was this Day converted, or is now in a converted State, having been converted formerly, or that one of my Neighbours is converted, or that I my self am converted; not by having any other Evidence of any of these Facts, from whence I argue them, but an immediate extraordinary Suggestion or Excitation of these Ideas, and a strong Impression of them upon my Mind: This is a Revelation of secret Facts by immediate Suggestion, as much as if the Facts were future; for the Facts being past, present, or future alters not the Case, as long as they are secret and hidden from my Senses and Reason, and not spoken of in Scripture, nor known by me any other Way than by **immediate Suggestion**. If I have it revealed to me, that such a Revolution is come to pass this Day in the **Ottoman** Empire, it is the very same Sort of Revelation, as if it were revealed to me that such a Revolution would come to pass there this Day come twelve-month; because, though one is present and the other future, yet both are equally hidden from me, any other Way than by immediate Revelation. When **Samuel** told **Saul** that the Asses which he went to seek were found, and that his Father had left caring for the

Asses and sorrowed for him; this was by the same Kind of Revelation, as that by which he told **Saul**, that in the Plain of **Tabor**, there should meet him three Men going up to God to **Bethel**, (1 **Samuel** 10. 2, 3.) though one of these Things was future and the other was not. So when **Elisha** told the King of **Israel** the Words that the King of **Syria** spake in his Bed-chamber, it was by the same Kind of Revelation with that by which he foretold many Things to come.

It is evident that this Revelation of secret Facts by immediate Suggestion, has nothing of the Nature of a spiritual and divine Operation, in the Sense fore-mentioned. There is nothing at all in the Nature of the Perceptions or Ideas themselves, which are excited in the Mind, that is divinely excellent, and so, far above all the Ideas of natural Men; though the Manner of exciting the Ideas be extraordinary. In those Things which are spiritual, as has been shown, not only **the Manner of producing Effect**, but **the Effect wrought** is divine, and so vastly above all that can be in an unsanctified Mind. Now simply the having an Idea of Facts, setting aside the Manner of producing those Ideas, is nothing beyond what the Minds of wicked Men are susceptible of, without any Goodness in them; and they all, either have or will have, the Knowledge of the Truth of the greatest and most important Facts, that have been, are, or shall be.

And as to the extraordinary Manner of producing the Ideas or Perception of Facts, even by immediate Suggestion, there is nothing in it, but what the Minds of natural Men, while they are yet natural Men, are capable of; as is manifest in **Balaam**, and others spoken of in the Scripture. And therefore it appears that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate Suggestion of secret Facts

that is spiritual, in the Sense in which it has been proved that gracious Operations are so. If there be nothing in the Ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a Mind not sanctified, then God can put them into the Mind **by immediate Power**, without sanctifying it. As there is nothing in the Idea of a Rainbow itself, that is of a holy and divine Nature; so that there is nothing hinders but that an unsanctified Mind may receive that Idea. So God if he pleases, and when he pleases, **immediately, and in an extraordinary Manner**, may excite that Idea in an unsanctified Mind. So also, as there is nothing in the Idea or Knowledge that such and such particular Persons are forgiven and accepted of God, and entitled to Heaven, but what unsanctified Minds may have and will have concerning many at the Day of Judgment; so God can if he pleases, extraordinarily and immediately suggest this to, and impress it upon an unsanctified Mind now. There is no Principle wanting in an unsanctified Mind, to make it capable of such a Suggestion or Impression; nor is there any Thing in them to exclude, or necessarily to prevent such a Suggestion.

And if these Suggestions of secret Facts be attended with **Words of Scripture**, immediately and extraordinarily brought to Mind, about some other Facts that seem in some Respects similar, that do not make the Operation to be of a spiritual and divine Nature. For that Suggestion of Words of Scripture is no more divine, than the Suggestion of the Facts themselves; as has been just now demonstrated. And two Effects together, which are neither of them spiritual, cannot make up one complex Effect, that is spiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already shown, and often repeated, that those Affections which are properly founded on such immediate Suggestions, or supposed Suggestions of secret Facts, are not gracious Affections. Not but that it is possible that such Suggestions may **be the Occasion**, or **Cause** of gracious Affections; for so may a Mistake and Delusion; but it is never properly the **Foundation** of gracious Affections. For gracious Affections, as has been shown, are all the Effects of an Influence and Operation which is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. But there are many Affections, and high Affections, which some have, that have such Kind of Suggestions or Revelations for their very Foundation: They look upon these as spiritual Discoveries; which is a gross Delusion; and this Delusion is truly the Spring whence their Affections flow.

Here it may be proper to observe, that it is exceeding manifest from what has been said, that what many Persons call the **Witness of the Spirit** that they are the Children of God, has nothing in it spiritual and divine; and consequently that the Affections built upon it, are vain and delusive. That which may call the Witness of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate Suggestion and Impression of that Fact, otherwise secret, that they are converted, or made the Children of God, and so that their Sins are pardoned, and that God has given them a Title to Heaven. This Kind of Knowledge, **namely** Knowing that a certain Person is converted, and delivered from Hell, and entitled to Heaven, is no divine Sort of Knowledge in itself. This Sort of Fact, is not that which requires any higher or more divine Kind of Suggestion, in order to impress it on the Mind, than any other Fact which **Balaam** had impressed on his Mind. It requires no higher Sort of Idea or

Sensation, for a Man to have the Apprehension of his own Conversion impressed upon him, than to have the Apprehension of his Neighbour's Conversion, in like Manner, impressed. But God, if he pleased, might impress the Knowledge of this Fact, that he had forgiven his Neighbour's Sins, and given him a Title to Heaven, as well as any other Fact, without any Communication of his Holiness. The Excellency and Importance of the Fact, do not at all hinder a natural Man's Mind being susceptible of an immediate Suggestion and Impression of it. **Balaam** had as excellent, and important, and glorious Facts as this, immediately impressed on his Mind, without any gracious Influence; as particularly, the coming of Christ, and his setting up his glorious Kingdom, and the Blessedness of the spiritual **Israel** in his peculiar Favour and their Happiness living and dying. Yea **Abimelech** King of the **Philistines**, had God's special Favour to a particular Person, even **Abraham**, revealed to him, **Genesis** 20:6, 7. So it seems that he revealed to **Laban** his special Favour to **Jacob**, see **Genesis** 31:24 and **Psalms** 125:15. And if a truly good Man should have an immediate Revelation or Suggestion from God, after the like Manner, concerning his Favour to his Neighbour, or himself; it would be no higher Kind or influence; it would be no more than a common Sort of Influence of God's Spirit; as the Gift of Prophecy, and all Revelation by immediate Suggestion is; see 1 **Corinthians** 13:2. And though it be true, that it is not possible that a natural Man should have that individual Suggestion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, because it is not true; yet that does not arise from the Nature of the **Person**, or because that Kind of Influence which suggests such excellent Facts, **is too** high for him to be the Subject of; but purely **from** the **Nature of** a Fact to be

suggested. The Influence which immediately suggests this Fact, when it is true, is of no different Kind from that which immediately suggests other true Facts: And so the Kind and Nature of the Influence, is not above what is common to natural Men, with good Men.

But this is a mean ignoble Notion of the Witness of the Spirit of God given to his dear Children, to suppose that there is nothing in the Kind and Nature of that Influence of the Spirit of God, in imparting this high and glorious Benefit but what is common to natural Men, or which Men are capable of, and be in the mean Time altogether unsanctified, and the Children of Hell; and that therefore the Benefit or Gift itself has nothing of the holy Nature of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of a vital Communication of that Spirit. This Notion greatly debases that high and most exalted Kind of Influence and Operation of the Spirit, which there is in the true Witness of the Spirit. That which is called **the Witness of the Spirit**, Romans 8:16 is elsewhere in the New Testament called **the Seal of the Spirit**, 2 Corinthians 1:22, **Ephesians** 1:13 and 4:13; alluding to the Seal of Princes, annexed to the **instruments**, by which they advanced any of their Subjects to **some** high Honour and Dignity, or peculiar Privilege in the Kingdom, as a Token of their special Favour. Which is an Evidence that the **Seal** of the Spirit of the Prince of Princes, in sealing his Favourites, **is** far from being of a common Kind; and that there is no Effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its Nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable and distinguishing of **them** as nothing is more Royal than the royal Seal; nothing more sacred, that belongs to a Prince, and more peculiarly denoting what belongs to him; it being the very End and Design of it, to be the most peculiar Stamp and

Confirmation of the royal Authority, and great Note of Distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the King, or belongs to him, may be known from every Thing else. And therefore undoubtedly the Seal of the great King of Heaven and Earth enstamped on the Heart, is something high and holy in its own Nature, some excellent Communication from the infinite Fountain of divine Beauty and Glory; and not merely a making known a secret Fact by Revelation or Suggestion; which is a Sort of Influence of the Spirit of God, that the Children of the Devil have often been the Subjects of. The Seal of the Spirit is a Kind of Effect of the Spirit of God on the Heart, which natural Men, while such, are so far from a Capacity of being the Subjects of, that they can have no Manner of Notion or Idea of it; agreeable to Revelation 2:17. **To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden Manna; and I will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.** There is all Reason to suppose that what is here spoken of, is the same Mark, Evidence, or blessed Token of special Favour, which is elsewhere called the **Seal of the Spirit**.

What has misled many in their Notion of that Influence of the Spirit of God we are speaking of, is the Word WITNESS, its being called the **Witness** of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it, not to be any Effect or Work of the Spirit upon the Heart, giving Evidence, from whence Men may argue that they are the Children of God; but an inward [...] Suggestion, as though God inwardly spoke to the Man, and [...] to him, and told him that he was his Child, by a Kind of a secret [...], or Impression: Not observing the [...] in which the Word **Witness**, or **Testimony** is often used in the New Testament; where such Terms often signify, not only a

mere declaring and affecting a Thing to be true, but holding forth Evidence from whence a Thing may be argued and proved to be true. Thus, **Hebrews 2. 4.** God is said to **hear Witness, with Signs and Wonders, and diverse [...], and Gifts of the Holy Ghost.** Now these Miracles, here spoken [...] are called God's Witness, not because they are of the Nature of Affections, but Evidences and Proofs. So **Acts 14. 3. [...] they speaking boldly in the Lord; which gave [...] Word of his Grace; and granted Signs and Wonders to be [...] Hands.** And **John 6. 36. But I have greater Witness than that of John; for the Works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same Works that I do, bear Witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.** Again, **Chapter 10. 25. The Works that I do in my Father's, Name, they bear Witness of me.** So the Water and the Blood are said to bear Witness, **1 John 5. 8.** not that they spoke or asserted any thing, but they were Proofs and Evidences. So God's Works of Providence, in the Rain and fruitful Seasons, are spoken of as Witnesses of God's Being and Goodness, **that is** They were Evidences of these Things. And when the Scripture speaks of the **Seal** of the Spirit, it is an Expression which properly denotes, not an immediate Voice or Suggestion, but some Work or Effect of the Spirit, that is left as a divine Mark upon the Soul, to be an Evidence, by which God's Children might be known. The Seals of Princes were the distinguishing Marks of Princes: And thus God's Seal is spoken of as God's Mark. **Revelation 7. 3. Hurt not the Earth, neither the Sea, or the Trees, 'till we have sealed the Servants of our God in their Foreheads; together with Ezekiel 9. 4. Set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that [...] and [...] for all the [...] that are done in**

the [...] thereof. When God [...] his Seal on a Man's Heart by his Spirit, there is some holy Stamp, some Image impressed and left upon the Heart by the Spirit, as by the Seal upon the Wax. And this holy Stamp, or impressed Image, exhibiting clear Evidence to the Conscience, that the Subject of it is the Child of God, is the very Thing which in Scripture is called **the Seal of the Spirit**, and **the Witness**, or **Evidence of the Spirit**. And this Image instamped by the Spirit on God's Children's Hearts, is his own Image: That is the Evidence by which they are known to be God's Children, that they have the Image of their Father stamped upon their Hearts by the Spirit of Adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two Things, **namely** The Image and the Name of the Person whose Seal it was. Therefore when Christ says to his Spouse, Canticles 8. [...]. **Set me as a Seal upon thine Heart, as a Seal upon thine [...]**; it is as much as to say, Let my Name and Image remain impressed there. The Seals of Princes were wont to be it their Image; so that what they set their Seal and royal Mark upon, had their Image left [...] it. It was the Manner of Princes of old to have their Image engraven on their Jewels and precious Stones; and the Image of [...] engraven on a precious Stone, was used as the Seal of the Roman Emperors, in Christ's and the Apostles Times. And the Saints are the Jewels of Jesus Christ, the great Potentate, who has the Possession of the Empire of the Universe: And these Jewels have his Image enstamped upon them, by his royal Signet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the Scripture means by the Seal of the Spirit; especially when it is enstamped in so fair and clear a Manner, as to be plain to the Eye of Conscience; which is what the Scripture calls [...] **Spirit**. This is, truly an Effect that is **spiritual, supernatu-**

ral, and **divine**. This is, in itself, of a holy Nature, being a Communication of the divine Nature and Beauty. That Kind of Influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this Stamp upon the Heart, is such that no natural Man can be the Subject of any Thing of the like Nature with it. This is the highest Sort of Witness of the Spirit, which it is possible the Soul should be the Subject of: if there were any such Thing as a Witness of the Spirit by immediate Suggestion or Revelation, this would be vastly more noble and excellent, and as much above it as the Heaven is above the Earth. This the Devil cannot imitate: As to an inward Suggestion of the Spirit of God, by a Kind of secret Voice speaking, and immediately asserting and revealing a Fact, he can do that which is a thousand Times so like to this, as he can to that holy and divine Effect, or Work of the Spirit of God, which has been now spoken of.

Another Thing which is a full Proof that the Seal of the Spirit is no Revelation of any Fact by immediate Suggestion, but is Grace itself in the Soul, is that the **Seal of the Spirit** is called the **Earnest of the Spirit**, in the Scripture. It is very plain, that the Seal of the Spirit is the same Thing with the Earnest of the Spirit, by 2 Corinthians 1. 22. **Who hath also sealed Us, and given the Earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts.** And Ephesians 1. 13, 14. **In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of Promise; which is the Earnest of our Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchased Possession, unto the Praise of his Glory.** Now the Earnest is Part of the Money agreed for, given in Hand, as a Token of the Whole, to be paid in due Time; a Part of the promised Inheritance, granted now, in Token of full Possession of the Whole hereafter. But surely that Kind of Communication of the Spirit of God, which

is of the Nature of eternal Glory, is the highest and most excellent Kind of Communication, something that is in its own Nature spiritual, holy and divine, and far from any Thing that is common; and therefore high above any Thing of the [...] of Inspiration, or Revelation of hidden Facts by Suggestion [...] Spirit of God, which many natural Men have had. What is the Earnest and Beginning of Glory, but Grace itself, especially in the more lively and clear Exercises of it? It is not Prophecy, nor Tongues, nor Knowledge, but that more excellent divine Thing, **Charity that never faileth**, which is a Prelibation and Beginning of the Light, Sweetness, and Blessedness of Heaven, that World of Love or Charity. It is Grace that is the Seed of Glory, and Dawning of Glory in the Heart, and therefore it is Grace that is the Earnest of the future Inheritance. What is it that is the Beginning or Earnest of eternal Life in the Soul, but spiritual Life? And what is that but Grace? The Inheritance that Christ has purchased for the Elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary Gifts, but in his vital Indwelling in the Heart, exerting and communicating himself there, in his own proper, holy or divine Nature: And this is the Sum total of the Inheritance that Christ purchased for the Elect. For so are Things constituted in the Affair of our Redemption, that the Father provides the Savior, or Purchaser, and the Purchase is made of Him; and the Son is the Purchaser and the Price; and the Holy Spirit is the great Blessing or Inheritance purchased, as is intimated **Galatians** 3. 13. 14. and hence the Spirit is often spoken of as the Sum of the Blessings promised in the Gospel, **Luke** 24. 49. **Acts** 1. 4. and **Chapter** 2. 38, 39. **Galatians** 3. 14. **Ephesians** 1. 13. This Inheritance was the grand Legacy which Christ left his Disciples and Church, in his last Will and

Testament; **John** Chapter 14, and 15, and 16. This is the Sum of the Blessings of eternal Life, which shall be given in Heaven. (Compare **John** 7. 37, 38, 39. and **John** 4. 14. with **Revelation** 21. 6. and 22. 1, 17.) It is through the vital Communications and Indwelling of the Spirit, that the Saints have all their Light, Life, Holiness, Beauty and Joy in Heaven: And it is through the vital Communications and Indwelling of the same Spirit, that the Saints have all Light, Life, Holiness, Beauty and Comfort on Earth; but only communicated in less Measure. And this vital Indwelling of the Spirit in the Saints, in this less Measure and small Beginning, is **the Earnest of the Spirit, the Earnest of the future Inheritance, and the first Fruits of the Spirit**, as the Apostle calls it, **Romans** 8. 22. where, by **the first Fruits of the Spirit**, the Apostle undoubtedly means the same vital gracious Principle, that he speaks of in all the preceding Part of the Chapter, which he calls Spirit, and sets in Opposition to Flesh or Corruption. Therefore this Earnest of the Spirit, and first Fruits of the Spirit, which has been shown to be the same with the Seal of the Spirit, is the vital, gracious, sanctifying Communication and Influence of the Spirit, and not any immediate Suggestion or Revelation of Facts by the Spirit.

And indeed the Apostle, when in that **Romans** 8. 16. he speaks of the Spirit's bearing Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God, does sufficiently explain himself, if his Words were but attended to. What is here expressed, is connected with the two preceding Verses, as resulting from what the Apostle had said there, as every Reader may see. The three Verses together are thus, **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God: For ye have not received the Spirit of**

Bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: The Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God. Here, what the Apostle says, if we take it together, plainly shows, that what he has Respect to, when he speaks of the Spirit's giving us Witness or Evidence that we are God's Children; is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a Spirit of Adoption, or Spirit of a Child, disposing us to behave towards God as to a Father. This is the Witness or Evidence the Apostle speaks of, that we **are Children**, that we **have the Spirit of Children**, or Spirit of Adoption. And what is that, but the Spirit of Love? There are two Kinds of Spirits the Apostle speaks of, the Spirit of a Slave, or **the Spirit of Bondage**, that is **Fear**; and the Spirit of a Child, or **Spirit of Adoption**, and that is **Love**. The Apostle says, we have not received the Spirit of Bondage, or of Slaves, which is a Spirit of Fear; but we have received the more ingenuous noble Spirit of Children, a Spirit of Love, which naturally disposes us to go to God, as Children to a Father, and behave towards God as Children. And this is the Evidence or Witness which the Spirit of God gives us that we are Children. This is the plain Sense of the Apostle: And so undoubtedly the Apostle here is speaking of the very same Way of casting out Doubting, and **Fear**, and the Spirit of Bondage, which the Apostle **John** speaks of, 1 **John** 4. 18. **namely** By the prevailing of **Love**, that is the Spirit of a Child. The Spirit of Bondage works by Fear, the Slave fears the Rod; but Love cries **Abba Father**; it disposes us to go to God, and behave ourselves towards God as Children; and it gives us clear Evidence of our Union to God as his Children, and so casts out Fear. So that it appears that the Witness of the Spirit the Apostle speaks of, is far

from being any Whisper, or immediate Suggestion or Revelation; but that gracious holy Effect of the Spirit of God in the Hearts of the Saints, the Disposition and Temper of Children, appearing in sweet child-like Love to God, which casts out Fear, or a Spirit of a Slave.

And the same Thing is evident from all the Context. It is plain the Apostle speaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the Hearts of the Saints, as a gracious Principle, set in Opposition to the Flesh or Corruption. And so he does in the Words that immediately introduce this Passage we are upon, Verse 13. **For if you live after the Flesh, you shall die; but if you, through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, you shall live.**

Indeed it is past Doubt with me, that the Apostle has a more special Respect to the Spirit of Grace, or the Spirit of Love, or Spirit of a Child, in its more lively Actings: For it is **perfect Love**, or **strong Love** only, which so witnesses or evidences that we are Children, as to cast out Fear, and wholly deliver from the Spirit of Bondage. The strong and lively Exercises of a Spirit of child-like, evangelical, humble Love to God, give clear Evidence of the Soul's Relation to God, as his Child; which does very greatly and directly satisfy the Soul. And though it be far from being true, that the Soul in this Case, judges only by an immediate Witness, without any Sign or Evidence; for it judges and is assured by the greatest Sign and clearest Evidence; yet in this Case, the Saint stands in no need of multiplied Signs, or any long Reasoning upon them. And though the Sight of his **relative Union** with God, and his being in his Favour, is not without a Medium, because he sees it by that Medium, **namely** his Love; yet his Sight of the **Union of his**

Heart to God is immediate: Love, the Bond of Union, is seen intuitively: The Saint sees and feels plainly the Union between his Soul and God; it is so strong and lively, that he cannot doubt of it. And hence he is assured that he is a Child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a child-like Relation to God, when he plainly sees a child-like Union between God and his Soul, and hence does boldly, and as it were, naturally and necessarily cry, **Abba Father?**

And whereas the Apostle says, the Spirit bears Witness **with our Spirits**; by **our Spirit** here, is meant our Conscience, which is called the Spirit of Man; Proverbs 20:27. **The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward Parts of the Belly.** We elsewhere read of the Witness of this Spirit of ours; 2 Corinthians 1:12. **For our Rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience.** And 1 John 3:19, 20, 21. **And hereby do we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him. For if our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things. Beloved if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.** When the Apostle **Paul** speaks of the Spirit of God bearing Witness with our Spirit, he is not to be understood of two Spirits, that are two separate, collateral, independent Witnesses; but it is by one, that we receive the Witness of the other: The Spirit of God gives the Evidence, by infusing and shedding abroad the Love of God, the Spirit of a Child, in the Heart, and our Spirit, or our Conscience, receives and declares this Evidence for our Rejoicing.

Many have been the Mischiefs that have arisen from that false and delusive Notion of the Witness of the Spirit, that it is a Kind of inward Voice, Suggestion, or Declaration from God to a Man, that

he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a Text of Scripture; and many have been the false, and vain, (though very high) Affections that have arisen from hence. And it is to be feared that Multitudes of Souls have been eternally undone by it. I have therefore insisted the longer on this Head.

But I proceed now to a second Characteristic of gracious Affections.

2. The first objective Ground of gracious Affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable Nature of divine Things, as they are in themselves; and not any conceived Relation they bear to Self, or Self-Interest.

I say that the supremely excellent Nature of divine Things, is the **first**, or **primary and original** objective Foundation of the spiritual Affections of true Saints; for I do not suppose that all Relation which divine Things bear to themselves, and their own particular Interest, are wholly excluded from all Influence in their gracious Affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a secondary and consequential Influence in those Affections that are truly holy and spiritual; as I shall show how by and by.

It was before observed, that the Affection of Love is as it were the Fountain of all Affection; and particularly, that christian Love is the Fountain of all gracious Affections: Now the divine Excellency and Glory of God, and Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Works of God, and the Ways of God, **etc.** is the primary Reason, why a true Saint loves these Things; and not any supposed Interest that he has in them, or any conceived Benefit that he has received from them, or shall receive from them, or any such imag-

ined Relation which they bear to his Interest, that Self-Love can properly be said to be the first Foundation of his Love to these Things.

Some say that all Love arises from Self Love; and that it is impossible in the Nature of Things, for any Man to have any Love to God, or any other Being, but that Love to himself must be the Foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for Want of Consideration, that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his Glory, or the Enjoyment of him, he desires these Things as his own Happiness; the Glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his Perfections, are considered as Things **agreeable to him**, tending to make him happy; he places his Happiness in them, and desires them as Things, which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with Delight and Joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from Self-love, or a Desire of his own Happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious Perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and enquire how the Man came **to place his Happiness** in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's Perfections. There is no Doubt, but that after God's Glory, and the beholding his Perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest Happiness in these Things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own Happiness. But how came these Things to be so agreeable to him, that he esteems it his highest Happiness to glorify God, **etc.?** Is not this the Fruit of Love? A Man must first love God, or have his Heart united to him, before he will esteem God's Good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God, as his Happiness. It is not strong

arguing, that because **after** a Man has his Heart united to God in Love, **as a Fruit of this**, he desires his Glory and Enjoyment as his own Happiness, that therefore a Desire of this Happiness of his own, must needs be the **Cause and Foundation** of his Love: Unless it be strong arguing, that because a Father begat a Son, that therefore his Son certainly begat him. If **after** a Man loves God, and has his Heart so united to him, as to look upon God as his chief Good, and on God's Good as his own, it will be a **Consequence and Fruit of this**, that even Self-love, or love to his own Happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very Exercise of Self-love, went **before** his Love to God, and that his Love to God was a **Consequence and Fruit of that**. Something else, entirely distinct from Self-love might be the Cause of this, **namely** A Change made in the Views of his Mind, and Relish of his Heart; whereby he apprehends a Beauty, Glory, and supreme Good, in God's Nature, as it is in itself. This may be the Thing that first draws his Heart to him, and causes his Heart to be united to him, prior to all Considerations of his own Interest or Happiness, although after this, and as a Fruit of this, he necessarily seeks his Interest and Happiness in God.

There is such a Thing, as a Kind of Love or Affection, that a Man may have towards Persons or Things, which **does properly arise** from Self-love; a preconceived Relation to himself, or some Respect already manifested by another to him, or some Benefit already received or depended on, **is truly the first Foundation** of his Love, and what his Affection does wholly arise from; and is what precedes any Relish of, or Delight in the Nature and Qualities inherent in the Being beloved, as beautiful and amiable, When the

first Thing that draws a Man's Benevolence to another, is the beholding those Qualifications and Properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves; and the Subject of them, on this Account, worthy of Esteem and Goodwill, Love arises in a very different Manner, than when it first arises from some Gift bestowed by another, or depended on from him, as a Judge loves and favours a Man that has bribed him; or from the Relation he supposes another has to him, as a Man who loves another because he looks upon him as his Child. When Love to another arises thus, it does truly and properly arise from Self-love.

That Kind of Affection to God or Jesus Christ, which does thus properly arise from Self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual Love; as appears from what has been said already: For Self-love is a Principle entirely natural, and as much in the Hearts of Devils as Angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere Result of it, can be supernatural and divine, in the Manner before described. Christ plainly speaks of this Kind of Love, as what is nothing beyond the Love of wicked Men, Luke 6:32. **If you love them that love you, what thank have you? For Sinners also love those that love them.** And the Devil himself knew that that Kind of Respect to God which was so mercenary, as to be only for Benefits received or depended on, (which is all one) is worthless in the Sight of God; otherwise he never would have made use of such a Slander before God, against **Job**, as in Job 1:9, 10. **Does Job serve God for naught? Have you not made a Hedge about him, and about his House.** etc.—? Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the Objection to have been good, in case the Accusation had been true, by allowing that that Matter should be tried, and that **Job** should be so dealt with, that it might

appear in the Event, whether **Job's** Respect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the Proof of the Sincerity and Goodness of his Respect, upon that Issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first Foundation of a true Love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme Loveliness of his Nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a Man, or any Creature lovely, is his Excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief Ground of true Love, is his Excellency. God's Nature, or the Divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea it is infinite Beauty, Brightness, and Glory itself. But how can that be **true Love** of this excellent and lovely Nature, which is not built on the Foundation of **its true Loveliness**? How can that be true Love of Beauty and Brightness, which is not for Beauty and Brightness sake? How can that be a true Prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the Sake of its Worthiness and Preciousness? This infinite Excellency of the divine Nature, as it is in itself, is the true Ground of all that is good in God in any Respect; but how can a Man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that Excellency in him, which is the Foundation of all that is in any Manner of Respect good or desirable in him? They whose Affection to God is founded first on his Profitableness to them, their Affection begins at the wrong End; they regard God only for the utmost Limit of the Stream of divine Good, where it touches them, and reaches their Interest; and have no Respect to that infinite Glory of God's Nature, which is the original Good, and the true Fountain of all Good, the first Fountain of all Loveliness of every Kind, and so the first Foundation of all true Love.

A natural Principle of Self-love may be the Foundation of great Affections towards God and Christ, without seeing any Thing of the Beauty & Glory of the divine Nature. There is a certain Gratitude that is a mere natural Thing. Gratitude is one of the natural Affections of the Soul of Man, as well as Anger; and there is a Gratitude that arises from Self-love, very much in the same Manner that Anger does. Anger in Men is an Affection excited **against** another, or in Opposition to another, for something in him that crosses Self-love: Gratitude is an Affection one has **towards** another, for loving him, or gratifying him, or for something in him that suits Self-love. And there may be a Kind of Gratitude, without any true or proper Love; as there may be Anger without any proper Hatred, as in Parents towards their Children, that they may be angry with, and yet at the same Time have a strong habitual Love to them. This Gratitude is the Principle which is in exercise in wicked Men, in that which Christ declares concerning them, in the sixth of **Luke**, where he says, **Sinners love those that love them**; and which he declares concerning even the **Publicans**, who were some of the most carnal and profligate Sort of Men, **Matthew** 5:46. This is the very Principle that is wrought upon by Bribery, in unjust Judges; and it is a Principle that even the brute Beasts do exercise: A Dog will love his Master that is kind to him. And we see in innumerable Instances, that mere Nature is sufficient to excite Gratitude in Men, or to affect their Hearts with Thankfulness to others for Kindnesses received; and sometimes towards them, whom at the same Time they have an habitual Enmity against. Thus **Saul** was once and again greatly affected, and even dissolved with Gratitude towards **David**, for sparing his Life; and yet remained an habitual Enemy to him. And as Men, from mere

Nature, may be thus affected towards Men; so they may towards God. There is nothing hinders, but that the same Self-love may work after the same Manner towards God, as towards Men. And we have manifest Instances of it in Scripture; as indeed the Children of **Israel, who sang God's Praises** at the Red Sea, **but soon forgot God's Works**; and in **Naaman the Syrian**, who was greatly affected with the miraculous Cure of his Leprosy, so as to have his Heart engaged thenceforward to worship the God that had healed him, and him only, excepting when it would expose him to be ruined in his temporal Interest. So was **Nebuchadnezzar** greatly affected with God's Goodness to him, in restoring him to his Reason and Kingdom, after his dwelling with the Beasts.

Gratitude being thus a natural Principle, it renders Ingratitude so much the more vile and heinous; because it shows a dreadful Prevalence of Wickedness when it even overbears, and suppresses the better Principles of human Nature: As it is mentioned as an Evidence of the high Degree of the Wickedness of many of the Heathen, that they were **without natural Affection**, Romans 2:31. But that the Want of Gratitude, or natural Affection, are Evidences of an high Degree of **Vice**, is no Argument that all Gratitude and natural Affection, has the Nature of **Virtue**, or **Saving-Grace**.

Self-love, through the Exercise of a mere natural Gratitude, may be the Foundation of a Sort of Love to God many Ways. A Kind of Love may arise from a false Notion of God, that Men have been educated in, or have some Way imbibed; as though he were only Goodness and Mercy, and no revenging Justice; or as though the Exercises of his Goodness were necessary, and not free and

sovereign; or as though his Goodness were dependent on what is in them, and as it were constrained by them. Men on such Grounds as these, may love a God of their own forming in their Imaginations, when they are far from loving such a God as reigns in Heaven.

Again, Self-love may be the Foundation of an Affection in Men towards God, through a great Insensibility of their State with Regard to God, and for Want of Conviction of Conscience to make them sensible how dreadfully they have provoked God to Anger; they have no Sense of the Heinousness of Sin, as against God, and of the infinite and terrible Opposition of the holy Nature of God against it: And so having formed in their Minds such a God as suits them, and thinking God to be such an one as themselves, who favours and agrees with them, they may like him very well, and feel a Sort of Love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And Men's Affections may be much moved towards God, from Self-love, by some remarkable outward Benefits received from God; as it was with **Naaman**, **Nebuchadnezzar**, and the Children of **Israel** at the **Red Sea**.

Again, a very high Affection towards God, may, and often does arise in Men, from an Opinion of the Favour and Love of God to them, as the first Foundation of their Love to him. After Awakenings and Distress through Fears of Hell, they may suddenly get a Notion, through some Impression on their Imagination, or immediate Suggestion, with or without Texts of Scripture, or by some other Means, that God loves them, and has forgiven their Sins, and made them his Children; and this is the first Thing that causes their Affections to flow towards God and Jesus Christ: And then after this, and upon this Foundation, many Things in God

may appear lovely to them, and Christ may seem excellent. And if such Persons are asked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself? They would perhaps readily answer, Yes; when indeed, if the Matter be strictly examined, this good Opinion of God was purchased and paid for before ever they afforded it, in the distinguishing and infinite Benefits they imagined they received from God; and they allow God to be lovely in himself, no otherwise, than that he has forgiven them, and accepted them, and loves them above most in the World, and has engaged to improve all his infinite Power and Wisdom in preferring, dignifying and exalting them, and will do for them just as they would have him. When once they are firm in this Apprehension, it is easy to own God and Christ to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. It is easy for them to own Christ to be a lovely Person, and the best in the World, when they are first firm in it, that he, though Lord of the Universe, is captivated with Love to them, and has his Heart swallowed up in them, and prizes them far beyond most of their Neighbours, and loved them from Eternity, and died for them, and will make them reign in eternal Glory with him in Heaven. When this is the Case with carnal Men, their very Lusts will make him seem lovely: Pride itself will prejudice them in Favour of that which they call Christ: Selfish proud Man naturally calls that lovely that greatly contributes to his Interest, and gratifies his Ambition.

And as this Sort of Persons begin, so they go on. Their Affections are raised from Time to Time, primarily on this Foundation of Self-love and a Conceit of God's Love to them. Many have a false Notion of Communion with God, as though it were carried on by Impulses, and Whispers, and external Representations, immediately made to their Imagination. These

Things they often have; which they take to be Manifestations of God's great Love to them, and Evidences of their high Exaltation above others of Mankind; and so their Affections are often renewedly set a going.

Whereas the Exercises of true and holy Love in the Saints arise in another Way. They do not first see that God loves them, and then see that he is lovely; but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their Hearts are first captivated with this View, and the Exercises of their Love are wont from Time to Time to begin here, and to arise primarily from these Views; and then, consequentially, they see God's Love; and great Favour to them. The Saint's Affections begin with God; and Self-Love has a Hand in these Affections consequentially, and secondarily only. On the contrary, those false Affections begin with Self, and an Acknowledgement of an Excellency in God, and an Affectedness with it, is only consequential and dependent. In the true Saint God is the lowest Foundation; the Love of the Excellency of his Nature is the Foundation of all the Affections which come afterwards, wherein Self-Love is concerned as an Handmaid: On the contrary, the Hypocrite lays himself at the Bottom of all, as the first Foundation, and lays on God as the Superstructure; and even his Acknowledgement of God's Glory itself, depends on his Regard to his private Interest.

Self-Love may not only influence Men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's Kindness to them separately; but also with God's Kindness to them, as Parts of a Community: As a natural Principle of Self-Love, without any other Principle, may be sufficient to make a Man concerned for the Interest of the Nation to which he belongs: As for Instance, in the present War, Self-Love

may make natural Men rejoice at the Successes of our Nation, and sorry for their Disadvantages, they being concerned as Members of the Body. So the same natural Principles may extend further, and even to the World of Mankind, and might be affected with the Benefits the Inhabitants of the Earth have, beyond those of the Inhabitants of other Planets; if we knew that such there were, and knew how it was with them. So this Principle may cause Men to be affected with the Benefits that Mankind have received beyond the fallen Angels. And hence Men, from this Principle, may be much affected with the wonderful Goodness of God to Mankind, his great Goodness in giving his Son to die for fallen Man, and the marvellous Love of Christ in suffering such great Things for us, and with the great Glory they hear God has provided in Heaven for us; looking on themselves as Persons concerned and interested, as being some of this Species of Creatures, so highly favoured: The same Principle of natural Gratitude may influence Men here, as in the Case of personal Benefits.

But these Things that I have said do by no Means imply that all Gratitude to God is a mere natural Thing, and that there is no such Thing as a spiritual Gratitude, which is a holy and divine Affection: They imply no more, than that there is a Gratitude which is merely natural, and that when Persons have Affections towards God only or primarily for Benefits received, their Affection is only the Exercise of a natural Gratitude. There is doubtless such a Thing as a gracious Gratitude, which does greatly differ from all that Gratitude which natural Men experience. It differs in the following Respects:

1. True Gratitude or Thankfulness to God for his Kindness to us, arises from a Foundation laid before, of Love to God for what he is in himself; whereas a natural Gratitude has no such antecedent Foundation. The gracious Stirrings of grateful Affection to God, for Kindness received, always are from a Stock of Love already in the Heart, established in the first Place on other Grounds, **namely** God's own Excellency; and hence the Affections are disposed to flow out, on Occasions of God's Kindness. The Saint having seen the Glory of God, and his Heart overcome by it, and captivated into a supreme Love to him on that Account, his Heart hereby becomes tender, and easily affected with Kindnesses received. If a Man has no Love to another, yet Gratitude may be moved by some extraordinary Kindness; as in **Saul** towards **David**: But this is not the same Kind of Thing, as a Man's Gratitude to a dear Friend, that his Heart was before possessed with a high Esteem of, and Love to; whose Heart by this Means became tender towards him, and more easily affected with Gratitude, and affected in another Manner. Self-Love is not excluded from a gracious Gratitude; the Saints love God for his Kindness to them, Psalm 116:1. **I love the Lord, because he hath heard the Voice of my Supplication.** But something else is included; and another Love prepares the Way, and lays the Foundation, for these grateful Affections.

Two. In a gracious Gratitude, Men are affected with the Attribute of God's Goodness and free Grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their Interest, but as a Part of the Glory and Beauty of God's Nature. That wonderful and unparalleled Grace of God, which is manifested in the Work of Redemption, and shines forth in the Face of Jesus Christ, is infin-

itely glorious in itself, and appears so to the Angels; it is a great Part of the moral Perfection and Beauty of God's Nature: This would be glorious, whether it were exercised towards us or no; and the Saint who exercises a gracious Thankfulness for it, sees it to be so, and delights in it as such; though his Concern in it serves the more to engage his Mind, and raise the Attention and Affection; and Self-Love here assists as an Handmaid, being subservient to higher Principles, to lead forth the Mind to the View and Contemplation, and engage and fix the Attention, and heighten the Joy and Love: God's Kindness to them is a Glass that God sets before them, wherein to behold the Beauty of the Attribute of God's Goodness: The Exercises and Displays of this Attribute, by this Means, are brought near to them, and set right before them. So that in a holy Thankfulness to God, the Concern our Interest has in God's Goodness, is not the first Foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the Heart before, in that Stock of Love which was to God, for his Excellency in himself, that makes the Heart tender, and susceptible of such Impressions from his Goodness to us: Nor is our own Interest, or the Benefits we have received, the only, or the chief objective Ground of the present Exercises of the Affection; but God's Goodness, as Part of the Beauty of his Nature; although the Manifestations of that lovely Attribute, set immediately before our Eyes, in the Exercises of it for us, be the special Occasion of the Mind's Attention to that Beauty, at that Time, and serves to fix the Attention, and heighten the Affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object against the whole that has been said, that Text, First John 4:19, **We love him, because he first loved us**, as though this implied that God's Love to the

true Saints were the **first Foundation** of their Love to him.

In answer to this I would observe, that the Apostle's Drift in these Words, is to magnify the Love of God to us from hence, that he loved us, while we had no Love to him; as will be manifest to any one who compares this Verse, and the two following, with the ninth, tenth and eleventh Verses. And that God loved us, when we had no Love to him, the Apostle proves by this Argument, that God's Love to the Elect, is the Ground of their Love to him. And that it is three Ways. One. The Saints Love to God, is the Fruit of God's Love to them; as it is the Gift of that Love. God gave them a Spirit of Love to him, because he loved them from Eternity. And in this Respect God's Love to his Elect is the first Foundation of their Love to him, as it is the Foundation of their Regeneration, and the Whole of their Redemption. Two. The Exercises and Discoveries that God has made of his wonderful Love to sinful Men, by Jesus Christ, in the Work of Redemption, is one of the chief Manifestations, which God has made of the Glory of his moral Perfection, to both Angels and Men; and so is one main objective Ground of the Love of Both to God; in a good Consistency with what was said before. Three. God's Love to a particular elect Person, discovered by his Conversion, is a great Manifestation of God's moral Perfection and Glory to him, and a proper Occasion of the Excitation of the Love of holy Gratitude, agreeable to what was before said. And that the Saints do in these Respects love God, because he first loved them, fully answers the Design of the Apostle's Argument in that Place. So that no good Argument can be drawn from hence, against a spiritual and gracious Love in the Saints,

arising primarily from the Excellency of divine Things, as they are in themselves, and not from any conceived Relation they bear to their Interest.

And as it is with the Love of the Saints, so it is with their Joy, and spiritual Delight and Pleasure: the first Foundation of it, is not any Consideration or Conception of their Interest in divine Things; but it primarily consists in the sweet Entertainment their Minds have in the View or Contemplation of the divine and holy Beauty of these Things, as they are in themselves. And this is indeed the very main Difference between the Joy of the Hypocrite, and the Joy of the true Saint. The former rejoices in himself; Self is the first Foundation of his Joy: The latter rejoices in God. The Hypocrite has his Mind pleased and delighted, in the first Place, with his own Privilege, and the Happiness which he supposes he has attained, or shall attain. True Saints have their Minds, in the first Place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet Ideas of the glorious and amiable Nature of the Things of God. And this is the Spring of all their Delights, and the Cream of all their Pleasures; it is the Joy of their Joy. This sweet and ravishing Entertainment, they have in the View of the beautiful and delightful Nature of divine Things, is the Foundation of the Joy that they have afterwards, in the Consideration of their being theirs. But the Dependence of the Affections of Hypocrites is in a contrary Order: They first rejoice, and are elevated with it, that they are made so much of by God; and then on that Ground, he seems in a Sort, lovely to them.

The first Foundation of the Delight a true Saint has in God, is his own Perfection; and the first Foundation of the Delight he has in Christ, is his own Beauty; he appears in himself the Chief among

Ten Thousand, and altogether lovely: the Way of Salvation by Christ, is a delightful Way to him, for the sweet and admirable Manifestations of the divine Perfections in it; the holy Doctrines of the Gospel, by which God is exalted and Man abased, Holiness honored and promoted, and Sin greatly disgraced and discouraged, and free and sovereign Love manifested; are glorious Doctrines in his Eyes, and sweet to his Taste, prior to any Conception of his Interest in these Things. Indeed the Saints rejoice in their Interest in God, and that Christ is theirs; and so they have great Reason; But this is not the first Spring of their Joy: They first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs: They first have their Hearts filled with Sweetness, from the View of Christ's Excellency, and the Excellency of his Grace, and the Beauty of the Way of Salvation by him; and then they have a secondary Joy, in that so excellent a Savior, and such excellent Grace is theirs. But that which is the true Saint's Superstructure, is the Hypocrite's Foundation. When they hear of the wonderful Things of the Gospel, of God's great Love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying Love to Sinners, and the great Things Christ has purchased, and promised to the Saints, and hear these Things lively and eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of Pleasure, and be lifted up with what they hear: but if their Joy be examined, it will be found to have no other Foundation than this, that they look upon these Things as theirs, all this exalts them, they love to hear of the great Love of Christ so vastly distinguishing some from others; for Self-love, and even Pride itself, makes them affect great Distinction from others: No Wonder, in this confident Opinion of their own good Estate, that they feel well under such Doctrine, and

are pleased in the highest Degree, in hearing how much God and Christ makes of them. So that their Joy is really a Joy in themselves, and not in God.

And because the Joy of Hypocrites is in themselves, hence it comes to pass, that in their Rejoicings and Elevations, they are wont to keep their Eye upon themselves; having received what they call spiritual Discoveries or Experiences, their Minds are taken up about them, admiring their own Experiences: And what they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the Glory of God, or Beauty of Christ, but the Beauty of their Experiences. They keep thinking with themselves, What a good Experience is this! What a great Discovery is this! What wonderful Things have I met with! And so they put their Experiences in the Place of Christ, and his Beauty and Fullness; and instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable Experiences: instead of feeding and feasting their Souls in the View of what is without them, **namely** the innate, sweet, refreshing Amiableness of the Things exhibited in the Gospel, their Eyes are off from these Things, or at least they view them as it were sideways; but the Object that fixes their Contemplation, is their Experience; and they are feeding their Souls, and feasting a selfish Principle with a View of their Discoveries: They take more Comfort in their Discoveries than in Christ discovered, which is the true Notion of living upon Experiences and Frames; and not a using Experiences as the Signs, on which they rely for Evidence of their good Estate, which some call living on Experiences: Though it be very observable, that some of them who do so, are most notorious for living upon Experiences, according to the true Notion of it.

The Affections of Hypocrites are very often after this Manner, they are first, much affected with some Impression on their Imagination, or some Impulse, which they take to be an immediate Suggestion, or Testimony from God, of his Love and their Happiness, and high Privilege in some Respect, either with or without a Text of Scripture; they are mightily taken with this, as a great Discovery; and hence arise high Affections. And when their Affections are raised, then they view those high Affections, and call them great and wonderful Experiences; and they have a Notion that God is greatly pleased with those Affections; and this affects them more; and so they are affected with their Affections. And thus their Affections rise higher and higher, until they sometimes are perfectly swallowed up: And Self-conceit, and a fierce Zeal rises withal; and all is built like a Castle in the Air, on no other Foundation but Imagination, Self-love and Pride.

And as the Thoughts of this Sort of Persons are, so is their Talk; for out of the Abundance of their Heart, their Mouth speaks. As in their high Affections, they keep their Eye upon the Beauty of their Experiences, and Greatness of their Attainments; so they are great Talkers about themselves. The true Saint, when under great spiritual Affections, from the Fullness of his Heart, is ready to be speaking much of God, and his glorious Perfections and Works, and of the Beauty and Amiableness of Christ, and the glorious Things of the Gospel; but Hypocrites, in their high Affections, talk more of the Discovery, than they do of the Thing discovered; they are full of Talk about the great Things they have met with, the wonderful Discoveries they have had, how sure they are of the Love of God to them, how safe their Condition is, and how they know they shall go to Heaven, **et cetera.**

A true Saint, when in the Enjoyment of true Discoveries of the sweet Glory of God and Christ, has his Mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that Time to view himself, and his own Attainments: it would be a Diversion and Loss which he could not bear, to take his Eye off from the ravishing Object of his Contemplation, to survey his own Experience, and to spend Time in thinking with himself, what a high Attainment this is, and what a good Story they now have to tell others. Nor does the Pleasure and Sweetness of his Mind at that Time, chiefly arise from the Consideration of the Safety of his State, or any Thing he has in View of his own Qualifications, Experiences, or Circumstances; but from the divine and supreme Beauty of what is the Object of his direct View, without himself; which sweetly entertains, and strongly holds his Mind.

As the Love and Joy of Hypocrites, are all from the Source of Self-Love; so it is with their other Affections, their Sorrow for Sin, their Humiliation and Submission, their religious Desires and Zeal: Every Thing is as it were paid for beforehand, in God's highly gratifying their Self-love, and their Lusts, by making so much of them, and exalting them so highly, as Things are in their Imagination. It is easy for Nature, as corrupt as it is, under a Notion of being already some of the highest Favorites of Heaven, and having a God who does so protect them and favor them in their Sins, to love this imaginary God that suits them so well, and to extol him, and submit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high Affections of many are all built on the Supposition of their being eminent Saints. If that Opinion which they have of themselves were taken away, if they thought they were some of the lower Form of Saints, (though they should yet suppose themselves

to be real Saints) their high Affections would fall to the Ground. If they only saw a little of the Sinfulness and Vileness of their own Hearts, and their Deformity, in the midst of their best Duties and their best Affections, it would knock their Affections on the Head; because their Affections are built upon Self, therefore Self-knowledge would destroy them. But as to truly gracious Affections, they are built elsewhere: they have their Foundation out of Self, in God and Jesus Christ; and therefore a Discovery of themselves, of their own Deformity, and the Meanness of their Experiences, though it will purify their Affections, yet it will not destroy them, but in some Respects sweeten and heighten them.

3. Those Affections that are truly Holy, are primarily founded on the Loveliness of the moral Excellency of divine Things. Or, (to express it otherwise) a Love to divine Things for the Beauty and Sweetness of their moral Excellency, is the first Beginning and Spring of all holy Affections.

Here, for the sake of the more illiterate Reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral Excellency of divine Things.

And it may be observed that the Word Moral is not to be understood here, according to the common and vulgar Acceptation of the Word, when Men speak of **Morality**, and a **moral** Behavior meaning an outward Conformity to the Duties of the moral Law, and especially the Duties of the second Table; or intending no more at farthest, than such seeming Virtues, as proceed from natural Principles, in Opposition to those Virtues that are more inward, spiritual, and divine; as the Honesty, Justice, Generosity, Good Nature, and public Spirit of many of the Heathen, are called

moral Virtues, in Distinction from the holy Faith, Love, Humility, and Heavenly-mindedness of true Christians: I say the Word Moral is not to be understood thus in this Place.

But in order to a right understanding what is meant, it must be observed, that Divines commonly make a Distinction between **moral** Good and Evil, and **natural** Good and Evil. By **moral** Evil, they mean the Evil of Sin, or that Evil which is against Duty, and contrary to what is right and ought to be. By **natural** Evil, they do not mean that Evil which is properly opposed to Duty; but that which is contrary to mere Nature, without any Respect to a Rule of Duty. So the Evil of suffering is called natural Evil, such as Pain, and Torment, Disgrace, and the like. These Things are contrary to mere Nature, contrary to the Nature of both Bad and Good, hateful to wicked Men and Devils, as well as good Men and Angels. So likewise natural Defects are called natural Evils, as if a Child be monstrous, or a natural Fool. These are natural Evils, but are not moral Evils, because they have not properly the Nature of the Evil of Sin. On the other Hand, as by moral Evil, Divines mean the Evil of Sin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by **moral** Good, they mean that which is contrary to Sin, or that Good in Beings who have Will and Choice, whereby, as voluntary Agents, they are, and act, as it becomes them to be and to act, or so as is most fit, and suitable, and lovely. By **natural** Good they mean that Good that is entirely of a different Kind from Holiness or Virtue, **namely** That which perfects or suits Nature, considering Nature abstractly from any holy or unholy Qualifications, and without any Relation to any Rule or Measure of Right and Wrong.

Thus Pleasure is a natural Good; so is Honor; so is Strength; so is speculative Knowledge, human Learning, and Policy. Thus there is a Distinction to be made between the natural Good that Men are possessed of, and their moral Good; and also between the natural and moral Good of the Angels in Heaven. The great Capacity of their Understandings, and their great Strength, and the honorable Circumstances they are in as the great Ministers of God's Kingdom, whence they are called Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, is the natural Good which they are possessed of; but their perfect and glorious Holiness and Goodness, their pure and flaming Love to God, and to the Saints, and one another, is their moral Good. So Divines make a Distinction between the natural and moral Perfections of God. **By the moral** Perfections of God, they mean those Attributes which God exercises as a moral Agent, or whereby the Heart and Will of God are good, right, and infinitely becoming, and lovely; such as his Righteousness, Truth, Faithfulness, and Goodness; or, in one Word, his Holiness. By God's **natural** Attributes or Perfections, they mean those Attributes, wherein, according to our Way of conceiving of God, consists, not the Holiness or moral Goodness of God, but his Greatness; such as his Power, his Knowledge whereby he knows all Things, and his being eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, his Omnipresence, and his awful and terrible Majesty.

The moral Excellency of an intelligent voluntary Being, is more immediately seated in the Heart or Will of moral Agents. That intelligent Being whose Will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent.

This moral Excellency of an intelligent Being, when it is true and real, and not only external, or merely Seeming and Counterfeit, is **Holiness**. Therefore **Holiness** comprehends all the true moral Excellency of intelligent Beings. There is no other **true Virtue**, but **real Holiness**. Holiness comprehends all the true Virtue of a good Man, his Love to God, his gracious Love to Men, his Justice, his Charity, and Bowels of Mercies, his gracious Meekness and Gentleness, and all other true Christian Virtues that he has, belong to his Holiness. So the Holiness of God in the more extensive Sense of the Word, and the Sense in which the Word is commonly, if not universally used in Scripture, is the same with the moral Excellency of the divine Nature, or his Purity and Beauty as a moral Agent, comprehending all his moral Perfections, his Righteousness, Faithfulness and Goodness. As in holy Men their Charity, Christian Kindness and Mercy, belongs to their Holiness; so the Kindness and Mercy of God, belongs to his Holiness. Holiness in Man, is but the image of God's Holiness. There are not more Virtues belonging to the Image, than are in the Original. Derived Holiness has not more in it, than is in that underived Holiness, which is its Fountain. There is no more than Grace for Grace, or Grace in the Image, answerable to Grace in the Original.

As there are two Kinds of Attributes in God, according to our Way of conceiving of him, his moral Attributes, which are summed up in his **Holiness**, and his natural Attributes, of Strength, Knowledge, **et cetera** that constitute the **Greatness** of God; so there is a twofold Image of God in Man, his **moral** or **spiritual** Image, which is his Holiness, that is the Image of God's moral Excellency; (which Image was lost by the Fall) and God's **natural**

Image, consisting in Men's Reason and Understanding, his natural Ability, and Dominion over the Creatures, which is the Image of God's natural Attributes.

From what has been said, it may easily be understood what I intend, when I say that a Love to divine Things for the Beauty of their **moral Excellency**, is the Beginning and Spring of all holy Affections. It has been already shown, under the former Head, that the first objective Ground of all holy Affections is the supreme Excellency of divine Things as they are in themselves, or in their own Nature; I now proceed further, and say more particularly, that that Kind of Excellency of the Nature of divine Things, which is the first objective Ground of all holy Affections, is their moral Excellency, or their Holiness. **Holy Persons**, in the Exercise of **holy Affections**, do love divine Things primarily for their **Holiness**: They love God, in the first Place, for the Beauty of his Holiness or moral Perfection, as being supremely amiable in itself. Not that the Saints, in the Exercise of gracious Affections, do love God only for his Holiness; all his Attributes are amiable and glorious in their Eyes, they delight in every divine Perfection; the Contemplation of the infinite Greatness, Power, and Knowledge, and terrible Majesty of God, is pleasant to them. But their Love to God for his Holiness is what is most fundamental and essential in their Love. Here it is that true Love to God begins. All other holy Love to divine Things flows from hence. This is the most essential and distinguishing Thing that belongs to a holy Love to God, with Regard to the Foundation of it. A Love to God for the Beauty of his moral Attributes, leads to, and necessarily causes a Delight in God for all his Attributes; for his moral Attributes cannot be without his

natural Attributes: For infinite Holiness supposes infinite Wisdom, and an infinite Capacity and Greatness; and all the Attributes of God do as it were imply one another.

The true Beauty and Loveliness of all intelligent Beings does primarily and most essentially consist in their moral Excellency or Holiness. Herein consists the Loveliness of the Angels, without which, with all their natural Perfections, their Strength, and their Knowledge, they would have no more Loveliness than Devils. It is moral Excellency alone, that is in itself, and on its own Account, the Excellency of intelligent Beings. It is this that gives Beauty to, or rather is the Beauty of their natural Perfections and Qualifications. Moral Excellency is the Excellency of natural Excellencies. Natural Qualifications are either excellent or otherwise, according as they are joined with moral Excellency or not. Strength and Knowledge do not render any Being lovely, without Holiness; but more hateful: Though they render them more lovely, when joined with Holiness. Thus the elect Angels are the more glorious for their Strength and Knowledge, because these natural Perfections of theirs, are sanctified by their moral Perfection. But though the Devils are very strong, and of great natural Understanding, they are not the more lovely. They are more terrible indeed, but not the more amiable; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The Holiness of an intelligent Creature, is the Beauty of all his natural Perfections. And so it is in God, according to our Way of conceiving of the divine Being. Holiness is in a peculiar Manner the Beauty of the divine Nature. Hence we often read of the Beauty of Holiness; **Psalms** 29:2, **Psalms** 96:9, and 110:3. This renders all his other Attributes glorious and lovely. It is the Glory of God's Wisdom, that it is a holy Wisdom, and not a wicked

Subtlety and Craftiness. This makes his Majesty lovely, and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a holy Majesty. It is the Glory of God's Immutability, that it is a holy Immutability, and not an inflexible Obstinacy in Wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a Sight of God's Loveliness must begin here. A true Love to God must begin with a Delight in his Holiness, and not with a Delight in any other Attribute; for no other Attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our Way of conceiving of God) it derives its Loveliness from this; and therefore it is impossible that other Attributes should appear lovely, in their true Loveliness, until this is seen; and it is impossible that any Perfection of the divine Nature should be loved with true Love, until this is loved. If the true Loveliness of all God's Perfections, arises from the Loveliness of his Holiness; then the true Love of all his Perfections, arises from the Love of his Holiness. They that do not see the Glory of God's Holiness, cannot see any Thing of the true Glory of his Mercy and Grace: They see nothing of the Glory of those Attributes, as any Excellency of God's Nature, as it is in itself; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their Interest: For these Attributes are no Part of the Excellency of God's Nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwise than as they are included in his Holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a Part of his moral Perfection.

As the Beauty of the divine Nature does primarily consist in God's Holiness, so does the Beauty of all divine Things. Herein consists the Beauty of the Saints, that they are Saints, or holy Ones: It is the moral Image of God in them, which is their Beauty; and which is their Holiness. Herein consists the Beauty and

Brightness of the Angels of Heaven, that they are holy Angels, and so not Devils; **Daniel** 4. 13, 17, 23; **Matthew** 25. 31; **Mark** 8. 38; **Acts** 10. 22; **Revelation** 14. 10. Herein consists the Beauty of the Christian Religion, above all other Religions, that it is so holy a Religion. Herein consists the Excellency of the Word of God, that it is so holy; Psalm 119. 140. **Thy Word is very pure, therefore thy Servant loveth it.** Verse 128. **I esteem all thy Precepts, concerning all Things, to be right; and I hate every false Way.** Verse 138. **Thy Testimonies, that thou hast commanded, are righteous, and very faithful.** And 172. **My Tongue shall speak of thy Word; for all thy Commandments are Righteousness.** And Psalm 19. 7, 8, 9, 10. **The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul: The Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart: The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the Eyes: The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: More to be desired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; sweeter also than Honey, and the Honey-comb.** Herein does primarily consist the Amiableness and Beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten Thousands and altogether lovely; even in that he is **the holy One of God**, Acts 3. 14. and **God's holy Child**, Acts 4. 27. and **he that is Holy, and he that is True**, Revelation 3. 7. All the spiritual Beauty of his human Nature, consisting in his Meekness, Lowliness, Patience, Heavenliness, Love to God, Love to Men, Condescension to the Mean and Vile, and Compassion to the Miserable, etc. all is summed up in his Holiness. And the Beauty of

his divine Nature, of which the Beauty of his human Nature is the Image and Reflection, does also primarily consist in his Holiness. Herein primarily consists the Glory of the Gospel, that it is a holy Gospel, and so bright an Emanation of the holy Beauty of God and Jesus Christ: Herein consists the spiritual Beauty of its Doctrines, that they are holy Doctrines, or Doctrines according to Godliness. And herein does consist the spiritual Beauty of the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ, that it is so holy a Way. And herein chiefly consists the Glory of Heaven, that it is the **holy City**, the **holy Jerusalem**, the **Habitation of God's Holiness**, and so **of his Glory**; Isaiah 63. 15. All the Beauties of the new **Jerusalem**, as it is described in the two last Chapters of Revelation, are but various Representations of this: See Chapter 21. 2, 10, 11, 18, 21, 27. Chapter 22. 1, 3.

And therefore it is primarily on Account of this Kind of Excellency, that the Saints do love all these Things. Thus they love the Word of God, **because it is very pure**. It is on this Account they love the Saints; and on this Account chiefly it is, that Heaven is lovely to them, and those holy Tabernacles of God amiable in their Eyes: It is on this Account that they love God; and on this Account primarily it is, that they love Christ, and that their Hearts delight in the Doctrines of the Gospel, and sweetly acquiesce in the Way of Salvation therein revealed.

Under the Head of the first distinguishing Characteristic of gracious Affection, I observed that there is given to those that are regenerated, a new supernatural Sense, that is as it were a certain divine spiritual Taste, which is in its whole Nature diverse from any former Kinds of Sensation of the Mind, as Tasting is diverse from any of the other five Senses, and that something is perceived

by a true Saint in the Exercise of this new Sense of Mind, in spiritual and divine Things, as entirely different from any Thing that is perceived in them by natural Men, as the sweet Taste or Honey is diverse from the Ideas Men get of Honey by looking on it or feeling of it; now this that I have been speaking, **namely**, The Beauty of Holiness is that Thing in spiritual and divine Things, which is perceived by this spiritual Sense, that is so diverse from all that natural Men perceive in them: This Kind of Beauty is the Quality that is the immediate Object of this spiritual Sense: This is the Sweetness that is the proper Object of this spiritual Taste. The Scripture often represents the Beauty and Sweetness of Holiness as the grand Object of a spiritual Taste, and spiritual Appetite. This was the sweet Food of the holy Soul of Jesus Christ, John 4. 32, 34. **I have Meat to eat, that ye know not of;—My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.** I know of no Part of the holy Scriptures, where the Nature and Evidences of true and sincere Godliness, are so much of set Purpose, and so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm; the Psalmist declares his Design in the first Verses of the Psalm, and he keeps his Eye on this Design all along, and pursues it to the End: But in this Psalm the Excellency of Holiness is represented as the immediate Object of a spiritual Taste, Relish, Appetite and Delight, **God's Law**, that grand Expression and Emanation of the Holiness of God's Nature, and Prescription of Holiness to the Creature, is all along represented as the Food and Entertainment, and as the great Object of the Love, the Appetite, the Compliance and Rejoicing of the gracious Nature, which prizes God's Commandments **above Gold, yea, the finest Gold**, and to which they are **sweeter than the Honey, and**

Honey-comb; and that upon Account of their Holiness, as I observed before. The same Psalmist declares, that this is the Sweetness that a spiritual Taste relishes in God's Law, Psalm 19. 8, 9, 10. **The Law of the Lord is perfect:—The Commandment of the Lord is pure: The Fear of the Lord is clean: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart:—The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: More to be desired are they than Gold, yea than much fine Gold; sweeter also than Honey and the Honey-comb.**

A holy Love has a holy Object: The Holiness of Love consists especially in this that it is the Love of that which is holy, as holy, or for its Holiness; so that it is the Holiness of the Object, which is the Quality whereon it fixes and terminates. An holy Nature must needs love that in holy Things chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that in divine Things, which above all others is agreeable to holy Nature, is Holiness; because Holiness must be above all other Things agreeable to Holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any Nature than itself; holy Nature must be above all Things agreeable to holy Nature: And so the holy Nature of God and Christ, and the Word of God, and other divine Things, must be above all other Things, agreeable to the holy Nature that is in the Saints.

And again, an holy Nature doubtless loves holy Things, especially on the Account of that, for which sinful Nature has Enmity against them: But that for which chiefly sinful Nature is at Enmity against holy Things, is their Holiness; it is for this, that the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and against the Law of God, and the People of God. Now it is just arguing from Contraries; from con-

trary Causes, to contrary Effects; from opposite Natures, to opposite Tendencies. We know that Holiness is of a directly contrary Nature to Wickedness: As therefore it is the Nature of Wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate Holiness; so it must be the Nature of Holiness chiefly to tend to, and delight in Holiness.

The holy Nature in the Saints and Angels in Heaven (where the true Tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the Holiness of divine Things. This is the divine Beauty which chiefly engages the Attention, Admiration and Praise of the bright and burning **Seraphim**; Isaiah 6. 3. **One cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole Earth is full of his Glory.** And Revelation 4. 8. **They rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.** So the glorified Saints, Chapter 15. 4. **Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name, for thou only art Holy?**

And the Scriptures represent the Saints on Earth as adoring God primarily on this Account, and admiring and extolling all God's Attributes, either as deriving Loveliness from his Holiness, or as being a Part of it. Thus when they praise God for his Power, his Holiness is the Beauty that engages them; Psalm 98. 1. **O sing unto the Lord a new Song, for he hath done marvellous Things; his right Hand and his HOLY Arm hath gotten him the Victory.** So when they praise him for his Justice and terrible Majesty; Psalm 99. 2, 3. **The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all People: Let them praise thy great and terrible Name, for it is HOLY.** Verse 5. **Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his Footstool, for he is HOLY.** Verse 8, 9. **Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou**

tookest Vengeance of their Inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy Hill; for the Lord our God is HOLY. So when they praise God for his Mercy and Faithfulness; Psalm 97. 11. 12. **Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart. Rejoice in the Lord ye Righteous, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his HOLINESS.** 1 Samuel 2. 2. **There is none HOLY as the Lord; for there is none beside thee; neither is there any Rock like our God.**

By this therefore all may try their Affections, and particularly their Love and Joy. Various Kinds of Creatures show the Difference of their Natures, very much, in the different Things they relish as their proper Good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a Difference is there between true Saints, and natural Men: Natural Men have no Sense of the Goodness and Excellency of holy Things; at least for their Holiness; they have no Taste of that Kind of Good; and so may be said not to know that divine Good, or not to see it; it is wholly hid from them: But the Saints, by the mighty Power of God, have it discovered to them: They have that supernatural, most noble and divine Sense given them, by which they perceive it: And it is this that captivates their Hearts, and delights them above all Things; it is the most amiable and sweet Thing to the Heart of a true Saint, that is to be found in Heaven or Earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his Soul; and that wherein, above all Things, he places his Happiness, and which he counts upon for Solace and Entertainment to his Mind, in this World, and full Satisfaction and Blessedness in another. By this you may examine your Love to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to the Word of God, and your Joy in

them, and also your Love to the People of God, and your Desires after Heaven; whether they be from a supreme Delight in this Sort of Beauty, without being primarily moved from your imagined Interest in them, or Expectations from them. There are many high Affections, great seeming Love and rapturous Joys, which have nothing of this holy Relish belonging to them.

Particularly, By what has been said you may try your Discoveries of the Glory of God's Grace and Love, and your Affections arising from them. The Grace of God may appear lovely two Ways; either as **Bonum Utile**, a profitable Good to me, that which greatly serves my Interest, and so suits my Self-Love; or as **Bonum formosum**, a Beautiful Good in itself, and Part of the moral and spiritual Excellency of the divine Nature. In this latter Respect it is that the true Saints have their Hearts affected, and Love captivated by the free Grace of God in the first Place.

From the Things that have been said, it appears, that if Persons have a great Sense of the **natural** Perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other Sight or Sense of God, than that which consists in, or implies a Sense of the Beauty of his **moral** Perfections, it is no certain Sign of Grace: As particularly, Men's having a great Sense of the **awful Greatness, and terrible Majesty of God**; for this is only God's natural Perfection, and what Men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the Beauty of his moral Perfection, and have nothing of that spiritual Taste which relishes this divine Sweetness.

It has been shown already, in what was said upon the first distinguishing Mark of gracious Affections, that that which is spiritual, is entirely different in its Nature, from all that it is possible any graceless Person should be the Subject of, while he continues

graceless. But it is possible that those who are wholly without Grace, should have a clear Sight, and very great and affecting Sense of God's Greatness, his mighty Power, and awful Majesty; for this is what the Devils have, though they have lost the spiritual Knowledge of God, consisting in a Sense of the Amiability of his moral Perfections; they are perfectly destitute of any Sense or Relish of that Kind of Beauty, yet they have a very great Knowledge of the natural Glory of God (if I may so speak) or his awful Greatness and Majesty; this they behold, and are affected with the Apprehensions of, and therefore tremble before him. This Glory of God all shall behold at the Day of Judgment; God will make all rational Beings to behold it to a great Degree indeed, Angels and Devils, Saints and Sinners: He will manifest his infinite Greatness, and awful Majesty to every One, in a most open, clear and convincing Manner, and in a Light that none can resist, when **he shall come in the Glory of his Father, and every Eye shall see him**; when they shall cry to the Mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the Face of him that sits upon the Throne, they are represented as seeing the Glory of God's Majesty, **Isaiah** 2:10, 19, 21. God will make all his Enemies to behold this, and to live in a most clear and affecting View of it, in Hell, to all Eternity. God hath often declared his immutable Purpose to make all his Enemies to know him in this Respect, in so often annexing these Words to the Threatenings he denounces against them, **and they shall know that I am the Lord**; yea, he hath sworn that all Men shall see his Glory in this Respect; Numbers 14:21. **As truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord**. And this Kind of Manifestation of God is very often spoken of in Scripture, as made, or to be made, in the Sight of God's

Enemies in this World; **Exodus** 9:16 and Chapter 14:18 and 15:16 **Psalms** 66:3 and 46:10 and other Places innumerable. This was a Manifestation which God made of himself in the Sight of that wicked Congregation at Mount **Sinai**; and deeply affecting them with it; so that all the People in the Camp trembled. Wicked Men and Devils will see, and have a great Sense of every Thing that appertains to the Glory of God, but only the Beauty of his moral Perfection. They will see his infinite Greatness and Majesty, his infinite Power, and will be fully convinced of his Omniscience, and his Eternity and Immutability; and they will see and know every Thing appertaining to his moral Attributes themselves, but only the Beauty and Amiableness of them: They will see and know that he is perfectly just and righteous and true; and that he is a holy God, of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, who cannot look on Iniquity, and they will see the wonderful Manifestations of his infinite Goodness and free Grace to the Saints; and there is nothing will be hid from their Eyes, but only the **Beauty** of these moral Attributes, and that Beauty of the other Attributes, which arises from it. And so natural Men in this World are capable of having a very affecting Sense of every Thing else that appertains to God, but this only. **Nebuchadnezzar** had a great and very affecting Sense of the infinite Greatness and awful Majesty of God, of his supreme and absolute Dominion, and mighty and irresistible Power, and of his Sovereignty, and that he, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth were nothing before him; and also had a great Conviction in his Conscience of his Justice, and an affecting Sense of his great Goodness; **Daniel** 4:1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37. And the Sense that **Darius** had of God's Perfections, seems to be very much like his; **Daniel** 6:25 etc. But the Saints and Angels do behold the Glory of God

consisting in the **Beauty of his Holiness**: And it is this Sight only, that will melt and humble the Hearts of Men, and wean them from the World, and draw them to God, and effectually change them. A Sight of the awful Greatness of God, may overpower Men's Strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral Beauty of God be hid, the Enmity of the Heart will remain in its full Strength, no Love will be enkindled, all will not be effectual to gain the Will, but that will remain inflexible; whereas the first Glimpse of the moral and spiritual Glory of God shining into the Heart, produces all these Effects, as it were with omnipotent Power, which nothing can withstand.

The Sense that natural Men may have of the awful Greatness of God may affect them various Ways; it may not only terrify them, but it may elevate them and raise their Joy and Praise, as their Circumstances may be. This will be the natural Effect of it, under the real or supposed Receipt of some extraordinary Mercy from God, by the Influence of mere Principles of Nature. It has been shown already, that the Receipt of Kindness may, by the Influence of natural Principles, affect the Heart with Gratitude and Praise to God; but if a Person, at the same Time that he receives remarkable Kindness from God, has a Sense of his infinite Greatness, and that he is but Nothing in Comparison of him, surely this will naturally raise his Gratitude and Praise the higher, for Kindness to one so much inferior. A Sense of God's Greatness had this Effect upon **Nebuchadnezzar**, under the Receipt of that extraordinary Favour of his Restoration, after he had been driven from Men, and had his dwelling with the Beasts: A Sense of God's exceeding Greatness raises his Gratitude very high; so that he does, in the most lofty Terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the

World to do it with him: And much more, if a natural Man, at the same Time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite Greatness and Majesty, entertains a strong Notion that this great God has made him his Child and special Favorite, and promised him eternal Glory in his highest Love; will this have a Tendency, according to the Course of Nature, to raise his Joy and Praise to a great Height.

Therefore, it is beyond Doubt, that too much Weight has been laid, by many Persons of late, on Discoveries of God's Greatness, awful Majesty, and natural Perfection, operating after this Manner, without any real View of the holy, lovely Majesty of God. And Experience does abundantly witness to what Reason and Scripture declare as to this Matter; there having been very many Persons, who have seemed to be overpowered with the Greatness and awful Majesty of God, and consequentially elevated in the Manner that has been spoken of, who have been very far from having Appearances of a Christian Spirit and Temper, in any Manner of Proportion, or Fruits in Practice in any wise agreeable; but their Discoveries have worked in a way contrary to the Operation of truly spiritual Discoveries.

Not that a Sense of God's Greatness and natural Attributes is not exceedingly useful and necessary. For, as I observed before, this is implied in a Manifestation of the Beauty of God's Holiness. Though that be something beyond it, it supposes it, as the greater supposes the less. And though natural Men may have a Sense of the natural Perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the Saints, than with natural Men; and Grace tends to enable Men to see these Things in a better Manner,

than natural Men do. And not only enables them to see God's natural Attributes, but that Beauty of those Attributes, which (according to our Way of conceiving of God) is derived from his Holiness.

4. Gracious Affections do arise from the Mind's being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine Things.

Holy Affections are not Heat without Light; but evermore arise from some Information of the Understanding, some spiritual Instruction that the Mind receives, some Light or actual Knowledge. The Child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine Things than he did before, more of God or Christ and of the glorious Things exhibited in the Gospel; he has some clearer and better View than he had before, when he was not affected; Either he receives some Understanding of divine Things that is new to him; or has his former Knowledge renewed after the View was decayed; 1 John 4:7. **Every one that loveth, knoweth God.** Philippians 1:9. **I pray that your Love may abound more and more, in knowledge and in all Judgment.** Romans 10:2. **They have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge.** Colossians 3:10. **The new Man, which is renewed in Knowledge.** Psalms 43:3, 4. **O send out thy Light and thy Truth; let them lead me, let them bring me into thy holy Hill.** John 6:45. **It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God: Every Man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.** Knowledge is the Key that first opens the hard Heart and enlarges the Affections, and so opens the Way for Men into the Kingdom of Heaven; Luke 11:52. **You have taken away the Key of Knowledge.**

Now there are many Affections which do not arise from any Light in the Understanding. And when it is thus, it is a sure Evidence that these Affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high. Indeed they have some new Apprehensions which they had not before. Such is the Nature of Man, that it is impossible his Mind should be affected, unless it be by something that he apprehends, or that his Mind conceives of. But in many Persons these Apprehensions or Conceptions that they have, where with they are affected, have nothing of the Nature of Knowledge or Instruction in them. As for Instance; when a Person is affected with a lively Idea, suddenly excited in his Mind, of some Shape, or very beautiful pleasant Form of Countenance, or some shining Light, or other glorious outward Appearance: Here is something apprehended or conceived by the Mind; but there is nothing of the Nature of Instruction in it: Persons become never the wiser by such Things, or more knowing about God, or a Mediator between God and Man, or the Way of Salvation by Christ, or any Thing contained in any of the Doctrines of the Gospel. Persons by these external Ideas have no further Acquaintance with God, as to any of the Attributes or Perfections of his Natures; nor have they any further Understanding of his Word, or any of his Ways or Works. Truly spiritual and gracious Affections are not raised after this Manner: These arise from the enlightening of the Understanding to understand the Things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new Manner, the coming to a new Understanding of the excellent Nature of God, and his wonderful Perfections, some new View of Christ in his spiritual Excellencies and Fullness, or Things opened to him in a new Manner, that appertain to the Way of Salvation by Christ, whereby he now sees how it is, and understands those di-

vine and spiritual Doctrines which once were Foolishness to him. Such Enlightenings of the Understanding as these, are Things entirely different in their Nature, from strong Ideas of Shapes and Colours, and outward Brightness and Glory, or Sounds and Voices. That all gracious Affections do arise from some Instruction or Enlightening of the Understanding, is therefore a further Proof, that Affections which arise from such Impression on the Imagination, are not gracious Affections, besides the Things observed before, which make this evident.

Hence also it appears, that Affections arising from Texts of Scripture coming to the Mind are vain, when no Instruction received in the Understanding from those Texts, or any Thing taught in those Texts, is the Ground of the Affection, but the Manner of their coming to the Mind. When Christ makes the Scripture a Means of the Heart's burning with gracious Affection, it is **by opening the Scriptures to their Understandings**; Luke 24:32. **Did not our Heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the Way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?** It appears also that the Affection which is occasioned by the coming of a Text of Scripture must be vain, when the Affection is founded on something that is supposed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it, nor in any other Scripture; because such supposed Instruction is not real Instruction, but a Mistake, and Misapprehension of the Mind. As for Instance, when Persons suppose that they are expressly taught by some Scripture coming to their Minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, or that their Sins are forgiven, that God is their Father, and the like: This is a Mistake or Misapprehension; for the Scripture nowhere reveals the individual Persons who are beloved, ex-

pressly; but only by Consequence, by revealing the Qualifications of Persons that are beloved of God: And therefore this Matter is not to be learned from Scripture any other Way than by Consequence, and from these Qualifications: For Things are not to be **learned from** the Scripture any other Way than they are **taught in** the Scripture.

Affections really arise from Ignorance, rather than Instruction, in these Instances which have been mentioned; as likewise in some others that might be mentioned. As some when they find themselves free of Speech in Prayer, they call it God's being with them; and this affects them more; and so their Affections are set a going and increased: When they look not into the Cause of this Freedom of Speech; which may arise many other Ways besides God's spiritual Presence. So some are much affected with some apt Thoughts that come into their Minds about the Scripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. So they ascribe many of the Workings of their own Minds, which they have a high Opinion of, and are pleased and taken with, to the special immediate Influences of God's Spirit; and so are mightily affected with their Privilege. And there are some Instances of Persons, in whom it seems manifest that the first Ground of their Affection is some bodily Sensation. The animal Spirits, by some Cause, (and probably sometimes by the Devil) are suddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable Motion, causing Person to feel pleasantly in their Bodies; the animal Spirits are put into such a Motion as is accustomed to be connected with the Exhilaration of the Mind: and the Soul, by the Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, hence feels Pleasure. The Motion of the animal Spirits do not first arise from any Affection or Apprehension of the Mind whatsoever; but the very first Thing

that is felt, is an Exhilaration of the animal Spirits, and a pleasant external Sensation, it may be in their Breasts. Hence, through Ignorance, the Person being surprised, begins to think, surely this is the Holy Ghost coming into him. And then the Mind begins to be affected and raised: There is first great Joy; and then many other Affections, in a very tumultuous Manner, putting all Nature, both Body and Mind, into a mighty Ruffle: For though, as I observed before, it is the Soul only that is **the Seat of the Affections**; yet this hinders not but that bodily Sensations, may in this Manner, be **an Occasion of Affections** in the Mind.

And if Men's religious Affections do truly arise from some Instruction or Light in the Understanding; yet the Affection is not gracious, unless the Light which is the Ground of it be spiritual. Affections may be excited by that Understanding of Things, which they obtain merely by human Teaching, with the common Improvement of the Faculties of the Mind. Men may be much affected by Knowledge of Things of Religion that they obtain this Way; as some Philosophers have been mightily affected, and almost carried beyond themselves, by the Discoveries they have made in Mathematics and natural Philosophy. So Men may be much affected from common Illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God assists Men's Faculties to a greater Degree of that Kind of Understanding of religious Matters, which they have in some Degree, by only the ordinary Exercise and Improvement of their own Faculties. Such Illuminations may much affect the Mind; as in many whom we read of in Scripture, **that were once enlightened**: But these Affections are not spiritual.

There is such a Thing, if the Scriptures are of any Use to teach us any Thing, as a spiritual, supernatural Understanding of divine Things, that is peculiar to the Saints, and which those who are not Saints have nothing of. It is certainly a Kind of Understanding, apprehending or discerning or divine Things, that natural Men have nothing of, which the Apostle speaks of, 1 Corinthians 2:14. **But 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.** It is certainly a Kind of seeing or discerning spiritual Things, peculiar to the Saints, which is spoken of, 1 John 3:6. **Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.** 3 John 11. **He that doth Evil hath not seen God.** And John 6:40. **This is the Will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life.** Chapter 14:19. **The World seeth me no more; but ye see me.** Chapter 17:3. **This is eternal Life, that that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.** Matthew 11:27. **No Man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any Man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.** John 12:45. **He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.** Psalm 9:10. **They that know thy Name, will put their trust in thee.** Philippians 3:8. **I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.—.** Verse 10. **That I may know Him—.** And innumerable other Places there are, all over the Bible, which show the same. And that there is such a Thing as an Understanding of divine Things, which in its Nature and Kind is wholly different from all Knowledge that

natural Men have, is evident from this, that there is an Understanding of divine Things, which the Scripture calls spiritual Understanding; Colossians 1:9. **We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will, in all Wisdom, and spiritual Understanding.** It has been already shown, that that which is **spiritual**, in the ordinary Use of the Word in the New Testament, is entirely different in Nature and Kind, from all which natural Men are, or can be the Subjects of.

From hence it may be surely inferred, wherein spiritual Understanding consists. For if there be in the Saints a Kind of Apprehension or Perception, which is in its Nature, perfectly diverse from all that natural Men have, or that it is possible they should have, until they have a new Nature; it must consist in their having a certain Kind of Ideas or Sensations of Mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the Minds of natural Men. And that is the same Thing as to say, that it consists in the Sensations of a new spiritual Sense, which the Souls of natural Men have not; as is evident by what has been before, once and again observed. But I have already shown what that new spiritual Sense is, which the Saints have given them in Regeneration, and what is the Object of it. I have shown that the immediate Object of it is the supreme Beauty and Excellency of the Nature of divine Things, as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the Scripture: The Apostle very plainly teaches that the great Thing discovered by spiritual Light, and understood by spiritual Knowledge, is the Glory of divine Things, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. **But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of**

them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them: together with Verse 6. **For God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ:** And Chapter 3:18 preceding, **But we all, with open Face, beholding as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.** And it must needs be so, for as has been before observed, the Scripture often teaches that all true Religion summarily consists in the Love of divine Things. And therefore that Kind of Understanding or Knowledge, which is the proper Foundation of true Religion, must be the Knowledge of the **Loveliness of divine Things**. For doubtless, that Knowledge which is the proper Foundation of **Love**, is the Knowledge of **Loveliness**. What that Beauty or Loveliness of divine Things is, which is the proper and immediate Object of a spiritual Sense of Mind, was showed under the last Head insisted on, **namely** That it is the Beauty of their moral Perfection. Therefore it is in the View or Sense of this, that spiritual Understanding does more immediately and primarily consist. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing else; for (as has been shown) there is nothing pertaining to divine Things besides the Beauty of their moral Excellency, and those Properties and Qualities of divine Things which this Beauty is the Foundation of, but what natural Men and Devils can see and know, and will know fully and clearly to all Eternity.

From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this Conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual Understanding consists; **namely That it consists in a Sense of the Heart, of the supreme Beauty and Sweetness of the Holiness or moral Perfection of divine Things, together with all that Discerning and Knowledge of Things of Religion, that depends upon, and flows from such a Sense.**

Spiritual Understanding consists primarily in **a Sense of Heart of that spiritual Beauty.** I say, a **Sense of Heart**; for it is not Speculation merely that is concerned in this Kind of Understanding: Nor can there be a clear Distinction made between the two Faculties of Understanding and Will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this Matter. When the Mind is sensible of the sweet Beauty and Amiableness of a Thing, that implies a Sensibleness of Sweetness and Delight in the Presence of the Idea of it: And this Sensibleness of the Amiableness or Delightfulness of Beauty, carries in the very Nature of it, **the Sense of the Heart**; or an Effect and Impression the Soul is the Subject of, as a Substance possessed of Taste, Inclination and Will.

There is a Distinction to be made between a mere **notional Understanding**, wherein the Mind only beholds Things in the Exercise of a speculative Faculty; and **the Sense of the Heart**, wherein the Mind does not only **speculate** and **behold**, but **relishes** and **feels**. That Sort of Knowledge, by which a Man has a sensible Perception of Amiableness and Loathsomeness, or of Sweetness and Nauseousness, is not just the same Sort of Knowledge with that, by which he knows what a Triangle is, and what a Square is. The one is mere speculative Knowledge; the other sensible Knowledge, in which more than the mere Intellect is

concerned; the Heart is the proper Subject of it, or the Soul as a Being that not only Beholds, but has Inclination, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the Nature of Instruction in it; as he that has perceived the sweet Taste of Honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon and felt of it.

The Apostle seems to make a Distinction between mere speculative Knowledge of the Things of Religion, and spiritual Knowledge, in calling that **the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth**; Romans 2:20. **Which hast the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth in the Law.** The latter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting; 2 Corinthians 2:14. **Now Thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and maketh manifest the Savour of his Knowledge, in every Place.** Matthew 16:23. **Thou savourest not the Things that be of God, but Things that be of Men.** 1 Peter 2:2-3. **As new born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.** Canticles 1:3. **Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name** is as Ointment poured forth; **therefore do the Virgins love thee**; compared with 1 John 2:20. **But ye have an Unction from the holy One, and ye know all Things.**

Spiritual Understanding primarily consists in this **Sense, or Taste of the moral Beauty of divine Things**; so that no Knowledge can be called Spiritual, any further than it arises from this, and has this in it. But **secondarily**, it includes **all that Discerning and Knowledge of Things of Religion, which depends upon, and flows from such a Sense.**

When the true Beauty and Amiableness of the Holiness or true moral Good that is in divine Things, is discovered to the Soul, it as it were opens a new World to its View. This shows the Glory of all the Perfections of God, and of every Thing appertaining to the divine Being: For, as was observed before, the Beauty of all arises from God's moral Perfection. This shows the Glory of all God's Works, both of Creation and Providence: For it is the special Glory of them, that God's Holiness, Righteousness, Faithfulness and Goodness are so manifested in them; and without these moral Perfections, there would be no Glory in that Power and Skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral Perfections, is the special End of all the Works of God's Hands. By this Sense of the moral Beauty of divine Things, is understood the Sufficiency of Christ as a Mediator: For it is only by the Discovery of the Beauty of the moral Perfection of Christ, that the Believer is let into the Knowledge of the Excellency of his Person, so as to know any Thing more of it than the Devils do: And it is only by the Knowledge of the Excellency of Christ's Person, that any know his Sufficiency as a Mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the former. It is by seeing the Excellency of Christ's Person, that the Saints are made sensible of the Preciousness of his Blood, and its Sufficiency to atone for Sin: For therein consists the Preciousness of Christ's Blood, that it is the Blood of so excellent and amiable a Person. And on this depends the Meritoriousness of his Obedience, and Sufficiency and Prevalence of his Intercession. By this Sight of the moral Beauty of divine Things, is seen the Beauty of the Way of Salvation by Christ: For that consists in the Beauty of the moral Perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every Step of this Method of Salvation, from Beginning to

End. By this is seen the Fitness and Suitableness of this Way: For this wholly consults in its Tendency to deliver us from Sin and Hell, and to bring us to the Happiness which consists in the Possession and Enjoyment of moral Good, in a Way sweetly agreeing with God's moral Perfections. And in the Way's being contrived so as to attain these Ends, consists the excellent Wisdom of that Way. By this is seen the Excellency of the Word of God: Take away all the moral Beauty and Sweetness in the Word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead Letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless Thing. By this is seen the true Foundation of our Duty; the Worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honored, loved, submitted to, and served, as he requires of us, and the Amiableness of the Duties themselves that are required of us. And by this is seen the true Evil of Sin: For he who sees the Beauty of Holiness, must necessarily see the Hatefulness of Sin, its Contrary. By this Men understand the true Glory of Heaven, which consists in the Beauty and Happiness that is in Holiness. By this is seen the Amiableness and Happiness of both Saints and Angels. He that sees the Beauty of Holiness, or true moral Good, sees the greatest and most important Thing in the World, which is the Fullness of all Things, without which all the World is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worse than nothing. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen, that is worth the Seeing: For there is no other true Excellency or Beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood, that is worthy of the Exercise of the noble Faculty of Understanding. This is the Beauty of the Godhead, and the Divinity of Divinity, (if I may so speak) the Good of the infinite Fountain of Good; without which God himself (if that were possible to be) would be an infinite Evil: Without which, we ourselves had better never have been; and without which there

had better have been no Being. He therefore in Effect knows nothing, that knows not this: His Knowledge is but the Shadow of Knowledge, or the Form of Knowledge, as the Apostle calls it. Well therefore may the Scripture represent those who are destitute of that spiritual Sense, by which is perceived the Beauty of Holiness, as totally blind, deaf and senseless, yea dead. And well may Regeneration, in which this divine Sense is given to the Soul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind Eyes, and raising the Dead, and bringing a Person into a new World. For if what has been said be considered, it will be manifest, that when a Person has this Sense and Knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he **knew all Things after the Flesh, yet henceforth he will know them so no more; and he is become a new Creature, old Things are past away, behold all Things are become new;** agreeable to 2 **Corinthians** 5:16-17.

And besides the Things that have been already mentioned, there arises from this Sense of spiritual Beauty, all true experimental Knowledge of Religion; which is of itself, as it were a new World of Knowledge. He that sees not the Beauty of Holiness, knows not what one of the Graces of God's Spirit is; he is destitute of any Idea or Conception of all gracious Exercise of Soul, and all holy Comforts and Delights, and all Effects of the saving Influences of the Spirit of God on the Heart: And so is ignorant of the greatest Works of God, the most important and glorious Effects of his Power upon the Creature: And also is wholly ignorant of the Saints as Saints; he knows not what they are: And in Effect is ignorant of the whole spiritual World.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that spiritual supernatural Sense which has been spoken of, makes a great Change in a Man. And were it not for the very imperfect Degree, in which this Sense is commonly given at first, or the small Degree of this glorious Light that first dawns upon the Soul; the Change made by this spiritual Opening of the Eyes in Conversion, would be much greater, and more remarkable, every Way than if a Man, who had been born Blind, and with only the other four Senses, should continue so a long Time, and then at once should have the Sense of seeing imparted to him, in the midst of the clear Light of the Sun, discovering a World of visible Objects. For though Sight be more noble than any of the other external Senses; yet this spiritual Sense which has been spoken of, is infinitely more noble than that, or any other Principle of Discerning that a Man naturally has, and the Object of this Sense infinitely greater and more important.

This Sort of Understanding or Knowledge is that Knowledge of divine Things from whence all truly gracious Affections do proceed. By which therefore all Affections are to be tried. Those Affections that arise wholly from any other Kind of Knowledge, or do result from any other Kind of Apprehensions of Mind, are vain.

From what has been said may be learned wherein the most essential Difference lies between that Light or Understanding which is given by the common Influences of the Spirit of God, on the Hearts of natural Men, and that saving Instruction which is given to the Saints. The Latter primarily and most essentially lies in beholding the moral Beauty that is in divine Things; which is the only **true** moral Good, and which the Soul of fallen Man is by Nature totally blind to. The Former consists only in a further

Understanding, through the Assistance of natural Principles, of those Things which Men may know, in some Measure, by the alone ordinary Exercise of their Faculties. And this Knowledge consists only in the Knowledge of those Things pertaining to Religion, which are **natural**. Thus for Instance, In those Awakenings and Convictions of Conscience, that natural Men are often subject to, the Spirit of God gives no Knowledge of the true **moral** Beauty which is in divine Things; but only assists the Mind to a clearer Idea of the Guilt of Sin, or its Relation to a Punishment, and Connection with the **Evil of Suffering** (without any Sight of its true **moral** Evil, or Odiousness as Sin) and a clearer Idea of the **natural** Perfections of God, wherein consists, not his holy Beauty and Glory, but his awful and terrible Greatness. It is a clear Sight of this, that will fully awaken the Consciences of wicked Men at the Day of Judgment, **without any spiritual Light**. And it is a lesser Degree of the same, that awakens the Consciences of natural Men, **without spiritual Light**, in this World. The same Discoveries are in some Measure given in the Conscience of an awakened Sinner in this World, which will be given more fully in the Consciences of Sinners at the Day of Judgment. The same Kind of Sight or Apprehension of God, in a lesser Degree, makes awakened Sinners in this World, sensible of the dreadful Guilt of Sin; against so great and terrible a God, and sensible of its amazing Punishment, and fills them with fearful Apprehensions of divine Wrath; that will thoroughly convince all wicked Men, of the infinitely dreadful Nature and Guilt of Sin, and astonish them with Apprehensions of Wrath, when Christ shall come in the Glory of his Power and Majesty, and every Eye shall see him, and all the Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him. And in those com-

mon Illuminations, which are sometimes given to natural Men, exciting in them some Kind of religious Desire, Love and Joy, the Mind is only assisted to a clearer Apprehension of the **natural Good** that is in divine Things. Thus sometimes, under common Illuminations, Men are raised with the Ideas of the natural Good that is in Heaven; as its outward Glory, its Ease, its Honour and Advancement, a being there the Objects of the high Favour of God, and the great Respect of Men and Angels, **et cetera**. So there are many Things exhibited in the Gospel, concerning God and Christ, and the Way of Salvation, that have a **natural** Good in them, which suits the natural Principle of Self-love. Thus in that great Goodness of God to Sinners, and the wonderful dying Love of Christ, there is a natural Good, which all Men love, as they love themselves; as well as a spiritual and holy Beauty, which is seen only by the Regenerate. Therefore there are many Things appertaining to the Word of God's Grace delivered in the Gospel, which may cause natural Men, when they hear it, **anon with Joy to receive it**. All that Love which natural Men have to God, and Christ, and Christian Virtues, and good Men, is not from any Sight of the Amiableness of the Holiness, or true **moral** Excellency of these Things; but only for the sake of the **natural** Good there is in them. All natural Men's Hatred of Sin, is as much from Principles of Nature, as Men's Hatred of a Tiger for his Rapaciousness, or their Aversion to a Serpent for his Poison and Hurtfulness: And all their Love of Christian Virtue, is from no higher Principle than their Love of a Man's good Nature, which appears amiable to natural Men; but no otherwise than Silver and Gold appears amiable in the Eyes of a Merchant, or than the Blackness of the Soil is beautiful in the Eyes of the Farmer.

From what has been said of the Nature of spiritual Understanding, it appears that spiritual Understanding does not consist in any new doctrinal Knowledge, or in having suggested to the Mind any new Proposition, not before read or heard of: For it is plain that this suggesting of new Propositions, is a Thing entirely diverse from giving the Mind a new Taste or Relish of Beauty and Sweetness. It is also evident that spiritual Knowledge does not consist in any new doctrinal Explanation of any Part of the Scripture; for still, this is but doctrinal Knowledge, or the Knowledge of Propositions; the doctrinal explaining of any Part of Scripture, is only giving us to understand, what are the Propositions contained or taught in that Part of Scripture.

Hence it appears, that the **spiritual Understanding** of the Scripture, does not consist in opening to the Mind the mystical Meaning of the Scripture, in its Parables, Types and Allegories; for this is only a doctrinal Explication of the Scripture. He that explains what is meant by the stony Ground, and the Seed's springing up suddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what Propositions or Doctrines are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by **Jacob's** Ladder, and the Angels of God ascending and descending on it, or what was typified by **Joshua's** leading **Israel** through **Jordan**, only shows what Propositions are hid in these Passages. And many Men can explain these Types, who have no spiritual Knowledge. It is possible that a Man might know how to interpret all the Types, Parables, Enigmas, and Allegories in the Bible and not have one Beam of spiritual Light in his Mind; because he may not have the least Degree of that spiritual Sense of the holy Beauty of divine Things which has been spoken of, and may see nothing of this Kind of Glory in any Thing contained in

any of these Mysteries, or any other Part of the Scripture. It is plain, by what the Apostle says, that a Man might understand all such Mysteries, and have no saving Grace: 1 Corinthians 13:2. **And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.** They therefore are very foolish, who are exalted in an Opinion of their own spiritual Attainments, from Notions that come into their Minds, of the mythical Meaning of these and those Passages of Scripture, as though it was a spiritual Understanding of these Passages, immediately given them by the Spirit of God, and hence have their Affections highly raised: And what has been said shows the Vanity of such Affections.

From what has been said, it is also evident, that it is not spiritual Knowledge, for Persons to be informed of their Duty, by having it immediately suggested to their Minds, that such and such outward Actions or Deeds are the Will of God. If we suppose that it is truly God's Manner thus to signify his Will to his People, by immediate inward Suggestions, such Suggestions have nothing of the Nature of spiritual Light. Such Kind of Knowledge would only be one Kind of doctrinal Knowledge: A Proposition concerning the Will of God, is as properly a Doctrine of Religion, as a Proposition concerning the Nature of God, or a Work of God: And an having either of these Kinds of Propositions, or any other Proposition, declared to a Man, either by Speech, or inward Suggestion, differs vastly from an having the holy Beauty of divine Things manifested to the Soul, wherein spiritual Knowledge does most essentially consist. Thus there was no spiritual Light in **Balaam**; though he

had the Will of God immediately suggested to him by the Spirit of God from Time to Time, concerning the Way that he should go, and what he should do and say.

It is manifest therefore, that a being led and directed in this Manner, is not that holy and spiritual **Leading of the Spirit of God**, which is peculiar to the Saints, and a distinguishing Mark of the Sons of God, spoken of Romans 8:14. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.** Galatians 5:18. **But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law.**

And if Persons have the Will of God concerning their Actions, suggested to them by some Text of Scripture, suddenly and extraordinarily brought to their Minds, which Text, as the Words lay in the Bible before they came to their Minds, related to the Action and Behaviour of some other Person, but they suppose, as God sent the Words to them, he intended something further by them, and meant such a particular Action of theirs; I say, if Persons should have the Will of God thus suggested to them with Texts of Scripture, it alters not the Case. The Suggestion being accompanied with an apt Text of Scripture, does not make the Suggestion to be of the Nature of spiritual Instruction. As for Instance, If a Person in **New-England**, on some Occasion, were at a Loss whether it was his Duty to go into some popish or heathenish Land, where he was like to be exposed to many Difficulties and Dangers, and should pray to God that he would show him the Way of his Duty; and after earnest Prayer, should have those Words which God spake to **Jacob, Genesis 46.** suddenly and extraordinarily brought to his Mind, as it they were spoken to him; **Fear not to go down into Egypt; and I will go with thee; and I will also surely bring thee up again.** In which Words, though

as they lay in the Bible before they came to his Mind, they related only to **Jacob**, and his Behaviour; yet he supposes that God has a further Meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that thus they are to be understood in a new Sense, that by **Egypt** is to be understood this particular Country he has in his Mind, and that the Action intended is his going thither, and that the Meaning of the Promise is that God would bring him back into **New-England** again. There is nothing of the Nature of a spiritual or gracious Leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the Nature of spiritual Understanding in it. Thus to understand Texts of Scripture, is not to have a spiritual Understanding of them. Spiritually to understand the Scripture, is rightly to understand what **is in** the Scripture, and what **was in** it before it was understood: It is to understand rightly, what **used to be contained in** the Meaning of it; and not the making a new Meaning. When the Mind is enlightened spiritually and rightly to understand the Scripture, it is enabled to see That in the Scripture, which before was not seen, **by Reason of Blindness**. But if it was by Reason of Blindness; that is an Evidence that the same Meaning was in it before; otherwise it would have been no Blindness not to see it: It is no Blindness not to see a Meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the Eyes to understand the Scripture, is **to open the Eyes**, Psalm 119:18. **Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law**; which argues that the Reason why the same was not seen in the Scripture before, was that the Eyes were **shut**; which would not be the Case, if the Meaning that is now understood was not there before, but is now newly added to the Scripture, by the Manner of the Scripture's coming to my Mind. This making a new Meaning to the Scripture,

is the same Thing as making a new Scripture: It is properly adding to the Word; which is threatened with too dreadful a Curse. Spiritually to understand the Scripture, is to have the Eyes of the Mind opened, to behold the wonderful spiritual Excellency of the glorious Things contained in the true Meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever since it was written; to behold the amiable and bright Manifestation of the divine Perfections, and of the Excellency and Sufficiency of Christ, and the Excellency and Suitableness of the Way of Salvation by Christ, and the spiritual Glory of the Precepts and Promises of the Scripture, **et cetera**. Which Things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been seen before, if it had not been for Blindness, without having any new Sense added by the Words being sent by God to a particular Person, and spoken anew to him, with a new Meaning.

And as to a gracious **Leading of the Spirit**, it consists in two things; partly in **instructing** a person in his duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully **inducing** him to comply with that instruction. But so far as the gracious Leading of the Spirit lies in instruction, it consists in a person's being guided by a spiritual and distinguishing taste of that which has in it true moral beauty. I have shown that spiritual knowledge primarily consists in a taste or relish of the amiableness and beauty of that which is truly good and holy: this holy relish is a thing that discerns and distinguishes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a train of reasoning. As he who has a true relish of external beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking upon it: he stands in no need of a train of reasoning about the proportion of the features, in order to determine whether that which he sees be a beautiful countenance or not: he needs nothing, but only the

glance of his eye. He who has a rectified musical ear, knows whether the sound he hears be true harmony: he doesn't need first to be at the trouble of the reasonings of a mathematician, about the proportion of the notes. He that has a rectified palate, knows what is good food, as soon as he tastes it, without the reasoning of a physician about it. There is a holy beauty and sweetness in words and actions, as well as a natural beauty in countenances and sounds, and sweetness in food; Job 12:11. **Does not the ear try words, and the mouth taste his meat?** When a holy and amiable action is suggested to the thoughts of a holy soul; that soul, if in the lively exercise of its spiritual taste, at once sees a beauty in it, and so inclines to it, and closes with it. On the contrary, if an unworthy unholy action be suggested to it, its sanctified eye sees no beauty in it, and is not pleased with it; its sanctified taste relishes no sweetness in it, but on the contrary, it is nauseous to it. Yes, its holy taste and appetite leads it to think of that which is truly lovely, and naturally suggests it; as a healthy taste and appetite naturally suggests the idea of its proper object. Thus a holy person is led by the Spirit, as he is instructed and led by his holy taste, and disposition of heart; whereby, in the lively exercise of grace, he easily distinguishes good and evil, and knows at once, what is a suitable amiable behavior towards God, and towards man, in this case and the other; and judges what is right as it were spontaneously, and of himself, without a particular deduction, by any other arguments than the beauty that is seen, and goodness that is tasted. Thus Christ blames the **Pharisees**, that they **did not, even of their own selves, judge what was right**, without needing miracles to prove it, **Luke** 12:57. The Apostle seems plainly to have respect to this way of judging of spiritual beauty, in

Romans 12:2. **Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God.**

There is such a thing as **good Taste** of **natural** Beauty, (which learned men often speak of) that is exercised about **temporal** things, in judging of them; as about the justness of a speech, the goodness of style, the beauty of a poem, the gracefulness of deportment, **etc.** A late great philosopher of our nation, writes thus upon it. To have **a Taste**, is to give things their real value, to be touched with the good, to be shocked with the ill; not to be dazzled with false lustres, but in spite of all colors, and every thing that might deceive or amuse, to judge soundly. **Taste** and **Judgment** then, should be the same thing; and yet it is easy to discern a difference. The **Judgment** forms its opinions from reflection: the reason on this occasion fetches a kind of circuit, to arrive at its end; it supposes principles, it draws consequences, and it judges; but not without a thorough knowledge of the case; so that after it has pronounced, it is ready to render a reason of its decrees. **Good Taste** observes none of these formalities; before it has time to consult, it has taken its side; as soon as ever the object is presented it, the impression is made, the sentiment formed, ask no more of it. As the ear is wounded with a harsh sound, as the smell is soothed with an agreeable odor, before ever the reason has meddled with those objects to judge of them, so the **Taste** opens itself at once, and precedes all reflection. They may come afterwards to confirm it, and discover the secret reasons of its conduct; but it was not in its power to wait for them. Frequently it happens not to know them at all, and what pains soever it uses, cannot discover what it was that determined it to think as it did. This conduct is

very different from that the **Judgment** observes in its decisions: unless we choose to say, that **good Taste** is as it were a first motion, or a kind of instinct of right reason, which hurries on with rapidity, and conducts more securely, than all the reasonings she could make: it is a first glance of the eye, which discovers to us the nature and relations of things in a moment.

Now as there is such a kind of **Taste** of the mind as this, which philosophers speak of, whereby persons are guided in their judgment of the natural beauty, gracefulness, propriety, nobleness and excellency of speeches and actions, whereby they judge as it were by the glance of the eye, or by inward sensation, and the first impression of the object; so there is likewise such a thing as a **divine Taste**, given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of the saints, whereby they are in like manner led and guided in discerning and distinguishing the true spiritual and holy beauty of actions; and that more easily, readily and accurately, as they have more or less of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. And thus **the children of God are led by the Spirit of God, in their behavior in the world.**

A holy disposition and spiritual taste, where grace is strong and lively, will enable a soul to determine what actions are right and becoming Christians, not only more speedily, but far more exactly, than the greatest abilities without it. This may be illustrated by the manner in which some habits of mind, and dispositions of heart, of a nature inferior to true grace, will teach and guide a man in his actions. As for instance, if a man is a very good-natured man, his good nature will teach him better how to act benevolently amongst mankind, and will direct him, on every occasion, to these speeches and actions, which are agreeable to rules of goodness,

than the strongest reason will a man of a morose temper. So if a man's heart is under the influence of an entire friendship, and most endeared affection to another; though he is a man of an indifferent capacity, yet this habit of his mind will direct him, far more readily and exactly, to a speech and deportment, or manner of behavior, which shall in all respects be sweet and kind, and agreeable to a benevolent disposition of heart, than the greatest capacity without it. He has as it were a spirit within him, that guides him: the habit of his mind is attended with a taste, by which he immediately relishes that air and mien which is benevolent, and disrelishes the contrary, and causes him to distinguish between one and the other **in a moment**, more precisely, than the most accurate reasonings can find out **in many hours**. As the nature and inward tendency of a stone, or other heavy body, that is let fall from a loft, shows the way to the center of the earth, more exactly in an instant, than the ablest mathematician, without it, could determine, by his most accurate observations, in a whole day. Thus it is that a spiritual disposition and taste teaches and guides a man in his behavior in the world. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable disposition, will direct a person of mean capacity to such a behavior, as is agreeable to Christian rules of humility, meekness and charity, far more readily and precisely, than the most diligent study, and elaborate reasonings, of a man of the strongest faculties, who has not a Christian spirit within him. So also will a spirit of love to God, and holy fear and reverence towards God, and filial confidence in God, and an heavenly disposition, teach and guide a man in his behavior.

It is an exceedingly difficult thing for a wicked man, destitute of divine principles in his heart, to guide him, to know how to demean himself like a Christian, with the life, and beauty, and heavenly shine of a truly holy, humble, spirit. He knows not how to put on those garments; neither do they fit him; with Ecclesiastes verse 15. **The labor of the foolish wearies every one of them; because he knows not how to go to the city.** Proverbs 10:32. **The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable.** Chapter 15:2. **The tongue of the wise uses knowledge aright; but the mouth of fools pours out foolishness.** And Chapter 16:23. **The heart of the righteous teaches his mouth, and adds learning to his lips.**

The saints in thus judging of actions by a spiritual taste, have not a particular recourse to the express rules of God's Word, with respect to every word and action that is before them, the good or evil of which they thus judge of: but yet their taste itself in general, is subject to the rule of God's Word, and must be tried by that, and a right reasoning upon it. As a man of a rectified palate judges of particular meats by his taste: but yet his palate itself must be judged of, whether it be right or not, by certain rules and reasons. But a spiritual taste of soul, mightily helps the soul, in its reasonings on the Word of God, and in judging of the true meaning of its rules; as it removes the prejudices of a depraved appetite, and naturally leads the thoughts in the right channel, casts a light on the Word of God, and causes the true meaning, most naturally to come to mind, through the harmony there is between the disposition and relish of a sanctified soul, and the true meaning of the rules of God's Word. Yes, this harmony tends to bring the texts themselves to mind, on proper occasions; as the particular state of the stom-

ach and palate, tends to bring such particular meats and drinks to mind, as are agreeable to that state. Thus **the children of God are led by the Spirit of God** in judging of actions themselves, and in their meditations upon, and judging of, and applying the rules of God's holy Word: and so God **teaches them his statutes, and causes them to understand the way of his precepts**; which the Psalmist so often prays for.

But this leading of the Spirit is a thing exceedingly diverse from that which some call so; which consists not in teaching them God's statutes and precepts, that he has already given; but in giving them new precepts, by immediate inward speech or suggestion; and has in it no tasting the true excellency of things, or judging or discerning the nature of things at all. They do not determine what is the will of God by any taste or relish, or any manner of judgment of the nature of things, but by an immediate dictate concerning the thing to be done: there is no such thing as any judgment or wisdom in the case. Whereas in that leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's children, is imparted that true wisdom, and holy discretion, so often spoken of in the Word of God; which is high above the other way, as the stars are higher than a glow-worm; and that which **Balaam** and **Saul** (who sometimes were led by the Spirit in that other way) never had, and no natural man can have, without a change of nature.

What has been said of the Nature of spiritual Understanding, as consisting most essentially in a divine supernatural Sense and Relish of the Heart, not only shows that there is nothing of it in this falsely supposed **Leading of the Spirit**, which has been now spoken of; but also shows the Difference between spiritual Understanding, and all Kinds and Forms of Enthusiasm, all imagi-

nary Sights of God and Christ and Heaven, all supposed Witnessing of the Spirit, and Testimonies of the Love of God by immediate inward Suggestion; and all Impressions of future Events, and immediate Revelations of any secret Facts whatsoever; all enthusiastical Impressions and Applications of Words of Scripture, as though they were Words now immediately spoken by God to a particular Person, in a new Meaning, and carrying something more in them, than the Words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all Interpretations of the mystical Meaning of the Scripture, by supposed immediate Revelation. None of these Things consist in a divine Sense and Relish of the **Heart**, of the holy Beauty and Excellency of divine Things; nor have they any Thing to do with such a Sense; but all consist in Impressions in the **Head**; all are to be referred to the Head of **Impressions on the Imagination**, and consist in the exciting external Ideas in the Mind, either in Ideas of outward Shapes and Colors, or Words spoken, or Letters written, or Ideas of Things external and sensible, belonging to Actions done, or Events accomplished, or to be Accomplished. An enthusiastical supposed Manifestation of the Love of God, is made by the exciting an Idea of a smiling Countenance, or some other pleasant outward Appearance, or by the Idea of pleasant Words spoken, or written, excited in the Imagination, or some pleasant bodily Sensation. So when Persons have an imaginary Revelation of some secret Fact, it is by exciting external Ideas; either of some Words, implying a Declaration of that Fact, or some visible or sensible Circumstances of such a Fact. So the supposed Leading of the Spirit, to do the Will of God, in outward Behavior, is either by exciting the Idea of Words (which are outward Things) in their Minds, either the Words of Scripture,

or other Words, which they look upon as an immediate Command of God; or else by exciting and impressing strongly the Ideas of the outward Actions themselves. So when an Interpretation of a Scripture Type or Allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary Way, strongly suggested, it is by suggesting Words, as though one secretly whispered, and told the Meaning; or by exciting other Ideas in the Imagination.

Such Sort of Experiences and Discoveries as these commonly raise the Affections of such as are deluded by them, to a great Height, and make a mighty Uproar in both Soul and Body. And a very great Part of the false Religion that has been in the World, from one Age to another, consists in such Discoveries as these, and in the Affections that flow from them. In such Things consisted the Experiences of the ancient **Pythagoreans** among the Heathen, and many others among them, who had strange Ecstasies and Raptures, and pretended to a divine **Afflatus**, and immediate Revelations from Heaven. In such Things as these seem to have consisted the Experiences of the **Essenes**, an ancient Sect among the **Jews**, at, and after the Times of the Apostles. In such Things as these consisted the Experiences of many of the ancient **Gnostics**, and the **Montanists**, and many other Sects of ancient Heretics, in the primitive Ages of the Christian Church. And in such Things as these consisted the pretended immediate Converse, with God and Christ, and Saints and Angels of Heaven, of the **Monks**, **Anchorites**, and **Recluses**, that formerly abounded in the Church of **Rome**. In such Things consisted the pretended high Experiences, and great Spirituality of many Sects of Enthusiasts, that swarmed in the World after the Reformation; such as the **Anabaptists**, **Antinomians**, and **Familists**, the Followers of

Nicholas Stork, Thomas Muncer, John Becold, Henry Pfeifer, David George, Casper Swenckfield, Henry Nicolas, Johannes Agricola Eislebius; and the many wild Enthusiasts that were in **England** in the Days of **Oliver Cromwell**; and the Followers of Mistress **Hutchinson**, in **New-England**; as appears by the particular and large Accounts given of all these Sects, by that eminently holy Man, Mr. **Samuel Rutherford**, in his **Display of the spiritual Antichrist**. And in such Things as these consisted the Experiences of the late **French Prophets**, and their Followers. And in these Things seems to lie the Religion of the many Kinds of Enthusiasts of the present Day. It is by such Sort of Religion as this chiefly that **Satan** transforms himself into an Angel of Light: And it is that which he has ever most successfully made use of to confound hopeful and happy Revivals of Religion, from the Beginning of the Christian Church to this Day. When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious Work, then the old Serpent, as fast as possible, and by all Means introduces this Bastard Religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from Time to Time soon brought all Things into Confusion. The pernicious Consequence of it is not easily imagined or conceived of, until we see and are amazed with the awful Effects of it, and the dismal Desolation it has made. If the Revival of true Religion be very great in its Beginning, yet if this Bastard comes in, there is Danger of its doing as **Gideon's** Bastard **Abimelech** did, who never left until he had slain all his 70 true born Sons, excepting one, that was forced to flee. Great and strict therefore should be the Watch and Guard that Ministers maintain against such Things, especially at a Time of great Awakening: For Men, especially the common People, are easily be-

witched with such Things; they having such a glaring and glistening Show of high Religion; and the Devil hiding his own Shape, and appearing as an Angel of Light, that Men may not to be afraid of him, but many adore him.

The Imagination seems to be that wherein are formed all those Delusions of **Satan**, which those are carried away with, who are under the Influence of false Religion, and counterfeit Grace and Affections. Here is the Devil's grand Lurking-Place, the very Nest of foul and delusive Spirits. It is very much to be doubted whether the Devil can come at the Soul of Man, at all to affect it, or to excite any Thought or Motion, or produce any Effect whatsoever in it, any other Way, than by the Phantasy; which is that Power of the Soul, by which it receives, and is the Subject of the Species, or Ideas of outward and sensible Things. As to the Laws and Means which the Creator has established, for the Intercourse and Communication of unbodied Spirits, we know nothing about them; we do not know by what Medium they manifest their Thoughts to each other, or excite Thoughts in each other. But as to Spirits that are united to Bodies, those Bodies God has united them to, are their Medium of Communication: They have no other Medium of acting on other Creatures, or being acted on by them, than the Body. Therefore it is not to be supposed that **Satan** can excite any Thought, or produce any Effect in the Soul of Man, any otherwise, than by some Motion of the animal Spirits, or by causing some Motion or Alteration in something which appertains to the Body. There is this Reason to think that the Devil cannot produce Thoughts, in the Soul immediately, or any other Way, than by the medium of the Body, **namely** That he cannot immediately see or know the Thoughts of the Soul: It is abundantly declared in the

Scripture to be peculiar to the omniscient God to do that. But it is not likely that the Devil can **immediately produce** an Effect which is out of the Reach of his **immediate View**. It seems unreasonable to suppose that his immediate Agency, should be out of his own Sight, or that it should be impossible for him to see what he himself immediately does. Is it not unreasonable to suppose that any Spirit or intelligent Agent, should by the Act of his Will, produce Effects, according to his Understanding, or agreeable to his own Thoughts, and that immediately; and yet the Effects produced, be beyond the Reach of his Understanding, or where he can have no immediate Perception or Discerning at all? But if this be so, that the Devil cannot produce Thoughts in the Soul immediately, or any other Way than by the animal Spirits, or by the Body; then it follows, that he never brings to pass any thing in the Soul, but by the Imagination or Phantasy, or by exciting external Ideas. For we know that Alterations in the Body, do immediately excite no other Sort of Ideas in the Mind, but external Ideas, or Ideas of the outward Senses, or Ideas which are of the same outward Nature. As to Reflection, Abstraction, Reasoning, **et cetera** and those Thoughts and inward Motions which are the Fruits of these Acts of the Mind, they are not the next Effects of Impressions on the Body. So that it must be only by the Imagination, that **Satan** has Access to the Soul, to tempt and delude it, or suggest any Thing to it. And this seems to be the Reason why Persons that are under the Disease of Melancholy, are commonly so visibly and remarkably subject to the Suggestions and Temptations of **Satan**: That being a Disease which peculiarly affects the animal Spirits, and is attended with Weakness of that Part of the Body which is the Fountain of the animal Spirits, even the Brain, which is, as it

were, the Seat of the Phantasy. It is by Impressions made on the Brain, that any Ideas are excited in the Mind, by the Motion of the animal Spirits, or any Changes made in the Body. The Brain being thus weakened and diseased, it is less under the Command of the higher Faculties of the Soul, and yields the more easily to extrinsic Impressions, and is overpowered by the disordered Motions of the animal Spirits; and so the Devil has greater Advantage to affect the Mind, by working on the Imagination. And thus **Satan**, when he casts in those horrid Suggestions into the Minds of many melancholy Persons, in which they have no Hand themselves, he does it by exciting imaginary Ideas, either of some dreadful Words or Sentences, or other horrid outward Ideas. And when he tempts other Persons who are not melancholy, he does it by presenting to the Imagination, in a lively and alluring Manner, the Objects of their Lusts, or by exciting Ideas of Words, and so by them exciting Thoughts; or by promoting an Imagination of outward Actions, Events, Circumstances, **et cetera**. Innumerable are the Ways by which the Mind might be led on to all Kind of evil Thoughts, by exciting external Ideas in the Imagination.

If Persons keep no Guard at these Avenues of **Satan**, by which he has Access to the Soul, to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And especially, if instead of guarding against him, they lay themselves open to him, and seek and invite him, because he appears as an Angel of Light, and counterfeits the Illuminations and Graces of the Spirit of God, by inward Whispers, and immediate Suggestions of Facts and Events, pleasant Voices, beautiful Images, and other Impressions on the Imagination. There are many who are deluded by such Things, and are lifted up with them, and seek after them, that have a continued Course of

them, and can have them almost when they will; and especially when their Pride and Vain-glory has most Occasion for them, to make a Show of them before Company. It is with them, something as it is with those who are Professors of the Art of telling where lost Things are to be found, by Impressions made on their Imaginations; they laying themselves open to the Devil, he is always at Hand to give them the desired Impression.

Before I finish what I would say on this Head of Imaginations, counterfeiting spiritual Light, and Affections arising from them, I would renewedly (to prevent Misunderstanding of what has been said) desire it may be observed, that I am far from determining that no Affections are spiritual which are attended with imaginary Ideas. Such is the Nature of Man, that he can scarcely think of any Thing intensely, without some Kind of outward Ideas. They arise and interpose themselves unavoidably, in the Course of a Man's Thoughts; though oftentimes they are very confused, and are not what the Mind regards. When the Mind is much engaged, and the Thoughts intense, oftentimes the Imagination is more strong, and the outward Idea more lively; especially in Persons of some Constitutions of Body. But there is a great Difference between these two Things, **namely, Lively Imaginations arising from strong Affections, and Strong Affections arising from lively Imaginations.** The former may be, and doubtless often is, in Case of truly gracious Affections. The Affections do not arise from the Imagination, nor have any Dependence upon it; but on the contrary, the Imagination is only the accidental Effect, or Consequent of the Affection, through the Infirmary of human Nature. But when the latter is the Case, as it often is, that the Affection arises from the Imagination, and is built upon it, as its

Foundation, instead of a spiritual Illumination or Discovery; then is the Affection, however elevated, worthless and vain. And this is the Drift of what has been now said, of Impressions on the Imagination. Having observed this, I proceed to another Mark of gracious Affections.

5. Truly gracious Affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual Conviction of the Judgment, of the Reality and Certainty of divine Things.

This seems to be implied in the Text that was laid as the Foundation of this Discourse, **Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet BELIEVING, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.**

All those who are truly gracious Persons have a solid, full, thorough and effectual Conviction of the Truth of the great Things of the Gospel. I mean that they no longer halt between two Opinions, the great Doctrines of the Gospel cease to be any longer doubtful Things, or Matters of Opinion, which, though probable, are yet disputable; but with them, they are Points settled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their All upon their Truth. Their Conviction is an **effectual** Conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious, and invisible Things of the Gospel, have the **Influence** of real and certain Things upon them; they have the **Weight** and **Power** of real Things in their Hearts; and accordingly rule in their Affections, and govern them through the Course of their Lives. With Respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, and the great Things he has revealed concerning Himself, and his Father, and another World, they have not only a predominating Opinion that these Things are true, and so yield their Assent, as they do in

many other Matters of doubtful Speculation; but they **see that it is really so**: Their Eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as to the Things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal Purposes and Designs, concerning fallen Man, and the glorious and everlasting Things prepared for the Saints in another World, they see that they are so indeed: And therefore these Things are of great Weight with them, and have a mighty Power upon their Hearts, and Influence over their Practice, in some Measure answerable to their infinite Importance.

That all true Christians have such a Kind of Conviction of the Truth of the Things of the Gospel, is abundantly manifest from the holy Scriptures. I will mention a few Places of many; Matthew 16:15, 16, 17. **But whom say ye that I am?** Simon Peter **answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, blessed art thou** Simon Bar-jona:—**my Father which is in Heaven, hath revealed it unto thee.** John 6:68, 69. **Thou hast the Words of eternal Life: And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.** John 17:6, 7, 8. **I have manifested thy Name to the Men which thou gavest me out of the World. —Now they have known that all Things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: For I have given unto them, the Words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me.** Acts 8:37. **If thou believest with all thy Heart, thou mayest.** 2 Corinthians 4:11, 12, 13, 14. **We which live, are always delivered unto Death, for Jesus sake:—**

Death worketh in us;—we having the Spirit of Faith; according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak: Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. Together with Verse 16. For which Cause, we faint not. And Verse 18. while we look not at the Things which are seen, etc. And Chapter 5:1. For we know that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God,—And Verse 6, 7, 8. Therefore we are always confident; knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord: For we walk by Faith, not by Sight; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord. 2 Timothy 1:12. For the which Cause, I also suffer these Things: Nevertheless, I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that Day. Hebrews 3:6. Whose House are we, if we hold fast the Confidence, and the Rejoicing of the Hope, firm unto the End. Hebrews 11:1. Now Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen: Together with that whole Chapter. 1 John 4:13, 14, 15, 16. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us; because he hath given us of his Spirit; and we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us. Chapter 5:4, 5.

For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World: And this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith. Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Therefore truly gracious Affections are attended with such a Kind of Conviction and Persuasion of the Truth of the Things of the Gospel, and Sight of their Evidence and Reality, as these and other Scriptures speak of.

There are many religious Affections, which are not attended with such a Conviction of the Judgment. There are many Apprehensions and Ideas which some have, that they call divine Discoveries, which are affecting, but not convincing. Though for a little while, they may seem to be more persuaded of the Truth of the Things of Religion, than they used to be, and may yield a forward Assent, like many of Christ's Hearers, who believed for a while; yet they have no thorough and effectual Conviction; nor is there any great abiding Change in them, in this Respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great Things of the Gospel, now these Things, with Regard to Reality and Certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them quite in another View than they used to do. There are many Persons who have been exceedingly raised with religious Affections, and think they have been converted, they do not go about the World any more convinced of the Truth of the Gospel, than they used to be; or at least, there is no remarkable Alteration: They are not Men who live under the Influence and Power of a realizing Conviction of the infinite and eternal Things which the Gospel reveals: If they were, it would be impossible for them to live as they do. Because their Affections are not attended with a thorough Conviction of the

Mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a Show and Noise they make, it is like the Blaze of Tow, or Crackling of Thorns, or like the forward flourishing Blade on stony Ground, that has no Root, nor Deepness of Earth to maintain its Life.

Some Persons, under high Affections, and a confident Persuasion of their good Estate, have that, which they very ignorantly call a Seeing the Truth of the Word of God, and which is very far from it, after this Manner; they have some Text of Scripture coming to their Minds, in a sudden and extraordinary Manner, immediately declaring to them (as they suppose) that their Sins are forgiven or that God loves them, and will save them; and it may be have a Chain of Scriptures coming one after another, to the same Purpose; and they are convinced that it is Truth; **that is** they are confident that it is certainly so, that their Sins are forgiven, and God does love them, **etc.**—; they say they know it is so; and when the Words of Scripture are suggested to them, and as they suppose immediately spoken to them by God, in this Meaning, they are ready to cry out, **Truth, Truth! It is certainly so! The Word of God is true!** And this they call a Seeing the Truth of the Word of God. Whereas the Whole of their Faith amounts to no more, than only a strong Confidence of their own good Estate, and so a Confidence that those Words are true, which they suppose tell them they are in a good Estate: When indeed (as was shown before) there is no Scripture which declares that any Person is in a good Estate directly, or any other Way than by Consequence. So that this, instead of being a real Sight of the Word of God, is a Sight of nothing but a Phantom, and is all over a Delusion. Truly to see the Truth of the Word of God, is to see the Truth of the Gospel; which is the glorious Doctrine the Word of

God contains, concerning God, and Jesus Christ, and the Way of Salvation by him, and the World of Glory that he is entered into, and purchased for all them who believe; and not a Revelation that such and such particular Persons are true Christians, and shall go to Heaven. Therefore those Affections which arise from no other Persuasion of the Truth of the Word of God than this, arise from Delusion, and not true Conviction; and consequently are themselves delusive and vain.

But if the religious Affections that Persons have, do indeed arise from a strong Persuasion of the Truth of the Christian Religion; their Affections are not the better, unless their Persuasion be a **reasonable** Persuasion or Conviction. By a reasonable Conviction, I mean a Conviction founded on real Evidence, or upon that which is a good Reason, or just Ground of Conviction. Men may have a strong Persuasion that the Christian Religion is true, when their Persuasion is not at all built on Evidence, but altogether on Education, and the Opinion of others; as many **Mahometans** are strongly persuaded of the Truth of the **Mahometan** Religion, because their Fathers, and Neighbours, and Nation believe it. That Belief of the Truth of the Christian Religion which is built on the very same Grounds, with **Mahometans** Belief of the **Mahometan** Religion, is the same Sort of Belief. And though the Thing believed happens to be better; yet That does not make the Belief it self, to be of a better Sort: For though the Thing believed happens to be true; yet the Belief of it is not owing to this Truth, but to Education. So that as the Conviction is no better than the **Mahometans** Conviction; so the Affections that flow from it, are no better, in themselves, than the religious Affections of **Mahometans**.

But if that belief of Christian doctrines, which persons' affections arise from, be not merely from education, but indeed from reasons and arguments which are offered, it will not from thence necessarily follow, that their affections are truly gracious: For in order to that, it is requisite, not only that the belief which their affections arise from, should be a **reasonable**, but also a **spiritual** belief or conviction. I suppose none will doubt but that some natural men do yield a kind of assent of their judgments to the truth of the Christian religion, from the rational proofs or arguments that are offered to evince it. **Judas**, without doubt, thought **Jesus** to be the **Messiah**, from the things which he saw and heard; but yet all along was a devil. So in **John** 2:23, 24, 25, we read of **many that believed in Christ's Name, when they saw the miracles that He did**; whom yet Christ knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So **Simon the Sorcerer** believed, when he beheld the miracles and signs which were done; but yet remained **in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity**, Acts 8:13, 23. And if there is such a belief or assent of the judgment in some natural men, none can doubt but that religious affections may arise from that assent or belief; as we read of some who **believed for a while**, that were greatly affected, and **anon, with joy received the word**.

It is evident that there is such a thing as a **spiritual** belief or conviction of the truth of the things of the Gospel, or a belief that is peculiar to those who are spiritual, or who are regenerated, and have the Spirit of God, in His holy communications, and dwelling in them as a vital principle. So that the conviction they have, does not only differ from that which natural men have, in its concomitants, in that it is accompanied with good works; but the belief it-

self is diverse, the assent and conviction of the judgment is of a kind peculiar to those who are spiritual, and that which natural men are wholly destitute of. This is evident by the Scripture, if anything at all is so; John 17:8. **They have believed that Thou didst send Me.** Titus 1:1: **According to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness.** John 16:27: **The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God.** 1 John 4:15: **Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.** Chapter 5:1: **Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.** Verse 10: **He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.**

What a **spiritual conviction** of the judgment is, we are naturally led to determine from what has been said already, under the former head of a **spiritual understanding**. The conviction of the judgment arises from the illumination of the understanding: The passing of a right judgment on things, depends on an having a right apprehension or idea of things. And therefore it follows, that a spiritual conviction of the truth of the great things of the Gospel, is such a conviction, as arises from having a spiritual view or apprehension of those things in the mind. And this is also evident from the Scripture, which often represents, that a saving belief of the reality and divinity of the things proposed and exhibited to us in the Gospel, is from the Spirit of God's enlightening the mind, to have right apprehensions of the nature of those things, and so as it were unveiling things, or revealing them, and enabling the mind to view them and see them as they are: Luke 10:21, 22. **I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast**

HID these things from the wise and prudent, and hast REVEALED them unto babes: Even so [Father], for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father; and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will REVEAL Him. John 6:40: And this is the will of Him that sent Me; that every one that SEETH the Son, and BELIEVETH on Him, may have everlasting life. Where it is plain, that true faith arises from a spiritual sight of Christ. And John 17:6, 7, 8: **I have MANIFESTED Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world—Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me, are of Thee; for I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them, and known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.** Where Christ's manifesting God's name to the disciples, or giving them a true apprehension and view of divine things, was that whereby they knew that Christ's doctrine was of God, and that Christ Himself was of Him, and was sent by Him. Matthew 16:16, 17: Simon Peter **said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not REVEALED it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.** 1 John 5:10: **He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.** Galatians 1:14, 15, 16: **Being more exceedingly [zealous] of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called**

me by His grace, to REVEAL His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

If it be so, that that is a spiritual conviction of the divinity and reality of the things exhibited in the Gospel, which arises from a spiritual understanding of those things; I have shown already what that is, **namely**, a sense and taste of the divine, supreme and holy excellency and beauty of those things. So that then is the mind spiritually convinced of the divinity and truth of the great things of the Gospel, when that conviction arises, either directly or remotely, from such a sense or view of their divine excellency and glory as is there exhibited. This clearly follows from things that have been already said; and for this the Scripture is very plain and express. 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4, 5, 6: **But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that BELIEVE not, lest the light of the GLORIOUS GOSPEL of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD, in the face of Jesus Christ.** Together with the last verse of the foregoing chapter, which introduces this: **But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass, the GLORY OF THE LORD are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.** Nothing can be more

evident than that a saving belief of the Gospel, is here spoken of, by the Apostle, as arising from the mind's being enlightened, to behold the divine glory of the things it exhibits.

This view or sense of the divine glory, and unparalleled beauty of the things exhibited to us in the Gospel, has a tendency to convince the mind of their divinity, two ways; **directly**; and more **indirectly**, and **remotely**. 1. A view of this divine glory **directly**, convinces the mind of the divinity of these things, as this glory is in itself a direct, clear, and all-conquering evidence of it; especially when clearly discovered, or when this supernatural sense is given in a good degree.

He that has his judgment thus **directly** convinced and assured of the divinity of the things of the Gospel, by a clear view of their divine glory, has a **reasonable** conviction; his belief and assurance is altogether agreeable to reason; because the divine glory and beauty of divine things is in itself, real evidence of their divinity, and the most direct and strong evidence. He that truly sees the divine, transcendent, supreme glory of those things which are divine, does as it were know their divinity intuitively; he not only argues that they are divine, but he sees that they are divine; he sees that in them wherein divinity chiefly consists; for in this glory, which is so vastly and inexpressibly distinguished from the glory of artificial things, and all other glory, does mainly consist the true notion of divinity: God is God, and distinguished from all other beings, and exalted above them, chiefly by His divine beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other beauty. They therefore that see the stamp of this glory in divine things, they see divinity in them, they see God in them, and so see them to be divine; because they see that in them wherein the truest idea of divinity does consist.

Thus a soul may have a kind of intuitive knowledge of the divinity of the things exhibited in the Gospel; not that he judges the doctrines of the Gospel to be from God, without any argument or deduction at all; but it is without any long chain of arguments; the argument is but one, and the evidence direct; the mind ascends to the truth of the Gospel but by one step, and that is its divine glory.

It would be very strange, if any professing Christian should deny it to be possible that there should be an Excellency in divine Things, which is so transcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other Things, that if it were seen, would evidently distinguish them. We cannot rationally doubt, but that Things that are **divine**, that appertain to the supreme Being, are vastly different from Things that are **human**; that there is a god-like, high, and glorious Excellency in them, that does so distinguish them from the Things which are of Men, that the Difference is ineffable; and therefore such, as, if seen, will have a most convincing, satisfying Influence upon any one, that they are what they are, **namely** divine. Doubtless there is that Glory and Excellency in the divine Being, by which he is so infinitely distinguished from all other Beings, that if it were seen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreasonable to deny that it is possible for God, to give Manifestations of this distinguishing Excellency, in Things by which he is pleased to make himself known; and that this distinguishing Excellency may be clearly seen in them. There are **natural** Excellencies that are very evidently distinguishing of the Subjects or Authors, to any one who beholds them. How is the Speech of an understanding Man different from that of a little Child! And how greatly distinguished is the Speech of some Men of great Genius, as **Homer, Cicero, Milton, Locke, Addison,**

and others, from that of many other understanding Men! There are no Limits to be set to the Degrees of Manifestation of mental Excellency, that there may be in Speech. But the Appearances of the **natural** Perfections of God, in the Manifestations he makes of himself, may doubtless be unspeakably more evidently distinguishing, than the Appearances of those Excellencies of Worms of the Dust, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with Mankind, and their Works, by viewing the Sun, may know it is no human Work. And it is reasonable to suppose, that when Christ comes at the End of the World, in the Glory of his Father, it will be with such ineffable Appearances of Divinity, as will leave no Doubt to the Inhabitants of the World, even the most obstinate Infidels, that he who appears is a divine Person. But above all, do the Manifestations of the **moral** and **spiritual** Glory of the divine Being (which is the proper Beauty of the Divinity) bring their own Evidence, and tend to assure the Heart. Thus the Disciples were assured that Jesus was the Son of God, for **they beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth**, John 1:14. When Christ appeared in the Glory of his Transfiguration to his Disciples, with that outward Glory, to their bodily Eyes, which was a sweet and admirable Symbol and Semblance of his spiritual Glory, together with his spiritual Glory itself, manifested to their Minds; the Manifestation of Glory was such, as did perfectly, and with good Reason, assure them of his Divinity; as appears by what one of them, **namely** the Apostle **Peter**, says concerning it, 2 Peter 1:16, 17, 18. **For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eye-witnesses of his**

Majesty: For he received from God the Father, Honor and Glory; when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this Voice which came from Heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount. The Apostle calls that Mount, **the holy Mount**, because the Manifestations of Christ which were there made to their Minds, and which their Minds were especially impressed and ravished with, was the Glory of his **Holiness**, or the Beauty of his **moral Excellency**; or, as another of these Disciples, who saw it, expresses it, **His Glory**, as **full of Grace and Truth**.

Now this distinguishing Glory of the divine Being has its brightest Appearance and Manifestation, in the Things proposed and exhibited to us in the Gospel, the Doctrines there taught, the Word there spoken, and the divine Counsels, Acts and Works there revealed. These Things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing Representations and Exhibitions of the Glory of God's moral Perfections, that ever were made to the World. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential Manifestation of divine Glory in the Gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be such a Thing as Seeing it: What should hinder but that it may be seen? It is no Argument that it cannot be seen, that some do not see it; though they may be discerning Men in temporal Matters. If there be such ineffable, distinguishing, evidential Excellencies in the Gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special Influence and Enlightenings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon Force of Mind to discern the distinguishing Excellencies of the Works of Authors of great Genius: Those Things in **Milton**, which to mean Judges, ap-

pear tasteless and Imperfections, are his inimitable Excellencies in the Eyes of those who are of greater Discerning, and better Taste. And if there be a Book, which God is the Author of, it is most reasonable to suppose that the distinguishing Glories of his Word are of such a Kind, as that the Sin and Corruption of Men's Hearts, which above all Things alienates Men from the Deity, and makes the Heart dull and stupid to any Sense or Taste of those Things wherein the moral Glory of the divine Perfections consists; I say, it is but reasonable to suppose, that this would blind Men from discerning the Beauties of such a Book; and that therefore they will not see them, but as God is pleased to enlighten them, and restore an holy Taste, to discern and relish divine Beauties.

This Sense of the spiritual Excellency and Beauty of divine Things, does also tend **directly** to convince the Mind of the Truth of the Gospel, as there are very many of the most important Things declared in the Gospel, that are hid from the Eyes of natural Men, the Truth of which does in Effect consist in this Excellency, or does so immediately depend upon it and result from it; that in this Excellency's being seen, the Truth of those Things is seen. As soon as ever the Eyes are opened to behold the holy Beauty and Amiableness that is in divine Things, a Multitude of most important Doctrines of the Gospel, that depend upon it, (which all appear strange and dark to natural Men) are at once seen to be true. As for Instance, hereby appears the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning the exceeding Evil of Sin; for the same Eye that discerns the transcendent Beauty of Holiness, necessarily therein sees the exceeding Odiousness of Sin: The same Taste which relishes the Sweetness of true moral Good, tastes the Bitterness of moral Evil. And by this Means a Man sees his own

Sinfulness and Loathsomeness; for he has now a Sense to discern Objects of this Nature; and so sees the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning the exceeding Sinfulness of Mankind, which before he did not see. He now sees the dreadful Pollution of his Heart, and the desperate Depravity of his Nature, in a new Manner; for his Soul has now a Sense given it to feel the Pain of such a Disease: And this shows him the Truth of what the Scripture reveals concerning the Corruption of Man's Nature, his original Sin, and the ruinous undone Condition Man is in, and his need of a Savior, his need of the mighty Power of God to renew his Heart and change his Nature. Men by seeing the true Excellency of Holiness, do see the Glory of all those Things, which both Reason and Scripture show to be in the divine Being; for it has been shown that the Glory of them depends on this: And hereby they see the Truth of all that the Scripture declares concerning God's glorious Excellency and Majesty, his being the Fountain of all Good, the only Happiness of the Creature, etc. And this again shows the Mind the Truth of what the Scripture teaches concerning the Evil of Sin against so glorious a God; and also the Truth of what it teaches concerning Sin's just Desert of that dreadful Punishment which it reveals; and also concerning the Impossibility of our offering any Satisfaction, or sufficient Atonement, for that which is so infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shows the Truth of what the Scripture reveals concerning the Necessity of a Savior, to offer an Atonement of infinite Value for Sin. And this Sense of spiritual Beauty that has been spoken of, enables the Soul to see the Glory of those Things which the Gospel reveals concerning the Person of Christ; and so enables to see the exceeding Beauty and Dignity of his Person, appearing in what the Gospel exhibits of his Word,

Works, Acts and Life: And this Apprehension of the superlative Dignity of his Person, shows the Truth of what the Gospel declares concerning the Value of his Blood and Righteousness, and so the infinite Excellency of the Offering he has made to God for us, and so its Sufficiency to atone for our Sins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God discovers the Way of Salvation by Christ: Thus the Soul sees the Fitness and Suitableness of this Way of Salvation, the admirable Wisdom of the Contrivance, and the perfect Answerableness of the Provision that the Gospel exhibits, (as made for us) to our Necessities. A Sense of true divine Beauty being given to the Soul, the Soul discerns the Beauty of every Part of the Gospel Scheme. This also shows the Soul the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning Man's chief Happiness, as consisting in holy Exercises and Enjoyments. This shows the Truth of what the Gospel declares concerning the unspeakable Glory of the heavenly State. And what the Prophecies of the old Testament, and the Writings of the Apostles declare concerning the Glory of the Messiah's Kingdom, is now all plain; and also what the Scripture teaches concerning the Reasons and Grounds of our Duty. The Truth of all these Things revealed in the Scripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appear to the Soul, only by imparting that spiritual Taste of divine Beauty, which has been spoken of. They being hidden Things to the Soul before.

And besides all this, the Truth of all those Things which the Scripture says about experimental Religion, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the Soul that one who knew the Heart of Man, better than we know our own Hearts, and perfectly knew the Nature of Virtue and Holiness, was the Author of the Scriptures. And the opening to View, with such

Clearness, such a World of wonderful and glorious Truth in the Gospel, that before was unknown, being quite above the View of a natural Man, but now appearing so clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible Influence on the Soul, to persuade of the Divinity of the Gospel.

Unless Men may come to a reasonable solid Persuasion and Conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, by the internal Evidences of it, in the Way that has been spoken, **namely** By a Sight of its Glory; it is impossible that those who are illiterate, and unacquainted with History, should have any thorough and effectual Conviction of it at all. They may without this, see a great deal of Probability of it; it may be reasonable for them to give much Credit to what learned Men, and Historians tell them; and they may tell them so much, that it may look very probable and rational to them, that the Christian Religion is true; and so much that they would be very unreasonable not to entertain this Opinion. But to have a Conviction, so clear, and evident, and assuring, as to be sufficient to induce them, with Boldness, to sell all, confidently and fearlessly to run the Venture of the Loss of all Things, and of enduring the most exquisite and long-continued Torments, and to trample the World under Foot, and count all Things but Dung, for Christ; the Evidence they can have from History, cannot be sufficient. It is impossible that Men, who have not something of a general View of the historical World, or the Series of History from Age to Age, should come at the Force of Arguments for the Truth of Christianity, drawn from History, to that Degree, as effectually to induce them to venture their all upon it. After all that learned Men have said to them, there will remain innumerable Doubts on their Minds: They will be ready, when pinched with some great Trial of

their Faith, to say, How do I know this, or that? How do I know when these Histories were written? Learned Men tell me these Histories were so and so attested in the Day of them; but how do I know that there were such Attestations then? They tell me there is equal Reason to believe these Facts, as any whatsoever that are related at such a Distance; but how do I know that other Facts which are related of those Ages, ever were? Those who have not something of a general View of the Series of historical Events, and of the State of Mankind from Age to Age, cannot see the clear Evidence from History, of the Truth of Facts, in distant Ages; but there will endless Doubts and Scruples remain.

But the Gospel was not given only for learned Men. There are at least Nineteen in Twenty, if not Ninety-nine in an Hundred, of those for whom the Scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual Conviction of the divine Authority of the Scriptures, by such Arguments as learned Men make use of. If Men who have been brought up in Heathenism must wait for a clear and certain Conviction of the Truth of Christianity, until they have Learning and Acquaintance with the History of Ages enough to see clearly the Force of such Kind of Arguments: it will make the Evidence of the Gospel, to them, immensely difficult, and will render the Propagation of the Gospel among them infinitely difficult. Miserable is the Condition of the **Heathens**, and others who have lately manifested a Desire to be instructed in Christianity: if they can come at no Evidence of the Truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in no other Way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided for his People, no more than probable Evidences of the Truth of the Gospel. He has with great Care, abundantly provided, and given

them, the most convincing, assuring, satisfying and manifold Evidence of his Faithfulness in the Covenant of Grace; and as **David** says, **made a Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure.** Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same Time, he would not fail of ordering the Matter so, that there should not be wanting, as great, and clear Evidence, **that this is his Covenant,** and that these Promises are his Promises; or which is the same Thing, that the Christian Religion is true, and that the Gospel is his Word. Otherwise in vain are those great Assurances he has given of his Faithfulness in his Covenant, by confirming it with his Oath, and so variously establishing it by Seals and Pledges. For the Evidence that it is his Covenant, is properly the Foundation on which all the Force and Effect of those other Assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some Sort of Evidence which God has given, that this Covenant, and these Promises are his, beyond all mere Probability; that there are some Grounds of Assurance of it held forth, which, if we are not blind to them, tend to give an higher Persuasion, than any arguing from History, human Tradition, **etcetera** which the Illiterate, and Unacquainted with History, are capable of; yea, that which is good Ground of the highest and most perfect Assurance, that Mankind have in any Case whatsoever; agreeable to those high Expressions which the Apostle uses, Hebrews 10:22. **Let us draw near in FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH.** And Colossians 2:2. **That their Hearts might be comforted, being knit together in Love, and unto ALL RICHES, OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God and of the Father, and of Christ.** It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest

Evidence, of those Things which are greatest, and the Truth of which is of greatest Importance to us: And that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest Desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect Assurance of. But it is certain, that such an Assurance is not to be attained, by the greater Part of them who live under the Gospel, by Arguments drawn from ancient Traditions, Histories, and Monuments.

And if we come to Fact and Experience, there is not the least Reason to suppose, that One in an Hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a Heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their Conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, this Way. If we read over the Histories of the many Thousands that died Martyrs for Christ, since the Beginning of the Reformation, and have cheerfully undergone extreme Tortures, in a Confidence of the Truth of the Gospel, and consider their Circumstances and Advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured Persuasion, this Way; or for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an Assurance, from such Arguments! Many of them were weak Women and Children, and the greater Part of them illiterate Persons, many of whom had been brought up in Popish Ignorance and Darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in Times, wherein those Arguments for the Truth of Christianity from Antiquity and History, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, it is but very lately that these Arguments have been set in a clear and convincing Light, even by learned Men themselves: And since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough Believers, among those who have been edu-

cated in the true Religion: Infidelity never prevailed so much, in any Age, as in this, wherein these Arguments are handled to the greatest Advantage.

The true Martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in Opinion that the Gospel of Christ is true, but **those that have seen the Truth of it**; as the very Name of Martyrs or Witnesses (by which they are called in Scripture) implies. Those are very improperly called Witnesses of the Truth of any Thing, who only declare they are very much of Opinion that such a Thing is true. Those only are proper Witnesses who can, and do testify that they have seen the Truth of the Thing they assert; John 3:11. **We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.** John 1:34. **And I saw, and bear Record, that this is the Son of God.** 1 John 4:14. **And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son, to be the Saviour of the World.** Acts 22:14-15. **The God of our Fathers hath chosen you, that you should know his Will, and see that just One, and should hear the Voice of his Mouth: For you shall be his Witness unto all Men, of what you have seen and heard.** But the true Martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his Witnesses: and all the Saints, who by their holy Practice under great Trials, declare that Faith, **which is the SUBSTANCE of Things hoped for, and the EVIDENCE of Things not seen**, are called Witnesses; **Hebrews** 11:1 and 12:1 because by their Profession and Practice, they declare their Assurance of the Truth and Divinity of the Gospel, having had the Eyes of their Minds enlightened, to see Divinity in the Gospel, or to behold that unparalleled, ineffably excellent, and truly divine Glory shining in it, which is altogether distinguishing, evidential, and convincing: So that they may truly be said to have

seen God in it, and to have seen that it is indeed divine: And so can speak in the Style of Witnesses: and not only say, that **they think** the Gospel is divine, but say, that **it is divine**, giving it in as their Testimony, because they have seen it to be so. Doubtless **Peter, James, and John**, after they had seen that excellent Glory of Christ in the Mount, would have been ready, when they came down, to speak in the Language of Witnesses, and to say positively that **Jesus is the Son of God**; as **Peter** says, **they were Eye-witnesses**, 2 Peter 1:16. And so all Nations will be ready positively to say this, when they shall behold his Glory at the Day of Judgment; though what will be universally seen, will be only his natural Glory, and not his moral and spiritual Glory, which is much more distinguishing. But yet, it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual Sight of the divine Glory of the Gospel, there is a great Variety of Degrees of Strength of Faith, as there is a vast Variety of the Degrees of Clearness of Views of this Glory: But there is no true and saving Faith, or spiritual Conviction of the Judgment, of the Truth of the Gospel, that has nothing in it, of this Manifestation of its internal Evidence, in some Degree. The Gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad a begging for its Evidence, so much as some think; it has its highest and most proper Evidence in itself. Though great Use may be made of external Arguments, they are not to be neglected, but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly serviceable to awaken Unbelievers, and bring them to serious Consideration, and to confirm the Faith of true Saints: Yea they may be in some Respects subservient **to the begetting** of a saving Faith in Men. Though what was said before remains true, that there is no spiritual Conviction of the Judgment, but what arises from an Apprehension of the spiritual

Beauty and Glory of divine Things: For, as has been observed, this Apprehension or View has a Tendency to convince the Mind of the Truth of the Gospel, two Ways, either directly or indirectly. Having therefore already observed how it does this directly, I proceed now

2. To observe how a View of this divine Glory does convince the Mind of the Truth of Christianity, more indirectly.

First, It does so as the Prejudices of the Heart against the Truth of divine Things are hereby removed, so that the Mind thereby is open to the Force of the Reasons which are offered. The Mind of Man is naturally full of Enmity against the Doctrines of the Gospel; which is a Disadvantage to those Arguments that prove their Truth, and causes them to lose their Force upon the Mind: But when a Person has discovered to him the divine Excellency of Christian Doctrines, this destroys that Enmity, and removes the Prejudices, and sanctifies the Reason, and causes it to be open and free. Hence is a vast Difference, as to the Force that Arguments have to convince the Mind. Hence was the very different Effect, which Christ's Miracles had to convince the **Disciples**, from what they had to convince the **Scribes** and **Pharisees**: Not that they had a stronger Reason, or had their Reason more improved; but their Reason was sanctified, and those blinding Prejudices, which the **Scribes** and **Pharisees** were under, were removed, by the Sense they had of the Excellency of Christ and his Doctrine.

Secondly, It not only removes the hindrances of reason, but positively helps reason. It makes even the speculative notions more lively. It assists and engages the attention of the mind to that kind of objects which causes it to have a clearer view of them, and more clearly to see their mutual relations. The ideas themselves, which otherwise are dim and obscure, by this means have a light

cast upon them, and are impressed with greater strength; so that the mind can better judge of them, as he that beholds the objects on the face of the earth, when the light of the sun is cast upon them, is under greater advantage to discern them, in their true forms, and mutual relations, and to see the evidences of divine wisdom and skill in their contrivance, than he that sees them in a dim starlight, or twilight.

What has been said, may serve in some measure to show the nature of a spiritual conviction of the judgment of the truth and reality of divine things; and so to distinguish truly gracious affections from others; for gracious affections are evermore attended with such a conviction of the judgment.

But before I dismiss this head, it will be needful to observe the ways whereby some are deceived, with respect to this matter; and take notice of several things, that are sometimes taken for a spiritual and saving belief of the truth of the things of religion, which are indeed very diverse from it.

1. There is a degree of conviction of the truth of the great things of religion, that arises from the common enlightenings of the Spirit of God. That more lively and sensible apprehension of the things of religion, with respect to what is **natural** in them, such as natural men have who are under awakenings and common illuminations, will give some degree of conviction of the truth of divine things, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For hereby they see the manifestations there are, in the revelation made in the holy Scriptures, and things exhibited in that revelation, of the natural perfections of God, such as his greatness, power, and awful majesty; which tends to convince the mind, that this is the word of a great and terrible God. From the tokens there

are of God's greatness and majesty in his word and works, which they have a great sense of, from the common influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater conviction that these are indeed the word and works of a very great invisible being. And the lively apprehension of the greatness of God, which natural men may have, tends to make them sensible of the great guilt, which sin against such a God brings, and the dreadfulness of his wrath for sin. And this tends to cause them more easily and fully to believe the revelation the Scripture makes of another world, and of the extreme misery it threatens, there to be inflicted on sinners. And so from that sense of the great natural good there is in the things of religion, which is sometimes given in common illuminations, men may be the more induced to believe the truth of religion. These things persons may have, and yet have no sense of the beauty and amiableness of the moral and holy excellency that is in the things of religion; and therefore no spiritual conviction of their truth. But yet such convictions are sometimes mistaken, for saving convictions, and the affections flowing from them, for saving affections.

2. The extraordinary impressions which are made on the imaginations of some persons, in the visions, and immediate strong impulses and suggestions that they have, as though they saw sights, and had words spoken to them, may, and often do beget a strong persuasion of the truth of invisible things. Though the general tendency of such things, in their final issue, is to draw men off from the Word of God, and to cause them to reject the Gospel, and to establish unbelief and atheism; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident persuasion of the truth of some things that are revealed in the Scriptures; however their confidence is founded in delusion, and so nothing worth. As for instance, if a

person has by some invisible agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his imagination, the appearance of a bright light, and glorious form of a person seated on a throne, with great external majesty and beauty, uttering some remarkable words, with great force and energy; the person who is the subject of such an operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible agents, spiritual beings from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no hand himself in this extraordinary effect, which he has experienced: And he may also be confident that this is Christ, whom he saw and heard speaking: And this may make him confident that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a throne in heaven, as he saw him; and may be confident that the words which he heard him speak are true, **etc.** In the same manner, as the lying miracles of the papists, may for the present, beget in the minds of the ignorant deluded people, a strong persuasion of the truth of many things declared in the New Testament. Thus when the images of Christ, in popish churches, are on some extraordinary occasions, made by priestcraft to appear to the people as if they wept, and shed fresh blood, and moved, and uttered such and such words; the people may be verily persuaded that it is a miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that what they are told of his death and sufferings, and resurrection, and ascension, and present government of the world is true; for they may look upon this miracle, as a certain evidence of all these things, and a kind of ocular demonstration of them. This may be the influence of these lying wonders for the present; though the general tendency of them is not to convince that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but finally to promote atheism. Even the intercourse which **Satan** has with witches, and their often ex-

perienicing his immediate power, has a tendency to convince them of the truth of some of the doctrines of religion; as particularly the reality of an invisible world, or world of spirits, contrary to the doctrine of the **Sadducees**. The general tendency of **Satan's** influences is delusion: But yet he may mix some truth with his lies, that his lies may not be so easily discovered.

There are multitudes that are deluded with a counterfeit faith, from impressions on their imagination, in the manner which has been now spoken of. They say they know that there is a God, for they have seen him; they know that Christ is the Son of God, for they have seen him in his glory; they know that Christ died for sinners, for they have seen him hanging on the cross, and his blood running from his wounds; they know there is a heaven and a hell, for they have seen the misery of the damned souls in hell, and the glory of saints and angels in heaven, (meaning some external representations, strongly impressed on their imagination;) they know that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and that such and such promises in particular, are his word, for they have heard him speak them to them, they came to their minds suddenly and immediately from God, without their having any hand in it.

3. Persons may seem to have their belief of the truth of the things of religion greatly increased, when the foundation of it is only a persuasion they have received, of their interest in them. They first, by some means or other, take up a confidence that, if there be a Christ and heaven, they are theirs; and this prejudices them more in favor of the truth of them. When they hear of the great and glorious things of religion, it is with this notion, that all these things belong to them; and hence easily become confident that they are true: They look upon it to be greatly for their interest

that they should be true. It is very obvious what a strong influence men's interest and inclinations have on their judgments. While a natural man thinks that, if there be a heaven and hell; the latter, and not the former, belongs to him; then he will be hardly persuaded that there is a heaven or hell: But when he comes to be persuaded, that hell belongs only to other folks, and not to him; then he can easily allow the reality of hell, and cry out of others' senselessness and sottishness in neglecting means of escape from it: And being confident that he is a child of God, and that God has promised heaven to him, he may seem strong in the faith of its reality, and may have a great zeal against that infidelity which denies it.

But I proceed to another distinguishing sign of gracious affections.

6. Gracious affections are attended with **evangelical humiliation**.

Evangelical humiliation is a sense that a Christian has of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness, with an answerable frame of heart.

There is a distinction to be made between a **legal** and **evangelical** humiliation. The former is what men may be the subjects of, while they are yet in a state of nature, and have no gracious affection; the latter is peculiar to true saints: The former is from the common influence of the Spirit of God, assisting natural principles, and especially natural conscience; the latter is from the special influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exercising supernatural and divine principles: The former is from the mind's being assisted to a greater sense of the things of religion, as to their

natural properties and qualities, and particularly of the natural perfections of God, such as his greatness, terrible majesty, **etc.** which were manifested to the congregation of **Israel**, in giving the law at Mount **Sinai**; the latter is from a sense of the transcendent beauty of divine things in their moral qualities: In the former a sense of the awful greatness, and natural perfections of God, and of the strictness of his law, convinces men that they are exceeding sinful, and guilty, and exposed to the wrath of God, as it will wicked men and devils at the day of judgment; but they do not see their own **odiousness** on the account of sin; they do not see the hateful nature of sin; a sense of this is given in **evangelical humiliation**, by a discovery of the beauty of God's holiness and moral perfection. In a **legal humiliation**, men are made sensible that they are little and nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly insufficient to help themselves; as wicked men will be at the day of judgment: But they have not **an answerable frame of heart**, consisting in a disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone: This disposition is given only in evangelical humiliation, by overcoming the heart, and changing its inclination, by a discovery of God's holy beauty: In a legal humiliation, the conscience is convinced; as the consciences of all will be most perfectly at the day of judgment: but because there is no spiritual understanding, the will is not bowed, nor the inclination altered: This is done only in evangelical humiliation. In legal humiliation men are brought to despair of helping themselves; in evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themselves: In the former they are subdued and forced to the ground; in the latter, they are brought sweetly to yield, and freely and with delight to prostrate themselves at the feet of God.

Legal humiliation has in it no spiritual good, nothing of the nature of true virtue; whereas evangelical humiliation is that wherein the excellent beauty of Christian grace does very much consist. Legal humiliation is useful, as a means in order to evangelical; as a common knowledge of the things of religion is a means requisite in order to spiritual knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no **humility**; as the wicked at the day of judgment will be thoroughly convinced that they have no righteousness, but are altogether sinful, and exceeding guilty, and justly exposed to eternal damnation, and be fully sensible of their own helplessness, without the least mortification of the pride of their hearts: But the essence of evangelical humiliation consists in such **humility**, as becomes a creature, in itself exceeding sinful, under a dispensation of grace; consisting in a mean esteem of himself, as in himself nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a mortification of a disposition to exalt himself, and a free renunciation of his own glory.

This is a great and most essential Thing in true Religion. The whole Frame of the Gospel, and every Thing appertaining to the new Covenant, and all God's Dispensations towards fallen Man, are calculated to bring to pass this Effect in the Hearts of Men. They that are destitute of this, have no true Religion, whatever Profession they may make, and how high soever their religious Affections may be. Habakkuk 2:4. **Behold, his Soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the Just shall live by his Faith:** that is, He shall live by his Faith on God's Righteousness and Grace, and not his own Goodness and Excellency. God has abundantly manifested in his Word, that This is what he has a peculiar Respect to in his Saints, and that nothing

is acceptable to him without it. Psalm 34:18. **The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit.** Psalm 51:17. **The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.** Psalm 138:6. **Though the Lord be High, he hath Respect unto the Lowly.** Proverbs 3:34. **He giveth Grace unto the lowly.** Isaiah 57:15. **Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones.** Isaiah 66:1, 2. **Thus saith the Lord, the Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my footstool:—But to this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word.** Micah 6:8. **He hath shown thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?** Matthew 5:3. **Blessed are the poor in Spirit: For theirs is the Kingdom of God.** Matthew 18:3, 4. **Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.** Mark 10:15. **Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, he shall not enter therein.** The Centurion, that we have an Account of Luke 7, acknowledged that **he was not worthy that Christ should enter under his Roof,** and that **he was not worthy to come to him.** See the

Manner of the Woman's coming to Christ that was a Sinner, Luke 7:37, etc. **And behold a Woman in the City which was a Sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at Meat in the Pharisee's House, brought an Alabaster-Box of Ointment, and stood at his Feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his Feet with her Tears, and did wipe them with the Hairs of her Head.** She did not think the Hair of her Head, which is the natural Crown and Glory of a Woman, (1 **Corinthians** 11:15.) too good to wipe the Feet of Christ withal. Jesus most graciously accepted her, and said to her, **Thy Faith hath saved thee, go in Peace.** The Woman of **Canaan** submitted to Christ, in his saying, **It is not meet to take the Children's Bread, and to cast it to Dogs,** and did as it were own that she was worthy to be called a Dog, whereupon Christ said unto her, **O Woman, great is thy Faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.** Matthew 15:26, 27. The **Prodigal Son** said, **I will arise and go to my Father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy it be called thy Son; make me as one of thy hired Servants,** Luke 15:18, etc. See also Luke 18:9. etc. **And he spoke this Parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were Righteous, and despised others,** etc.—The **Publican** standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his Breast, saying, **God be merciful to me a Sinner.** I tell you, **this Man went down to his House justified, rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.** Matthew 23:12. **And they came, and held him by the Feet,**

and worshipped him. Colossians 3:12. **Put ye on, as the Elect of God,—Humbleness of Mind.** Ezekiel 20:41, 43. **I will accept you with your sweet Savour, when I bring you out from the People, etc.—And there shall ye remember your Ways, and all your Doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own Sight, for all your Evils that ye have committed.** Chapter 36:26, 27, 31. **A new Heart also will I give unto you,—and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, etc.—Then shall ye remember your own evil Ways, and your Doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own Sight, for your Iniquities, and for your Abominations.** Chapter 16:63. **That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more, because of thy Shame; when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.** Job 42:6. **I abhor myself, and repent in Dust and Ashes.**

As we would therefore make the holy Scriptures our Rule, in judging of the Nature of true Religion, and judging of our own religious Qualifications and State; it concerns us greatly to look at this Humiliation, as one of the most essential Things pertaining to true Christianity. This is the principal Part of the great Christian Duty of **Self-denial**: That Duty consists in two Things, **namely First**, In a Man's denying his worldly Inclinations, and in forsaking and renouncing all worldly Objects and Enjoyments; and **Secondly**, In denying his natural Self-exaltation, and renouncing his own Dignity and Glory, and in being emptied of himself; so that he does freely, and from his very Heart, as it were renounce himself, and annihilate himself. Thus the Christian does, in evangelical

Humiliation. And this Latter is the greatest and most difficult Part of Self-denial: Although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural Men can come much nearer to the Former than the Latter. Many **Anchorites** and **Recluses** have abandoned (though without any true Mortification) the Wealth, and Pleasures, and common Enjoyments of the World, who were far from renouncing their own Dignity and Righteousness; they never denied themselves for Christ, but only sold one Lust to feed another, sold a beastly Lust to pamper a devilish One; and so were never the better, but their latter End was worse than their Beginning; they turned out one black Devil, to let in seven white ones, that were worse than the first, though of a fairer Countenance. It is inexpressible, and almost inconceivable, how strong a self-righteous, self-exalting Disposition is naturally in Man; and what he will not do and suffer, to feed and gratify it; and what Lengths have been gone in a seeming Self-denial in other Respects, by **Essenes** and **Pharisees** among the **Jews**, and by **Papists**, many Sects of Heretics, and Enthusiasts, among professing Christians; and by many **Mahometans**; and by **Pythagorean** Philosophers, and others, among the Heathen: And all to do Sacrifice to this **Moloch** of spiritual Pride or Self-righteousness; and that they may have Something wherein to exalt themselves before God, and above their Fellow-creatures.

That Humiliation which has been spoken of, is what all the most glorious Hypocrites, who make the most splendid Show of Mortification to the World, and high religious Affection, do grossly fail in. Were it not that this is so much insisted on in Scripture, as a most essential Thing in true Grace; one would be tempted to think

that many of the Heathen Philosophers were truly gracious, in whom was so bright an Appearance of many Virtues, and also great Illuminations, and inward Fervors and Elevations of Mind, as though they were truly the Subjects of divine Illapses and heavenly Communications.

It is true that many Hypocrites make great Pretenses to Humility, as well as other Graces; and very often there is nothing whatsoever which they make a higher Profession of. They endeavor to make a great Show of Humility in Speech and Behavior; but they commonly make bungling Work of it; though glorious Work in their own Eyes. They cannot find out what a humble Speech and Behavior is, or how to speak and act so that there may indeed be a Savor of Christian Humility in what they say and do: That sweet humble Air and Mien is beyond their Art, being not **led by the Spirit**, or naturally guided to a Behavior becoming holy Humility, by the Vigor of a lowly Spirit within them. And therefore they have no other Way, many of them, but only to be much in declaring that they be humble, and telling how they were humbled to the Dust at such and such Times, and abounding in very bad Expressions which they use about themselves; such as, **I am the least of all Saints, I am a poor vile Creature, I am not worthy of the least Mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked Heart! my Heart is worse than the Devil! Oh, this cursed Heart of mine**, etc. Such Expressions are very often used, not with a Heart that is broken, not with spiritual Mourning, not with the Tears of her that washed Jesus' Feet with her Tears, not as **remembering and being confounded, and never opening their Mouth more, because of their Shame, when God is pacified**, as the

Expression is, Ezekiel 16:63. But with a light Air, with Smiles in the Countenance, or with a pharisaical Affectation: And we must believe that they are thus humble, and making themselves so vile, upon the Credit of their **Say-so**; for there is nothing appears in them of any Savor or Humility, in the Manner of their Deportment and Deeds that they do. There are many that are full of Expressions of their own Vileness, who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright Saints by others, as their due; and it is dangerous for any, so much as to hint the Contrary, or to carry it towards them any otherwise, than as if we looked upon them some of the chief of Christians. There are many that are much in crying out of their wicked Hearts, and then great Short-comings, and Unprofitableness, and speaking as though they looked on themselves as the meanest of the Saints; who yet, if a Minister should seriously tell them the same Things in private, and should signify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians, and thought they had Reason solemnly to consider of their great defects, and Unprofitableness, and falling so much short of many others; it would be more than they could digest: they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be Danger of a rooted Prejudice in them against such a Minister.

There are some that are abundant in talking against **legal doctrines, legal preaching**, and a **legal spirit**, who do but little understand the thing they talk against. A **legal spirit** is a more subtle thing than they imagine; it is too subtle for them. It lurks, and operates, and prevails in their hearts, and they are most notoriously guilty of it, at the same time, when they are inveighing against it. So far as a man is not emptied of himself, and of his own righteousness and goodness, in whatever form or shape, so far he

is of a **legal spirit**. A spirit of pride of a man's own righteousness, morality, holiness, affection, experience, faith, humiliation, or any goodness whatsoever, is a legal spirit. It was no pride in **Adam** before the Fall, to be of a legal spirit: because of his circumstances, he might seek acceptance by his own righteousness. But a legal spirit in a fallen sinful creature, can be nothing else but spiritual pride; and reciprocally, a spiritually proud spirit is a legal spirit. There is no man living that is lifted up with a conceit of his own experiences and discoveries, and upon the account of them glistens in his own eyes, but what trusts in his experiences, and makes a righteousness of them; however he may use humble terms, and speak of his experiences as of the **great things God has done for him**, and it may be calls upon others to glorify God for them; yet he that is proud of his experiences, arrogates something to himself, as though his experiences were some dignity of his. And if he looks on them as his own dignity, he necessarily thinks that God looks on them so too; for he necessarily thinks his own opinion of them to be true; and consequently judges that God looks on them as he does; and so unavoidably imagines that God looks on his experiences as a dignity in him, as he looks on them himself; and that he glistens as much in God's eyes, as he does in his own. And thus he trusts in what is inherent in him, to make him shine in God's sight, and recommend him to God: and with this encouragement he goes before God in prayer; and this makes him expect much from God; and this makes him think that Christ loves him, and that he is willing to clothe him with his righteousness; because he supposes that he is taken with his experiences and graces. And this is a high degree of living on his own righteousness; and such persons are in the high road to Hell. Poor deluded wretches, who

think they look so glistening in God's eyes, when they are a smoke in his nose, and are many of them more odious to him, than the most impure beast in **Sodom**, that makes no pretence to religion! To do as these do, is to **live upon experiences**, according to the true notion of it; and not to do as those, who only make use of spiritual experiences, as evidences of a state of grace, and in that way receive hope and comfort from them.

There is a sort of men, who indeed abundantly cry down works, and cry up faith in opposition to works, and set up themselves very much as evangelical persons, in opposition to those that are of a legal spirit, and make a fair show of advancing Christ and the Gospel, and the way of free grace; who are indeed some of the greatest enemies to the Gospel way of free grace, and the most dangerous opposers of pure humble Christianity.

There is a pretended great humiliation, and being dead to the law, and emptied of self, which is one of the biggest and most elated things in the world. Some there are, who have made great profession of experience of a thorough work of the law on their own hearts, and of being brought fully off from works; whose conversation has favored most of a self-righteous spirit, of any that ever I had opportunity to observe. And some who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, and are confident that they are abased in the dust, are full as they can hold with the glory of their own humility, and lifted up to Heaven with an high opinion of their abasement. Their humility is a swelling, self-conceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming humility. It seems to be the nature of spiritual pride to make men conceited and ostentatious of their humility. This appears in that first-born of pride, among the children of men, that would be called **His Holiness**, even the Man of Sin,

that exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshipped; he styles himself **Servant of Servants**; and to make a show of humility, washes the feet of a number of poor men at his inauguration.

For persons to be truly emptied of themselves, and to be poor in spirit, and broken in heart, is quite another thing, and has other effects, than many imagine. It is astonishing how greatly many are deceived about themselves as to this matter, imagining themselves most humble, when they are most proud, and their behavior is really the most haughty. The deceitfulness of the heart of man appears in no one thing so much, as this of spiritual pride and self-righteousness. The subtlety of Satan appears in its height in his managing of persons with respect to this sin. And perhaps one reason may be, that here he has most experience: He knows the way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the secret springs of it; it was his own sin. Experience gives vast advantage in leading souls, either in good or evil.

But though spiritual pride be so subtle and secret an iniquity, and commonly appears under a pretext of great humility; yet there are two things by which it may (perhaps universally and surely) be discovered and distinguished.

The **first** thing is this; He that is under the prevalence of this distemper, is apt to think highly of his attainments in religion, as comparing himself with others. It is natural for him to fall into that thought of himself, that he is an eminent saint, that he is very high amongst the saints, and has distinguishingly clear and great experiences. That is the secret language of his heart. Luke 18:11. **God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men.** And Isaiah 65:5. **I am holier than thou.** Hence such are apt to put themselves for-

ward among God's people, and as it were to take place above them, as if there was no doubt of it but it belonged to them. They, as it were, naturally do that which Christ forbids, Luke 14:7, etc., take the highest room. This they do, by taking upon them the place and office of the guides to direct and manage; They are confident that they are a light of them which are in darkness, instructors of babes, Romans 2:19-20. It is natural for them to take it for granted, that it belongs to them to do the teaching and matters in matters of religion; and so they love to be called of men Rabbi, which is by interpretation Master, as the **Pharisees** did, Matthew 23:6, etc. They are expecting that others should regard them, and yield to them, as masters in matters of religion.

But he whose heart is under the power of Christian humility, is of a contrary disposition. If the Scriptures are at all to be relied on, such an one is apt to think his attainments in religion to be comparatively mean, and to esteem himself low among the saints, and one of the least of saints. Humility, or true lowliness of mind, disposes persons to think others better than themselves: Philippians 2:3. **In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.** Hence they are apt to think the lowest room belongs to them: and their inward disposition naturally leads them to obey that precept of our Savior, **Luke 14:10**. It is not natural to them to take it upon them to do the part of teachers; but on the contrary, they are disposed to think that they are not the persons, that others are fitter for it than they; as it was with **Moses** and **Jeremiah** (Exodus 3:11, **Jeremiah** 1:6) though they were such eminent saints, and of great knowledge. It is not natural to them to think that it belongs to them to teach, but to be taught: They are much more eager to hear, and to receive instruction from others,

than to dictate to others; James 1:19. **Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak.** And when they do speak, it is not natural to them to speak with a bold, masterly air; but humility disposes them rather to speak trembling. Hosea 13:1. **When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.** They are not apt to assume authority, and to take upon them to be chief managers and masters; but rather to be subject to others. James 3:1-2. **Be not many masters.** 1 Peter 5:5. **All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.** Ephesians 5:21. **Submitting yourselves one to another, in the fear of God.**

There are some person's experiences that naturally work that way, to make them think highly of their experiences; and they do often themselves speak of their experiences as very great and extraordinary, they freely speak of the **great things; they have met with.** This may be spoken, and meant in a good sense. In one sense, every degree of saving mercy is a **great thing:** It is indeed a thing **great,** yea, **infinitely great,** for God to bestow the least crumb of children's bread upon such dogs as we are in ourselves; and the more humble a person is that hopes that God has bestowed such mercy on him, the more apt will he be to call it a **great thing that he has met with,** in this sense. But if by **great things which they have experienced,** they mean comparatively great spiritual experiences, or great compared with others' experiences, or beyond what is ordinary, which is evidently oftentimes the case; then for a person to say, **I have met with great things,** is the very same thing as to say, **I am an eminent saint,** and have more grace than ordinary: for to have great experiences, if the experiences be true and worth the telling of, is the same

thing as to have great grace: there is no true experience, but the exercise of grace; and exactly according to the degree of true experience, is the degree of grace and holiness. The persons that talk thus about their experiences, when they give an account of them, expect that others should admire them. Indeed they do not call it boasting to talk after this manner about their experiences, nor do they look upon it as any sign of pride; because they say, **they know that it was not they that did it, it was free grace, they are the great things that God has done for them, they would acknowledge the great mercy God has shown them, and not make light of it.** But so it was with the **Pharisee** that Christ tells us of, **Luke 18**. He in words gave God the glory of making him to differ from other men; **God I thank thee**, says he, **that I am not as other men.** Their verbally ascribing it to the grace of God, that they are holier than other saints, does not hinder their forwardness to think so highly of their holiness, being a sure evidence of the pride and vanity of their minds. If they were under the influence of an humble spirit, their attainments in religion would not be so apt to shine in their own eyes, nor would they be so much in admiring their own beauty. The Christians that are really the most eminent saints, and therefore have the most excellent experiences, **and are greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven, humble themselves as a little child**, **Matthew 18:4**. Because they look on themselves as but little children in grace, and their attainments to be but the attainments of babes in Christ, and are astonished at, and ashamed of the low degrees of their love, and their thankfulness, and their little knowledge of God. **Moses** when he had been conversing with God in the Mount, and his face shone so bright in the eyes of others, as to daz-

zle their eyes, **knew not that his face shone**. There are some persons that go by the name of high professors, and some will own themselves to be high professors; but eminently humble saints, that will shine brightest in Heaven, are not at all apt to profess high. I do not believe there is an eminent saint in the world that is a high professor. Such will be much more likely to profess themselves to be the least of all saints, and to think that every saint's attainments and experiences are higher than his.

Such is the nature of grace, and of true spiritual light, that they naturally dispose the saints in the present state, to look upon their grace and goodness little, and their deformity great. And they that have the most grace and spiritual light, of any in this world, have most of this disposition. As will appear most clear and evident to any one that soberly and thoroughly weighs the nature and reason of things, and considers the things following.

That grace and holiness is worthy to be called little, that is, little in comparison of what it ought to be. And so it seems to one that is truly gracious: for such an one has his eye upon the rule of his duty; a conformity to that is what he aims at; it is what his soul struggles and reaches after; and it is by that that he estimates and judges of what he does, and what he has. To a gracious soul, and especially to one eminently gracious, **that** holiness appears little, which is little of what it should be; little of what he sees infinite reason for, and obligation to. If his holiness appears to him to be at a vast distance from this, it naturally appears despicable in his eyes, and not worthy to be mentioned as any beauty or amiability in him. For the like reason as a hungry man naturally accounts that which is set before him, but a little food, a small matter, not worth mentioning, that is nothing in comparison of his appetite.

Or as the child of a great prince, that is jealous for the honor of his father, and beholds the respect which men show him, naturally looks on that honor and respect very little, and not worthy to be regarded, which is nothing in comparison of that, which the dignity of his father requires.

But that is the nature of true grace and spiritual light, that it opens to a person's view the infinite reason there is that he should be holy in a high degree. And the more grace he has, the more this is opened to view, the greater sense he has of the infinite excellency and glory of the divine Being, and of the infinite dignity of the person of Christ, and the boundless length and breadth, and depth and height, of the love of Christ to sinners. And as grace increases, the field opens more and more to a distant view, until the soul is swallowed up with the vastness of the object, and the person is astonished to think how much it becomes him to love this God, and this glorious Redeemer, that has so loved man, and how little he does love. And so the more he apprehends, the more the smallness of his grace and love appears strange and wonderful; and therefore is more ready to think that others are beyond him. For wondering at the littleness of his own grace, he can scarcely believe that so strange a thing happens to other saints. It is amazing to him, that one that is really a child of God, and that has actually received the saving benefits of that unspeakable love of Christ, should love no more. And he is apt to look upon it as a thing peculiar to himself, a strange and exempt instance; for he sees only the outside of other Christians, but he sees his own inside.

Here the reader may possibly object, that love to God is really increased, in proportion as the knowledge of God is increased; and therefore how should an increase of knowledge in a saint, make his

love appear less, in comparison of what is known? To which I answer, that although grace and the love of God in the saints, be answerable to the degree of knowledge or sight of God; yet it is not in proportion to the object seen and known. The soul of a saint, by having something of God opened to sight, is convinced of much more than is seen. There is something that is seen, that is wonderful; and that sight, brings with it a strong conviction of something vastly beyond, that is not immediately seen. So that the soul, at the same time, is astonished at its ignorance, and that it knows so little, as well as that it loves so little. And as the soul, in a spiritual view, is convinced of infinitely more in the object, yet beyond sight; so it is convinced of the capacity of the soul, of knowing vastly more, if clouds and darkness were but removed. Which causes the soul, in the enjoyment of a spiritual view, to complain greatly of spiritual ignorance, and want of love, and long and reach after more knowledge, and more love.

Grace and the love of God in the most eminent saints in this world, is truly very little in comparison of what it ought to be. Because the highest love, that ever any attain to in this life, is poor, cold, exceeding low, and not worthy to be named in comparison of what our obligations appear to be, from the joint consideration of these two things; **namely**, first: The reason God has given us to love him, in the manifestations he has made of his infinite glory, in his word, and in his works; and particularly in the gospel of his Son, and what he has done for sinful man by him. And second: The capacity there is in the soul of man, by those intellectual faculties which God has given it, of seeing and understanding these reasons, which God has given us to love him. How small indeed is the love of the most eminent saint on earth, in comparison of what these

things jointly considered do require! And this grace tends to convince men of; and especially eminent grace: for grace is of the nature of light, and brings truth to view. And therefore, he that has much grace, apprehends much more than others, that great height to which his love ought to ascend; and he sees better than others, how little a way he has risen towards that height. And therefore, estimating his love by the whole height of his duty, hence it appears astonishingly little and low in his eyes.

And the eminent saint, having such a conviction of the high degree in which he ought to love God, this shows him, not only the littleness of his grace, but the greatness of his remaining corruption. In order to judge how much corruption or sin we have remaining in us, we must take our measure from that height to which the rule of our duty extends. The whole of the distance we are at from that height, is sin: for failing of duty is sin; otherwise our duty is not our duty; and by how much the more we fall short of our duty, so much the more sin have we. Sin is no other than disagreeableness, in a moral agent, to the law, or rule of his duty. And therefore the degree of sin is to be judged of by the rule: so much disagreeableness to the rule, so much sin, whether it be in **defect** or **excess**. Therefore if men, in their love to God, don't come up half way to that height which duty requires, then they have more corruption in their hearts than grace; because there is more goodness wanting, than is there; and all that is wanting is sin. It is an abominable defect; and appears so to the saints, especially those that are eminent. It appears exceeding abominable to them, that Christ should be loved so little, and thanked so little for his dying love; it is in their eyes hateful ingratitude.

And then the increase of grace has a tendency another way, to cause the saints to think their deformity vastly more than their goodness: it not only tends to convince them that their corruption is much greater than their goodness; which is indeed the case: but it also tends to cause the deformity that there is in the least sin, or the least degree of corruption, to appear so great, as vastly to outweigh all the beauty there is in their greatest holiness: for this also is indeed the case. For the least sin against an infinite God, has an infinite hatefulness or deformity in it; but the highest degree of holiness in a creature, has not an infinite loveliness in it: and therefore the loveliness of it is as nothing, in comparison of the deformity of the least sin. That every sin has infinite deformity and hatefulness in it, is most demonstrably evident; because what the evil, or iniquity, or hatefulness of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, or the being or doing contrary to what we should be or do, or are obliged to. And therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, so much the greater is the iniquity and hatefulness of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love and honor any being, is in some proportion to his loveliness and honorableness, or to his worthiness to be loved and honored by us; which is the same thing. We are surely under greater obligation to love a more lovely being, than a less lovely: and if a being be infinitely lovely or worthy to be loved by us, then our obligations to love him, are infinitely great: and therefore, whatever is contrary to this love, has in it infinite iniquity, deformity and unworthiness. But on the other hand, with respect to our holiness or love to God, there is not an infinite worthiness in that. The sin of the creature against God, is ill-deserving and hateful in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature: the greatness of the

object, and the meanness and inferiority of the subject, aggravates it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of the respect of the creature to God; it is **worthless**, and not worthy, in proportion to the meanness of the subject. So much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The great degree of superiority, increases the obligation on the inferior to regard the superior; and so makes the want of regard more hateful: but the great degree of inferiority diminishes the worth of the regard of the inferior; because the more he is inferior, the less is he worthy of notice, the less he is, the less is what he can offer worth; for he can offer no more than himself, in offering his best respect; and therefore as he is little, and little worth, so is his respect little worth. And the more a person has of true grace and spiritual light, the more will it appear thus to him; the more will he appear to himself infinitely deformed by reason of sin, and the less will the goodness that is in his grace, or good experience, appear in proportion to it. For indeed it is nothing to it: it is less than a drop to the ocean: for finite bears no proportion at all to that which is infinite. But the more a person has of spiritual light, the more do things appear to him, in this respect, as they are indeed. Hence it most demonstrably appears, that true grace is of that nature, that the more a person has of it, with remaining corruption, the less does his goodness and holiness appear, in proportion to his deformity; and not only to his past deformity, but to his present deformity, in the sin that now appears in his heart, and in the abominable defects of his highest and most affections, and brightest experiences.

The nature of many high religious affections, and great discoveries (as they are called) in many persons that I have been acquainted with, is to hide and cover over the corruption of their hearts, and to make it seem to them as if all their sin was gone, and to leave them without complaints of any hateful evil left in them; (though it may be they cry out much of their past unworthiness) a sure and certain evidence that their discoveries (as they call them) are darkness and not light. It is darkness that hides men's pollution and deformity; but light let into the heart discovers it, searches it out in its secret corners, and makes it plainly to appear; especially that penetrating, all-searching light of God's holiness and glory. It is true that saving discoveries may for the present hide corruption in one sense; they restrain the **positive exercises** of it, such as malice, envy, covetousness, lasciviousness, murmuring, **et cetera**; but they bring corruption to light, in that which is privative, **namely**, that there is no more love, no more humility, no more thankfulness. Which defects appear most hateful, in the eyes of those who have the most eminent exercises of grace; and are very burdensome, and cause the saints to cry out of their leanness, and odious pride and ingratitude. And whatever positive exercises of corruption, at any time arise, and mingle themselves with eminent acting of grace, grace will exceedingly magnify the view of them, and render their appearance far more heinous and horrible.

The more eminent Saints are, and the more they have of the **Light of Heaven** in their Souls, the more do they appear to themselves, as the most eminent Saints in this World do, to the Saints and Angels **in Heaven**. How can we rationally suppose the most eminent Saints on Earth appear to them, if beheld any otherwise,

than covered over with the Righteousness of Christ, and their Deformities swallowed up and hid in the Coruscation of the Beams of his abundant Glory and Love? How can we suppose our most ardent Love and Praise appear to them, that do behold the Beauty and Glory of God without a Veil? How does our highest Thankfulness for the dying Love of Christ appear to them, who see Christ as he is, who know as they are known, and see the Glory of the Person of him that died, and the Wonders of his dying Love, without any Cloud or Darkness? And how do they look on the deepest Reverence and Humility, with which Worms of the Dust on Earth approach that infinite Majesty, which they behold? Do they appear great to them, or so much as worthy of the Name of Reverence and Humility, in those that they see to be at such an infinite Distance from that great and holy God, in whose glorious Presence they are? The Reason why the highest Attainments of the Saints on Earth appear so mean to them, is because they dwell in the Light of God's Glory, and see God as he is. And it is in this Respect with the Saints on Earth, as it is with the Saints in Heaven, in Proportion as they are more eminent in Grace.

I would not be understood that the Saints on Earth have, in all Respects, the worst Opinion of themselves, when they have most of the Exercise of Grace. In many Respects it is otherwise. With Respect to the positive Exercises of Corruption, they may appear to themselves freest and best when Grace is most in Exercise, and worst when the Actings of Grace are lowest. And when they compare themselves with themselves, at different Times, they may know, when Grace is in lively Exercise, that it is better with them than it was before, (though before, in the Time of it, they did not see so much Badness as they see now); and when afterwards they

sink again in the Frame of their Minds, they may know that they sink, and have a new Argument of their great remaining Corruption, and a **rational** Conviction of a greater Vileness than they saw before; and may have more of a Sense of Guilt, and a kind of **legal** Sense of their Sinfulness, by far, than when in the lively Exercise of Grace. But yet it is true, and demonstrable from the forementioned Considerations, that the Children of God never have so much of a **sensible** and **spiritual** Conviction of their Deformity; and so great and quick and abasing a Sense of their present Vileness and Odiousness, as when they are highest in the Exercise of true and pure Grace; and never are they so much disposed to set themselves low among Christians as then. And thus **he that is greatest in the Kingdom**, or most eminent in the Church of Christ, is the same **that humbles himself**, as the least Infant among them; agreeable to that great Saying of Christ, **Matthew 18:4**.

A true Saint may know that he has some true Grace: And the more Grace there is, the more easily is it known; as was observed and proved before. But yet it does not follow, that an eminent Saint is easily sensible that he is an eminent Saint, when compared with others. I will not deny that it is possible, that he that has much Grace, and is an eminent Saint, may know it. But he will not be apt to know it: It will not be a Thing obvious to him: That he is better than others, and has higher Experiences and Attainments, is not a foremost Thought; nor is it That which, from Time to Time, readily offers itself: It is a Thing that is not in his Way, but lies far out of Sight: He must take Pains to convince himself of it: There will be need of a great Command of Reason, and a high Degree of Strictness and Care in arguing, to convince himself. And if he be

rationally convinced, by a very strict Consideration of his own Experiences, compared with the great Appearances of low Degrees of Grace in some other Saints, it will hardly seem real to him, that he has more Grace than they: And he will be apt to lose the Conviction, that he has by Pains obtained: Nor will it seem at all natural to him to act upon that Supposition. And this may be laid down as an infallible Thing, **That the Person who is apt to think that he, as compared with others, is a very eminent Saint, much distinguished in Christian Experience, in whom this is a first Thought, that rises of itself, and naturally offers itself; he is certainly mistaken; he is no eminent Saint; but under the great Prevailings of a proud and self-righteous Spirit.** And if this be habitual with the Man, and is statedly the prevailing Temper of his Mind, he is no Saint at all; he has not the least Degree of any true Christian Experience; so surely as the Word of God is true.

And that Sort of Experiences that appears to be of that Tendency, and is found from Time to Time to have that Effect, to elevate the Subject of them with a great Conceit of those Experiences, is certainly vain and delusive. Those supposed Discoveries that naturally blow up the Person with an Admiration of the Eminency of his Discoveries, and fill him with Conceit, that now he has seen, and knows more than most other Christians, have nothing of the Nature of true spiritual Light in them. All true spiritual Knowledge is of that Nature, that the more a Person has of it, the more is he sensible of his own Ignorance; as is evident by 1 Corinthians 8:2. **He that thinketh he knoweth any Thing, he knoweth nothing yet, as he ought to know.** Agur when he had a great Discovery of God, and Sense of the wonderful

Height of his Glory, and of his marvellous Works, and cries out of his Greatness and Incomprehensibleness; at the same Time, had the deepest Sense of his brutish Ignorance, and looked upon himself the most ignorant of all the Saints; Proverbs 30:2, 3, 4. **Surely I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the Understanding of a Man: I neither learned Wisdom, nor have the Knowledge of the Holy. Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the Wind in his Fists? Who hath bound the Waters in a Garment? Who hath established all the Ends of the Earth?** What is his Name? **And what is his Son's Name?** If you can tell.

For a Man to be highly conceited of his spiritual and divine Knowledge, is for him to be wise in his own Eyes, if any Thing is. And therefore it comes under those Prohibitions, Proverbs 3:7. **Be not wise in your own Eyes.** Romans 12:16. **Be not wise in your own Conceits.** And brings Men under that Woe, Isaiah 5:21. **Woe unto them that are wise in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight.** Those that are thus wise in their own Eyes, are some of the least likely to get Good of any in the World. Experience shows the Truth of that, Proverbs 26:12. **Do you see a Man wise in his own Conceit? There is more Hope of a Fool than of him.**

To this some may object, That the **Psalmist**, when we must suppose that he was in a holy Frame, speaks of his Knowledge as eminently great, and far greater than that of other Saints, Psalm 119:99, 100. **I have more Understanding than all my Teachers: For thy Testimonies are my Meditation. I understand more than the Ancients: Because I keep thy Precepts.**

To this I answer two Things:

First, There is no Restraint to be laid upon the Spirit of God, (as to what he shall reveal to a **Prophet**, for the Benefit of his Church) who is speaking or writing under **immediate Inspiration**. The Spirit of God may reveal to such an one, and dictate to him, to declare to others, secret Things, that otherwise would be hard, yea impossible for him to find out. As he may reveal to him Mysteries, that otherwise would be above the Reach of his Reason; or Things in a distant Place, that he cannot see; or future Events, that it would be impossible for him to know and declare, if they were not extraordinarily revealed to him. So the Spirit of God might reveal to **David** this distinguishing Benefit he had received, by conversing much with God's Testimonies; and use him as his Instrument to record it for the Benefit of others, to excite them to the like Duty, and to use the same Means to gain Knowledge. Nothing can be gathered concerning the natural Tendency of the **ordinary** gracious Influences of the Spirit of God, from that, that **David** declares of his distinguishing Knowledge under the **extraordinary** Influences of God's Spirit, immediately dictating to him the divine Mind by Inspiration, and using **David** as his Instrument to write what he pleased for the Benefit of his Church; any more than we can reasonably argue, that it is the natural Tendency of Grace to incline Men to curse others, and wish the most dreadful Misery to them that can be thought of because **David**, under Inspiration, often curses others, and prays that such Misery may come upon them.

Secondly, It is not certain that the Knowledge **David** here speaks of, is spiritual Knowledge, wherein Holiness does fundamentally consist. But it may be that greater Revelation which God

made to him of the **Messiah**, and the Things of his future Kingdom, and the far more clear and extensive Knowledge that he had of the Mysteries and Doctrines of the Gospel, than others; as a Reward for his keeping God's Testimonies. In this, it is apparent by the Book of Psalms, that **David** far exceeded all that had gone before him.

Secondly, Another Thing that is an infallible Sign of spiritual Pride, is Persons' being apt to think highly of their Humility. False Experiences are commonly attended with a counterfeit Humility. And it is the very Nature of a counterfeit Humility, to be highly conceited of itself. False religious Affections have generally that Tendency, especially when raised to a great Height, to make Persons think that their Humility is great, and accordingly to take much Notice of their great Attainments in this Respect, and admire them. But eminently gracious Affections (I scruple not to say it) are evermore of a contrary Tendency, and have universally a contrary Effect, in those that have them. They indeed make them very sensible what Reason there is that they should be deeply humbled, and cause them earnestly to thirst and long after it; but they make their present Humility, or that which they have already attained to, to appear small; and their remaining Pride great, and exceedingly abominable.

The Reason why a proud Person should be apt to think his Humility great, and why a very humble Person should think his Humility small, may be easily seen, if it be considered, That it is natural for Persons, in judging of the Degree of their own Humiliation, to take their Measure from that which they esteem their proper Height, or the Dignity wherein they properly stand. That may be great Humiliation in one, that is no Humiliation at all

in another: Because the Degree of Honorableness or Considerableness, wherein each does properly stand, is very different. For some great Man, to stoop to loose the Latchet of the Shoes of another great Man, his Equal, or to wash his Feet, would be taken Notice of as an Act of Abasement in him; and he being sensible of his own Dignity, would look upon it so himself. But if a poor Slave is seen stooping to unloose the Shoes of a great Prince, nobody will take any Notice of this, as any Act of Humiliation in him, or Token of any great Degree of Humility: Nor would the Slave himself, unless he be horribly proud, and ridiculously conceited of himself: And if, after he had done it, he should, in his Talk and Behaviour, show that he thought his Abasement great in it, and had his Mind much upon it, as an Evidence of his being very humble; would not every Body cry out upon him, Who do you think yourself to be, that you should think this that you have done, such a deep Humiliation? This would make it plain to a Demonstration, that this Slave was swollen with a high Degree of Pride and Vanity of Mind, as much as if he declared in plain Terms, **I think myself to be some great one.** And the Matter is no less plain and certain, when worthless, vile and loathsome Worms of the Dust, are apt to put such a Construction on their Acts of Abasement before God, and to think it a Token of great Humility in them that they, under their Affections, can find themselves so willing to acknowledge themselves to be so and so mean and unworthy, and to behave themselves as those that are so inferior. The very Reason why such outward Acts, and such inward Exercises, look like great Abasement in such an one, is because he has a high Conceit of himself. Whereas if he thought of himself more justly, these Things would appear nothing to him, and his Humility in them worthy of

Regard; but would rather be astonished at his Pride, that one so infinitely despicable and vile, is brought no lower before God. When he says in his Heart, This is a great Act of Humiliation: It is certainly a Sign of great Humility in me, that I should feel thus, and do so; his Meaning is, This is great Humility for me, for such a one as I, that am so considerable and worthy. He considers how low he is now brought, and compares this with the Height of Dignity, on which, he in his Heart thinks he properly stands, and the Distance appears very great, and he calls it all mere Humility, and as such admires it. Whereas, in him that is truly humble, and really sees his own Vileness and Loathsomeness before God, the Distance appears the other Way. When he is brought lowest of all, it does not appear to him, that he is brought below his proper Station; but that he is not come to it: He appears to himself, yet vastly above it: He longs to get lower, that he may come to it; but appears at a great Distance from it. And this Distance he calls Pride. And therefore his Pride appears great to him, and not his Humility. For although he is brought much lower than he used to be; yet it does not appear to him worthy of the Name of Humiliation, for him that is so infinitely mean and detestable, to come down to a Place, which though it be lower than what he used to assume, is yet vastly higher than what is proper for him. As Men would hardly count it worthy of the Name of Humility, in a contemptible Slave, that formerly affected to be a Prince, to have his Spirit so far brought down, as to take the Place of a Nobleman; when this is still so far above his proper Station.

All Men in the World, in judging of the Degree of their own and others Humility, as appearing in any Act of theirs, consider two Things; **namely** the real Degree of Dignity they stand in; and the

Degree of Abasement, and the Relation it bears to that real Dignity. Thus the complying with the same low Place, or low Act, may be an Evidence of great Humility in one, that evidences but little or no Humility in another. But truly humble Christians have so mean an Opinion of their own real Dignity, that all their Self-abasement, when considered with Relation to that, and compared with that, appears very small to them. It does not seem to them to be any great Humility, or any Abasement to be made much of, for such poor, vile, abject Creatures as they, to lie at the Foot of God.

The Degree of Humility is to be judged of by the Degree of **Abasement**, and the Degree of the **Cause for Abasement**: But he that is truly and eminently humble, never thinks his Humility great, considering the Cause. The Cause why he should be abased appears so great, and the Abasement of the Frame of his Heart so greatly short of it, that he takes much more Notice of his Pride than his Humility.

Every One that has been conversant with Souls under Convictions of Sin, knows that those who are greatly convinced of Sin, are not apt to think themselves greatly convinced. And the Reason is this: That Men judge of the Degree of their own Convictions of Sin by two Things jointly considered; **namely** the Degree of Sense which they have of Guilt and Pollution, and the Degree of Cause they have for such a Sense, in the Degree of their real Sinfulness. It is really no Argument of any great Conviction of Sin, for some Men to think themselves to be very sinful, beyond most others in the World; because they are so indeed, very plainly and notoriously. And therefore a far less Conviction of Sin may incline such an one to think so than another: He must be very blind indeed not to be sensible of it. But he that is truly under great

Convictions of Sin, naturally thinks this to be his Case. It appears to him that the Cause he has to be sensible of Guilt and Pollution, is greater than others have; and therefore he ascribes his Sensibleness of this, to the Greatness of his Sin, and not to the Greatness of his Sensibility. It is natural for one under great Convictions to think himself one of the greatest of Sinners in Reality, and also that it is so very plainly and evidently; for the greater his Convictions are, the more plain and evident it seems to be to him. And therefore it necessarily seems to him so plain and so easy to him to see it, that it may be seen without much Conviction. **That** Man is under great Convictions, whose Conviction is great in Proportion to his Sin. But no Man that is truly under great Convictions, thinks his Conviction great in Proportion to his Sin. For if he does, it is a certain Sign that he inwardly thinks his Sins small. And if that be the Case, **that** is a certain Evidence that his Conviction is small. And this, by the Way, is the main Reason, that Persons when under a Work of Humiliation, are not sensible of it, in the Time of it.

And as it is with Conviction of Sin, just so it is, by Parity of Reason, with Respect to Person's Conviction or Sensibleness of their own Meanness and Vileness, their own Blindness, their own Impotence, and all that low Sense that a Christian has of himself, in the Exercise of **evangelical Humiliation**. So that in a high Degree of this, the Saints are never disposed to think their Sensibleness of their own Meanness, Filthiness, Impotence, **et cetera** to be great; because it never appears great to them, considering the Cause.

An eminent Saint is not apt to think himself eminent in any Thing; all his Graces and Experiences are ready to appear to him to be comparatively small; but especially his Humility. There is nothing that appertains to Christian Experience, and true Piety, that is so much out of his Sight as his Humility. He is a thousand Times more quick-sighted to discern his Pride, than his Humility: **That** he easily discerns, and is apt to take much Notice of, but hardly discerns his Humility. On the contrary, the deluded Hypocrite, that is under the Power of spiritual Pride, is so blind to nothing as his Pride; and so quick-sighted to nothing, as the Shows of Humility that are in him.

The humble Christian is more apt to find Fault with his own Pride than with other Mens. He is apt to put the best Construction on others' Words and Behaviour, and to think that none are so proud as himself. But the proud Hypocrite is quick to discern the Mote in his Brother's Eye, in this Respect; while he sees nothing of the Beam in his own. He is very often much in crying out of others' Pride, finding Fault with others' Apparel and Way of Living; and is affected ten Times as much with his Neighbor's Ring or Ribbon, as with all the Filthiness of his own Heart.

From the Disposition there is in Hypocrites to think highly of their Humility, it comes to pass that counterfeit Humility is forward to put forth itself to view. Those that have it, are apt to be much in speaking of their Humiliations, setting them forth in high Terms, and to make a great outward Show or Humility, in affected Looks, Gestures or Manner of meanness of Apparel, or some affected Singularity. So it was of old with the false Prophets, **Zechariah** 13:4. So it was with the hypocritical **Jews**, Isaiah 57:5. And so Christ tells us it was with the **Pharisees**, Matthew 6:16.

But it is contrariwise with true Humility: They that have it, are not apt to display their Eloquence in setting of it forth, or to speak of the Degree of their Abasement in strong Terms. It does not affect to show itself in any singular outward Meanness of Apparel, or Way of Living; agreeable to what is implied in Matthew 6:17. **But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine Head, and wash thy Face.** Colossians 2:23. **Which Things have indeed a Show of Wisdom, in will worship and Humility, and neglecting the Body.** Nor is true Humility a noisy thing; it is not loud and boisterous. The Scripture represents it as of a contrary Nature. **Ahab**, when he had a visible Humility, a Resemblance of true Humility, **went softly**, 1 Kings 21:27. A Penitent, in the Exercise of true Humiliation, is represented as still and silent, Lamentations 3:28. **He sitteth alone, and keepeth Silence, because he hath borne it upon him.** And Silence is mentioned as what attends Humility, Proverbs 30:32. **If thou hast done foolishly, in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought Evil, lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth.**

Thus I have particularly and largely shown the Nature of that true Humility that attends holy Affections, as it appears in its Tendency to cause Persons to think meanly of their Attainments in Religion, as compared with the Attainments of others, and particularly, of their Attainments in Humility: And have shown the contrary Tendency of spiritual Pride, to dispose Persons to think their Attainments in these Respects to be great. I have insisted the longer on this Matter, because I look upon it a Matter of great Importance, as it affords a certain Distinction between true and counterfeit Humility; and also as this Disposition of Hypocrites to look on themselves better than others, is what God has declared to

be very hateful to him, **a Smoke in his Nose, and a Fire that burneth all the Day**, Isaiah 65:5. It is mentioned as an Instance of the Pride of the Inhabitants of that holy City (as it was called) **Jerusalem**, that they esteemed themselves far better than the People of **Sodom**, and so looked upon them worthy to be overlooked and disregarded by them; Ezekiel 16:56. **For thy Sister Sodom was not mentioned by thy Mouth, in the Day of thy Pride.**

Let not the Reader lightly pass over these Things in Application to himself. If you once have taken it in, that it is a bad Sign for a Person to be apt to think himself a better Saint than others, there will arise a blinding Prejudice in your own Favor; and there will probably be need of a great Strictness of Self-Examination, in order to determine whether it be so with you. If on the Proposal of the Question, you answer, **No, it [<◇>] time, none are [<...>]**. Do not let the Matter pass off so; but examine again, whether or not you do not think yourself better than others on this very Account, because you imagine you think so meanly of yourself. Have you not a high Opinion of this Humility? And if you answer again, **No; I have not a high Opinion of my Humility; It seems to me I am proud as the Devil;** Yet examine again, whether Self-conceit does not rise up under this Cover; whether on this very Account, that you think yourself as proud as the Devil, you do not think yourself to be very humble.

From this Opposition that there is between the Nature of a true, and of a counterfeit Humility, as to the Esteem that the Subjects of them have of themselves, arises a manifold Contrariety of Temper and Behavior.

A truly humble Person, having such a mean Opinion of his Righteousness and Holiness, is **poor in Spirit**. For a Person to be poor in Spirit, is to be in his own Sense and Apprehension poor, as to what is in him, and to be of an answerable Disposition. Therefore a truly humble Person, especially one eminently humble, naturally behaves himself in many Respects as a poor Man. **The Poor [〈◇◇〉], but the Rich answers roughly.** A poor Man is not disposed to quick and high Resentment when he is among the Rich: He is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are above him; he is not stiff and self-willed; he is patient with hard Fare; he expects no other than to be despised, and takes it patiently; he does not take it heinously that he is overlooked, and but little regarded; he is prepared to be in low Place; he readily honors his Superiors; he takes Reproofs quietly; he readily honors others as above him; he easily yields to be taught, and does not claim much to his Understanding and Judgment; he is not over nice or humorsome, and has his Spirit subdued to hard Things; he is not assuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but it is natural for him to be subject to others. Thus it is with the humble Christian. Humility is (as the great **Mastricht** expresses it) **a kind of holy Pusillanimity.**

A Man that is very poor is a Beggar; so is he that is poor in Spirit. This is a great Difference between those Affections that are gracious, and those that are false: Under the former, the Person continues still a poor Beggar at God's Gates, exceeding empty and needy; but the latter make Men appear to themselves rich, and increased with Goods, and not very necessitous; they have a great Stock in their own Imagination for their Subsistence.

A poor Man is modest in his Speech and [<◇>] so, and much more, and more certainly and universally, is one that [<◇>] in Spirit; he is humble and modest in his Behavior amongst Men. It is in vain for any to pretend that they are humble, and [<◇>] Children before God, when they are haughty, assuming and [<◇>] in their Behavior amongst Men. The Apostle informs us [<◇◇>] Design of the Gospel is to cut off all Glorifying, not only before [<◇◇>] before Men, **Romans** 4:1-2. Some pretend to great [<◇>], that are very haughty, audacious and assuming in their external Appearance and Behavior: But they ought to consider these Scriptures. Psalm 131:1. **Lord, my Heart is not haughty, [<...>] neither do I exercise myself in great Matters, or in Things [<◇◇>] for me.** Proverbs 6:16, 17. **These six Things does the Lord [<◇>], [<◇>] serve are an Abomination unto him; a proud Look, &c.** Chapter 21:4. An high Look, and a proud Heart, are Sin. Psalm 1[•]. [••]. Thou [<◇>] bring [<...>]

[<◇◇>] Spirit will [<◇>] a Christian to honor all Men. 1 Peter 2:17. **Honor all Men.** A humble Christian is not only disposed to honor the Saints to his Behavior; but others also, in all these Ways [<◇◇>] imply a visible Approbation of their Sins. Thus [<◇>] the great Pattern of Believers, honored the Children of **Heth**. Genesis 23:11, 12. [<◇◇>] up, and bowed himself to the People of the land. This was a remarkable Instance or a humble Behavior towards them that were out of Christ, and that **Abraham** knew to be [<◇>] and therefore would by no Means suffer his Servant to [<◇>] a [<◇>] to his Son, from among them; and [<◇>] Wives, because of these Children of **Heth**, were a [<◇>] or Mind to **Isaac** and **Rebekah**. So [<◇>]. honored

[〈◇〉], Acts 26:25. **I am not mad, [〈◇〉] who [〈◇〉]**. Not only will Christian Humility dispose Persons to honor those wicked Men that are out of the visible Church, but also false Brethren and Persecutors. As **Jacob**, when he was in an excellent Frame, having just been wrestling all Night with God, and received the Blessing, honored **Esau**, his false and persecuting Brother; Genesis 33:14, 15. Jacob **bowed himself to the Ground seven Times, until he came near his Brother** Esau. So he called him **Lord**; and commanded all his Family to honor him in like Manner.

Thus I have endeavored to describe the Heart and Behavior of one that is governed by a truly gracious Humility, as exactly agreeable to the Scriptures, as I am able.

Now it is out of such a Heart as this, that all truly holy Affections do flow. Christian Affections are like **Mary's** precious Ointment, that she poured on Christ's Head, that filled the whole House with a sweet Odor. **That** was poured out of an **Alabaster Box**; so gracious Affections flow out to Christ out of a **pure Heart**. That was poured out of a **broken Box**; until the Box was broken the Ointment could not flow, nor diffuse its Odor: So gracious Affections flow out of a **broken Heart**. Gracious Affections are also like those of **Mary Magdalene** (Luke [••] at the latter End) who also pours precious Ointment on Christ, out of an Alabaster broken Box, anointing therewith the Feet of Jesus, when she had washed them with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hair of her Head. All gracious Affections, that are a sweet Odor to Christ, and that fill the Soul of a Christian with an heavenly Sweetness and Fragrance, are broken-hearted Affections. A truly Christian Love, either to God or Men, is a humble broken-hearted

Love. The Desires of the Saints, however earnest, are humble Desires: Their Hope is an humble Hope; and their Joy, even when it is **unspeakable, and full of Glory**, is a humble, broken-hearted Joy, and leaves the Christian more poor in Spirit, and more like a little Child, and more disposed to an universal Lowliness of Behavior.

7. Another Thing, wherein gracious Affections are distinguished from others, is, that **they are attended with a Change of Nature.**

All gracious Affections do arise from a spiritual Understanding, in which the Soul has the Excellency and Glory of divine Things discovered to it, as was shown before. But all spiritual Discoveries are transforming; and not only make an Alteration of the present Exercise, Sensation and Frame of the Soul; but such Power and Efficacy have they, that they make an Alteration in the very Nature of the Soul: 2 Corinthians 3:18. **But we all, with open Face, beholding as in a [<◇>], the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.** Such Power as this [<◇>] properly divine Power, and is peculiar to **the Spirit of the Lord**: Other Power may make a great Alteration in Men's present Frames and Feelings; but it is the Power of a Creator only that can change the Nature, or give a new Nature. And no Discoveries or Illuminations, but those that are divine and supernatural, will have this supernatural Effect. But this Effect all those Discoveries have, that are truly divine. The Soul is deeply affected by these Discoveries, and so affected as to be transformed.

Thus it is with those Affections that the Soul is the Subject of in its Conversion. The Scripture Representations of Conversion do strongly imply and signify a Change of Nature: such as **being born again; becoming new Creatures; rising from the Dead; being renewed in the Spirit of the Mind; dying to Sin, and living to Righteousness; putting off the old Man, and putting on the new Man; a being ingrafted into a new Stock; a having a divine Seed implanted in the Heart; a being made Partakers of the divine Nature, &c.**

Therefore if there be no great and remarkable, abiding Change in Persons, that think they have experienced a Work of Conversion, vain are all their Imaginations and Pretenses, however they have been affected. Conversion (if we may give any Credit to the Scripture) is a great and universal Change of the Man, turning him from Sin to God. A Man may be restrained from Sin, before [〈◇〉] is converted; but when he is converted, he is not only restrained from Sin, [〈◇〉] very Heart and Nature is turned from it, unto Holiness: So [〈◇〉] forward he becomes a holy Person, and an Enemy to Sin. [〈◇〉], after a [〈◇◇〉] Affections, at his supposed [〈◇◇〉], it come to that in a little Time, that there is no very [〈◇〉], or remarkable Alteration in him, as to those bad Qualities, and evil Habits, which before were visible in him, and he is ordinarily under the Prevalence of the same Kind of Dispositions that he used to be, and the same Things seem to belong to his Character, he appears as selfish, carnal, as stupid, and perverse, as unchristian, and [〈◇〉] as ever; it is greater Evidence against him, than the [〈◇〉] Story of Experiences that ever was told, is for him. For in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision, nor

Uncircumcision, neither high Profession, nor low Profession, neither a fair Story, nor a broken one, [<◇>] any Thing; but a new Creature.

If there be a very great Alteration visible in a Person for a while; if it is not abiding, but he afterwards returns, in a stated Manner to be much [<◇>] he used to be; It appears to be no Change of Nature. For Nature is an abiding Thing. A Swine that is of a filthy Nature may be washed; but the swinish Nature remains. And a Dove that [<◇>] of a cleanly Nature may be defiled, but its cleanly Nature remains.

Indeed Allowances must be made for the natural Temper: Conversion does not entirely root out the natural Temper: These Sins which a Man by his natural Constitution was most inclined to before his Conversion, he may be most apt to fall into still. But yet Conversion will make a great Alteration even with Respect to these Sins. Though Grace, while imperfect, does not root out an evil natural Temper; yet it is of great Power and Efficacy with respect [<◇>], to correct it. The Change that is wrought in Conversion, as an universal Change: Grace changes a Man with respect to whatever is sinful in him: The **old Man** is put off and the **new Man** put on: They are sanctified throughout: And the Man becomes a new Creature; old Things are passed away, and **all Things** are become new: All Sin is mortified; Constitution Sins, as well as others. If a Man before his Conversion, was by his natural Constitutions especially inclined to [<◇>], or Drunkenness, or Maliciousness; converting Grace will make a great Alteration in him, with respect to these evil Dispositions; so that however he may be still most in Danger of these Sins, yet they shall no longer have Dominion over him; nor will they any more be properly his Character. Yea, true

Repentance does in some Respects, especially turn a Man against his own Iniquity; **that** wherein he has been most guilty, and has chiefly dishonored God. He that forsakes other Sins, but saves his leading Sin, the Iniquity he is chiefly inclined to [••]is like **Saul**, when sent against God's Enemies the **Amalekites**, with a strict Charge to save none of them alive, but utterly to destroy them, small and great; who utterly destroyed inferior People, but saved the King, the chief of them all, alive.

Some foolishly make it an Argument in Favor of their Discoveries and Affections, that when they are gone, they are lost wholly without any Life or Sense, or any Thing [〈◇〉] they [〈◇〉] before. They think it an Evidence that what they experienced was [〈◇〉] of God, and not of themselves; because [〈◇〉] say they when God is departed, all is gone; they can see and [〈◇〉] nothing, and are no better than they used to be.

It is very true that all Grace and Goodness in the Hearts of the Saints is entirely from God; and they are universally and immediately dependent on him for it. But yet these Persons are mistaken, as to the Manner of God's communicating himself and his Spirit, in imparting saving Grace to the Soul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the Faculties of the Soul, and to dwell there after the Manner of a Principle of Nature; so that the Soul, in being endued with Grace, is endued with a new Nature: But Nature is an abiding Thing. All the Exercises of Grace are entirely from Christ: But these Exercises are not from Christ, as something that is alive, moves and actuates something that is without Life, and yet remains without Life; but as having Life communicated to it; so as through Christ's Power, to have inherent in itself, a vital Nature. In the Soul where Christ savingly is, there he lives. He does not only live **upon** it, so as vio-

lently to actuate it; but he lives in it: so that that also is alive. Grace in the Soul is as much from Christ, as the Light of a Glass, held out in the Sun-beams, is from the Sun. But this represents the Manner of the Communication only to hold out in Part; because the Glass remains as it was, and sure of it not being at all changed, it is as much without any Light inherent in its Nature as ever. But the Soul of a Saint receives Light from the Sun of Righteousness, in such a Manner, that its Nature is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous Thing: Not only does the Sun shine in the Saints, but they also become little Suns, partaking of the Nature of the Fountain of their Light. In this Respect, the Manner of their Derivation of Light, is like that of the Lamps in the Tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting Glass; which though they were lit up by Fire from Heaven, yet thereby became, themselves burning and shining Things. The Saints don't only drink of the Water of Life, drawn from the original Fountain; but this Water becomes a Fountain of Water in them, springing up there, and flowing out of them; **John** 4. 14. and Chapter 7. 38, 39. Grace is compared to a Seed implanted, that not only is in the Ground, but has hold of it, has Root there, and grows there, and is an abiding Principle of Life and Nature there.

As it is with spiritual Discoveries and Affections given at first Conversion, so it is in all Illuminations and Affections of that Kind, that Persons are the Subjects of afterwards; they are all **transforming**. There is a like divine Power and Energy in them, as in the first Discoveries: And they still reach the Bottom of the Heart, and affect and alter the very Nature of the Soul, in Proportion to the Degree in which they are given. And a Transformation of Nature is continued and carried on by them, to the End of Life, un-

til it is brought to Perfection in Glory. Hence the Progress of the Work of Grace in the Hearts of the Saints, is represented in Scripture, as a continued Conversion and Renovation of Nature. So the Apostle exhorts those that were at **Rome, beloved of God, called to be Saints**, and that were the Subjects of God's redeeming Mercies, to be **transformed by the renewing of their Mind**; Romans 12. 1, 2. **I beseech you therefore by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies, a living Sacrifice;—and be not conformed to this World; but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your Mind.** Compared with Chapter 1. 7. So the Apostle writing to the **Saints and Faithful in Christ Jesus**, that were at **Ephesus**, (Ephesians 1. 1.) and those who **were once dead in Trespasses and Sins**, but were now **quickened, and raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly Places in Christ, and created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, that were once far off, but were now made nigh by the Blood of Christ, and that were no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, and that were built together for an Habitation of God through the Spirit**; I say, the Apostle writing to these, tells them, **that he ceased not to pray for them, that God would give them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, in the Knowledge of Christ; the Eyes of their Understanding being enlightened, that they might know, or Experience, what was the exceeding Greatness of God's Power towards them that believe; according to the Working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the Dead, and set him at his own right Hand in the heavenly**

Places, Ephesians 1. 16, to the End. In this the Apostle has Respect to the glorious Power and Work of God in converting and renewing the Soul: As is most plain by the sequel. So the Apostle exhorts the same Persons **to put off the old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts; and be renewed in the Spirit of their Minds; and put on the new Man, which after God, is created in Righteousness and true Holiness**, Ephesians 4. 22, 23, 24.

There is a Sort of high Affections that some have from Time to Time, that leave them without any Manner of Appearance of an abiding Effect. They go off suddenly; so that from the very Height of their Emotion, and seeming Rapture, they pass at once to be quite dead, and void of all Sense and Activity. It surely is not used to be thus with high gracious Affections; they leave a sweet Savor and Relish of divine Things on the Heart, and a stronger Bent of Soul towards God and Holiness. As **Moses'** Face not only shone while he was in the Mount, extraordinarily conversing with God; but it continued to shine after he came down from the Mount. When Men have been conversing with Christ in an extraordinary Manner, there is a sensible Effect of it remains upon them; there is something remarkable in their Disposition and Frame, which if we take Knowledge of, and trace to its Cause, we shall find it is because they have been with Jesus; **Acts** 4. 13.

8. Truly gracious Affections differ from those Affections that are false and delusive, in that they tend **to**, and are attended **with** the Lamb-like, Dove-like Spirit and Temper of Jesus Christ; or in other Words, they naturally beget and promote such a Spirit of Love, Meekness, Quietness, Forgiveness and Mercy, as appeared in Christ.

The Evidence of this in the Scripture, is very abundant. If we judge of the Nature of Christianity, and the proper Spirit of the Gospel, by the Word of God, this Spirit is what may by way of Eminency be called **the Christian Spirit**; and may be looked upon as the true, and distinguishing Disposition of the Hearts of Christians, as Christians. When some of the Disciples of Christ said something, through Inconsideration and Infirmary, that was not agreeable to such a Spirit, Christ told them that 'they knew not what Manner of Spirit they were of,' **Luke** 9. 55. implying that this Spirit that I am speaking of, is the proper Spirit of his Religion and Kingdom. All that are truly Godly, and real Disciples of Christ, have this Spirit in them; and not only so but they **are of** this Spirit; it is the Spirit by which they are so possessed and governed, that it is their true and proper Character. This is evident by what the wise Man says, **Proverbs** 17. 27. (having Respect plainly to such a Spirit as this) 'A Man of Understanding is of an excellent Spirit'; and by the particular Description Christ gives of the Qualities and Temper of such as are truly Blessed, that shall obtain Mercy, and are God's Children and Heirs, **Matthew** 5. 'Blessed are the Meek: For they shall inherit the Earth.' 'Blessed are the Merciful: For they shall obtain Mercy.' 'Blessed are the Peace-makers: For they shall be called the Children of God.' And that this Spirit is the special Character of the Elect of God, is manifest by **Colossians** 3. 12, 13. 'Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.' And the Apostle speaking of that Temper and Disposition which he speaks of as the most excellent and essential Thing in Christianity, and **that** without which none are true

Christians, and the most glorious Profession and Gifts are nothing (calling this Spirit by the Name of Charity) he describes it thus; (1 **Corinthians** 13. 4, 5.) 'Charity suffereth long and is kind: Charity envieth not: Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no Evil.' And the same Apostle, **Galatians** 5. designedly declaring the distinguishing Marks and Fruits of true Christian Grace, chiefly insists on the Things that appertain to such a Temper and Spirit as I am speaking of, Verse 22, 23. 'The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance.' And so does the Apostle **James**, in describing true Grace, or **that Wisdom that is from above**, with that declared Design, that others who are of a contrary Spirit may not deceive themselves, and lie against the Truth, in professing to be Christians, when they are not, **James** 2. 14,—17. 'If ye have bitter Envy and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth: This Wisdom descendeth not from above; but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' 'For where Envy and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work.' 'But the Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.'

Every Thing that appertains to Holiness of Heart, does indeed belong to the Nature of true Christianity, and the Character of Christians; but a Spirit of Holiness as appearing in some particular Graces, may more especially be called the Christian Spirit or Temper. There are some amiable Qualities and Virtues, that do more especially agree with the Nature of the Gospel Constitution, and Christian Profession; because there is a special Agreeableness in them, with those divine Attributes which God has more remark-

ably manifested and glorified in the Work of Redemption by Jesus Christ, that is the grand Subject of the Christian Revelation; and also a special Agreeableness with these Virtues that were so wonderfully exercised by Jesus Christ towards us in that Affair, and the blessed Example he hath therein set us: and likewise because they are peculiarly agreeable to the special Drift and Design of the Work of Redemption, and the Benefits we thereby receive, and the Relation that it brings us into, to God and one another. And these Virtues are such as Humility, Meekness, Love, Forgiveness, and Mercy. These Things therefore especially belong to the Character of Christians, as such.

These Things are spoken of as what are especially the character of Jesus Christ himself, the great Head of the Christian Church. They are so spoken of in the Prophecies of the Old Testament; as in that cited **Matthew** 21:5. 'Tell ye the Daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an Ass, and a Colt the Foal of an Ass.' So Christ himself speaks of them, **Matthew** 11:29. 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in Heart.' The same appears by the Name by which Christ is so often called in Scripture, **namely** THE LAMB. And as these Things are especially the character of Christ; so they are also especially the character of Christians. Christians are Christlike: None deserve the Name of Christians that are not so, in their prevailing character. 'The new Man is renewed, after the Image of him that creates him, Colossians 3:10.' All true Christians 'behold as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same Image, by his Spirit, 2 Corinthians 3:18.' The Elect are all 'predestinated to be conformed to the Image of the Son of God, that he might be the First-born among many Brethren,' Romans 8:29. 'As we have borne the

Image of the first Man, that is earthly, so we must also bear the Image of the heavenly: For as is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly, 1 Corinthians 15:47, 48, 49.' Christ is full of Grace; and Christians 'all receive of its Fullness, and Grace for Grace:' **that is** there is Grace in Christians answering to Grace in Christ, such an Answerableness as there is between the Wax and the Seal; there is character for character: Such Kind of Graces, such a Spirit and Temper, the same Things that belong to Christ's character, belong to theirs. That Disposition wherein Christ's character does in a special Manner consist, therein does his Image in a special Manner consist. Christians that live by reflecting the Light of the Sun of Righteousness, do shine with the same Sort or Brightness, the same mild, sweet and pleasant Beams. These Lamps of the spiritual Temple, that are enkindled by Fire from Heaven, burn with the same sort of Flame. The Branch is of the same Nature with the Stock and Root, has the same Sap, and bears the same Sort of Fruit. The Members have the same Kind of Life with the Head. It would be strange if Christians should not be of the same Temper and Spirit that Christ is of; when 'they are his Flesh and his Bone, yea are one Spirit, 1 Corinthians 6:17, and live so, that it is not they that live, but Christ that lives in them.' A Christian Spirit is Christ's Mark, that he sets upon the Souls of his People; his Seal in their Foreheads, bearing his Image and Superscription. Christians are the Followers of Christ: And they are so, as they are obedient to that Call of Christ, 'Matthew 11:28, 29. Come to me, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart. They follow him as the Lamb; 'Revelation 14:4. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.' True Christians are as it were clothed

with the meek, quiet, and loving Temper of Christ; for **as many as are in Christ, have put on Christ**. And in this Respect **the Church is clothed with the Sun**, not only by being clothed with his imputed Righteousness, but also by being adorned with his Graces; **Romans** 13:14. Christ the great Shepherd, is himself a Lamb, and Believers are also Lambs; all the Flock are Lambs; 'John 21:15. Feed my Lambs' Luke 10:3. 'I send you forth as Lambs, in the midst of Wolves.' The Redemption of the Church by Christ from the Power of the Devil was typified of old, by **David's** delivering the **Lamb**, out of the Mouth of the Lion and the Bear.

That such Manner of Virtue as has been spoken of is the very Nature of the Christian Spirit, or the Spirit that works in Christ and in his Members, and the distinguishing Nature of it, is evident by this, that **the Dove** is the very Symbol or Emblem, chosen of God, to represent it. Those Things are fittest Emblems of other Things, which do best represent **that** which is most distinguishing in their Nature. The Spirit that descended on Christ, when he was anointed of the Father, descended on him **like a Dove**. The Dove is a noted Emblem of Meekness, Harmlessness, Peace and Love. But the same Spirit that descended on the Head of the Church, descends to the Members. 'God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their Hearts, **Galatians** 4:6. And if any Man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Romans 8:9.' There is but one Spirit to the whole mystical Body, Head and Members, 1 Corinthians 6:17; Ephesians 4:4. Christ breathes his own Spirit on his Disciples, John 20:22. As Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost, descending on him like a Dove, so Christians also 'have an Anointing from the Holy One, 1 John 2:20, 27. And they are anointed with the same Oil; it is the same 'precious Ointment on

the Head, that goes down to the Skirts of the Garments:' And on both it is a Spirit of Peace and Love: Psalm 133:1, 2. 'Behold how good, and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity! It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even **Aaron's** Beard; that went down to the Skirts of his Garments.' The Oil on **Aaron's** Garments, had the same sweet and inimitable Odor, with that on his Head; the Smell of the same sweet Spices. Christian Affections, and a Christian Behavior, is but the flowing out of the Savor of Christ's sweet Ointments. Because the Church has a dovelike Temper and Disposition, therefore it is said of her that she has Dove's Eyes, Song of Solomon 1:15. 'Behold thou art fair, my Love; behold thou art fair: Thou hast Dove's Eyes.' And Chapter 4:1. 'Behold thou art fair, my Love; behold thou art fair: Thou hast Dove's Eyes within thy Locks.' The same that is said of Christ, Chapter 6:12. 'His Eyes are as the Eyes of Doves.' And the Church is frequently compared to a Dove in Scripture, Song of Solomon 2:14. 'O my Dove, that art in the Clefts of the Rock—.' Chapter 5:2. 'Open to me my Love, my Dove.' And Chapter 6:9. 'My Dove, my Undeified, is but one.' Psalm 68:13. 'Ye shall be as the Wings of a Dove, covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold.' And 74:13. 'O deliver not the Soul of thy Turtle-Dove unto the Multitude of the Wicked.' The Dove that **Noah** sent out of the Ark, that could find no Rest for the Sole of her Foot, till she returned, was a Type of a true Saint.

Meekness is so much the Character of the Saints, that **the Meek** and **the Godly**, are used as synonymous Terms in Scripture: So Psalm 37:10, 11. The Wicked and the Meek are set in Opposition one to another, as Wicked and Godly. 'Yet a little

While, and the Wicked shall not be—but the Meek shall inherit the Earth.' So Psalm 147:6. 'The Lord lifteth up the Meek: He casteth the Wicked down to the Ground.'

It is doubtless very much on this Account, that Christ represents all his Disciples, all the Heirs of Heaven, as little Children, Matthew 19:14. 'Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' Matthew 10:42. 'Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a Cup of cold Water, in the Name of a Disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.' Matthew 18:6. 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, etc. Verse 10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. Verse 14. It is not the Will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.' John 13:33. 'Little Children, yet a little while am I with you.' Little Children are innocent and harmless: They do not do a great deal of Mischief in the World: Men need not be afraid of them: They are no dangerous Sort of Persons: Their Anger does not last long: They do not lay up Injuries in high Resentment, entertaining deep and rooted Malice. So Christians, in Malice, are Children, 1 **Corinthians** 14:20. Little Children are not guileful and deceitful; but plain and simple: They are not versed in the Arts of Fiction and Deceit; and are Strangers to artful Disguises. They are yielding and flexible, and not willful and obstinate; do not trust to their own Understanding, but rely on the Instructions of Parents, and others of superior Understanding. Here is therefore a fit and lively Emblem of the Followers of the Lamb. Persons being thus like little Children, is not only a Thing highly commendable, and what Christians approve of, and aim at, and which some of extraordinary Proficiency do attain to; but it is their universal Character,

and absolutely necessary in order to entering into the Kingdom of Heaven; unless Christ was mistaken; Matthew 18:3. 'Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' Mark 10:15. 'Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, he shall not enter therein.'

But here some may be ready to say, Is there no such Thing as Christian Fortitude, and Boldness for Christ, being good Soldiers in the Christian Warfare, and coming out bold against the Enemies of Christ and his People?

To which I answer, There doubtless is such a Thing. The whole Christian Life is compared to a Warfare, and fitly so. And the most eminent Christians are the best Soldiers, endowed with the greatest Degrees of Christian Fortitude. And it is the Duty of God's People to be steadfast, and vigorous in their Opposition to the Designs and Ways of such, as are endeavoring to overthrow the Kingdom of Christ, and the Interest of Religion. But yet many Persons seem to be quite mistaken concerning the Nature of Christian Fortitude. It is an exceeding diverse Thing from a brutal Fierceness, or the Boldness of Beasts of Prey. True Christian Fortitude consists in Strength of Mind, through Grace, exerted in two Things; In ruling and suppressing the **evil**, and unruly Passions and Affections of the Mind; and in steadfastly and freely exerting, and following **good** Affections and Dispositions, without being hindered by sinful Fear, or the Opposition of Enemies. But the Passions that are restrained and kept under, in the Exercise of this Christian Strength and Fortitude, are those very Passions that are vigorously and violently exerted, in a false Boldness for Christ. And those Affections that are vigorously exerted in true Fortitude,

are those Christian holy Affections, that are directly contrary to them. Although Christian Fortitude appears, in withstanding and counteracting the Enemies that are without us; yet it much more appears, in resisting and suppressing the Enemies that are within us; because they are our worst and strongest Enemies, and have greatest Advantage against us. The Strength of the good Soldier of Jesus Christ, appears in nothing more, than in steadfastly maintaining the holy Calm, Meekness, Sweetness, and Benevolence of his Mind, amidst all the Storms, Injuries, strange Behavior, and surprising Acts and Events of this evil and unreasonable World. The Scripture seems to intimate that true Fortitude consists chiefly in this, Proverbs 16:32. 'He that is slow to Anger, is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.'

The directest and surest Way in the World, to make a right Judgment, what a holy Fortitude is, in fighting with God's Enemies; is to look to the Captain of all God's Hosts, and our great Leader and Example; and see wherein his Fortitude and Valour appeared, in his chief Conflict, and in the Time of the greatest Battle that ever was, or ever will be fought with these Enemies, when he fought with them all alone, and of the People there was none with him, and exercised his Fortitude in the highest Degree that ever he did, and got that glorious Victory that will be celebrated in the Praises and Triumphs of all the Hosts of Heaven, throughout all Eternity: even to Jesus Christ in the Time of his last Sufferings; when his Enemies in Earth and Hell made their most violent Attack upon him, compassing him round on every Side, like rending and roaring Lions. Doubtless here we shall see the Fortitude of a holy Warrior and Champion in the Cause of God, in its highest Perfection and greatest Lustre, and an Example fit for

the Soldiers to follow, that fight under this Captain. But how did he show his holy Boldness and Valour at that Time? Not in the Exercise of any fiery Passions; not in fierce and violent Speeches, and vehemently declaiming against, and crying out of the intolerable Wickedness of Opposers, giving them their own in plain Terms; but in not opening his Mouth when afflicted and oppressed, in going as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before his Shearers, is dumb, not opening his Mouth; praying that the Father would forgive his cruel Enemies, because they knew not what they did; not shedding others Blood; but with all-conquering Patience and Love, shedding his own. Indeed one of his Disciples, that made a forward Pretense to **Boldness for Christ**, and confidently declared he would sooner die with Christ than deny him, began to lay about him with a Sword: But Christ meekly rebukes him, and heals the Wound he gives. And never was the Patience, Meekness, Love, and Forgiveness of Christ, in so glorious a Manifestation, as at that Time. Never did he appear so much a **Lamb**, and never did he show so much of the **dove-like** Spirit, as at that Time. If therefore we see any of the Followers of Christ, in the midst of the most violent, unreasonable and wicked Opposition, of God's and his own Enemies, maintaining under all this Temptation, the Humility, Quietness, and Gentleness of a Lamb, and the Harmlessness, and Love, and Sweetness of a Dove, we may well judge that here is a good Soldier of Jesus Christ.

When Persons are fierce and violent, and exert their sharp and bitter Passions, it shows Weakness, instead of Strength and Fortitude. 1 **Corinthians** 3 at the Beginning, 'And I Brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal,

even as unto Babes in Christ.—For ye are yet Carnal: For whereas there is among you Envyng and Strife, and Divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as Men?'

There is a pretended Boldness for Christ that arises from no better Principle than Pride. A Man may be forward to expose himself to the Dislike of the World, and even to provoke their Displeasure, out of Pride. For it is the Nature of spiritual Pride to cause Men to seek Distinction and Singularity; and so oftentimes to set themselves at War with those that they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their Party. True Boldness for Christ is universal, and overcomes all, and carries them above the Displeasure of Friends and Foes; so that they will forsake all rather than Christ; and will rather offend all Parties, and be thought meanly of by all, than offend Christ. And that Duty which tries whether a Man is willing to be despised by them that are of his own Party, and thought the least worthy to be regarded by them, is a much more proper Trial of his Boldness for Christ, than his being forward to expose himself to the Reproach of Opposers. The Apostle sought not Glory, not only of Heathens and **Jews**, but of Christians; as he declares, 1 **Thessalonians** 2:26. He is bold for Christ, that has christian Fortitude enough, to confess his Fault openly, when he has committed one that requires it, and as it were to come down upon his Knees before Opposers. Such Things as these are a vastly greater Evidence of holy Boldness, than resolutely and fiercely confronting Opposers.

As some are much mistaken concerning the Nature of true **Boldness** for Christ, so they are concerning christian **Zeal**. It is indeed a Flame, but a sweet One: Or rather it is the Heat and Fervour of a sweet Flame. For the Flame of which it is the Heat, is

no other than that of divine Love, or christian Charity; which is the sweetest and most benevolent Thing that is, or can be, in the Heart of Man or Angel. Zeal is the Fervour of this Flame, as it ardently and vigorously goes out towards the Good that is its Object, in Desires of it, and Pursuit after it; and so consequentially, in Opposition to the Evil that is contrary to it, and impedes it. There is indeed Opposition, and vigorous Opposition, that is a Part of it, or rather as an Attendant of it; but it is against **Things**, and not **Persons**. Bitterness against the **Persons** of Men is no Part of it, but is very contrary to it; insomuch that so much the warmer true Zeal is, and the higher it is raised, so much the further are Persons from such Bitterness, and so much fuller of Love, both to the Evil and to the Good. As appears from what has been just now observed, that it is no other, in its very Nature and Essence, than the Fervour of a Spirit of christian Charity. And as to what Opposition there is in it, to **Things**, it is firstly and chiefly against the **evil Things** in the Person himself, who has this Zeal; against the Enemies of God and Holiness, that are in his own Heart; (as these are most in his View, and what he is most to do with;) and but secondarily against the Sins of others. And therefore there is nothing in a true christian Zeal, that is contrary to that Spirit of Meekness, Gentleness and Love, that Spirit of a little Child, a Lamb and Dove, that has been spoken of; but it is entirely agreeable to it, and tends to promote it.

But to say something particularly concerning this christian Spirit I have been speaking of, as exercised in these three Things, **Forgiveness**, **Love** and **Mercy**; I would observe that the

Scripture is very clear and express concerning the absolute Necessity of each of these, as belonging to the Temper and Character of every Christian.

It is so as to a **forgiving Spirit**, or a Disposition to overlook and forgive Injuries. Christ gives it to us both as a negative and positive Evidence; and is express in teaching us, that if we are of such a Spirit, it is a Sign we are in a State of Forgiveness and Favour our selves; and that if we are not of such a Spirit, we are not forgiven of God; and seems to take special Care that we should take good Notice of it, and always bear it on our Minds. **Matthew** 6:12, 14, 15. 'Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.—For if ye forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.' Christ expresses the same again at another Time, **Mark** 11:25, 26 and again in **Matthew** 18:22, to the End, in the Parable of the Servant that owed his Lord ten thousand Talents, that would not forgive his fellow Servant an hundred Pence; and therefore was delivered to the Tormentors. In the Application of the Parable Christ says, Verse 35. 'So likewise shall my heavenly Father do, if ye from your Heart forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.'

And that all true Saints are of a **loving**, benevolent and beneficent Temper, the Scripture is very plain and abundant. Without it the Apostle tells us, 'Though we should speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, we are as a sounding Brass or a tinkling Cymbal: And that though we have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge; yet without this Spirit we are nothing.' And there is no one Virtue or Disposition of the Mind, that is so often, and so expressly insisted on, in the Marks that are laid

down in the New Testament, whereby to know true Christians. It is often given as a Sign that is peculiarly distinguishing, by which all may know Christ's Disciples, and by which they may know themselves: And is often laid down, both as a negative and positive Evidence. Christ calls the Law of Love, by way of Eminency, **his Commandment**, John 13:34. 'A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.' And Chapter 15:12. 'This is **my Commandment**, that ye love one another as I have loved you.' And Verse 17. 'These Things I command you, that ye love one another.' And says, Chapter 13:35. 'By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.' And Chapter 14:21 (still with a special Reference to this which he calls **his Commandment**) 'He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' The beloved Disciple, who had so much of this sweet Temper himself, abundantly insists on it, in his Epistles. There is none of the Apostles, is so much in laying down express Signs of Grace, for Professors to try themselves by, as he; and in his Signs, he insists scarcely on any Thing else, but a Spirit of christian Love, and an agreeable Practice; 1 John 2:9, 10. 'He that saith he is in the Light, and hateth his Brother, is in Darkness even until now. He that loveth his Brother abideth in the Light, and there is none Occasion of Stumbling in him.' Chapter 3:14. 'We know that we are passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren. He that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death.' Verse 18, 19. 'My little Children, let us not love in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him.' Verse 23, 24. 'This is his Commandment, that we should love one another. And he that keepeth his

Commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.' Chapter 4:7, 8. 'Beloved, let us love one another; for Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love.' Verse 12, 13. 'No Man hath seen God at any Time: If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his Spirit.' Verse 16. 'God is Love: And he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.' Verse 20. 'If a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar: For he that loveth not his Brother that he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?'

And the Scripture is as plain as it is possible it should be, that none are true Saints, but those whose true Character it is, that they are of a Disposition to **pity** and **relieve** their Fellow-creatures, that are poor, indigent and afflicted. Psalm 37. 21. 'The Righteous shows Mercy, and gives.' Verse 26. 'He is ever merciful, and lends.' Psalm 112. 5. 'A good Man shows Favour, and lends.' Verse 9. 'He has dispersed abroad, and given to the Poor.' Proverbs 14. 31. 'He that honors God, has Mercy on the Poor.' Proverbs 21. 26. 'The Righteous gives, and spares not.' Jeremiah 22. 16. 'He judges the Cause of the Poor and Needy: Then it was well with him: Was not this to know me, saith the Lord?' James 1. 27. 'Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, etc.' Hosea 6. 6. 'For I desired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God, more than Burnt-Offerings.' Matthew 5. 7. 'Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy.' 2 Corinthians 8. 8. 'I speak not by Commandment, but by Occasion of the Forwardness of others, and

to prove the Sincerity of your Love.' James 2. 13, 14, 15, 16. 'For he shall have Judgment without Mercy, that has shown no Mercy. What does it profit my Brethren, though a Man says he has Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith save him? If a Brother or Sister be naked, and destitute of daily Food, and one of you say unto them, depart in Peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those Things which are needful for the Body; what does it profit?' 1 John 3. 17. 'Whoso has this Worlds Goods, and sees his Brother have Need, and shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwells the Love of God in him? Christ in that Description he gives us of the Day of Judgment, **Matthew** 25. (which is the most particular that we have in all the Bible) represents that Judgment will be passed at that Day, according as Men have been found to have been of a merciful Spirit and Practice, or otherwise. Christ's Design in giving such a Description of the Process of that Day, is plainly to possess all his Followers with that Apprehension, that unless this was their Spirit and Practice, there was no Hope of their being accepted and owned by him, at that Day. Therefore this is an Apprehension that we ought to be possessed with. We find in Scripture that a **righteous Man**, and a **merciful Man** are synonymous Expressions; Isaiah 57. 1. 'The **Righteous** perishes, and no Man lays it to Heart; and the **merciful Men** are taken away, none considering that the **Righteous** is taken away from the Evil to come.'

Thus we see how full, clear and abundant, the Evidence from Scripture is, that those who are truly gracious, are under the Government of that lamb-like, dove-like Spirit of Jesus Christ. And that this is essentially and eminently the Nature of the saving Grace of the Gospel, and the proper Spirit of true Christianity. We

may therefore undoubtedly determine that all truly Christian Affections are attended with such a Spirit; and that this is the natural Tendency of the Fear and Hope, the Sorrow and the Joy, the Confidence and the Zeal of true Christians.

None will understand me that true Christians have no Remains of a contrary Spirit, and can never, in any Instances, be guilty of a Behavior disagreeable to such a Spirit. But this I affirm, and shall affirm until I deny the Bible to be any Thing worth, that every Thing in Christians that belongs to true Christianity, is of this Tendency, and works this Way; and that there is no true Christian upon Earth, but is so under the prevailing Power of such a Spirit, that he is properly denominated from it, and it is truly and justly his Character: And that therefore Ministers, and others have no Warrant from Christ to encourage Persons, that are of a contrary Character and Behavior, to think they are converted, because they tell a fair Story of Illuminations and Discoveries. In so doing they would set up their own Wisdom against Christ's, and judge without, and against that Rule by which Christ has declared all Men should know his Disciples. Some Persons place Religion so much in certain transient Illuminations and Impressions (especially if they are in such a particular Method and Order) and so little in the Spirit and Temper Persons are of, that they greatly deform Religion, and form Notions of Christianity quite different from what it is, as delineated in the Scriptures. The Scripture knows of no such true Christians, as are of a sordid, selfish, cross and contentious Spirit. Nothing can be invented that is a greater Absurdity, than a morose, hard, close, high-spirited, spiteful true Christian. We must learn the Way of bringing Men to Rules, and

not Rules to Men, and so strain and stretch the Rules of God's Word, to take in ourselves, and some of our Neighbors, until we make them wholly of none Effect.

It is true that Allowances must be made for Men's natural Temper with Regard to these Things, as well as others. But not such Allowances, as to allow Men, that once were Wolves and Serpents, to be now converted, without any remarkable Change in the Spirit of their Mind. The Change made by true Conversion, is wont to be most remarkable and sensible, with Respect to that which before was the Wickedness the Person was most notoriously guilty of. Grace has as great a Tendency to restrain and mortify such Sins, as are contrary to the Spirit that has been spoken of, as it has to mortify Drunkenness or Lasciviousness. Yea the Scripture represents the Change wrought by Gospel Grace, as especially appearing in an Alteration of the former Sort; Isaiah 11. 6-9. 'The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb; and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid; and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together; and a little Child shall lead them. And the Cow, and the Bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: And the Lion shall eat Straw like the Ox: And the sucking Child shall play on the Hole of the Asp; and the weaned Child shall put his Hand on the Cockatrice Den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain. For the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.' And to the same Purpose is **Isaiah** 65. 25. Accordingly we find, that in the primitive Times of the Christian Church, Converts were remarkably changed in this Respect: Titus 3. 3, etc. 'For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures; living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another. But af-

ter that the Kindness and Love of God our Savior, toward Men, appeared,—He saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost.' And Colossians 2. 7, 8. 'In the which ye also walked, some Time, when ye lived in them. But now you also put off all these; Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blasphemy, filthy Communication out of your Mouth.'

9. Gracious Affections soften the Heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian Tenderness of Spirit.

False Affections, however Persons may seem to be melted by them while they are new, yet have a Tendency in the End to harden the Heart. A Disposition to some Kind of Passions may be established; such as imply Self-seeking, Self-Exaltation, and Opposition to others. But false Affections, with the Delusion that attends them, finally tend to stupefy the Mind, and shut it up against those Affections wherein Tenderness of Heart consists: And the Effect of them at last is, that Persons in the settled Frame of their Minds, become less affected with their present and past Sins, and less conscientious with Respect to future Sins, less moved with the Warnings and Cautions of God's Word, or God's Chastisements in his Providence, more careless of the Frame of their Hearts, and the Manner and Tendency of their Behavior, less quick-sighted to discern what is sinful, less afraid of the Appearance of Evil, than they were while they were under legal Awakenings and Fears of Hell. Now they have been the Subjects of such and such Impressions and Affections, and have a high Opinion of themselves, and look on their State to be safe; they can be much more easy than before, in living in the Neglect of Duties that are troublesome and inconvenient; and are much more flow and partial in complying with difficult Commands; are in no Measure so alarmed at the

Appearance of their own Defects and Transgressions; are emboldened to favor themselves more, with Respect to the Labor, and painful Care and Exactness in their Walk, and more easily yield to Temptations, and the Solicitations of their Lusts; and have far less Care of their Behavior, when they come into the holy Presence of God, in the Time of public or private Worship. Formerly it may be, under legal Convictions they took much Pains in Religion, and denied themselves in many Things: But now they think themselves out of Danger of Hell, they very much put off the Burden of the Cross, and save themselves the Trouble of difficult Duties, and allow themselves more of the Comfort and the Enjoyment of their Ease and their Lusts.

Such Persons as these, instead of embracing Christ as their **Savior from Sin**, they trust in him as the **Savior of their Sins**: Instead of flying to him as their Refuge **from their spiritual Enemies**, they make Use of him as the Defence **of their spiritual Enemies, from God**, and to strengthen them against him. They make Christ the Minister of Sin, and great Officer and Vicegerent of the Devil, to strengthen his Interest, and make him above all Things in the World strong against JEHOVAH; so that they may sin against him with good Courage, and without any Fear, being effectually secured from Restraints by his most solemn Warnings and most awful Threatenings. They trust in Christ to preserve to them the quiet Enjoyment of their Sins, and to be their Shield to defend them from God's Displeasure; while they come close to him, even to his Bosom, the Place of his Children, to fight against him, with their mortal Weapons, hid under their Skirts.

However some of these, at the same Time, make a great Profession of Love to God, and Assurance of his Favor, and great Joy in tasting the sweets of his Love.

After the Manner **they** trusted in Christ, that the Apostle **Jude** speaks of, **crept in** among the Saints **unknown**; but were really **ungodly Men, turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness**, Jude 4. These are they that trust in their being righteous; and because God has promised that **the Righteous shall surely live** or certainly be saved, are therefore emboldened to **commit Iniquity**, whom God threatens in Ezekiel 33. 13. **When I shall say to the Righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own Righteousness, and commit Iniquity; all his Righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his Iniquity that he has committed, he shall die for it.**

Gracious Affections are of a quite contrary Tendency; they turn a Heart of Stone more and more into a Heart of Flesh. An holy Love and Hope are Principles that are vastly more efficacious upon the Heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a Dread of Sin, or whatever might displease and offend God, and to engage it to Watchfulness and Care and Strictness, than a slavish Fear of Hell. Gracious Affections, as was observed before, flow out of a contrite Heart, or (as the Word signifies) a bruised Heart, bruised and broken with godly Sorrow; which makes the Heart tender, as bruised Flesh is tender, and easily hurt. Godly Sorrow has much greater Influence to make the Heart tender, than mere legal Sorrow from selfish Principles.

The Tenderness of the Heart of a true Christian, is elegantly signified by our Saviour, in his comparing such a one to a little Child. The Flesh of a little Child is very tender: so is the Heart of one that is new-born. This is represented in what we are told of **Naaman's** Cure of his Leprosy, by his washing in **Jordan**, by the Direction of the Prophet; which was undoubtedly a Type of the renewing of the Soul, by washing in the Laver of Regeneration. We are told, 2 Kings 5:14, That **he went down, and dipped himself seven Times in Jordan, according to the Saying of the Man of God; and his Flesh came again, like unto the Flesh of a little Child.** Not only is the Flesh of a little Child tender, but his Mind is tender. A little Child has his Heart easily moved, wrought upon and bowed: So is a Christian in spiritual Things. A little Child is apt to be affected with Sympathy, to weep with them that weep, and can't well bear to see others in Distress: So it is with a Christian; **John** 11:35; **Romans** 12:15; 1 **Corinthians** 12:26. A little Child is easily won by Kindness: So is a Christian. A little Child is easily affected with Grief at temporal Evils, and has his Heart melted, and he falls a weeping: Thus tender is the Heart of a Christian, with Regard to the Evil of Sin. A little Child is easily affrighted at the Appearance of outward Evils, or any thing that threatens its Hurt: So is a Christian apt to be alarmed at the Appearance of moral Evil, and any thing that threatens the Hurt of the Soul. A little Child, when it meets Enemies, or fierce Beasts, is not apt to trust its own Strength, but flies to its Parents for Refuge: So a Saint is not self-confident in engaging spiritual Enemies, but flies to Christ. A little Child is apt to be suspicious of Evil in Places of Danger, afraid in the Dark, afraid when left alone, or far from Home: So is a Saint apt to be sensible of his spiritual Dangers, jeal-

ous of himself, full of Fear when he can't see his Way plain before him, afraid to be left alone, and to be at a Distance from God; Proverbs 28:14. **Happy is the Man that feareth always; but he that hardens his Heart shall fall into Mischief.** A little Child is apt to be afraid of Superiors, and to dread their Anger, and tremble at their Frowns and Threatenings: So is a true Saint with Respect to God; Psalm 119:120. **My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.** Isaiah 66:2. **To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and trembleth at my Word.** Verse 5. **Hear ye the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word.** Ezra 9:4. **Then were assembled unto me, every one that trembled at the Words of the God of Israel.** Chapter 10:3. **According to the Counsel of my Lord, and of those that tremble at the Commandment of our God.** A little Child approaches Superiors with Awe: So do the Saints approach God with holy Awe and Reverence. Job 13:11. **Shall not his Excellency make you afraid, and his Dread fall upon you.** Holy Fear is so much the Nature of true Godliness, that it is called in Scripture by no other Name more frequently, than the **Fear of God.**

Hence gracious Affections don't tend to make Men bold, forward, noisy and boisterous; but rather to **speak trembling;** (Hosea 13:1. **When Ephraim spoke trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.**) and to clothe with a Kind of holy Fear in all their Behavior towards God and Man; agreeable to **Psalm 2:11; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Corinthians 7:15; Ephesians 6:5; 1 Peter 3:2; Romans 11:20.**

But here some may object and say, Is there no such Thing as a holy Boldness in Prayer, and the Duties of divine Worship? I answer, There is doubtless such a Thing; and it is chiefly to be found in eminent Saints, Persons of great Degrees of Faith and Love. But this holy Boldness is not in the least opposite to **Reverence**; though it be to **Disunion** and **Servility**. It abolishes or lessens that Disposition which arises from **moral Distance** or **Alienation**; and also **Distance of Relation**, as that of a Slave: But not at all, that which becomes the **natural Distance**, whereby we are infinitely inferior. No Boldness in poor sinful Worms of the Dust, that have a right Sight of God and themselves, will prompt them to approach to God with less Fear and Reverence, than spotless and glorious Angels in Heaven; who cover their Faces before his Throne; **Isaiah** 6 at the Beginning. **Rebecca**, (who in her Marriage with **Isaac**, in almost all its Circumstances, was manifestly a great Type of the Church, the Spouse of Christ) when she meets **Isaac**, lights off from her Camel, and takes a Veil, and covers herself; although she was brought to him as his Bride, to be with him, in the nearest Relation, and most intimate Union, that Mankind are ever united one to another in. **Elijah**, that great Prophet, who had so much holy Familiarity with God, at a Time of special Nearness to God, even when he conversed with him in the Mount, wrapped his Face in his Mantle. Which was not because he was terrified with any servile Fear, by the terrible **Wind**, and **Earthquake**, and **Fire**; but after these were all over, and God spoke to him as a Friend, **in a still small Voice**; 1 Kings 19:12, 13. **And after the Fire, a still small Voice: And it was so, when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his Face in his Mantle.** And **Moses**, with whom God

spoke Face to Face, as a Man speaks with his Friend, and was distinguished from all the Prophets, in the Familiarity with God that he was admitted to; at a Time when he was brought nearest of all, when God showed him his Glory in that same Mount, where he afterwards spoke to **Elijah; He made Haste, and bowed his Head towards the Earth, and worshipped,** Exodus 34:8. There is in some Persons, a most unsuitable and unsufferable Boldness, in their Addresses to the great JEHOVAH, in an Affectation of an holy Boldness, and Ostentation of eminent Nearness and Familiarity; the very Thoughts of which would make them shrink into Nothing, with Horror and Confusion, if they saw the Distance that is between God and them. They are like the **Pharisee**, that boldly came up near, in a Confidence of his own Eminency in Holiness. Whereas, if they saw their Vileness, they would be more like the **Publican**, that **stood afar off, and dared not so much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven; but smote upon his Breast, saying, God be merciful to me a Sinner.** It becomes such sinful Creatures as we, to approach a holy God (although with Faith, and without Terror, yet) with Contrition, and penitent Shame and Confusion of Face. It is foretold that this should be the Disposition of the Church, in the Time of her highest Privileges on Earth, in her latter Day of Glory, when God should remarkably comfort her, by revealing his Covenant-Mercy to her; Ezekiel 16:60, to the End. **I will establish unto thee an everlasting Covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy Ways, and be ashamed.— And I will establish my Covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more, because of thy**

Shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done; saith the Lord God. The Woman that we read of in the seventh Chapter of **Luke**, that was an eminent Saint, and had much of that true Love which casts out Fear, by Christ's own Testimony, Verse 47, she approached Christ in an amiable, and acceptable Manner, when she came with that humble Modesty, Reverence and Shame, when she stood at his Feet, weeping **behind him**, as not being fit to appear before his Face, and washed his Feet with her Tears.

One Reason why gracious Affections are attended with this Tenderness of Spirit which has been spoken of, is that true Grace tends to promote Convictions of Conscience. Persons are wont to have Convictions of Conscience before they have any Grace: And if afterwards they are truly converted, and have true Repentance, and Joy, and Peace in Believing; this has a Tendency to put an End to **Terrors**, but has no Tendency to put an End to **Convictions of Sin**, but to increase them. It doesn't stupefy a Man's Conscience; but makes it more sensible, more easily and thoroughly discerning the Sinfulness of that which is sinful, and receiving a greater Conviction of the heinous and dreadful Nature of Sin, susceptible of a quicker and deeper Sense of it, and more convinced of his own Sinfulness, and Wickedness of his Heart; and consequently it has a Tendency to make him more jealous of his Heart. Grace tends to give the Soul a further and better **Conviction** of the same Things concerning Sin, that it was **convinced** of under a legal Work of the Spirit of God; **namely** Its great Contrariety to the Will and Law and Honor of God, the Greatness of God's Hatred of it, and Displeasure against it, and the dreadful Punishment it exposes to and deserves. And not only so,

but it **convinces** the Soul of some thing further concerning Sin, that it saw nothing of, while only under legal **Convictions**; and that is the infinitely hateful Nature of Sin, and its Dreadfulness upon that Account. And this makes the Heart tender with Respect to Sin; like **David's** Heart, that smote him, when he had cut off **Saul's** Skirt. The Heart of a true Penitent is like a burnt Child, that dreads the Fire. Whereas on the Contrary, he that has had a counterfeit Repentance, and false Comforts and Joys, is like Iron that has been suddenly heated and quenched; it becomes much harder than before. A false Conversion puts an End to Convictions of Conscience; and so either takes away, or much diminishes that Conscientiousness, which was manifested under a Work of the Law.

All gracious Affections have a Tendency to promote this Christian Tenderness of Heart, that has been spoken of: Not only a godly Sorrow; but also a gracious Joy; Psalm 2:11. 'Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling.' As also a gracious Hope; Psalm 33:18. 'Behold the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him; upon them that hope in his Mercy.' And Psalm 147:11. 'The Lord taketh Pleasure in them that fear him, and in them that hope in his Mercy.' Yea the most confident and assured Hope, that is truly gracious, has this Tendency. The higher an holy Hope is raised, the more there is of this Christian Tenderness. The banishing of a servile Fear, by a holy Assurance, is attended with a proportionable Increase of a reverential Fear. The diminishing of the Fear of the Fruits of God's Displeasure in future Punishment, is attended with a proportionable Increase of Fear of his Displeasure itself: The diminishing of the Fear of Hell, with an Increase of the Fear of Sin. The vanishing of Jealousies of the Person's State, is at-

tended with a proportionable Increase of Jealousy of his Heart, in a Distrust of its Strength, Wisdom, Stability, Faithfulness, **et cetera**. The less apt he is to be afraid of natural Evil, having 'his Heart fixed trusting in God, and so, not afraid of evil Tidings;' the more apt is he to be alarmed with the Appearance of moral Evil, or the Evil of Sin. As he has more holy Boldness, so he has less of Self-Confidence, and a forward assuming Boldness, and more Modesty. As he is more sure than others of Deliverance from Hell, so he has more of a Sense of the Desert of it. He is less apt than others to be shaken in Faith; but more apt than others to be moved with solemn Warnings, and with God's Frowns, and with the Calamities of others. He has the firmest Comfort, but the softest Heart: Richer than others, but poorest of all in Spirit: The tallest and strongest Saint, but the least and tenderest Child amongst them.

10. Another Thing wherein those Affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false, is **beautiful Symmetry and Proportion**.

Not that the Symmetry of the Virtues, and gracious Affections of the Saints, in this Life, is perfect: It oftentimes, is in many Things defective, through the Imperfection of Grace, for want of proper Instructions, through Errors in Judgment, or some particular Unhappiness of natural Temper, or Defects in Education, and many other Disadvantages that might be mentioned. But yet there is, in no wise, that monstrous Disproportion in gracious Affections, and the various Parts of true Religion in the Saints, that is very commonly to be observed, in the false Religion, and counterfeit Graces of Hypocrites.

In the truly holy Affections of the Saints is found that Proportion, which is the natural Consequence of the Universality of their Sanctification. They have the whole Image of Christ upon them: They have 'put off the old Man, and have put on the new Man' entire in all his Parts and Members. 'It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all Fullness should dwell:' there is in him every Grace; 'He is full of Grace and Truth: And they that are Christ's, do 'of his Fullness receive, and Grace for Grace;' (**John** 1:14, 16.) that is there is every Grace in them, which is in Christ: 'Grace for Grace;' that is, Grace answerable to Grace: There is no Grace in Christ, but there is its Image in Believers to answer it: The Image is a true Image; and there is something of the same beautiful Proportion in the Image, which is in the Original; there is Feature for Feature, and Member for Member. There is Symmetry and Beauty in God's Workmanship. The natural Body, which God hath made consists of many Members; and all are in a beautiful Proportion: So it is in the new Man, consisting of various Graces and Affections. The Body of one that was born a perfect Child, may fail of exact Proportion through Distemper, and the Weakness and Wounds of some of its Members; yet the Disproportion is in no Measure like that of those that are born Monsters.

It is with Hypocrites, as it was with **Ephraim** of old, at a Time when God greatly complains of their Hypocrisy; Hosea 7. 'Ephraim is a Cake not turned,' half roasted and half raw: There is commonly no Manner of Uniformity in their Affections.

There is in many of them a great Partiality, with Regard to the several Kinds of religious Affections: Great Affections in some Things, and no manner of Proportion in others. An holy Hope and holy Fear go together in the Saints, as has been observed from

Psalms 33:18 and 147:11. But in some of these is the most confident Hope, while they are void of Reverence, Self-jealousy and Caution, and to a great Degree cast off Fear. In the Saints, Joy and holy Fear go together, though the Joy be never so great; as it was with the Disciples, in that joyful Morning of Christ's Resurrection, Matthew 28:8. 'And they departed quickly from the Sepulchre, with Fear and GREAT Joy. But many of these rejoice without trembling: Their Joy is of that Sort, that is truly opposite to godly Fear.

But particularly, one great Difference between Saints and Hypocrites is this, that the Joy and Comfort of the Former is attended with godly Sorrow and Mourning for Sin. They have not only Sorrow to prepare them for their first Comfort, but after they are comforted, and their Joy established. As it is foretold of the Church of God, that they should mourn and loathe themselves for their Sins, after they were returned from the Captivity, and were settled in the Land of **Canaan**, the Land of Rest, and the Land that flows with Milk and Honey, Ezekiel 20:42, 43. 'And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the Land of **Israel**, into the Country for the which I lifted up mine Hand, to give it to your Fathers. And there shall ye remember your Ways, and all your Doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own Sight, for all your Evils that ye have committed.' As also in Ezekiel 16:61, 62, 63. A true Saint is like a little Child in this Respect; he never had any godly Sorrow before he was born again; but since has it often in exercise: As a little Child, before it is born, and while it remains in Darkness, never cries; but as soon as ever it sees the Light, it begins to cry; and thenceforward is often crying. Although Christ has borne our

Griefs, and carried our Sorrows, so that we are freed from the **Sorrow of Punishment**, and may now sweetly feed upon the Comforts Christ has purchased for us; yet that hinders not but that our feeding on these Comforts should be attended with the **Sorrow of Repentance**. As of old, the Children of **Israel** were commanded, evermore to feed upon the paschal Lamb, with bitter Herbs. True Saints are spoken of in Scripture, not only as those that have mourned for Sin, but as those that do mourn, whose Manner it is still to mourn; Matthew 5:4. 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

Not only is there often in Hypocrites, an essential Deficiency, as to the various Kinds of religious Affections; but also a strange Partiality and Disproportion, in the same Affections, with Regard to different Objects.

Thus as to the Affection of **Love**, some make high Pretenses, and a great Show of Love to God and Christ, and it may be have been greatly affected with what they have heard or thought concerning them: But they have not a Spirit of Love and Benevolence towards Men, but are disposed to Contention, Envy, Revenge, and Evil-speaking; and will, it may be, suffer an old Grudge to rest in their Bosoms towards a Neighbor, for seven Years together, if not twice seven Years; living in real Ill-will and Bitterness of Spirit towards him: And it may be in their Dealings with their Neighbors, are not very strict and conscientious in observing the Rule of **doing to others, as they would that they should do to them:** 1 John 4:20. **If a Man say, I love God, and hates his Brother, he is a Liar: For he that loves not his Brother, whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?**

And on the other Hand, there are others, that appear as if they had a great deal of Benevolence to Men, are very good natured and generous in their Way; but have no Love to God.

And as to Love to Men, there are some that have flowing Affections to some; but their Love is far from being of so extensive and universal a Nature, as a truly Christian Love is. They are full of dear Affections to some, and full of Bitterness towards others. They are knit to their own Party, them that approve of them, love them and admire them; but are fierce against those that oppose and dislike them. Matthew 5:45, 46. **Be like your Father which is in Heaven: For he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good. —For if ye love them which love you, what Reward have ye? Do not even the Publicans the same?** Some show a great Affection to their Neighbors; and pretend to be ravished with the Company of the Children of God; and at the same Time are uncomfortable and churlish towards their Wives and other near Relations **at Home**, and are very negligent of relative Duties. And as to the great Love to Sinners and Opposers of Religion, and the great Concern for their Souls, that there is an Appearance of in some, even to extreme Distress and Agony, singling out a particular Person, from among a Multitude, for its Object, there being at the same Time no general Compassion to Sinners, that are in equally miserable Circumstances, but what is in a monstrous Disproportion; this seems not to be of the Nature of a gracious Affection. Not that I suppose it to be at all strange, that Pity to the perishing Souls of Sinners should be to a Degree of Agony, if other Things are answerable; or that a truly gracious Compassion to Souls should be exercised much more to some Persons than others that are equally

miserable, especially on some particular Occasions: There may many Things happen to fix the Mind, and affect the Heart, with Respect to a particular Person, at such a Juncture; and without Doubt some Saints have been in great Distress for the Souls of particular Persons, so as to be as it were in Travail for them: But when Persons appear, at particular Times, in wracking Agonies for the Soul of some single Person, far beyond what has been usually heard or read of in eminent Saints, but appear to be Persons that have a Spirit of meek and fervent Love, Charity, and Compassion to Mankind in general, in a far less Degree than they; I say, such Agonies are greatly to be suspected, for Reasons already given; **namely**, That the Spirit of God is wont to give Graces and gracious Affections in a beautiful Symmetry and Proportion.

And as there is a monstrous Disproportion in the Love of some, in its Exercises towards different Persons, so there is in their seeming Exercises of Love towards the same Persons. Some Men show a Love to others as to their outward Man, they are liberal of their worldly Substance, and often give to the Poor; but have no Love to, or Concern for the Souls of Men. Others pretend a great Love to Men's Souls, that are not compassionate and charitable towards their Bodies. The making a great Show of Love, Pity, and Distress for Souls, costs them nothing; but in order to show Mercy to Men's Bodies, they must part with Money out of their Pockets. But a true Christian Love to our Brethren, extends both to their Souls and Bodies. And herein is like the Love and Compassion of Jesus Christ. He showed Mercy to Men's Souls, by laboring for them in preaching the Gospel to them; and showed Mercy to their Bodies, by going about doing Good, healing all Manner of Sickness and Diseases among the People. We have a remarkable Instance of

Christ's having Compassion at once both to Men's Souls and Bodies, and showing Compassion by feeding both, in Mark 6:34, and so forth. **And Jesus, when he came out, saw much People, and was moved with Compassion towards them; because they were as Sheep not having a Shepherd: And he began to teach them many Things.** Here was his Compassion to their Souls. And in the Sequel, we have an Account of his Compassion to their Bodies, because they had been a long While **having nothing to eat:** He fed five thousand of them with five Loaves and two Fishes. And if the Compassion of professing Christians towards others do not work in the same Ways, it is a Sign that it is no true Christian Compassion.

And furthermore, it is a Sign that Affections are not of the right Sort, if Persons seem to be much affected with the bad Qualities of their Fellow-Christians, as the Coldness and Lifelessness of other Saints, but are in no Proportion affected with their own Defects and Corruptions. A true Christian may be affected with the Coldness and Unsavoriness of other Saints, and may mourn much over it. But at the same Time he is not so apt to be affected with the Badness of any Body's Heart, as his own. This is most in his View: This he is most quick-sighted to discern: This he sees most of the Aggravations of, and is most ready to cry out of. And a lesser Degree of Virtue will bring him to pity himself, and be concerned at his own Calamities, than rightly to be affected with others' Calamities. And if Men have not attained to the Less, we may determine they never attained to the Greater.

And here by the Way, I would observe, that it may be laid down as a general Rule, That if Persons pretend that they come to high Attainments in Religion, but have never yet arrived to the lesser

Attainments, it is a Sign of a vain Pretence. As if Persons pretend that they have got beyond mere **Morality**, to live a **spiritual** and **divine** Life; but really have not come to be so much as **moral** Persons. Or pretend to be greatly affected with the Wickedness of their Hearts, and are not affected with the palpable Violations of God's Commands in their Practice, which is a lesser Attainment. Or if they pretend to be brought to be even willing to be damned for the Glory of God, but have no Forwardness to suffer a little in their Estates and Names and worldly Convenience, for the sake of their Duty. Or pretend that they are not afraid to venture their Souls upon Christ, and commit their All to God, trusting to his bare Word, and the Faithfulness of his Promises, for their eternal Welfare; but at the same Time, have not Confidence enough in God, to dare to trust him with a little of their Estates, bestowed to pious and charitable Uses: I say, when it is thus with Persons, their Pretences are manifestly vain. He that is in a Journey, and imagines he has got far beyond such a Place in his Road, and never yet came to it, must be mistaken; and he is not yet arrived to the Top of the Hill, that never yet got half-way thither. But this by the Way.

The same that has been observed of the Affection of **Love**, is also to be observed of **other** religious Affections. Those that are true, extend in some Proportion, to the various Things that are their due and proper Objects: But when they are false, are commonly strangely disproportionate. So it is with religious **Desires** and Longings: These in the Saints, are to those Things that are spiritual and excellent in general; and that in some Proportion to their Excellency, Importance or Necessity, or their near Concern in them: But in false Longings, it is often far otherwise. They will strangely run, with an impatient Vehemence, after something of

less Importance, when other Things of greater Importance are neglected. Thus for Instance. Some Persons, from Time to Time, are attended with a vehement Inclination, and unaccountably violent Pressure, to declare to others what they experience, and to exhort others; when there is at the same Time, no Inclination, in any Measure equal to it, to other Things, that true Christianity has as great, yea, a greater Tendency to; as the pouring out the Soul before God in secret earnest Prayer and Praise to him, and more Conformity to him, and living more to his Glory, **and so forth.** We read in Scripture of **Groanings that cannot be uttered,** and **Soul-breakings for the Longing it hath,** and **Longings, Thirstings,** and **Pantings,** much more frequently to these latter Things, than the former.

And so as to **Hatred** and **Zeal;** when these are from right Principles, they are against Sin in general, in some Proportion to the Degree of Sinfulness; Psalm 119, 104. **I hate every false Way.** So Verse 128. But a false Hatred and Zeal against Sin, is against some particular Sin only. Thus some seem to be very zealous against Profaneness, and Pride in Apparel, who themselves are notorious for Covetousness, Closeness, and it may be Backbiting, Envy towards Superiors, Turbulency of Spirit towards Rulers, and rooted Ill-will to them that have injured them. False Zeal is against the Sins of others, while Men have no Zeal against their own Sins. But he that has true Zeal, exercises it chiefly against his own Sins: Though he shows also a proper Zeal against prevailing and dangerous Iniquity in others. And some pretend to have a great Abhorrence of their own Sins of Heart, and cry out much of their

inward Corruption; and yet make light of Sins in Practice, and seem to commit them without much Restraint or Remorse; though these imply Sin, both in Heart and Life.

As there is a much greater Disproportion in the Exercises of false Affections, than of true, as to different Objects; so there is also, as to different Times. For although true Christians are not always alike; yea, there is very great Difference, at different Times, and the best have Reason to be greatly ashamed of their Unsteadiness; yet there is in no wise that Instability and Inconstancy in the Hearts of those who are true **Virgins, that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth**, which is in false-hearted Professors. The righteous Man is truly said to be one **whose Heart is fixed, trusting in God**, (Psalm 112. 7.) and to have **his Heart established with Grace**, (Hebrews 13. 9.) and to **hold on his Way**. Job 17. 9. **The Righteous shall hold on his Way, and he that hath clean Hands shall wax stronger and stronger**. It is spoken of as a Note of the Hypocrisy of the Jewish Church, that they **were as a swift Dromedary, traversing her Ways**.

If therefore Persons are religious only by Fits and Starts; if they now and then seem to be raised up to the Clouds in their Affections, and then suddenly fall down again, lose all, and become quite careless and carnal, and this is their Manner of carrying on Religion; if they appear greatly moved, and mightily engaged in Religion, only in extraordinary Seasons, in the Time of a remarkable Out-pouring of the Spirit, or other uncommon Dispensation or Providence, or upon the real or supposed Receipt of some great Mercy, when they have received some extraordinary temporal Mercy, or suppose that they are newly converted, or have lately

had what they call a great Discovery; but quickly return to such a Frame, that their Hearts are chiefly upon other Things, and the prevailing Bent of their Hearts and Stream of their Affections is ordinarily towards the Things of this World; when they are like the Children of **Israel** in the Wilderness, who had their Affections highly raised by what God had done for them at the Red Sea, and sang his Praise, and soon fell a lusting after the Flesh-Pots of **Egypt**, but then again when they came to Mount **Sinai**, and saw the great Manifestations God made of himself there, seemed to be greatly engaged again, and mighty forward to enter into Covenant with God, saying, **All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient**, but then quickly made them a golden Calf; I say, when it is thus with Persons, it is a Sign of the Unsoundness of Affections. They are like the Waters in the Time of a Shower of Rain, which during the Shower, and a little after, run like a Brook, and flow abundantly; but are presently quite dry: And when another Shower comes, then they will flow again. Whereas a true Saint is like a Stream from a living Spring; which though it may be greatly increased by a Shower of Rain, and diminished in Time of Drought; yet constantly runs: (John 4. 14. **The Water that I shall give him, shall be in him, a Well of Water springing up**, and so forth) or like a Tree planted by such a Stream, that has a constant Supply at the Root, and is always green, even in Time of the greatest Drought. Jeremiah 17. 7, 8. 'Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose Hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a Tree planted by the Waters, and that spreadeth out her Roots by the River; and shall not see when Heat cometh; but her Leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the Year of Drought; neither shall cease from yielding Fruit.' Many Hypocrites are like

Comets, that appear for a While with a mighty Blaze; but are very unsteady and irregular in their Motion, (and are therefore called wandering Stars, **Jude** 13.) and their Blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great While. But the true Saints are like the fixed Stars, which, though they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are steadfast in their Orb, and may truly be said to shine with a constant Light. Hypocritical Affections are like a violent Motion; like that of the Air that is moved with Winds. (**Jude** 12.) But gracious Affections are more a natural Motion, like the Stream of a River; which though it has many Turns hither and thither, and may meet with Obstacles, and run more freely and swiftly in some Places than others; yet in the general, with a steady and constant Course, tends the same Way, until it gets to the Ocean.

And as there is a strange Unevenness and Disproportion in false Affections, at different **Times**; so there often is in different **Places**. Some are greatly affected from Time to Time, when in Company; but have nothing that bears any Manner of Proportion to it, in Secret, in close Meditation, secret Prayer, and conversing with God, when alone, and separated from all the World. A true Christian doubtless delights in religious Fellowship, and christian Conversation, and finds much to affect his Heart in it: But he also delights at Times to retire from all Mankind, to converse with God in solitary Places. And this also has its peculiar Advantages for fixing his Heart, and engaging its Affections. True Religion disposes Persons to be much alone, in solitary Places, for holy Meditation and Prayer. So it wrought in **Isaac**, **Genesis** 24:63. And which is much more, so it wrought in Jesus Christ. How often do we read of his retiring into Mountains and solitary Places, for holy Converse

with his Father? It is difficult to conceal great Affections, but yet gracious Affections are of a much more silent and secret Nature, than those that are counterfeit. So it is with the gracious Sorrow of the Saints. So it is with their Sorrow for their own Sins. Thus the Future gracious Mourning of true Penitents, at the Beginning of the latter Day Glory, is represented as being so secret, as to be hidden from the Companions of their Bosom; Zechariah 12:12-14. 'And the Land shall mourn, every Family apart. The Family of the House of **David** apart, and their Wives apart. The Family of the House of **Nathan** apart, and their Wives apart. The Family of the House of **Levi** apart, and their Wives apart. The Family of **Shimei** apart, and their Wives apart. All the Families that remain, every Family apart, and their Wives apart.' So it is with their Sorrow for the Sins of others. The Saints' Pains and Travailing for the Souls of Sinners is chiefly in secret Places; Jeremiah 13:17. 'If ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in Secret Places for your Pride: And mine Eye shall weep sore, and run down with Tears; because the Lord's Flock is carried away captive.' So it is with gracious Joys: They are **hidden Manna**, in this Respect, as well as others; Revelation 2:17. The Psalmist seems to speak of his sweetest Comforts, as those that were to be had in Secret; Psalm 63:5. 'My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips; when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate upon thee in the Night Watches.' Christ calls forth his Spouse, away from the World, into retired Places, that he may give her his sweetest Love; Canticles 7:11, 12. 'Come my Beloved, let us go forth into the Field, let us lodge in the Villages:— There will I give thee my Love.' The most eminent divine Favours that the Saints obtained, that we read of in Scripture, were in their

Retirement. The principal Manifestations that God made of himself, and his Covenant-Mercy to **Abraham**, were when he was alone, apart from his numerous Family; as any one will judge that carefully reads his History. **Isaac** received that special Gift of God to him, **Rebekah**, who was so great a Comfort to him, and by whom he obtained the promised Seed, walking alone, meditating in the Field. **Jacob** was retired for secret Prayer, when Christ came to him, and he wrestled with him, and obtained the Blessing. God revealed himself to **Moses** in the Bush, when he was in a solitary Place in the Desert, in Mount **Horeb**; Exodus 3 at the Beginning. And afterwards, when God showed him his Glory, and he was admitted to the highest Degree of Communion with God that ever he enjoyed; he was alone, in the same Mountain, and continued there forty Days and forty Nights, and then came down with his Face shining. God came to those great Prophets, **Elijah** and **Elisha**, and conversed freely with them, chiefly in their Retirement. **Elijah** conversed alone with God at Mount **Sinai**, as **Moses** did. And when Jesus Christ had his greatest Prelibation of his future Glory, when he was transfigured; it was not when he was with the Multitude, or with the twelve Disciples, but retired into a solitary Place in a Mountain, with only three select Disciples, charging them that they should tell no Man, till he was risen from the Dead. When the Angel **Gabriel** came to the blessed Virgin, and when the Holy Ghost came upon her, and the Power of the Highest overshadowed her, she seems to have been alone, and to be in this Matter hid from the World; her nearest and dearest earthly Friend **Joseph**, that had betrothed her, (though a just Man) knew nothing of the Matter. And she that first partook of the Joy of Christ's Resurrection, was alone with Christ at the

Sepulchre; **John** 20. And when the beloved Disciple was favoured with those wonderful Visions of Christ, and his future Dispensations towards the Church and the World, he was alone in the Isle of **Patmos**. Not but that we have also Instances of great Privileges that the Saints have received when with others; or that there is not much in christian Conversation, and social and public Worship, tending greatly to refresh and rejoice the Hearts of the Saints. But this is all that I aim at by what has been said, to show that it is the Nature of true Grace, that however it loves christian Society in its Place, yet it in a peculiar Manner delights in Retirement, and secret Converse with God. So that if Persons appear greatly engaged in social Religion and but little in the Religion of the Closet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their Religion.

11. Another great and very distinguishing Difference between gracious Affections and others is, that gracious Affections, the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual Appetite and Longing of Soul after spiritual Attainments, increased. On the contrary, false Affections rest satisfied in themselves.

The more a true Saint loves God with a gracious Love, the more he desires to love him, and the more uneasy is he at his Want of Love to him: The more he hates Sin, the more he desires to hate it, and laments that he has so much remaining Love to it: The more he mourns for Sin, the more he longs to mourn for Sin: The more his Heart is broken, the more he desires it should be broken: The more he thirsts and longs after God and Holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very Soul in Longings after God: The kindling and raising of gracious Affections is like kindling a

Flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and seek to burn. So that the spiritual Appetite after Holiness, and an Increase of holy Affections, is much more lively and keen in those that are eminent in Holiness, than others; and more when Grace and holy Affections are in their most lively Exercise, than at other Times. It is as much the Nature of one that is spiritually new-born, to thirst after Growth in Holiness, as it is the Nature of a new-born Babe, to thirst after the Mother's Breast; who has the sharpest Appetite, when best in Health; 1 Peter 2:2, 3. **As new-born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.** The most that the Saints have in this World, is but a Taste, a Prelibation of that future Glory which is their proper Fullness; it is only an Earnest of their future Inheritance in their Hearts; 2 **Corinthians** 1:22 and 5:5 and **Ephesians** 1:14. The most eminent Saints in this State are but Children, compared with their future, which is their proper State of Maturity and Perfection; as the Apostle observes, 1 **Corinthians** 13:10, 11. The greatest Eminency and Perfection, that the Saints arrive to in this World, has no Tendency to Satiety, or to abate their Desires after more; but on the contrary, makes them more eager to press forwards; as is evident by the Apostle's Words, Philippians 3:13, 14, 15. **Forgetting those Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those Things which are before, I press toward the Mark. —Let us therefore, as many as be PERFECT, be thus minded.**

The Reasons of it are, that the more Persons have of holy Affections, the more they have of that spiritual Taste which I have spoken of elsewhere; whereby they perceive the Excellency, and relish the divine Sweetness of Holiness. And the more Grace they have, while in this State of Imperfection, the more they see their Imperfection and Emptiness, and Distance from what ought to be; and so the more do they see their Need of Grace; as I showed at large before, when speaking of the Nature of evangelical Humiliation. And besides Grace, as long as it is imperfect, is of a growing Nature, and in a growing State. And we see it to be so with all living Things, that while they are in a State of Imperfection, and in their growing State, their Nature tends to Growth; and so much the more, as they are more healthy and prosperous. Therefore the Cry of every true Grace, is like that Cry of true Faith, Mark 9:24. **Lord I believe, help thou my Unbelief.** And the greater spiritual Discoveries and Affections the true Christian has, the more does he become of an earnest Beggar for Grace, and spiritual Food, that he may grow; and the more earnestly does he pursue after it, in the Use of proper Means and Endeavours: For true and gracious Longings after Holiness, are no idle ineffectual Desires.

But here some may object and say; How is this consistent with what all allow, That spiritual Enjoyments are of a Soul-satisfying Nature?

I answer, Its being so, will appear to be not at all inconsistent with what has been said, if it be considered in what Manner spiritual Enjoyments are said to be of a Soul-satisfying Nature. Certainly they are not so in that Sense, that they are of so cloying a Nature, that he who has any Thing of them, though but in a very imperfect Degree, desires no more. But spiritual Enjoyments are of

a Soul-satisfying Nature in the following Respects, 1. They in their Kind and Nature, are fully adapted to the Nature, Capacity and Need of the Soul of Man. So that those who find them, desire **no other Kind** of Enjoyments; they sit down fully contented with that Kind of Happiness which they have, desiring no Change, nor inclining to wander about any more, saying who will show us any Good? The Soul is never cloyed, never weary; but perpetually giving up itself, with all its Powers, to this Happiness. But not that those who have something of this Happiness, desire no more of the same. 2. They are satisfying also in this Respect, that they answer the Expectation of the Appetite. When the Appetite is high to any Thing, the Expectation is consequently so. Appetite to a particular Object implies Expectation in its Nature. This Expectation is not satisfied by worldly Enjoyments, the Man expected to have a great Accession of Happiness, but he is disappointed. But it is not so with spiritual Enjoyments; They fully answer and satisfy the Expectation. 3. The Gratification and Pleasure of spiritual Enjoyments is permanent. It is not so with worldly Enjoyments. They in a Sense satisfy particular Appetites; but the Appetite in being satisfied, is glutted, and then the Pleasure is over: And as soon as that is over, the general Appetite of human Nature after Happiness returns; but is empty, and without any Thing to satisfy it. So that the glutting of a particular Appetite, does but take away from, and leave empty, the general Thirst of Nature. 4. Spiritual Good is satisfying, as there is enough in it, to satisfy the Soul, as to Degree, if Obstacles were but removed, and the enjoying Faculty duly applied. There is Room enough here for the Soul to extend it-

self; Here is an infinite Ocean of it. If Men be not satisfied here, in Degree of Happiness, the Cause is with themselves; it is because they do not open their Mouths wide enough.

But these things do not argue that a soul has no appetite excited after more of the same, that has tasted a little; or that his appetite will not increase, the more he tastes, until he comes to fullness of enjoyment: as bodies that are attracted to the globe of the earth, tend to it more strongly, the nearer they come to the attracting body, and are not at rest out of the center. Spiritual good is of a satisfying nature; and for that very reason, the soul that tastes, and knows its nature, will thirst after it, and a fullness of it, that it may be satisfied. And the more he experiences, and the more he knows this excellent, unparalleled, exquisite, and satisfying sweetness, the more earnestly will he hunger and thirst for more, until he comes to perfection. And therefore this is the nature of spiritual affections, that the greater they be, the greater the appetite and longing is, after grace and holiness.

But with those joys, and other religious affections, that are false and counterfeit, it is otherwise. If before, there was a great desire, of some sort, after grace; as these affections rise, **that** desire ceases, or is abated. It may be before, while the man was under legal convictions, and much afraid of hell, he earnestly longed that he might obtain spiritual light in his understanding, and faith in Christ, and love to God: but now, when these false affections are risen, that deceive him, and make him confident that he is converted, and his state good, there are no more earnest longings after light and grace: for his end is answered; he is confident that his sins are forgiven him, and that he shall go to heaven; and so he is satisfied. And especially when false affections are raised very high,

do they put an end to longings after grace and holiness. The man now is far from appearing to himself, a poor empty creature. On the contrary, he is rich, and increased with goods; and hardly conceives of any thing more excellent, than what he has already attained to.

Hence there is an end to many persons' earnestness in seeking, after they have once obtained that which they call their conversion: or at least, after they have had those high affections, that make them fully confident of it. Before, while they looked upon themselves as in a state of nature, they were engaged in seeking after God and Christ, and cried earnestly for grace, and strove in the use of means: but now they act as though they thought their work was done: they live upon their first work, or some high experiences that are past; and there is an end to their crying, and striving after God and grace. Whereas the holy principles that actuate a true saint, have a far more powerful influence to stir him up to earnestness in seeking God and holiness, than servile fear. Hence seeking God is spoken of as one of the distinguishing characters of the saints; and **those that seek God**, is one of the names by which the godly are called in scripture; Psalm 24 verse 6. **This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.** Psalm 69 verse 6. **Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake.** Verse 32. **The humble shall see this and be glad, and your heart shall live that seek God.** And 74 verse 4. **Let all those that seek thee rejoice, and be glad in thee; and let such as love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified.** And the scriptures everywhere represent the seeking, striving and labor of a Christian, as being chiefly after his conversion, and his conversion as being but the beginning of his work.

And almost all that is said in the New Testament, of men's watching, giving earnest heed to themselves, running the race that is set before them, striving and agonizing, wrestling not with flesh and blood, but principalities and powers, fighting, putting on the whole armor of God, and standing, having done all to stand, pressing forward, reaching forth, continuing instant in prayer, crying to God day and night; I say, almost all that is said in the New Testament of these things, is spoken of, and directed to the saints. Where these things are applied to sinners seeking conversion once, they are spoken of the saints' prosecution of the great business of their high calling ten times. But many in these days have got into a strange antiscriptural way, of having all their striving and wrestling over before they are converted; and so having an easy time of it afterwards, to sit down and enjoy their sloth and indolence; as those that now have a supply of their wants, and are become rich and full. But as the Lord **filled the hungry with good things, these rich** are like to be **sent away empty**. Luke 1 verse 53.

But doubtless there are some hypocrites, that have only high affections, who will think they are able to stand this trial; and will readily say, that they desire not to rest satisfied with past attainments, but to be pressing forward, they do desire more, they long after God and Christ, and desire more holiness, and do seek it. But the truth is, their desires are not properly the desires of appetite after holiness, for its own sake, or for the moral excellency and holy sweetness that is in it, but only for by-ends. They long after clearer discoveries, that they may be better satisfied about the state of their souls, or because in great discoveries, self is gratified, in being made so much of by God, and so exalted above others, they long to taste the love of God (as they call it) more than to have

more love to God. Or, it may be, they have a kind of forced, fancied or made longings; because they think they must long for more grace, otherwise it will be a dark sign upon them. But such things as these are far different from the natural, and as it were necessary appetite and thirsting of the new man, after God and holiness. There is an inward burning desire that a saint has after holiness, as natural to the new creature, as vital heat is to the body. There is a holy breathing and panting after the Spirit of God, to increase holiness, as natural to a holy nature, as breathing is to a living body. And holiness or sanctification is more directly the object of it, than any manifestation of God's love and favor. This is the meat and drink that is the object of the spiritual appetite, John 4 verse 34. **My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.** Where we read in scripture of the desires, longings and thirstings of the saints, righteousness and God's laws are much more frequently mentioned, as the object of them, than any thing else. The saints **desire the sincere milk of the word**, not so much to testify God's love to them, as **that they may grow thereby** in holiness. I have shown before that holiness is that good which is the immediate object of a spiritual taste. But undoubtedly the same sweetness that is the chief object of a spiritual taste, is also the chief object of a spiritual appetite. Grace is the godly man's treasure; Isaiah 33 verse 6. **The fear of the Lord is his treasure.** Godliness is the gain that he is covetous and greedy of; 1 Timothy 6 verse 6. Hypocrites long for discoveries, more for the present comfort of the discovery, and the high manifestation of God's love in it, than for any sanctifying influence of it. But neither a longing after great discoveries, or after great tastes of the love of

God, nor longing to be in heaven, nor longing to die, are in any measure so distinguishing marks of true saints, as longing after a more holy heart, and living a more holy life.

But I am come now to the last distinguishing mark of holy affections that I shall mention.

12. Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice; I mean, they have that influence and power upon him who is the subject of them, that they cause that a practice, which is universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules, should be the practice and business of his life.

This implies three things; 1. That his behavior or practice in the world, be universally conformed to, and directed by Christian rules. 2. That he makes a business of such a holy practice above all things; that it be a business which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and pursues with highest earnestness and diligence: so that he may be said to make this practice of religion eminently **his work and business**. And 3. That he persists in it to the end of life: so that it may be said, not only to be his business at certain seasons, the business of Sabbath days, or certain extraordinary times, or the business of a month, or a year, or of seven years, or his business under certain circumstances; but the **business of his life**; it being that business which he perseveres in through all changes, and under all trials, as long as he lives.

The necessity of each of these, in all true Christians, is most clearly and fully taught in the word of God.

1. It is necessary that men should be universally obedient: 1 John 3 verse 3, etc. **Every man that hath this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure. And ye know that he**

was manifested to take away our sins, and in him was no sin. Whosoever abides in him, sins not. Whosoever sins, hath not seen him, neither known him. He that does righteousness, is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that commits sin, is of the devil. Chapter 5 verse 18. We know that whosoever is born of God, sins not; but he that is begotten of God, keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not. John 15 verse 14. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. James 2 verse 10. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. 1 Corinthians 6 verse 9. Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, etc. shall inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5 verses 19, 20. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Which is as much as to say, they that do any sort of wickedness. Job 34 verses 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Does not he see my ways, and count all my steps? Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands, etc. Ezekiel 33 verse 15. If he walk in the

statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live. If one member only be corrupt, and we do not cut it off, it will carry the whole body to hell; **Matthew** 5 verses 29, 30. **Saul** was commanded to destroy all God's enemies, the **Amalekites**; and he slew all but **Agag**, and the saving him alive proved his ruin. **Caleb** and **Joshua** entered into God's promised rest, because they **wholly** followed the Lord; **Numbers** 14 verse 24 and 32 verses 11, 12. **Deuteronomy** 1 verse 36. **Joshua** 14 verses 6, 8, 9, 14. **Naaman's** hypocrisy appeared in that, however he seemed to be greatly affected with gratitude to God for healing his leprosy, and engaged to serve him, yet in one thing he desired to be excused. And **Herod**, though he feared **John**, and observed him, and heard him gladly, and did many things; yet was condemned, in that in one thing he would not hearken to him, even in parting with his beloved **Herodias**. So that it is necessary that men should part with their dearest iniquities, which are as their right hand and right eyes, sins that most easily beset them, and which they are most exposed to by their natural inclinations, evil customs, or particular circumstances, as well as others. As **Joseph** would not make known himself to his brethren, who had sold him, until **Benjamin**, the beloved child of the family, that was most hardly parted with, was delivered up; no more will Christ reveal his love to us, until we part with our dearest lusts, and until we are brought to comply with the most difficult duties, and those that we have the greatest aversion to.

And it is of Importance, that it should be observed, that in order to a Man's being truly said to be universally obedient, his Obedience must not only consist in **Negatives**, or in universally avoiding wicked Practices, consisting in Sins of Commission; but

he must also be universal in the **Positives** of Religion. Sins of Omission are as much Breaches of God's Commands, as Sins of Commission. Christ, in **Matthew** 25 represents those on the left Hand, as being condemned and cursed to everlasting Fire, for Sins of Omission, **I was hungry and ye gave me no Meat**, etc. A Man therefore cannot be said to be universally obedient, and of a Christian Conversation, only because he is no Thief, nor Oppressor, nor fraudulent Person, nor Drunkard, nor Tavern-haunter, nor Whore-Master, nor Rioter, nor Night-walker, nor unclean, nor profane in his Language, nor Slanderer, nor Liar, nor Furious, nor Malicious, nor Reviler: He is falsely said to be of a Conversation that becomes the Gospel, who goes thus far and no farther; but in order to this, it is necessary that he should also be of a serious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, respectful, condescending, benevolent, merciful, charitable and beneficent Walk and Conversation. Without such Things as these, he does not obey the Laws of Christ, and Laws that he and his Apostles did abundantly insist on, as of greatest Importance and Necessity.

2. In order to Men's being true Christians, it is necessary that they prosecute the Business of Religion, and the Service of God with great Earnestness and Diligence, as the Work which they devote themselves to, and make the main Business of their Lives. All Christ's **peculiar People**, not only do good Works, but are **zealous of good Works**; Titus 2:14. No Man can do the Service of two Masters at once. They that are God's true Servants, do give up themselves to his Service, and make it as it were their whole Work, therein employing their whole Hearts, and the chief of their Strength; Philippians 3:13. **This one Thing I do**. Christians in

their effectual Calling, are not called to Idleness, but to Labour in God's Vineyard, and spend their Day in doing a great and laborious Service. All true Christians comply with this Call, (as is implied in its being an effectual Call) and do the Work of Christians; which is every where in the New Testament compared to those Exercises, wherein Men are wont to exert their Strength, with the greatest Earnestness, as Running, Wrestling, Fighting. All true Christians are good and faithful Soldiers of Jesus Christ, and **fight the good Fight of Faith:** For none but those who do so, do ever **lay hold on eternal Life.** Those who **fight as those that beat the Air,** never win the Crown of Victory. **They that run in a Race, run all; but one wins the Prize;** and they that are slack and negligent in their Course, do not **so run, as that they may obtain.** The Kingdom of Heaven is not to be taken but by Violence. Without Earnestness there is no getting along, in that narrow Way that leads to Life; and so no arriving at that State of glorious Life and Happiness which it leads to. Without earnest Labour, there is no ascending the steep and high Hill of **Zion;** and so no arriving at the heavenly City on the Top of it. Without a constant Laboriousness, there is no stemming the swift Stream in which we swim, so as ever to come to that Fountain of Water of Life, that is at the Head of it. There is need that we should **watch and pray always,** in order to our **escaping those** dreadful **Things,** that are coming on the Ungodly, and our **being counted worthy to stand before the Son of Man.** There is need of our **putting on the whole Armour of God, and doing all to stand,** in order to our avoiding a total Overthrow, and being utterly destroyed by the **fiery Darts of the Devil.** There is need that we should **forget the Things that are behind,** and **be reaching forth to**

the Things that are before, and pressing towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord, in order to our obtaining that Prize. Slothfulness in the Service of God, in his professed Servants, is as damning, as open Rebellion: For the **Slothful Servant,** is a **wicked Servant,** and shall be cast into outer Darkness, among God's open Enemies; **Matthew 25:26, 28.** They that are **Slothful,** are not **Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.** Hebrews 6:11, 12. **And we desire that every one of you do show the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope, unto the End: that ye be not slothful; but Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.** And all they who follow **that Cloud of Witnesses** that are gone before to Heaven, do **lay aside every Weight, and the Sin that easily besets them, and do run with Patience the Race that is set before them,** Hebrews 12:1. That true Faith, by which Persons rely on the Righteousness of Christ, and the Work that he hath done for them, and do truly feed and live upon him, is evermore accompanied with such a Spirit of Earnestness in the Christian Work and Course. Which was typified of old, by the Manner of the Children of **Israel's** feeding on the Paschal Lamb: Who were directed to eat it, as those that were in Haste, with their Loins girded, their Shoes on their Feet, and Staff in their Hand; Exodus 12:11. **And thus shall ye eat it; with your Loins girded, your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your Hand, and ye shall eat it in Haste: It is the Lord's Passover.**

3. Every true Christian perseveres in this Way of universal Obedience, and diligent and earnest Service of God, through all the various Kinds of Trials that he meets with, to the End of Life. That all true Saints, all those that do obtain eternal Life, do thus persevere in the Practice of Religion, and the Service of God, is a Doctrine so abundantly taught in the Scripture, that particularly to rehearse all the Texts which imply it would be endless. I shall content myself with referring to some in the Margin.

But **that** in Perseverance in Obedience, which is chiefly insisted on in the Scripture, as a special Note of the Truth of Grace, is the Continuance of Professors in the Practice of their Duty, and being steadfast in an holy Walk, through the various **Trials** that they meet with.

By **Trials**, here I mean, those Things that occur, and that a Professor meets with in his Course, that do especially render his Continuance in his Duty, and Faithfulness to God, difficult to Nature. These Things are from Time to Time called in Scripture by the Name of **Trials**, or **Temptations** (which are Words of the same Signification). These are of various Kinds: There are many Things that render Persons' Continuance in the Way of their Duty difficult, by their Tendency to cherish and foment, or to stir up and provoke their Lusts and Corruptions. Many Things make it hard to continue in the Way of Duty, by their being of an alluring Nature, and having a Tendency to entice Persons to Sin; or by their Tendency to take off Restraints, and embolden them in Iniquity. Other Things are Trials of the Soundness and Steadfastness of Professors, by their Tendency to make their Duty appear terrible to them, and so to affright and drive them from it: Such as the Sufferings which their Duty will expose them to; Pain, Ill-will,

Contempt, and Reproach, or Loss of outward Possessions and Comforts. If Persons, after they have made a Profession of Religion, live any considerable Time, in this World which is so full of Changes, and so full of Evil, it cannot be otherwise, than that, they should meet with many Trials of their Sincerity and Steadfastness. And besides, it is God's Manner, in his Providence, to bring Trials on his professing Friends and Servants designedly, that he may manifest them, and may exhibit sufficient Matter of Conviction of the State which they are in, to their own Consciences; and often times, to the World. As appears by innumerable Scriptures; some are referred to the Margin.

True Saints may be guilty of some Kinds and Degrees of Backsliding, and may be soiled by particular Temptations, and may fall into Sin, yea great Sins: But they can never fall away so, as to grow weary of Religion, and the Service of God, and habitually to dislike it and neglect it; either on its own Account, or on Account of the Difficulties that attend it: As is evident by **Galatians** 6:9; **Romans** 2:7; **Hebrews** 10:36; **Isaiah** 43:22; **Malachi** 1:13. They can never backslide, so as to continue no longer in a **Way** of universal Obedience; or so, that it shall cease to be their **Manner** to observe all the Rules of Christianity, and do all Duties required, even the most difficult, and in the most difficult Circumstances. This is abundantly manifest by the Things that have been observed already. Nor can they ever fall away so, as habitually to be more engaged in other Things, than in the Business of Religion; or so that it should become their Way and Manner to serve something else more than God; or so as statedly to cease to serve God, with such Earnestness and Diligence, as still to be habitually devoted and given up to the Business of Religion. Unless

those Words of Christ can fall to the Ground, **Ye cannot serve two Masters**, and those of the Apostle, **He that will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God**; and unless a Saint can change his God, and yet be a true Saint. Nor can a true Saint ever fall away so, that it shall come to this, that ordinarily there shall be no remarkable Difference in his Walk and Behaviour since his Conversion, from what was before. They that are truly converted are new Men, new Creatures; new, not only within, but without; they are sanctified throughout, in Spirit, Soul and Body; old Things are passed away, all Things are become new; they have new Hearts, and new Eyes, new Ears, new Tongues, new Hands, new Feet; **that is** a new Conversation and Practice; and they walk in Newness of Life, and continue to do so to the End of Life. And they that fall away, and cease visibly to do so, it is a Sign they never were risen with Christ. And especially when Men's Opinion of their being converted, and so in a safe Estate, is the very Cause of their coming to this, it is a most evident Sign of their Hypocrisy. And that, whether their Falling away be into their former Sins, or into some new Kind of Wickedness; having the Corruption of Nature only turned into a new Channel, instead of its being mortified. As when Persons that think themselves converted, though they do not openly turn to former Profaneness and Lewdness; yet from the high Opinion they have of their Experiences, Graces and Privileges, gradually settle more and more in a self-righteous and spiritually proud Temper of Mind, and in such a Manner of Behaviour and Conversation, as naturally arises therefrom. When it is thus with Men, however far they may seem to be from their former evil Practices, this alone is enough to condemn them, and may render their last State far worse than the first. For this seems

to be the very Case of the **Jews** of that Generation that Christ speaks of, **Matthew** 12:43, 44, 45, who having been awakened by **John the Baptist's** Preaching, and brought to a Reformation of their former licentious Courses, whereby the unclean Spirit was as it were turned out, and the House swept and garnished; yet being **empty** of God and of Grace, became full of themselves, and were exalted in an exceeding high Opinion of their own Righteousness and eminent Holiness, and became habituated to an answerably Self-exalting Behaviour; so changing the Sins of Publicans and Harlots, for those of the Pharisees; and in the Issue, had seven Devils, worse than the first.

Thus I have explained what Exercise and Fruit I mean, when I say that gracious Affections have their Exercise and Fruit in Christian Practice.

The Reason why gracious Affections have such a Tendency and Effect, appears from many Things that have already been observed, in the preceding Parts of this Discourse.

The Reason of it appears from this, that **gracious Affections do arise from those Operations and Influences which are spiritual**, and that the inward Principle from whence they flow, is something **divine**, a Communication of God, a Participation of the divine Nature, Christ living in the Heart, the holy Spirit dwelling there, in Union with the Faculties of the Soul, as an internal vital Principle, exerting his own proper Nature, in the Exercise of those Faculties. This is sufficient to show us why true Grace should have such Activity, Power and Efficacy. No Wonder that which is divine, is powerful and effectual; for it has Omnipotence on its Side. If God dwells in the Heart, and be vitally united to it, he will show that he is a God, by the Efficacy of his Operation. Christ is not in

the Heart of a Saint, as in a Sepulcher, or as a dead Savior, that does nothing; but as in his Temple, and as one that is alive from the Dead. For in the Heart where Christ savingly is, there he lives, and exerts himself after the Power of that endless Life, that he received at his Resurrection. Thus every Saint that is the Subject of the Benefit of Christ's Sufferings, is made to know and feel the Power of his Resurrection. The Spirit of Christ, which is the immediate Spring of Grace in the Heart, is all Life, all Power, all Act; 2 **Corinthians** 2:4.—**In Demonstration of the Spirit, and of Power.** 1 Thessalonians 1:5. **Our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the holy Ghost.** 1 **Corinthians** 4:20. **The Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power.** Hence saving Affections, though oftentimes they do not make so great a Noise and Show as others; yet have in them a secret Solidity, Life and Strength, whereby they take hold of, and carry away the Heart, leading it into a Kind of Captivity, 2 **Corinthians** 10:5. gaining a full and steadfast Determination of the Will for God and Holiness; Psalm 110:3. **Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power.** And thus it is that holy Affections have a governing Power in the Course of a Man's Life. A Statue may look very much like a real Man, and a beautiful Man; yea it may have, in its Appearance to the Eye, the Resemblance of a very lively, strong and active Man; but yet an inward Principle of Life and Strength is wanting; and therefore it does nothing, it brings nothing to pass, there is no Action or Operation to answer the Show. False Discoveries and Affections do not go deep enough, to reach and govern the Spring of Men's Actions and Practice. The Seed in stony Ground had not Deepness of Earth, and the Root did not go deep enough to bring forth Fruit. But gracious Affections go

to the very Bottom of the Heart, and take hold of the very inmost Springs of Life and Activity. Herein chiefly appears the Power of true Godliness, **namely** in its being effectual in Practice. And the Efficacy of Godliness in this Respect, is what the Apostle has Respect to when he speaks of the Power of Godliness, **2 Timothy 3:5.** as is very plain; for he there is particularly declaring, how some Professors of Religion would notoriously fail in the Practice of it; and then in the 5th Verse observes, that in being thus of an unholy Practice, they deny the Power of Godliness, though they have the Form of it. Indeed the Power of Godliness is exerted in the first Place within the Soul, in the sensible, lively Exercise of gracious Affections there. Yet the principal Evidence of this Power of Godliness, is in those Exercises of holy Affections that are practical, and in their being practical; in conquering the Will, and conquering the Lusts and Corruptions of Men, and carrying Men on in the Way of Holiness, through all Temptation, Difficulty and Opposition.

Again, The Reason why gracious Affections have their Exercise and Effect in Christian Practice, appears from this (which has also been before observed) that **the first objective Ground of gracious Affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable Nature of divine Things, as they are in themselves, and not any conceived Relation they bear to Self, or Self-Interest.** This shows why holy Affections will cause Men to be holy in their Practice universally. What makes Men partial in Religion is, that they seek themselves, and not God, in their Religion, and close with Religion, not for its own excellent Nature, but only to serve a Turn. He that closes with Religion only to serve a Turn, will close with no more of it than he imagines serves that

Turn: But he that closes with Religion for its own excellent and lovely Nature, closes with all that has that Nature: He that embraces Religion for its own Sake, embraces the Whole of Religion. This also shows why gracious Affections will cause Men to practice Religion perseveringly, and at all Times. Religion may alter greatly in Process of Time, as to its Consistence with Men's private Interest, in many Respects; and therefore he that complies with it only from selfish Views, is liable, in Change of Times, to forsake it: But the excellent Nature of Religion, as it is in itself, is invariable; it is always the same, at all Times, and through all Changes; it never alters in any Respect.

The Reason why gracious Affections issue in holy Practice, also further appears from the Kind of Excellency of divine Things, that it has been observed is the Foundation of all holy Affection, **namely their moral Excellency, or the Beauty of their Holiness.** No wonder that a Love to Holiness, for Holiness Sake, inclines Persons to practice Holiness, and to practice every Thing that is holy. Seeing Holiness is the main Thing that excites, draws and governs all gracious Affections, no wonder that all such Affections tend to Holiness. That which Men love, they desire to have and to be united to, and possessed of. That Beauty which Men delight in, they desire to be adorned with. Those Acts which Men delight in, they necessarily incline to do.

And what has been observed of that **divine Teaching and Leading of the Spirit of God**, which there is in gracious Affections, shows the Reason of this Tendency of such Affections to an universally holy Practice. For as has been observed, the Spirit of God in this his divine Teaching and Leading, gives the Soul a

natural Relish of the Sweetness of that which is holy, and of every Thing that is holy, so far as it comes in View, and excites a Disrelish and Disgust of every Thing that is unholy.

The same also appears from what has been observed of the Nature of that **spiritual Knowledge**, which is the Foundation of all holy Affection, as consisting in **a Sense and View of that Excellency in divine Things, which is supreme and transcendent**. For hereby these Things appear above all others, worthy to be chosen and adhered to. By the Sight of the transcendent Glory of Christ, true Christians see him worthy to be followed; and so are powerfully drawn after him: They see him worthy that they should forsake all for him: By the Sight of that superlative Amiableness, they are thoroughly disposed to be subject to him, and engaged to labor with Earnestness and Activity in his Service, and made willing to go through all Difficulties for his Sake. And it is the Discovery of this divine Excellency of Christ, that makes them constant to him: For it makes a deep Impression upon their Minds, that they cannot forget him; and they will follow him whithersoever he goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavor to draw them away from him.

The Reason of this practical Tendency and Issue of gracious Affections, further appears, from what has been observed of such Affections being **attended with a thorough Conviction of the Judgment, of the Reality and Certainty of divine Things**. No wonder that they who were never thoroughly convinced that there is any Reality in the Things of Religion, will never be at the Labor and Trouble of such an earnest, universal and persevering Practice of Religion, through all Difficulties, Self-denials and Sufferings, in a Dependence on that, which they are not convinced

of. But on the other Hand, they who are thoroughly convinced of the certain Truth of those Things, must needs be governed by them in their Practice; for the Things revealed in the Word of God are so great, and so infinitely more important, than all other Things, that it is inconsistent with the human Nature, that a Man should fully believe the Truth of them, and not be influenced by them above all Things, in his Practice.

Again, The Reason of this Expression and Effect of holy Affections in the Practice, appears from what has been observed of **a Change of Nature, accompanying such Affections.** Without a Change of Nature, Men's Practice will not be thoroughly changed. Until the Tree be made good, the Fruit will not be good. Men do not gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thistles. The Swine may be washed, and appear clean for a little while, but yet, without a Change of Nature, he will still wallow in the Mire. Nature is a more powerful Principle of Action, than any Thing that opposes it: Though it may be violently restrained for a while, it will finally overcome that which restrains it: It is like the Stream of a River, it may be stopped a while with a Dam, but if nothing be done to dry the Fountain, it will not be stopped always; It will have a Course, either in its old Channel, or a new one. Nature is a Thing more constant and permanent, than any of those Things that are the Foundation of carnal Men's Reformation and Righteousness. When a natural Man denies his Lust, and lives a strict, religious Life, and seems humble, painful and earnest in Religion, it is not natural, it is all a Force against Nature; as when a Stone is violently thrown upwards; but that Force will be gradually spent; yet Nature will remain in its full Strength, and so prevails again, and the Stone returns downwards. As long as corrupt Nature is not morti-

fied, but the Principle left whole in a Man, it is a vain Thing to expect that it should not govern. But if the old Nature be indeed mortified, and a new and heavenly Nature infused; then may it well be expected, that Men will walk in Newness of Life, and continue to do so to the End of their Days.

The Reason of this practical Exercise and Effect of holy Affections, may also be partly seen, from what has been said of that **Spirit of Humility, which attends them.** Humility is that wherein a Spirit of Obedience does much consist. A proud Spirit is a rebellious Spirit, but a humble Spirit is a yieldable, subject, obediential Spirit. We see among Men, that the Servant who is of a haughty Spirit, is not apt in every Thing to be submissive and obedient to the Will of his Master; but it is otherwise with that Servant who is of a lowly Spirit.

And that **Lamblike, Dovelike Spirit**, that has been spoken of, which accompanies all gracious Affections, fulfills (as the Apostle observes, Romans 13:8, 9, 10 and Galatians 5:14) all the Duties of the second Table of the Law; wherein Christian Practice does very much consist, and wherein the external Practice of Christianity chiefly consists.

And the Reason why gracious Affections are attended with that strict, universal and constant Obedience which has been spoken of, further appears, from what has been observed of that **Tenderness of Spirit**, which accompanies the Affections of true Saints, causing in them so quick and lively a Sense of Pain, through the Presence of moral Evil, and such a Dread of the Appearance of Evil.

And one great Reason why the Christian Practice which flows from gracious Affections, is universal, and constant, and persevering, appears from what has been observed of those Affections themselves, from whence this Practice flows, being universal and constant, in all Kinds of holy Exercises, and towards all Objects, and in all Circumstances, and at all Seasons, **in a beautiful Symmetry and Proportion.**

And much of the Reason why holy Affections are expressed and manifested in such an Earnestness, Activity, and Engagedness and Perseverance in holy Practice, as has been spoken of, appears from what has been observed, of the spiritual Appetite and Longing after further Attainments in Religion, which evermore attends true Affection, and does not decay, but increases, as those Affections increase.

Thus we see how the Tendency of holy Affections to such a Christian Practice as has been explained, appears from each of those Characteristics of holy Affection, that have been before spoken of.

And this Point may be further illustrated and confirmed, if it be considered, that the holy Scriptures do abundantly place Sincerity and Soundness in Religion, in making a full Choice of God as our only Lord and Portion, forsaking all for him, and in a full Determination of the Will for God and Christ, on counting the Cost; in our Hearts closing and complying with the Religion of Jesus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its Difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly Enjoyments, and even our own Lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves, with all that we have, wholly and forever, unto Christ, without keeping back any Thing or making any Reserve; or in one Word, in the great Duty of

Self-denial for Christ; or in denying, **that is** as it were disowning and renouncing ourselves for him, making ourselves nothing that he may be all. See the Texts to this Purpose referred to in the Margin. Now surely having a Heart to forsake all for Christ, tends to actually forsaking all for him, so far as there is Occasion, and we have the Trial. And having a Heart to deny ourselves for Christ, tends to a denying ourselves in deed, when Christ and Self-Interest stand in Competition. A giving up ourselves, with all that we have in our Hearts, without making any Reserve there, tends to our behaving ourselves universally as his, as subject to his Will, and devoted to his Ends. Our Hearts entirely closing with the Religion of Jesus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its Difficulties, upon a deliberate counting the Cost, tends to an universal closing with the same in act and deed, and actually going through all the Difficulties that we meet with in the Way of Religion, and so holding out with Patience and Perseverance.

The Tendency of Grace in the Heart to holy Practice, is very direct, and the Connection most natural close and necessary. True Grace is not an inactive Thing; there is nothing in Heaven or Earth of a more active Nature; for it is Life itself, and the most active Kind of Life, even spiritual and divine Life. It is no barren Thing; there is nothing in the Universe that in its Nature has a greater Tendency to Fruit. Godliness in the Heart has as direct a Relation to Practice, as a Fountain has to a Stream, or as the luminous Nature of the Sun has to Beams sent forth, or as Life has to Breathing, or the Beating of the Pulse, or any other vital Act; or as a Habit or Principle of Action has to Action: For it is the very Nature and Notion of Grace, that it is a Principle of holy Action or Practice. Regeneration, which is that Work of God in which Grace

is infused, has a direct Relation to Practice; for it is the very End of it, with a View to which the whole Work is wrought: All is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold Change wrought in the Soul, so as directly to tend to this End: Ephesians 2:10. **For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good Works.** Yea it is the very End of the Redemption of Christ; Titus 2:14. **Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.** 2 Corinthians 5:15. **He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died, and rose again.** Hebrews 9:14. **How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered up himself without Spot to God, purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God?** Colossians 1:21, 22. **And you that were sometimes alienated, and Enemies in your Minds by wicked Works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the Body of his Flesh, through Death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreprouable in his Sight.** 1 Peter 1:18. **For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold, from your vain Conversation—.** Luke 1:74, 75. **That he would grant us, that we being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, might serve him without Fear, in Holiness and Righteousness before him, all the Days of our Lives.** God often speaks of holy Practice, as the End of that great typical Redemption, the Redemption from **Egyptian** Bondage; as Exodus 4:23. **Let my Son go, that he may serve me.** So Chapter 4:23 and 7:16 and 8:1, 20 and 9:1, 13 and 10:3. And this is also declared

to be the End of Election; John 15:13. **Ye have not chosen me; but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you go and bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit should remain.** Ephesians 1:4. **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.** Chapter 2:10. **Created unto good Works; which God hath fore-ordained that we should walk in them.** Holy Practice is as much the End of all that God does about his Saints, as Fruit is the End of all the Husbandman does about the Growth of his Field or Vineyard: As the Matter is often represented in Scripture; Matthew 3:10. Chapter 13:8, 23, 24-30, 38. Chapter 21:19, 33, 34. Luke 13:6. John 15:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8. 1 Corinthians 3:9. Hebrews 6:7, 8. Isaiah 5:1-8. Song of Solomon 8:11, 12. Isaiah 27:2, 3. And therefore every Thing in a true Christian is calculated to reach this End. This Fruit of holy Practice, is what every Grace, and every Discovery, and every individual Thing, which belongs to christian Experience, has a direct Tendency to.

The constant and indissoluble Connection that there is between a christian Principle and Profession in the true Saints, and the Fruit of holy Practice in their Lives, was typified of Old in the Frame of the golden Candlestick in the Temple. It is beyond Doubt that that golden Candlestick, with its seven Branches and seven Lamps, was a Type of the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost himself, has been pleased to put that Matter out of Doubt, by representing his Church by such a golden Candlestick, with seven Lamps, in the fourth Chapter of **Zechariah**, and representing the seven Churches of **Asia** by seven golden Candlesticks, in the first Chapter of the **Revelation**. That golden Candlestick in the

Temple was every where, throughout its whole Frame, made with **Knops and Flowers**; Exodus 25:31 to the End, and Chapter 37:17-24. The Word translated **Knop**, in the Original signifies Apple or Pomegranate. There was a **Knop and a Flower, a Knop and a Flower**: Wherever there was a Flower, there was an Apple or Pomegranate with it: The Flower and the Fruit were constantly connected, without fail. The Flower contained the Principles of the Fruit, and a beautiful promising Appearance of it; and it never was a deceitful Appearance: The Principle or Show of Fruit, hath evermore real Fruit attending it, or succeeding it. So it is in the Church of Christ: There is the Principle of Fruit in Grace in the Heart; and there is an amiable Profession, signified by the open Flowers of the Candlestick; and there is answerable Fruit, in holy Practice, constantly attending this Principle and Profession. Every Branch of the golden Candlestick, thus composed of golden Apples and Flowers, was crowned with a burning, shining Lamp on the Top of it. For it is by this Means that the Saints shine as Lights in the World, by making a fair and good Profession of Religion, and having their Profession evermore joined with answerable Fruit in Practice: Agreeable to that of our Saviour, Matthew 5:15, 16. **Neither do Men light a Candle, and put it under a Bushel, but on a Candlestick; and it giveth Light unto all that are in the House. Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.** A fair and beautiful Profession, and golden Fruits accompanying one another, are the amiable Ornaments of the true Church of Christ. Therefore we find that Apples and Flowers were not only the Ornaments of the Candlestick in the Temple, but of the Temple itself, which is a Type

of the Church; which the Apostle tells us **is the Temple of the living God**. See 1 Kings 6:18. **And the Cedar of the House within, was carved with Knops and open Flowers**. The Ornaments and Crown of the Pillars, at the Entrance of the Temple, were of the same Sort: They were Lilies and Pomegranates, or Flowers and Fruits mixed together: 1 Kings 7:18, 19. So it is with all those that are **as Pillars in the Temple of God, who shall go no more out**, or never be ejected as Intruders; as it is with all true Saints; Revelation 3:12. **Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out**.

Much the same Thing seems to be signified by the Ornaments on the Skirt of the Ephod, the Garment of **Aaron** the high Priest; which were golden Bells and Pomegranates. That these Skirts of **Aaron's** Garment represent the Church, or the Saints (that are as it were the Garment of Christ) is manifest; for they are evidently so spoken of, Psalm 133:1, 2. **Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity! It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even Aaron's Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments**. That Ephod of **Aaron** signified the same with the seamless Coat of Christ our great high Priest. As Christ's Coat had no Seam, but was woven from the Top throughout, so it was with the Ephod, **Exodus** 39:22. As God took Care in his Providence, that Christ's Coat should not be rent; so God took special Care that the Ephod should not be rent; **Exodus** 28:32 and Chapter 39:23. The golden Bells on this Ephod, by their precious Matter and pleasant Sound, do well represent the good Profession that the Saints make; and the Pomegranates, the Fruit they bring

forth. And as in the Hem of the Ephod, Bells and Pomegranates were constantly connected, as is once and again observed, there was **a golden Bell and a Pomegranate, a golden Bell and a Pomegranate**, Exodus 28:34 and Chapter 39:26. So it is in the true Saints; their good Profession and their good Fruit, do constantly accompany one another: The Fruit they bring forth in Life, evermore answers the pleasant Sound of their Profession.

Again, The very same Thing is represented by Christ, in his Description of his Spouse, Song of Solomon 7:2. **Thy Belly is like an Heap of Wheat, set about with Lilies.** Here again are beautiful Flowers, and good Fruit, accompanying one another. The Lilies were fair and beautiful Flowers, and the Wheat was good Fruit.

As this fruit of Christian practice is evermore sound in true saints, according as they have opportunity and trial, so it is found in them only; none but true Christians do live such an obedient life, so universally devoted to their duty, and given up to the business of a Christian, as has been explained. All unsanctified men are **Workers of Iniquity**: They are of their Father the Devil, and the lusts of their Father they will do. There is no hypocrite that will go through with the business of religion, and both begin and finish the tower: They will not endure the trials God is wont to bring on the professors of religion, but will turn aside to their crooked ways: They will not be thoroughly faithful to Christ in their practice, and follow him whithersoever he goes. Whatever lengths they may go in religion in some instances, and though they may appear exceeding strict, and mightily engaged in the service of God for a season; yet they are servants to sin; the chains of their old taskmasters are not broken: Their lusts yet have a reigning power in their hearts;

and therefore to these masters they will bow down again. Daniel 12:10. **Many shall be purified and made white and tried: But the Wicked will do wickedly: And none of the Wicked shall understand.** Isaiah 26:10. **Let Favour be showed to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteousness; in the Land of Uprightness will he deal unjustly.** Isaiah 35:8. **And an Highway shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness, the Unclean shall not pass over it.** Hosea 14:9. **The Ways of the Lord are right, and the Just shall walk in them; but the Transgressors shall fall therein.** Job 27:8, 9, 10. **What is the Hope of the Hypocrite? —Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?** An unsanctified man may hide his sin, and may in many things and for a season refrain from sin; but he will not be brought finally to renounce his sin, and give it a bill of divorce: Sin is too dear to him, for him to be willing for that: **Wickedness is sweet in his Mouth; and therefore he hides it under his Tongue; he spares it and forsakes it not; but keeps it still within his Mouth.** Job 20:12, 13. Herein chiefly consists the straitness of the gate, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life; upon the account of which, carnal men will not go in thereat, namely; That it is a way of utterly denying, and finally renouncing all ungodliness, and so a way of **Self-denial** or **Self-renunciation**.

Many natural men, under the means that are used with them, and God's strivings with them to bring them to forsake their sins, do by their sins, as **Pharaoh** did by his pride and covetousness, which he gratified by keeping the children of **Israel** in bondage, when God strove with him to bring him to let the people go. When

God's hand pressed **Pharaoh** sore, and he was exercised with fears of God's future wrath, he entertained some thoughts of letting the people go, and promised he would do it; But from time to time he broke his promises, when he saw there was respite. When God filled **Egypt** with thunder and lightning, and the fire ran along the ground, then **Pharaoh** is brought to confess his sin with seeming humility, and to have a great resolution to let the people go, Exodus 9:27, 28. **And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this Time; the Lord is Righteous, and I and my People are wicked: Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty Thunderings and Hail, and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.** So sinners are sometimes, by thunders and lightnings, and great terrors of the law, brought to a seeming work of humiliation, and to appearance to part with their sins; but are no more thoroughly brought to a disposition to dismiss them, than **Pharaoh** was to let the people go. **Pharaoh** in the struggle that was between his conscience and his lusts, was for contriving that God might be served, and he enjoy his lusts that were gratified by the slavery of the people, too. **Moses** insisted that **Israel's** God should be served and sacrificed to: **Pharaoh** was willing to consent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the people: **Go sacrifice to your God in the Land,** says he, Exodus 8:25. So many sinners are for contriving to serve God, and enjoy their lusts too. **Moses** objected against complying with **Pharaoh's** proposal, that serving God, and yet continuing in **Egypt** under their taskmasters, did not agree together, and were inconsistent one with another; (there is no serving God, and continuing slaves to such enemies of God at the same time.) After this

Pharaoh consented to let the people go, provided they would not go far away: He was not willing to part with them finally, and therefore would have them within reach. So do many hypocrites with respect to their sins. Afterwards **Pharaoh** consented to let the **Men** go, if they would leave the **Women** and **Children**; Exodus 10:8, 9, 10. And then after that, when God's hand was yet harder upon him, he consented that they should go, even **Women** and **Children**, as well as **Men**, provided they would leave their **Cattle** behind: But he was not willing to let them go, and all that they had; **Exodus** 10:24. So it oftentimes is with sinners: They are willing to part with some of their sins; but not all: They are brought to part with the more gross acts of sin; but not to part with their lusts, in lesser indulgences of them. Whereas we must part with all our sins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, **Men, Women, Children** and **Cattle**: They must all be let go, with **their Young, and with their Old, with their Sons, and with their Daughters, with their Flocks, and with their Herds; there must not be an Hoof left behind**: As **Moses** told **Pharaoh**, with respect to the children of **Israel**. At last, when it came to extremity, **Pharaoh** consented to let the people all go, and all that they had; but he was not steadfastly of that mind: He soon repented, and pursued after them again: And the reason was, that those lusts of pride and covetousness, that were gratified by **Pharaoh's** dominion over the people, and the gains of their service, were never really mortified in him, but only violently restrained. And thus, he being guilty of backsliding, after his seeming compliance with God's commands was destroyed without remedy. Thus there may be a forced parting with ways of disobedience to the commands of God, that may seem to be universal, as to what

appears, for a little season: But because it is a mere force, without the mortification of the inward principle of sin; they will not persevere in it; but will return as the dog to his vomit; and so bring on themselves dreadful and remediless destruction. There were many false disciples in Christ's time, that followed him for a while; but none of them followed him to the end; but some on one occasion, and some on another, went back and walked no more with him.

From what has been said it is manifest, that Christian practice or a holy life is **a great and distinguishing Sign** of true and saving grace. But I may go further, and assert, that it is **the chief** of all the signs of grace, both as an evidence of the sincerity of professors unto others, and also to their own consciences.

But then it is necessary that this be rightly taken, and that it be well understood and observed, in what sense and manner Christian practice is the **greatest Sign** of grace. Therefore, to set this matter in a clear light, I will endeavor particularly and distinctly to prove, that Christian practice is the **principal Sign** by which Christians are to judge, both of their own and others' sincerity of godliness; withal observing some things that are needful to be particularly noted, in order to a right understanding of this matter.

1. I shall consider Christian practice and a holy life, as a manifestation and sign of the sincerity of a professing Christian, **to the Eye of his Neighbors** and Brethren.

And that this is the **chief sign** of grace in this respect, is very evident from the Word of God. Christ, who knew best how to give us rules to judge of others, has repeated it and inculcated it, that we should know them by their fruits; Matthew 7:16. **You shall**

know them by their fruits. And then after arguing the point, and giving clear reasons why it must needs be, that men's fruits must be the chief evidence of what sort they are, in the following verses, he closes by repeating the assertion: Verse 20. **Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them.** Again, Chapter 12:33. **Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt.** --As much as to say, it is a very absurd thing, for any to suppose that the tree is good, and yet the fruit bad, that the tree is of one sort, and the fruit of another; for the proper evidence of the nature of the tree is its fruit. Nothing else can be intended by that last clause in the verse, **For the tree is known by its fruit,** than that the tree is chiefly known by its fruit, that this is the main and most proper diagnostic by which one tree is distinguished from another. So Luke 6:44. **Every tree is known by its own fruit.** Christ nowhere says, You shall know the tree by its leaves or flowers, or you shall know men by their talk, or you shall know them by the good story they tell of their experiences, or you shall know them by the manner and air of their speaking, and emphasis and pathos of expression, or by their speaking feelingly, or by making a very great show by abundance of talk, or by many tears and affectionate expressions, or by the affections you feel in your hearts towards them: But by **their fruits shall you know them; the tree is known by its fruit; Every tree is known by its own fruit.** And as this is the evidence that Christ has directed us mainly to look at in others, in judging of them, so it is the evidence that Christ has mainly directed us to give to others, whereby they may judge of us; Matthew 5:16. **Let your light so shine before men, that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in Heaven.**

Here Christ directs us to manifest our godliness to others. Godliness is as it were a light that shines in the soul: Christ intends that this light should not only shine within, but that it should **shine out before men**, that they may see it. But which way shall this be? It is by our good works. Christ does not say, that others hearing your good words, your good story, or your pathological expressions; but **that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in Heaven**. Doubtless when Christ gives us a rule how to make our light shine, that others may have evidence of it, His rule is the best that is to be found. And the Apostles do mention a Christian practice, as the principal ground of their esteem of persons as true Christians. As the Apostle **Paul**, in the sixth chapter of **Hebrews**. There the Apostle in the beginning of the chapter, speaks of them that have great common illuminations, that have **been enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, that afterwards fall away**, and are like barren ground, **that is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned**: And then immediately adds in the ninth verse (expressing his charity for the Christian **Hebrews**, as having that saving grace, which is better than all these common illuminations) **But beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation; though we thus speak**. And then in the next verse, he tells them what was the reason he had such good thoughts of them: He does not say, that it was because they had given him a good account of a work of God upon their souls, and talked very experimentally; but it was their work, and labour of love; **For God is not unrighteous, to for-**

get your work, and labour of love, which you have showed towards His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And the same Apostle speaks of a faithful serving God in practice, as the proper proof to others of men's loving Christ above all, and preferring His honour to their private interest. Philippians 2:21, 22. **For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's: But you know the proof of him, that as a son with the father, he has served with me in the Gospel.** So the Apostle **John** expresses the same, as the ground of his good opinion of **Gaius**, 3 John 3, 4, 5, 6. **For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you.** But how did the brethren testify of the truth that was in **Gaius**? And how did the Apostle judge of the truth that was in him? It was not because they testified that he had given them a good account of the steps of his experiences, and talked like one that felt what he said, and had the very language of a Christian; but they testified, **that he walked in the truth**; as it follows, **even as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy, than to hear that my children walk in the truth. Beloved, you do faithfully, whatsoever you do to the brethren and to strangers; which have borne witness of your charity before the church.** Thus the Apostle explains what the brethren had borne witness of, when they **came and testified of his walking in the truth.** And the Apostle seems in this same place, to give it as a rule to **Gaius** how he should judge of others; in Verse 10, he mentions one **Diotrephes**, that did not carry himself well, and led away others after him; and then in the eleventh verse he directs **Gaius** to beware of such, and not to follow them; and gives him a rule whereby he may know them, ex-

actly agreeable to that rule Christ had given before, **By their fruits you shall know them**; says the Apostle, **Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that does good is of God, but he that does evil has not seen God.** And I would further observe that the Apostle **James**, expressly comparing that way of showing others our faith and Christianity by our practice or works, with other ways of showing our faith without works, or not by works, does plainly and abundantly prefer the former; James 2:18. **Yea a man may say, you have faith and I have works: Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.** A manifestation of our faith **without works**, or in a way diverse from works, is a manifestation of it in **words**, whereby a man professes faith. As the Apostle says, Verse 14. **What does it profit, my brethren, though a man SAY he has faith?** --Therefore here are two ways of manifesting to our neighbour what is in our hearts; one by what we **say**, and the other by what we **do**. But the Apostle abundantly prefers the latter as the best evidence. Now certainly all accounts we give of ourselves in words, our saying that we have faith, and that we are converted, and telling the manner how we came to have faith, and the steps by which it was wrought, and the discoveries and experiences that accompanied it, are still but manifesting our faith by what we **say**; it is but showing our faith by our **words**; which the Apostle speaks of as falling vastly short of manifesting of it by what we do, and showing our faith by our **works**.

And as the Scripture plainly teaches that Practice is the best Evidence of the Sincerity of professing Christians; so Reason teaches the same Thing. Reason shows that Men's Deeds are better

and more faithful Interpreters of their Minds, than their Words. The common Sense of all Mankind, through all Ages and Nations, teaches them to judge of Men's Hearts chiefly by their Practice, in other Matters: As whether a Man be a loyal Subject, a true Lover, a dutiful Child, or a faithful Servant. If a Man professes a great deal of Love and Friendship to another, Reason teaches all Men, that such a Profession is not so great an Evidence of his being a real and hearty Friend, as his appearing a Friend in Deeds; being faithful and constant to his Friend in Prosperity and Adversity, ready to lay out himself, and deny himself, and suffer in his personal Interest, to do him a Kindness. A wise Man will trust to such Evidences of the Sincerity of Friendship, further than a thousand earnest Professors and solemn Declarations, and most affectionate Expressions of Friendship in Words. And there is equal Reason why Practice should also be looked upon as the best Evidence of Friendship towards Christ. Reason says the same that Christ said, in John 14:21. **He that has my Commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me.** Thus if we see a Man, who in the Course of his Life, seems to follow and imitate Christ, and greatly to exert and deny himself for the Honor of Christ and to promote his Kingdom and Interest in the World; Reason teaches that this is an Evidence of Love to Christ, more to be depended on, than if a Man only says he has Love to Christ, and tells of the inward Experiences he has had of Love to him, what strong Love he felt, and how his Heart was drawn out in Love at such and such a Time, when it may be there appears but little Imitation of Christ in his Behavior, and he seems backward to do any great Matter for him, or to put himself out of his Way for the promoting of his Kingdom, but seems to be apt to excuse himself, whenever he is called to

deny himself for Christ. So if a Man in declaring his Experiences, tells how he found his Heart weaned from the World, and saw the Vanity of it, so that all looked as nothing to him, at such and such Times, and professes that he gives up all to God, and calls Heaven and Earth to witness to it; but yet in his Practice is violent in pursuing the World, and what he gets he keeps close, is exceeding loath to part with much of it to charitable and pious Uses, it comes from him almost like his Heart's Blood. But there is another professing Christian, that says not a great deal, yet in his Behavior appears ready at all Times to forsake the World, whenever it stands in the Way of his Duty, and is free to part with it at any Time, to promote Religion and the Good of his Fellow Creatures; Reason teaches that the Latter gives far the most credible Manifestation of an Heart weaned from the World. And if a Man appears to walk humbly before God and Men, and to be of a Conversation that favors of a broken Heart, appearing patient and resigned to God under Affliction, and meek in his Behavior amongst Men; this is a better Evidence of Humiliation, than if a Person only tells how great a Sense he had of his own Unworthiness, how he was brought to lie in the Dust, and was quite emptied of himself, and see himself nothing and all over filthy and abominable, **etc.** but yet acts as if he looked upon himself one of the first and best of Saints, and by just Right the Head of all the Christians in the Town, and is assuming, self-willed, and impatient of the least Contradiction or Opposition; we may be assured in such a Case, that a Man's Practice comes from a lower Place in his Heart, than his Profession. So (to mention no more Instances) if a Professor of Christianity manifests in his Behavior a pitiful tender Spirit towards others in Calamity, ready to bear their Burdens with them,

willing to spend his Substance for them, and to suffer many inconveniences in his worldly Interest to promote the Good of others Souls and Bodies: is not this a more credible Manifestation of a Spirit of Love to Man, than only a Man's telling what Love he felt to others at certain Times, how he pitied their Souls, how his Soul was in Travail for them, and how he felt a hearty Love and Pity to his Enemies; when in his Behavior he seems to be of a very selfish Spirit, close and covetous, all for himself and none for his Neighbors, and perhaps envious and contentious? Persons in a Pang of Affection may think they have a Willingness of Heart for great Things, to do much and to suffer much, and so may profess it very earnestly and confidently; when really their Hearts are far from it. Thus many in their affectionate Pangs, have thought themselves willing to be damned eternally for the Glory of God. Passing Affections easily produce Words; and Words are cheap; and Godliness is more easily feigned in Words than in Actions. Christian Practice is a costly laborious Thing. The Self-denial that is required of Christians, and the Narrowness of the Way that leads to Life, do not consist in Words, but in Practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like Saints, than to act like Saints.

Thus it is plain that Christian Practice is the best Sign or Manifestation of the true Godliness of a professing Christian, to the Eye of his Neighbors.

But then the following Things should be well observed, that this Matter may be rightly understood.

First, It must be observed, that when the Scripture speaks of Christian Practice, as the best Evidence to others, of Sincerity and Truth of Grace, **a Profession of Christianity** is not excluded,

but supposed. The Rules mentioned were Rules given to the Followers of Christ, to guide them in their Thoughts of **professing Christians**, and those that offered themselves as some of their Society, whereby they might judge of the Truth of their **Pretenses**, and the Sincerity of the **Profession** they made; and not for the Trial of Heathens, or those that made no Pretence to Christianity, and that Christians had nothing to do with. This is as plain as is possible in that great Rule which Christ gives in the 7th of Matthew, **By their Fruits ye shall know them**. He there gives a Rule how to judge of those that professed to be Christians, yea that made a very high Profession, **false Prophets, who come in Sheep's Clothing**, as Verse 15. So it is also with that of the Apostle **James**, Chapter 2:18. **Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works**. It is evident that both these Sorts of Persons, offering to give these diverse Evidences of their Faith, are Professors of Faith: This is implied in their offering each of them to give Evidences of the Faith they professed. And it is evident by the preceding Verses, that the Apostle is speaking of Professors of Faith in Jesus Christ. So it is very plain that the Apostle **John**, in those Passages that have been observed in his third Epistle, is speaking of professing Christians. Though in these Rules, the Christian Practice of Professors be spoken of as the greatest and most distinguishing Sign of their Sincerity in their Profession, much more evidential than their Profession it self; yet a Profession of Christianity is plainly presupposed: It is not the main Thing in the Evidence, nor any Thing distinguishing in it; yet it is a Thing requisite and necessary in it. As the having an animal Body, is not any Thing distinguishing of a Man, from other Creatures, and is not the main

Thing in the Evidence of human Nature; yet it is a Thing requisite and necessary in the Evidence. So that if any Man should say plainly that he was not a Christian, and did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or a Person sent of God; these Rules of Christ and his Apostles don't at all oblige us to look upon him as a sincere Christian, let his visible Practice and Virtues, be what they will. And not only do these Rules take no place with Respect to a Man that explicitly denies Christianity, and is a professed Deist, Jew, Heathen, or open Infidel; but also with Respect to a Man that only forbears to make a Profession of Christianity: Because these Rules were given us only to judge of professing Christians: Fruits must be joined with open Flowers; Bells and Pomegranates go together.

But here will naturally arise this Inquiry, **namely** when a Man may be said to profess Christianity, or what Profession may properly be called a Profession of Christianity?

I answer in two Things;

1. In order to a man's being properly said to make a profession of Christianity, there must undoubtedly be a profession of all that is necessary to his being a Christian, or of so much as belongs to the essence of Christianity. Whatsoever is essential in Christianity itself, the profession of that is essential in the profession of Christianity. The profession must be of the thing professed. For a man to profess Christianity, is for him to declare that he has it. And therefore so much as belongs to a thing, so as to be necessary in order to its being truly denominated **that** thing; so much is essential to the declaration of **that** thing, in order to its being truly denominated a declaration of **that** thing. If we take only a part of Christianity, and leave out a part that is essential to it, what we take is not Christianity; because something that is of the essence of

it is wanting. So if we profess only a part, and leave out a part that is essential, that which we profess is not Christianity. Thus in order to a profession of Christianity, we must profess that we believe that **Jesus** is the **Messiah**; for this reason, because such a belief is essential to Christianity. And so we must profess, either expressly or implicitly, that **Jesus** satisfied for our sins, and other essential doctrines of the Gospel; because a belief of these things also are essential to Christianity. But there are other things as essential to religion, as an orthodox belief; which it is therefore as necessary that we should profess, in order to our being truly said to profess Christianity. Thus it is essential to Christianity that we repent of our sins, that we be convinced of our own sinfulness, and that we are sensible we have justly exposed ourselves to God's wrath, and that our hearts do renounce all sin, and that we do with our whole hearts embrace Christ as our only Saviour, and that we love him above all, and are willing for his sake to forsake all, and that we do give up ourselves to be entirely and forever his, **etc.** Such things as these do as much belong to the essence of Christianity, as the belief of any of the doctrines of the Gospel: And therefore the profession of them does as much belong to a Christian profession. Not that in order to a being professing Christians, it is necessary that there should be an explicit profession of every individual thing that belongs to Christian grace or virtue: But certainly, there must be a profession, either express or implicit, of what is of the essence of religion. And as to those things that Christians should **express** in their profession, we ought to be guided by the precepts of God's Word, or by Scripture examples of public professions of religion, God's people have made from time to time. Thus they ought to profess their repentance of sin: As of old, when persons were initi-

ated as professors, they came confessing their sins, manifesting their humiliation for sin, **Matthew 3:6**. And the baptism they were baptized with, was called **the baptism of repentance**, Mark 1:3. And **John**, when he had baptized them, exhorted them **to bring forth fruits meet for repentance**, Matthew 3:8, **that is** agreeable to that repentance which they had professed; encouraging them, that if they did so, they should escape the wrath to come, and be gathered as wheat into God's garner, **Matthew 3:7-10, 12**. So the Apostle **Peter** says to the **Jews**, Acts 2:38, **Repent, and be baptized**: Which shows that repentance is a qualification that must be visible in order to baptism; and therefore ought to be publicly professed. So when the **Jews** that returned from captivity, entered publicly into covenant, it was with confession, or public profession of repentance of their sins, **Nehemiah 9:2**. This profession of repentance should include or imply a profession of conviction that God would be just in our damnation: See **Nehemiah 9:33** together with verse 35 and the beginning of the next chapter. They should profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and that they embrace Christ, and rely upon him as their Saviour, with their whole hearts, and that they do joyfully entertain the Gospel of Christ. Thus **Philip**, in order to baptizing the Eunuch, required that he should profess that he **believed with all his heart**: And they that were received as visible Christians, at that great outpouring of the Spirit, which began at the day of **Pentecost**, appeared **gladly to receive the Gospel**; Acts 2:4. **Then they that gladly received the word, were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls**. They should profess that they rely only on Christ's righteousness and strength, and that they are devoted to him, as their only Lord and

Saviour, and that they rejoice in him as their only righteousness and portion. It is foretold that all nations should be brought publicly to make this profession, Isaiah 45:22, to the end; **Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength. Even to him shall men come: And all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.** They should profess to give up themselves entirely to Christ, and to God through him; as the children of **Israel**, when they publicly recognized their covenant with God; Deuteronomy 26:17. **Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice.** They ought to profess a willingness of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties, and to walk in a way of obedience to God universally and perseveringly; Exodus 19:8 and 24:3, 7; Deuteronomy 26:16-18; 2 Kings 23:3; Nehemiah 10:28-29; Psalm 119:57, 106. They ought to profess that all their hearts and souls are in these engagements to be the Lord's, and forever to serve him; 2 **Chronicles** 15:12-14. God's people's swearing to God, and swearing **by** his name, or **to** his name, as it might be rendered, (by which seems to be signified their solemnly giving up themselves to him in covenant, and vowing to receive him as their God, and to be entirely his, to obey and serve him) is spoken of as a duty to be performed by all God's visi-

ble **Israel**; Deuteronomy 6:13 and 10:20; Psalm 63:11; Isaiah 19:18; Chapter 45:23-24 compared with Romans 14:11 and Philippians 2:10-11; Isaiah 48:1-2 and 65:15-16; Jeremiah 4:2, 5:7, and 12:16; Hosea 4:15 and 10:4. Therefore, in order to persons being entitled to full esteem and charity, with their neighbours, as being sincere professors of Christianity; by those forementioned rules of Christ and his apostles, there must be a visibly holy life, with a profession, either expressing, or plainly implying such things as those which have been now mentioned. We are to **know them by their fruits**; that is, we are by their fruits to know whether they be what they profess to be; not that we are to know by their fruits, that they have something in them, which they don't so much as pretend to.

And moreover,

2. That profession of these things, which is properly called a Christian profession, and which must be joined with Christian practice, in order to person's being entitled to the benefit of those rules, must be made (as to what appears) understandingly: that is, they must be persons that appear to have been so far instructed in the principles of religion, as to be in an ordinary capacity to understand the proper import of what is expressed in their profession. For sounds are no significations or declarations of any thing, any further than men understand the meaning of their own sounds.

But in order to persons making a proper profession of Christianity, such as the Scripture directs to, and such as the followers of Christ should require, in order to the acceptance of the professors with full charity, as of their society; it is not necessary they should give an account of the particular steps and method, by which the Holy Spirit, sensibly to them, wrought and brought

about those great essential things of Christianity in their hearts. There is no footstep in the Scripture of any such way of the apostles, or primitive ministers and Christians requiring any such relation, in order to their receiving and treating others, as their Christian brethren, to all intents and purposes, or of their first examining them, concerning the particular method and order of their experiences. They required of them a profession of the things wrought; but no account of the manner of working was required of them. Nor is there the least shadow in the Scripture of any such custom in the church of God, from **Adam** to the death of the Apostle **John**.

I am far from saying that it is not requisite that persons should give any sort of account of their experiences to their brethren. For persons to profess those things wherein the essence of Christianity lies, is the same thing as to profess that they **experience** those things. Thus for persons solemnly to profess, that, in a sense and full conviction of their own utter sinfulness, misery, and impotence, and totally undone state as in themselves, and their just desert of God's rejection and eternal wrath, without mercy, and the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness, or any thing in them, to satisfy divine justice, or recommend them to God's favour, they do only and entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ and his satisfaction and righteousness; that they do with all their hearts believe the truth of the Gospel of Christ; and that in a full conviction and sense of his sufficiency and perfect excellency as a Saviour, as exhibited in the Gospel, they do with their whole souls cleave to him, and acquiesce in him, as the refuge and rest of their souls, and fountain of their comfort; that they repent of their sins, and utterly renounce all sin, and give up themselves wholly to

Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to him as their King; that they give him their hearts and their whole man; and are willing and resolved to have God for their whole and everlasting portion; and in a dependence on his promises of a future eternal enjoyment of him in heaven, to renounce all the enjoyments of this vain world, selling all for this great treasure and future inheritance, and to comply with every command of God, even the most difficult and self-denying, and devote their whole lives to God's service; and that in forgiveness of those that have injured them, and a general benevolence to mankind, their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, to cleave to them and love them as their brethren, and worship and serve God and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all those duties that belong to them, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ; I say, for persons solemnly to profess such things as these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing, as to profess that they are conscious to, or do **experience** such things in their hearts.

Nor is it what I suppose, that Persons giving an Account of their Experience of particular Exercises of Grace, with the Times and Circumstances, gives no Advantage to others in forming a Judgment of their State; or that Persons may not fitly be enquired of concerning these in some Cases, especially Cases of great Importance, where all possible Satisfaction concerning Persons Piety is especially to be desired and sought after, as in the Case of Ordination or Approbation of a Minister. It may give Advantage in forming a Judgment, in several Respects; and among others, in this, That hereby we may be better satisfied that the Professor speaks honestly and understandingly, in what he professes; and

that he does not make the Profession in mere Formality. In order to a Profession of Christianity being accepted to any Purpose, there ought to be good Reason, from the Circumstances of the Profession, to think that the Professor does not make such a Profession out of a mere customary Compliance with a prescribed Form, using Words without any distinct Meaning, or in a very lax and ambiguous Manner, as Confessions of Faith are often subscribed; but that the Professor understandingly and honestly signifies what he is conscious of in his own Heart; otherwise his Profession can be of no Significance, and no more to be regarded than the Sound of Things without Life. But indeed (whatever Advantage an Account of particular Exercises may give in judging of this) it must be owned that the Professor having been previously thoroughly instructed by his Teachers, and giving good Proof of his sufficient Knowledge, together with a Practice agreeable to his Profession, is the best Evidence of this.

Nor do I suppose, but that, if a Person that is enquired of about particular Passages, Times and Circumstances of his Christian Experience, among other Things, seems to be able to give a distinct Account of the Manner of his first Conversion, in such a Method as has been frequently observable in true Conversion, so that Things seem sensibly and distinctly to follow one another, in the Order of Time, according to the Order of Nature; it is an illustrating Circumstance, that among other Things, adds Lustre to the Evidence he gives his Brethren of the Truth of his Experiences.

But the Thing that I speak of as unscriptural, is the insisting on a particular Account of the distinct Method and Steps, wherein the Spirit of God did sensibly proceed, in first bringing the Soul into a State of Salvation, as a Thing requisite in order to receiving a

Professor into full Charity as a real Christian; or so, as for the Want of such Relation, to disregard other Things in the Evidence Persons give to their Neighbors of their Christianity, that are vastly more important and essential.

Secondly, That we may rightly understand how Christian Practice is the greatest Evidence that others can have of the Sincerity of a professing Christian, it is needful that what was said before, showing what Christian Practice is, should be borne in Mind; and that it should be considered how far this may be visible to others. Merely that a Professor of Christianity is what is commonly called an honest Man, and a moral Man, (**that is** we have no special Transgression or Iniquity to charge him with, that might bring a Blot on his Character) is no great Evidence of the Sincerity of his Profession. This is not **making his Light shine before Men**. This is not that **Work and Labor of Love showed towards Christ's Name**, which gave the Apostle such Persuasion of the Sincerity of the professing **Hebrews**, Hebrews 6:9, 10. It may be so, that we may see nothing in a Man, **but that he may be** a good Man, there may appear nothing in his Life and Conversation inconsistent with his being godly, and yet neither may there be any great positive Evidence **that he is** so. But there may be great positive Appearances of Holiness in Men's visible Behavior: Their Life may appear to be a Life of the Service of God: They may appear to follow the Example of Jesus Christ, and come up in a great Measure to those excellent Rules in the fifth, sixth, and seventh Chapters of **Matthew**, and twelfth of **Romans**, and many other Parts of the New Testament: There may be a great Appearance of their being universal in their Obedience to Christ's Commands and the Rules of the Gospel. They may appear to be

universal in the Performance of the Duties of the first Table, manifesting the Fear and Love of God: and also universal in fulfilling Rules of Love to Men, Love to Saints, and Love to Enemies; Rules of Meekness and Forgiveness, Rules of Mercy and Charity, and looking not only at our own Things, but also at the Things of others; Rules of doing Good to Men's Souls and Bodies, to particular Persons and to the Public; Rules of Temperance and Mortification, and of an humble Conversation; Rules of bridling the Tongue, and improving it to glorify God and bless Men, showing that in their Tongues is the Law of Kindness. They may appear to walk as Christians in all Places, and at all Seasons, in the House of God, and in their Families, and among their Neighbors, on Sabbath Days, and every Day, in Business and in Conversation, towards Friends and Enemies, towards Superiors, Inferiors and Equals. Persons in their visible Walk may appear to be very earnestly engaged in the Service of God and Mankind, much to labor and lay out themselves in this Work of a Christian, and to be very constant and steadfast in it, under all Circumstances and Temptations. There may be great Manifestations of a Spirit to deny themselves, and suffer for God and Christ, and the Interest of Religion, and the Benefit of their Brethren. There may be great Appearances in a Man's Walk, of a Disposition to forsake any Thing, rather than to forsake Christ, and to make every Thing give Place to his Honor. There may be great Manifestations in a Man's Behavior of such Religion as this being his Element, and of his placing the Delight and Happiness of his Life in it: And his Conversation may be such, that he may carry with him a sweet Odor of Christian Graces and heavenly Dispositions, wherever he goes. And when it is thus in

the Professors of Christianity, here is an Evidence to others of their Sincerity in their Profession, to which all other Manifestations are not worthy to be compared.

There is doubtless a great Variety in the Degrees of Evidence that Professors do exhibit of their Sincerity, in their Life and Practice; as there is a Variety in the Fairness and Clearness of Accounts Persons give of the Manner and Method of their Experiences: But undoubtedly such a Manifestation as has been described, of a Christian Spirit in Practice, is vastly beyond the fairest and brightest Story of particular Steps and Passages of Experience, that ever was told. And in general a Manifestation of the Sincerity of a Christian Profession in Practice, is far better than a Relation of Experiences.

But yet,

Thirdly, It must be noted, agreeable to what was formerly observed, That no external Manifestations and outward Appearances whatsoever, that are visible to the World, are infallible Evidences of Grace. These Manifestations that have been mentioned, are the best that Mankind can have; and they are such as do oblige Christians entirely to embrace Professors as Saints, and love them and rejoice in them as the Children of God, and are sufficient to give them as great Satisfaction concerning them, as ever is needful to guide them in their Conduct, or for any Intent and Purpose that needs to be answered in this World. But nothing that appears to them in their Neighbor, can be sufficient to beget an absolute Certainty concerning the State of his Soul: For they see not his Heart, nor can they see all his external Behavior; for much of it is in secret, and hid from the Eye of the World: And it is impossible certainly to determine, how far a Man may go in many external

Appearances and Imitations of Grace, from other Principles. Though undoubtedly, if others could see so much of what belongs to Men's Practice, as their own Consciences may see of it, it might be an infallible Evidence of their State, as will appear from what follows.

Having thus considered Christian Practice as the **best Evidence** of the Sincerity of Professors **to others**, I now proceed,

2. To observe that the Scripture also speaks of Christian Practice as a distinguishing and sure Evidence of Grace to **Persons own Consciences**. This is very plain in 1 John 2:3. **Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments**. And the Testimony of our Consciences, with Respect to our good Deeds, is spoken of as that which may give us Assurance of our own Godliness; 1 John 3:18, 19. **My little Children, let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed** (in the Original it is ERGO **in Work**) **and in Truth. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him**. And the Apostle Paul, in Hebrews 6 speaks of **the Work, and Labor of Love**, of the Christian **Hebrews**, as that which both gave him a Persuasion that they had something above the highest common Illuminations, and also as that Evidence which tended to give them the highest Assurance of Hope concerning themselves; Verse 9, etc. **But Beloved, we are persuaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work, and Labor of Love, which you have showed towards his Name, in that you have ministered to his Saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show**

the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope, unto the End. So the Apostle directs the **Galatians** to examine their Behavior or Practice, that they might have Rejoicing in themselves in their own happy State: Galatians 6:4. **Let every Man prove his own Work; so shall he have Rejoicing in himself, and not in another.** And the Psalmist says, Psalm 119:6. **Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect to all thy Commandments. that is** Then shall I be bold and assured and steadfast in my Hope. And in that of our Savior, Matthew 7:19, 20. **Every Tree that brings not forth good Fruit is hewn down and cast into the Fire: Wherefore by their Fruits you shall know them.** Though Christ gives this firstly, as a Rule by which we should judge of others, yet in the Words that next follow he plainly shows, that he intends it also as a Rule by which we should judge ourselves; **Not every one that says unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that DOES THE WILL of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say unto me in that Day, Lord, Lord, etc.—and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me YOU THAT WORK INIQUITY. Therefore whosoever hears these Sayings of mine, and DOES them, I will liken him to a wise Man, which built his house upon a Rock. — And every one that hears these Sayings of mine and DOES THEM NOT, shall be likened unto a foolish Man, which built his House upon the Sand.** I shall have Occasion to mention other Texts that show the same Thing, hereafter.

But for the greater Clearness in this Matter, I would **First,** Show how Christian Practice, doing good Works, or keeping Christ's Commandments, is to be taken, when the Scripture repre-

sents it as a sure Sign to our own Consciences, that we are real Christians. And **Secondly**, will prove that this is the Chief of all Evidences that Men can have of their own sincere Godliness.

First, I would show how Christian Practice, or keeping Christ's Commandments, is to be taken, when the Scripture represents it as a sure Evidence to our own Consciences, that we are sincere Christians.

And here I would observe, that we cannot reasonably suppose that when the Scripture in this case speaks of good works, good fruit, and keeping Christ's commandments; that it has respect merely to what is external, or the motion and action of the body, without including anything else, having no respect to any aim or intention of the agent, or any act of his understanding or will. For consider men's actions so, and they are no more good works or acts of obedience, than the regular motions of a clock; nor are they considered as the actions of the men, or any human actions at all. The actions of the body, taken thus, are neither acts of obedience, nor disobedience; any more than the motions of the body in a convulsion. But the obedience and fruit that is spoken of, is the obedience and fruit of the man, and therefore not only the acts of the body, but the obedience of the soul, consisting in the acts and practice of the soul. Not that I suppose that when the Scripture speaks, in this case of gracious works and fruit and practice, that in these expressions is included all inward piety and holiness of heart, both principle and exercise, both spirit and practice: Because then, in these things being given as signs of a gracious principle in the heart, the same thing would be given as a sign of itself, and there would be no distinction between root and fruit. But only the gracious exercise, and holy act of the soul is meant, and

given as the sign of the holy principle, and good estate. Neither is every kind of inward exercise of grace meant; but the practical exercise, that exercise of the soul, and exertion of inward holiness, which there is in an obediential act; or that exertion of the mind, and act of grace, which issues and terminates in what they call the imperate acts of the will; in which something is directed and commanded by the soul to be done, and brought to pass in practice.

Here for a clearer understanding, I would observe, that there are two kinds of exercises of grace. 1. There are those that some call **immanent** acts: That is, those exercises of grace that remain within the soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate relation to anything to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in practice. Such are the exercises of grace, which the saints often have in **contemplation**: When the exercise that is in the heart, does not directly proceed **to**, or terminate **in** anything beyond the thoughts of the mind; however they may tend to practice (as [reconstructed: all] exercises of grace do) more remotely. 2. There is another kind of acts of grace, that are more strictly called **practical**, or effective exercises; because they immediately respect something to be done. They are the exertions of grace in the commanding acts of the will, directing the outward actions. As when a saint gives a cup of cold water to a disciple, in and from the exercise of the grace of charity; or voluntarily endures persecution, in the way of his duty, immediately from the exercise of a supreme love to Christ. Here is the exertion of grace producing its effect in outward actions. These exercises of grace are practical and productive [reconstructed: of] good works, not only in this sense, that they are of a **productive nature**, (for so are all exercises of true grace) but they are the **producing** acts. This is prop-

erly the exercise of grace in the act of the will; and this is properly the practice of the soul. And the soul is the immediate actor of no other practice but this: The [reconstructed: motions] of the body follow from the laws of union between the [reconstructed: soul] and body, which God, and not the soul has fixed, and does maintain. The act of the soul, and the exercise of grace, that is [reconstructed: exerted] in the performance of a good work, is the good work itself, [reconstructed: so far] as the [reconstructed: soul has part] in it, or so far as it is the soul's good work. The determinations of the will, are indeed our very actions, [reconstructed: so far] as they are properly ours, as Doctor **[reconstructed: Doddridge]** observes. By this practice of the soul, is included the aim and intention of the [reconstructed: soul] which [reconstructed: i]s the agent. For not only should we not look on the [reconstructed: acts] of a [reconstructed: statue], [reconstructed: dispensing] justice or distributing [reconstructed: alms], by clock-work, [reconstructed: as] acts of obedience to Christ in that statue; but neither would anybody call the voluntary actions of a man, externally and [reconstructed: conformable] to a command of Christ, by the name of obedience to [reconstructed: Christ], if he had never heard of Christ, or any of his commands, or had no thought of his commands in what he did. If the acts of obedience and good fruits spoken of, [reconstructed: ar]e looked upon, not as mere [reconstructed: motions] of the body, but as acts of the soul: the whole exercise of the spirit of the mind, in the action, must be taken in, with the end acted for, and the respect the soul then has to God, otherwise they are no acts of denial of ourselves, or obedience to God, or service done to him, but something else. Such effective exercises of grace as these that I have now described, many

of the martyrs have experienced in a high degree. And all true saints live a life of such acts of grace as these; as they all live a life of gracious works, of which these operative exertions of grace are the life and soul. And this is the obedience and fruit that God mainly looks at, as he looks at the soul, more than the body; as much as the soul, in the constitution of the human nature, is the superior part. As God looks at the obedience and practice of the man, he looks at the practice of the soul: for the soul is the man in God's sight; **For the Lord sees not as man sees, for He looks on the heart.**

And thus it is, that obedience, good works, good fruit, are to be taken, when given in Scripture as a sure evidence to our own consciences of a true principle of grace; even as including the obedience and practice of the soul, as preceding and governing the actions of the body. When practice is given in Scripture as the main evidence of our true Christianity to others, then is meant that in our practice which is visible to them, even our outward actions: But when practice is given as a sure evidence of our real Christianity to our own consciences, then is meant that in our practice which is visible to our own consciences; which is not only the motion of our bodies, but the exertion and exercise of the soul, which directs and commands that motion; which is more directly and immediately under the view of our own consciences, than the act of the body. And that this is the intent of the Scripture, not only [reconstructed: does] the nature and reason of the thing show, but it is plain by the Scripture itself. Thus it is evident that when Christ, at the conclusion of [reconstructed: his] Sermon on the Mount, speaks of doing or practicing these sayings of his, [reconstructed: a]s the grand sign of professors being true [recon-

structed: disciples], without which he likens them to a man that built his house upon the sand, and with which, to a man that built his house upon [reconstructed: a rock]; He has [reconstructed: a] respect, not only to the outward behaviour, but to the [reconstructed: inward] exercise of the mind in that behaviour: As is evident by observing what those preceding sayings of his are, that he refers to, when he speaks of our doing or practicing them: And we shall find they are such as these; **Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are they that [reconstructed: mourn], blessed [reconstructed: are] the [reconstructed: meek], Blessed are they that [reconstructed: hunger] and [reconstructed: thirst] after righteousness, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are the [reconstructed: pure in] heart, Whosoever is angry with his brother without a [reconstructed: cause], etc. Whosoever [reconstructed: looks on] a [reconstructed: woman] to [reconstructed: lust] after her, etc. Love your enemies, [reconstructed: Take no] thought for your life,** and others of the [reconstructed: li]ke nature, which imply inward exercises: And when Christ says, John 14:[reconstructed: 2]1. **He [reconstructed: that] hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it [reconstructed: is] that [reconstructed: loves] me;** He has evidently a special respect to that command several times repeated in the same discourse, (which he calls, by way of eminence, **His commandment**) **that they [reconstructed: should] love one another, as he had loved them:** (See chapter 13:34, 35. and chapter 15:10, 12, 13, 14.) But this command respects chiefly an exercise of the mind or heart, though exerted in practice. So when the apostle **John** says, 1 John 2:3, **Hereby we do know that we know**

him, if we keep his commandments; He has plainly a principal respect to the same command, as appears by what follows, verses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and second epistle, verses 5, 6. And when we are told in Scripture that men shall at the last day be judged **according to their works, and all shall receive according to the things done in the body;** It is not to be understood only of outward acts; for if so, why is God so often spoken of as searching the hearts and trying the reins, **That he may render to every one according to his works?** as Revelation 2:23. **And all the churches shall know that I am he that searcheth the reins and the hearts; and I will give unto every one according to his works.** Jeremiah 17:9, 10. **I the Lord search the hearts, I try the reins, even to give every man [illegible] according to the fruit of his doings.** But if by **his ways, and the fruit of the [reconstructed: doings],** [reconstructed: i]s meant only the actions of his body, what need of **[reconstructed: searching] the heart and reins,** in order to know them? **Hezekiah** in his [reconstructed: sic]kness [reconstructed: pleaded] his practice as an evidence of his title to God's favor, [reconstructed: a]s including, not only his outward actions, but what was in his heart, Isaiah 3[reconstructed: 8]:3. **Remember [reconstructed: now], O Lord, I beseech Thee, how I have [reconstructed: walked] before Thee, in truth, and with a perfect heart.**

Though in this great evidence of sincerity that the Scripture gives us, what is inward is of greatest importance; yet what is outward is included and intended, as connected with the practical exertion of grace in the will, directing and commanding the actions of the body. And hereby are effectually cut off all pretensions that

any man can have to evidences of godliness, who externally lives wickedly: Because the great evidence lies in that inward exercise and practice of the soul, which consists in the act of the will, commanding outward acts. But it is known that these commanding acts of the will are [reconstructed: one] way, and the actions of the bodily organs another: For the [reconstructed: fixed] law of nature is, that they should be united, as long [reconstructed: as] soul and [reconstructed: body] are united, and the organs are not so destroyed as to be incapable of those motions that the soul commands. Thus it would be [reconstructed: ri]diculous for a man to plead, that the commanding act of his will was to go to the public worship, while his feet carry him to a [reconstructed: tavern] or [reconstructed: b]rother house; or that the commanding act of his will was to give such a piece of money he had in his hand, to a poor beggar, while his hand at the same instant, kept it back, and held it fast.

Secondly, I proceed to show that Christian practice, taken in the sense that has been explained, is **the chief** of all the evidences of a saving sincerity in religion, to the consciences of the professors of it; much to be preferred to the method of the first convictions, enlightenings and comforts in conversion, or any immanent discoveries [reconstructed: or] exercises of grace whatsoever, that begin and end in contemplation. The evidence of this appears by the following arguments.

Argument 1. Reason plainly shows that those things which put it to the proof what men will actually cleave to and prefer in their practice, when left to follow their own choice and inclinations, are the proper trial what they do really prefer in their hearts. Sincerity in religion, as has been observed already, consists in set-

ting God highest in the heart, in choosing him before other things, in having a heart to sell all for Christ, **etc.** But a man's actions are the proper trial what a man's heart prefers. As for instance, when it is so that God and other things come to stand in competition, God is as it were set before a man on one hand, and his worldly interest or pleasure on the other, (as it often is so in the course of a man's life) his behavior in such case, in actually cleaving to the one and forsaking the other, is the proper trial which he prefers. Sincerity consists in forsaking all for Christ in heart; but to forsake all for Christ in heart, is the very same thing as to have a heart to forsake all for Christ: But certainly the proper trial whether a man has a heart to forsake all for Christ, is his being actually put to it, the having Christ and other things coming in competition, that he must actually or practically cleave to one and forsake the other. To forsake all for Christ in heart, is the same thing as to have a heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it: But the highest proof to ourselves and others, that we have a heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it, is actually doing it when called to it, or so far as called to it. To follow Christ in heart, is to have a heart to follow him. To deny ourselves in heart for Christ, is the same thing as to have a heart to deny ourselves for him in fact. The main and most proper proof of a man's having a heart to anything, concerning which he is at liberty to follow his own inclinations, and either to do or not to do as he pleases, is his doing of it. When a man is at liberty whether to speak or keep silence, the most proper evidence of his having a heart to speak, is his speaking. When a man is at liberty whether to walk or sit still, the proper proof of his having a heart to walk, is his walking. Godliness consists not in a heart to intend to do the will of God, but in a heart to do it. The children of

Israel in the wilderness had the former, of whom we read, Deuteronomy 5:27-29. **Go near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak to us all that the Lord our God shall speak to you; and we will hear it and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when you spoke to me; and the Lord said to me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you: They have well said all that they have spoken. Oh that there were such a HEART in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.** The people manifested that they had **a heart to intend to keep God's commandments**, and to be very forward in those intentions; but God manifests that this was far from being the thing that he desired, wherein true godliness consists, even **a heart actually to keep them.**

It is therefore exceeding absurd, and even ridiculous, for any to pretend that they have a good heart, while they live a wicked life, or do not bring forth the fruit of universal holiness in their practice. For it is proved in fact, that such men do not love God above all. It is foolish to dispute against plain fact and experience. Men that live in ways of sin, and yet flatter themselves that they shall go to heaven, or expect to be received hereafter as holy persons, without a holy life and practice, act as though they expected to make a fool of their Judge. Which is implied in what the Apostle says (speaking of men's doing good works, and living a holy life, thereby exhibiting evidence of their title to everlasting life) Galatians 6:7. **Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.** As much as

to say, Do not deceive yourselves with an expectation of reaping life everlasting hereafter, if you do not sow to the Spirit here; it is in vain to think that God will be made a fool of by you, that he will be shamed and baffled with shadows instead of substance, and with vain pretenses, instead of that good fruit which he expects, when the contrary to what you pretend, appears plainly in your life before his face. In this manner the word **mock** is sometimes used in scripture. Thus **Delilah** says to **Samson**, **Behold, you have mocked me, and told me lies**, Judges 16:10, 13. That is, you have baffled me, as though you would make a fool of me, as if I might be easily turned off with any vain pretense, instead of the truth. So it is said that **Lot**, when he told his sons-in-law that God would destroy that place, **he seemed as one that mocked to his sons-in-law**, Genesis 19:14. That is, He seemed as one that would make a game of them, as though they were such credulous fools as to regard such bugbears. But the great Judge, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will not be mocked or baffled with any pretenses, without a holy life. If in his name men have prophesied and wrought miracles, and have had faith, so that they could remove mountains, and cast out devils, and however high their religious affections have been, however great resemblances they have had of grace, and though their hiding place has been so dark and deep, that no human skill nor search could find them out; yet if they are **workers** or **practicers of iniquity**, they cannot hide their hypocrisy from their Judge; Job 34:22. **There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the WORKERS OF INIQUITY may hide themselves.** Would a wise prince suffer himself to be fooled and baffled by a subject, who should pretend that he was a loyal subject, and should tell his prince that he had an entire affec-

tion to him, and that at such and such a time he had experience of it, and felt his affections strongly working towards him, and should come expecting to be accepted and rewarded by his prince, as one of his best friends on that account, though he lived in rebellion against him, following some pretender to his crown, and from time to time stirring up sedition against him? Or would a master suffer himself to be shamed and gulled by a servant, that should pretend to great experiences of love and honor towards him in his heart, and a great sense of his worthiness and kindness to him, when at the same time he refused to obey him, and he could get no service done by him?

Argument 2. As reason shows that those things which occur in the course of life, that put it to the proof whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the proper trial of the uprightness and sincerity of their hearts; so the same are represented as the proper trial of the sincerity of professors, in the Scripture. There we find that such things are called by that very name, **Trials** or **Temptations** (which I before observed are both words of the same signification). The things that put it to the proof whether men will prefer God to other things in practice, are the difficulties of religion, or those things which occur that make the practice of duty difficult and cross to other principles besides the love of God; because in them, God and other things are both set before men together, in the **Way of the Lord**. So Chapter 3:1, 4 and Exodus 16:4. And the Scripture, when it calls these difficulties of religion by the name of temptations or trials, explains itself to mean thereby, the trial or experiment of their faith, James 1:2, 3. **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith works**

patience. 1 Peter 1:6, 7. **Now for a season you are in heaviness, through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold,** etc. So the Apostle **Paul** speaks of that expensive duty of parting with our substance to the poor, as the proof of the sincerity of the love of Christians, 2 **Corinthians** 8:8. And the difficulties of religion are often represented in Scripture as being the trial of professors, in the same manner that the furnace is the proper trial of gold and silver; Psalm 66:10, 11. **Thou, O God, hast proved us, thou hast tried us, as silver is tried: Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins,** Zechariah 13:9. **And I will bring the third part of them through the fire: And I will refine them as silver is refined; and I will try them as gold is tried.** That which has the color and appearance of gold is put into the furnace to try whether it be what it seems to be, real gold or no. So the difficulties of religion are called trials, because they try those that have the profession and appearance of saints, whether they are what they appear to be, real saints. If we put true gold into the furnace, we shall find its great value and preciousness. So the truth and inestimable value of the virtues of a true Christian appear, when under these trials; 1 Peter 1:7. **That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory.** True and pure gold will come out of the furnace in full weight: So true saints when tried come forth as gold, **Job** 23:10. Christ distinguishes true grace from counterfeit by this, that it is **Gold tried in the fire,** Revelation 3:17, 18. So that it is evident that these things are called **Trials** in Scripture, principally as they try or prove the sincerity of professors. And

from what has been now observed, it is evident that they are the most proper trial or proof of their sincerity; inasmuch as the very meaning of the word **Trial**, as it is ordinarily used in Scripture, is the difficulty occurring in the way of a professor's duty, as the trial or experiment of his sincerity. If **Trial of Sincerity** be the proper name of these difficulties of religion, then doubtless these difficulties of religion are **properly and eminently** the trial of sincerity. For they are doubtless eminently what they are called by the Holy Ghost: God gives things their name from that which is eminently their nature. And if it be so, that these things are the proper and eminent trial, proof or experiment of the sincerity of professors; then certainly the result of the trial or experiment (that is, persons' behavior or practice under such trials) is the proper and eminent evidence of their sincerity. For they are called trials or proofs only with regard to the result, and because the effect is eminently the **Proof**, or **Evidence**. And this is the most proper proof and evidence to the conscience of those that are the subjects of these trials. For when God is said by these things to **try men, and prove them, to see what is in their hearts, and whether they will keep his commandments or no**; we are not to understand, that it is for his own information, or that he may obtain evidence himself of their sincerity; (for he needs no trials for his information) but chiefly for their conviction, and to exhibit evidence to their consciences. Thus when God is said to prove **Israel** by the difficulties they met with in the wilderness, and by the difficulties they met with from their enemies in **Canaan**, to know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep his commandments or no; it must be understood that it was to discover them to themselves, that they might know what was in their own hearts. So when God

tempted or tried **Abraham** with that difficult command of offering up his son, it was not for his satisfaction, whether he feared God or no, but for **Abraham's** own greater satisfaction and comfort, and the more clear manifestation of the favor of God to him. When **Abraham** had proved faithful under this trial, God says to him, **Now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, thine only son from me.** Which plainly implies that in this practical exercise of **Abraham's** grace under this trial, was a clearer evidence of the truth of his grace, than ever was before; and the greatest evidence to **Abraham's** conscience; because God himself gives it to **Abraham** as such, for his comfort and rejoicing; and speaks of it to him, as what might be the greatest evidence to his conscience, of his being upright in the sight of his Judge. Which proves what I say, that holy practice under trials is the highest evidence of the sincerity of professors to their own consciences. And we find that Christ from time to time took the same method to convince the consciences of those that pretended friendship to him, and to show them what they were. This was the method he took with the rich young man, **Matthew** 19:16, **etc.** He seemed to show a great respect to Christ; he came kneeling to him, and called him **Good Master**, and made a great profession of obedience to the commandments; but Christ tried him by bidding him **go and sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and come and take up his cross, and follow him;** telling him **that then he should have treasure in heaven.** So he tried another that we read of **Matthew** 8:20. He made a great profession of respect to Christ: Says he, **Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.** Christ immediately puts his friendship to the proof, by telling him that **the foxes had holes, and the birds**

of the air had nests, but that the Son of Man had not where to lay his head. And thus Christ is wont still to try professed disciples in general, in his providence. So the seed sown in every kind of ground, stony ground, thorny ground, and good ground, which in all appears alike, when it first springs up; yet is tried, and the difference made to appear, by the burning heat of the sun.

Seeing therefore that these are the things that God makes use of to try us, it is undoubtedly the surest way for us to pass a right judgment on ourselves, to try ourselves by the same things. These trials of his are not for his information, but for ours; therefore we ought to receive our information from thence. The surest way to know our gold, is to look upon it and examine it in God's furnace, where he tries it for that end that we may see what it is. If we have a mind to know whether a building stands strong or no, we must look upon it when the wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in the form of wheat, has the real substance of wheat, or be only chaff, we must observe it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a staff be strong, or a rotten broken reed, we must observe it when it is leaned on, and weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourselves justly, we must weigh ourselves in God's scales, that he makes use of to weigh us. These trials in the course of our practices are as it were the balances in which our hearts are weighed, or in which Christ and the world, or Christ and his competitors, as to the esteem and regard they have in our hearts, are weighed, or are put into opposite scales, by which there is opportunity to see which preponderates. When a man is brought to the dividing of paths, the one of which leads to Christ, and the other to the objects of his lusts, to see which way he will go, or is

brought, and as it were set between Christ and the world, Christ on the right hand, and the world on the left; so that if he goes to one he must leave the other, to see which his heart inclines most to, or which preponderates in his heart; this is just the same thing as laying Christ and the world in two opposite scales; and his going to the one, and leaving the other, is just the same thing as the sinking of one scale, and rising of the other. A man's practice then, under the trials of God's providence, is as much the proper experiment and evidence of the superior inclination of his heart, as the motion of the balance, with different weights, in the scales, is the proper experiment of the superior weight.

Argument 3. Another argument, that holy practice, in the sense that has been explained, is the highest kind of evidence of the truth of grace to the consciences of Christians, is the commandment of Christ which the Apostle has especial respect to, when he here speaks of our keeping his commandments, is as I observed before that great commandment of his, which respects the duty of love to our brethren; as appears by the following verses. Again, the love of God is said to be perfected, in the same sense, Chapter 4:12. **If we love one another, God dwells in us, and his Love is perfected in us.** Here doubtless the Apostle has still respect to loving one another, in the same manner that he had explained in the preceding chapter, speaking of loving one another, as a sign of the love of God, Verse 17, 18. **Whoso has this world's goods, and shuts up his bowels, etc. how dwells the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed (or in work) and in truth.** By thus **loving in work**, the Apostle says **the love of God is perfected in us.** Grace is said to be perfected or finished

in holy practice, as therein it is brought to its proper effect, and to that exercise which is the end of the principle; the tendency and design of grace, herein is reached, and its operation completed and crowned. As the tree is made perfect in the fruit: It is not perfected in the seed's being planted in the ground; it is not perfected in the first quickening of the seed, and in its putting forth root and sprout; nor is it perfected when it comes up out of the ground; nor is it perfected in bringing forth leaves; nor yet in putting forth blossoms: But when it has brought forth good ripe fruit, then it is perfected, therein it reaches its end, the design of the tree is finished: All that belongs to the tree is completed and brought to its proper effect in the fruit: So is grace in its practical exercises. Grace is said to be made perfect or finished in its work or fruit, in the same manner as it is said of sin, James 1:15. **When lust has conceived, it brings forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.** Here are three steps; **first**, sin in its principle or habit, in the being of lust in the heart; and secondly here is its conceiving, consisting in the immanent exercises of it in the mind; and **lastly**, here is the fruit that was conceived actually brought forth, in the wicked work and practice. And this the Apostle calls the **finishing** or **perfecting** of sin: For the word in the original is the same that is translated **perfected** in those fore-mentioned places.

Now certainly if it be so, if Grace be in this Manner made perfect, in its Fruit, if these practical Exercises of Grace are those Exercises wherein Grace is brought to its proper Effect and End, and the Exercises wherein whatsoever belongs to its Design, Tendency and Operation is completed and crowned; then these Exercises must be the highest Evidences of Grace, above all other

Exercises. Certainly the proper Nature and Tendency of every Principle, must appear best and most fully, in its most perfect Exercises, or in those Exercises wherein its Nature is most completely exerted, and its Tendency most fully answered and crowned, in its proper Effect and End. If we would see the proper Nature of any Thing whatsoever, and see it in its full Distinction from other Things; let us look upon it in the finishing of it. The Apostle **James** says, **by Works is Faith made perfect**; and introduces this as an Argument to prove that Works are the chief Evidence of Faith whereby the Sincerity of the Professors of Faith is justified, James 2. And the Apostle **John**, after he had once and again told us, that Love was made perfect in keeping Christ's Commandments, observes 1 John 4:18, **That perfect Love casts out Fear**. Meaning (at least in Part) Love made perfect in this Sense; agreeable to what he had said in the foregoing Chapter, **That by loving in Deed, or Work, we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts**, Verse 18, 19.

Argument 4. Another Thing which makes it evident that holy Practice is the principal Evidence that we ought to make use of in judging both of our own and others' Sincerity, is, That this Evidence is above all others insisted on in Scripture. A common Acquaintance with the Scripture, together with a little Attention and Observation, will be sufficient to show to any one, that this is ten times more insisted on as a Note of true Piety, throughout the Scripture, from the Beginning of **Genesis** to the End of **Revelations**, than any Thing else. And in the new Testament, where Christ and his Apostles do expressly, and of declared Purpose, lay down Signs of true Godliness, this is almost wholly insisted on. It may be observed that Christ and his Apostles do not

only often say those Things, in their Discoursing on the great Doctrines of Religion, which do show what the Nature of true Godliness must be, or from whence the Nature and Signs of it may be inferred by just Consequence, and often occasionally mention many Things which do appertain to Godliness; but they do also often, of set Purpose, give Signs and Marks for the Trial of Professors, putting them upon trying themselves by the Signs they give, introducing what they say with such like Expressions as these; **By this you shall know that you know God; By this are manifest the Children of God and the Children of the Devil; He that has this, builds on a good Foundation; He that has it not, builds on the Sand; Hereby we shall assure our Hearts; He is the Man that loves Christ, etc.** But I can find no Place, where either Christ or his Apostles do in this Manner give Signs of Godliness, (though the Places are many) but where Christian Practice is almost the only Thing insisted on. Indeed in many of these Places, **Love to the Brethren** is spoken of as a Sign of Godliness; and (as I have observed before) there is no one virtuous Affection or Disposition so often expressly spoken of as a Sign of true Grace, as our having Love one to another: But then the Scriptures explain themselves to intend chiefly this Love as exercised and expressed in Practice, or in Deeds of Love. So does the Apostle **John** (who above all others insists on Love to the Brethren as a Sign of Godliness) most expressly explain himself, in that 1 John 3:14, 'We know that we have passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren. He that loves not his Brother abides in Death. —Whosoever has this World's Good, and sees his Brother have Need, and shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwells the Love of God in him? My little Children, let us love, not

in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed (that is in Deeds of Love) and in Truth, and hereby we know that we are of the Truth and shall assure our Hearts before him.' So that when the Scripture so much insists on our Loving one another, as a great Sign of Godliness, we are not thereby to understand the immanent Workings of Affection which Men feel one to another, so much as the Soul's practicing all the Duties of the Second Table of the Law; all which the new Testament tells us again and again, a true Love one to another comprehends; **Romans** 13:8, and 10. **Galatians** 5:14. **Matthew** 22:39, 40. So that really, there is no Place in the new Testament, where the declared Design is to give Signs of Godliness, but that holy Practice, and keeping Christ's Commandments, is the Mark chosen out from all others to be insisted on. Which is an invincible Argument that it is the Chief of all the Evidences of Godliness: Unless we suppose that when Christ and his Apostles on Design, set themselves about this Business of giving Signs, by which professing Christians in all Ages might determine their State, they did not know how to choose Signs so well as we could have chosen for them. But if we make the Word of Christ our Rule, then undoubtedly those Marks which Christ and his Apostles did chiefly lay down, and give to us, that we might try ourselves by them, those same Marks we ought especially to receive, and chiefly to make use of, in the Trial of ourselves. And surely those Things which Christ and his Apostles chiefly insisted on in the Rules they gave, Ministers ought chiefly to insist on in the Rules they give. To insist much on those Things that the Scripture insists little on, and to insist very little on those Things on which the Scripture insists much, is a dangerous Thing; because it is going out of God's Way, and is to judge ourselves, and guide

others, in an unscriptural Manner. God knew which Way of leading and guiding Souls was safest and best for them: He insisted so much on some Things, because he knew it to be needful that they should be insisted on; and let other Things more alone, as a wise God, because he knew it was not best for us, so much to lay the Weight of the Trial there. As the Sabbath was made for Man, so the Scriptures were made for Man; and they are by infinite Wisdom fitted for our Use and Benefit. We should therefore make them our Guide in all Things, in our Thoughts of Religion, and of ourselves. And for us to make that great which the Scripture makes little, and that little which the Scripture makes great, tends to give us a monstrous Idea of Religion; and (at least indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right Rule, and from a right Opinion of ourselves, and to establish Delusion and Hypocrisy.

Argument 5. Christian Practice **is plainly spoken of** in the **Word of God**, as the main Evidence of the Truth of Grace, not only to others, but to Men's own Consciences. It is not only more spoken of and insisted on than other Signs, but in many Places where it is spoken of, it is represented as the Chief of all Evidences. This is plain in the Manner of Expression from Time to Time. If God were now to speak from Heaven to resolve our Doubts concerning Signs of Godliness, and should give some particular Sign, that by it all might know whether they were sincerely Godly or not, with such emphatical Expressions as these, **The Man that has such a Qualification or Mark, That is the Man that is a true Saint, that is the very Man, by this you may know, this is the Thing by which it is manifest who are Saints and who are Sinners, such Men as these are Saints indeed;** Should not we look upon it as a Thing beyond Doubt, that this was given as a

special, and eminently distinguishing Note of true Godliness? But this is the very Case with Respect to the Sign of Grace I am speaking of; God has again and again uttered himself in his Word in this very Manner, concerning Christian Practice; as John 14. **He that has my Commandments and keeps them,** HE IT IS THAT LOVES ME. This Christ in this Place gives to the Disciples, not so much to guide them in judging of others, but to apply to themselves for their own Comfort after his Departure, as appears by every Word of the Context. And by the Way I would observe, that not only the Emphasis with which Christ utters himself is remarkable, but also his so much insisting on, and repeating the Matter, as he does in the Context; Verse 15. 'If you love me, keep my Commandments.' Verse 23. 'If a Man love me, he will keep my Words.' And Verse 24. 'He that loves me not, keeps not my Sayings.' And in the next Chapter over and over; Verse 2. 'Every Branch in me that bears not Fruit, he takes away; and every Branch that bears Fruit, he purges.' Verse 8. 'Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much Fruit, so shall you be my Disciples.' Verse 14. 'You are my Friends, if you do whatsoever I command you.' We have this Mark laid down with the same Emphasis again John 8:31. 'If you continue in my Word, THEN are you my Disciples INDEED.' And again, 1 John 2, 3. 'HEREBY we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.' And Verse 5. 'Whoso keeps his Word, IN HIM VERILY is the Love of God perfected; HEREBY know we that we are in him. And Chapter 3:18, 19. 'Let us love in Deed and in Truth, HEREBY we know that we are of the Truth.' What is translated **hereby**, would have been a little more emphatical, if it had been rendered more literally from the Original, **BY THIS we do know**—. And how evidently is holy

Practice spoken of as the grand Note of Distinction between the Children of God and the Children of the Devil, in Verse 10 of the same Chapter? 'IN THIS the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil.' Speaking of a holy, and a wicked Practice, as may be seen in all the Context: as Verse 3. 'Every Man that has this Hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure.' Verse 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. 'Whosoever abides in him sins not; whosoever sins has not seen him nor known him. Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that does Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that commits Sin is of the Devil. —Whosoever is born of God sins not. —Whosoever does not Righteousness is not of God.' So we have the like Emphasis 2 John 6. 'THIS IS LOVE, that we walk after his Commandments.' That is (as we must understand it) **This is the proper Evidence of Love.** So 1 John 5:3. 'THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, that we keep his Commandments.' So the Apostle **James**, speaking of the proper Evidences of true and pure Religion, says, James 1:27. 'Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, IS THIS, to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World.' We have the like emphatical Expressions used about the same Thing in the old Testament; Job 28:28. 'And unto Man he said, Behold the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding. Jeremiah 22:15, 16. 'Did not your Father eat and drink, and do Judgment and Justice? —He judged the Cause of the Poor and Needy: Was not this to know me? says the Lord.' Psalm 34:11, etc. 'Come you Children unto me, and I will teach you the Fear of the Lord. —Keep your Tongue from Evil, and your Lips from speaking Guile; depart from Evil, and do Good, seek Peace, and pursue it.' Psalm 15 at the Beginning, etc. 'Who shall abide in

thy Tabernacle? Who shall dwell in his holy Hill? He that walks uprightly, etc.' Psalm 24:3, 4. 'Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in thy holy Place? He that has clean Hands, and a pure Heart, etc.' Psalm 119:1. 'Blessed are the Undefined in the Way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.' Verse 6. 'Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect to all thy Commandments.' Proverbs 8:13. 'The Fear of the Lord is to hate Evil.

So the Scripture never uses such emphatical Expressions concerning any other Signs of Hypocrisy, and Unsoundness of Heart, as concerning an unholy Practice. So Galatians 6:7. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: For whatsoever a Man sows, that shall he also reap." 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10. 'Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, etc. shall inherit the Kingdom of God.' Ephesians 5:5, 6. 'For this know, that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Person, etc. has any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God: Let no Man deceive you with vain Words.' 1 John 3:7, 8. 'Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that does Righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: He that commits Sin is of the Devil.' Chapter 2:4. 'He that says, I know him, and keeps not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.' And Chapter 1:6. 'If we say we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth.' James 1:27. 'If any Man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his Tongue, but deceives his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain.' Chapter 3:14, 15. 'If you have bitter Envy and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not against the Truth: This Wisdom descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.' Psalm 125:5.

'As for such as turn aside to their crooked Ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the Workers of Iniquity.' Isaiah 35:8. 'An high Way shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the Unclean shall not pass over it.' Revelation 21:27. 'And there shall in no wise enter into it, whatsoever works Abomination or makes a Lie:' And in many Places. 'Depart from you, I know you not, you that work Iniquity.'

Argument 6. Another Thing which makes it evident, that holy Practice is the chief of all the Signs of the Sincerity of Professors, not only to the World, but to their own Consciences, is, that this is the grand Evidence which will hereafter be made use of, before the Judgment Seat of God; according to which his Judgment will be regulated, and the State of every Professor of Religion unalterably determined. In the future Judgment, there will be an open Trial of Professors; and Evidences will be made use of in the Judgment. For God's future judging of Men, in order to their eternal Retribution, will not be his trying, and finding out, and passing a Judgment upon the State of Men's Hearts, in his own Mind; but it will be a declarative Judgment: And the End of it will be, not God's forming a Judgment within himself, but the Manifestation of his Judgment, and the Righteousness of it, to Men's own Consciences, and to the World. And therefore the Day of Judgment is called **the Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God**, Romans 2:5. And the End of God's future Trial and Judgment of Men, as to the Part that each one in particular is to have in the Judgment, will be especially the clear Manifestation of God's righteous Judgment, with Respect to him, to his Conscience: As is manifest by **Matthew** 18:31, to the End. Chapter 20:8-15. Chapter 22:11, 12, 13. Chapter 25:19-30. and Verse 35, to the End. **Luke**

19:15-23. And therefore though God needs no Medium, whereby to make the Truth evident to himself, yet Evidences will be made use of in his future judging of Men. And doubtless the Evidences that will be made use of in their Trial, will be such as will be best fitted to serve the Ends of the Judgment; **namely** the Manifestation of the righteous Judgment of God, not only to the World, but to Men's own Consciences. But the Scriptures do abundantly teach us, that the grand Evidences which the Judge will make use in the Trial, for these Ends, according to which the Judgment of every one shall be regulated, and the irreversible Sentence passed, will be Men's Works, or Practice, here in this World: Revelation 20:12. 'And I saw the Dead, small and great, stand before God; and the Books were opened—And the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.' So Verse 13. 'And the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it, and Death and Hell gave up the Dead which were in them; and they were judged, every Man, according to their Works.' 2 Corinthians 5:10. 'For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, that every one may receive the Things done in the Body, whether it be good or bad.' So Men's Practice is the only Evidence, that Christ represents the future Judgment as regulated by, in that most particular Description of the Day of Judgment, which we have in the holy Bible, **Matthew** 25, at the latter End. See also Romans 2:6-13. Jeremiah 17:10. Job 34:11. Proverbs 24:12. Jeremiah 32:19. Revelation 22:12. Matthew 16:27. Revelation 2:23. Ezekiel 33:20. 1 Peter 1:17. The Judge at the Day of Judgment, will not (for the Conviction of Men's own Consciences, and to manifest them to the World) go about to examine Men, as to the Method of their Experiences, or set every Man to tell his Story of the Manner of his

Conversion; but his Works will be brought forth, as Evidences of what he is, what he has done in Darkness and in Light; Ecclesiastes 12:14. 'For God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' In the Trial that Professors shall be the Subjects of, in the future Judgment. God will make use of the same Evidences, to manifest them to themselves and to the World, which he makes use of to manifest them, in the Temptations or Trials of his Providence here, **namely** Their Practice, in Cases wherein Christ and other Things come into actual and immediate Competition. At the Day of Judgment, God, for the Manifestation of his righteous Judgment, will weigh Professors in a Balance that is visible. And the Balance will be the same that he weighs Men in now; which has been already described.

Hence we may undoubtedly infer, that Men's Works (taken in the Sense that has been explained) are the highest Evidences, by which they ought to try themselves. Certainly that which our supreme Judge will chiefly make use of, to judge us by, when we come to stand before him, we should chiefly make use of, to judge ourselves by. If it had not been revealed in what Manner, and by what Evidence the Judge would proceed with us hereafter; how natural would it be for one to say, O that I knew what Token God will chiefly look for and insist upon in the last and decisive Judgment; and which he expects that all should be able to produce who would then be accepted of him, and according to which Sentence shall be passed; that I might know what Token or Evidence especially to look at and seek after now, as I would be

sure not to fail then. And seeing God has so plainly and abundantly revealed what this Token or Evidence is; surely if we act wisely, we shall regard it as of the greatest Importance.

Now from all that has been said, I think it to be abundantly manifest, that Christian Practice is the most proper Evidence of the gracious Sincerity of Professors, to themselves and others; and the chief of all the Marks of Grace, the Sign of Signs, and Evidence of Evidences, that which seals and crowns all other Signs. I had rather have the Testimony of my Conscience, that I have such a Saying of my supreme Judge on my Side, as that, John 14:21. **He that has my Commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me;** than the Judgment, and fullest Approbation, of all the wise, sound and experienced Divines, that have lived this thousand Years, on the most exact and critical Examination of my Experiences, as to the Manner of my Conversion. Not that there are no other good Evidences of a State of Grace but these. There may be other Exercises of Grace, besides these efficient Exercises, which the Saints may have in Contemplation, that may be very satisfying to them: But yet this is the chief and most proper Evidence. There may be several good Evidences that a Tree is a Fig-Tree; But the highest and most proper Evidence of it, is that it actually bears Figs. It is possible that a Man may have a good Assurance of a State of Grace, at his first Conversion, before he has had Opportunity to gain Assurance, by this great Evidence I am speaking of. If a Man hears that a great Treasure is offered him, in a distant Place, on Condition that he will prize it so much, as to be willing to leave what he possesses at home, and go a Journey for it, over the Rocks and Mountains that are in the Way, to the Place where it is; it is possible the Man may be well assured, that he val-

ues the Treasure to the Degree spoken of, as soon as the Offer is made him; he may feel a Willingness to go for the Treasure, within him, beyond all Doubt: But yet, this does not hinder but that his actual going for it is the highest and most proper Evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himself. But then as an Evidence to himself, his outward Actions, and the Motions of his Body in his Journey, are not considered alone, exclusive of the Action of his Mind, and a Consciousness within himself, of the Thing that moves him, and the End he goes for; otherwise, his bodily Motion is no Evidence to him, of his prizing the Treasure. In such a Manner is Christian Practice the most proper Evidence of a saving Value of **the Pearl of great Price, and Treasure hid in the Field.**

Christian Practice is the Sign of Signs, in this Sense that it is the great Evidence, which confirms and crowns all other Signs of Godliness. There is no one Grace of the Spirit of God, but that Christian Practice is the most proper Evidence of the Truth of it. As it is with the Members of our Bodies, and all our Utensils, the proper Proof of the Soundness and Goodness of them, is in the Use of them: so it is with our Graces (which are given to be used in Practice, as much as our Hands and Feet, or the Tools with which we work, or the Arms with which we fight) the proper Trial and Proof of them is in their Exercise in Practice. Most of the Things we use, are serviceable to us, and so have their Serviceableness proved, in some Pressure, Straining, Agitation, or Collision. So it is with a Bow, a Sword, an Ax, a Saw, a Cord, a Chain, a Staff, a Foot, a Tooth, etc. And they that are so weak, as not to bear the Strain or Pressure we need to put them to, are good for nothing. So it is with all the Virtues of the Mind. The proper Trial and Proof of them, is

in being exercised under those Temptations and Trials that God brings us under, in the Course of his Providence, and in being put to such Service as strains hard upon the Principles of Nature.

Practice is the proper Proof of the true and saving **Knowledge of God**; as appears by that of the Apostle already mentioned, **Hereby do we know that we know him, that we keep his Commandments.** It is in vain for us to **profess that we know God**, if **in Works we deny him**, Titus 1:16. And if we **know God, but glorify him not as God**; our Knowledge will only condemn us, and not save us, Romans 1:21. The great Note of that Knowledge which saves and makes happy, is that it is practical; John 13:17. **If you know these Things, happy are you if you do them.** Job 28:28. **To depart from Evil is Understanding.**

Holy Practice is the proper Evidence of **Repentance**. When the **Jews** professed Repentance, when they came confessing their Sins, to **John**, preaching the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins; he directed them to the right Way of getting and exhibiting proper Evidences of the Truth of their Repentance, when he said to them, **Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance**, Matthew 3:8. Which was agreeable to the Practice of the Apostle **Paul**; see Acts 26:20. Pardon and Mercy are from Time to Time promised to him who has this Evidence of true Repentance, that he forsakes his Sin; **Proverbs** 28:13 and **Isaiah** 55:7; and many other Places.

Holy Practice is the proper Evidence of a **saving Faith**. It is evident that the Apostle **James** speaks of Works, as what does eminently justify Faith, or (which is the same Thing) justify the Professors of Faith, and vindicate and manifest the Sincerity of their Profession, not only to the World, but to their own

Consciences: As is evident by the Instance he gives of **Abraham**, James 2:21-24. And in Verse 22 and 26 he speaks of the practical and working Nature of Faith as the very Life and Soul of it; in the same Manner, that the active Nature and Substance, which is in the Body of a Man, is the Life and Soul of that. And if so, doubtless Practice is the proper Evidence of the Life and Soul of true Faith, by which it is distinguished from a dead Faith. For doubtless, Practice is the most proper Evidence of a practical Nature, and Operation the most proper Evidence of an operative Nature.

Practice is the best Evidence of a saving **Belief of the Truth**. That is spoken of as the proper Evidence of the **Truth's being in** a professing Christian, that **he walks in the Truth**, 3 John 3. **I rejoiced greatly, when the Brethren came and testified of the Truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the Truth.**

Practice is the most proper Evidence of a true **Coming to Christ**, and **accepting** of, and **closing** with him. A true and saving Coming to Christ, is (as Christ often says) a Coming so, as to forsake all for him. And as was observed before, to forsake all for Christ in Heart, is the same Thing as to have a Heart actually to forsake all; but the proper Evidence of having a Heart actually to forsake all, is indeed actually to forsake all, so far as called to it. If a Prince makes Suit to a Woman in a far Country, that she would forsake her own People, and Father's House, and come to him, to be his Bride; the proper Evidence of the Compliance of her Heart with the King's Suit, is her actually forsaking her own People, and Father's House, and coming to him. By this, her Compliance with the King's Suit, is made perfect, in the same Sense, that the Apostle **James** says, **by works was faith made perfect**. Christ prom-

ises Life, on Condition of our Coming to him: but it is such a Coming as he directed the young Man to, who came to enquire, **What he shall do, that he might have eternal Life;** Christ bid him **Go, and sell all that thou hast, and come, follow him.** If he had consented in his Heart to the Proposal, (and had therein come to Christ in his Heart) the proper Evidence of it would have been his doing of it: And there his coming to Christ would have been made perfect. When Christ called **Matthew** the Publican, when sitting at the Receipt of Custom, and in the midst of his worldly Gains; the closing of **his** Heart with this call of his Savior, to come to him, was signified, and made perfect, by actually rising up, leaving all, and following him, **Luke** 5:27, 28. Christ and other Things, are set before us together, calling us practically to cleave to him, and forsake the other: In such a Case, a practical Cleaving to Christ, is a practical **Acceptance** of Christ; as much as a Beggar's reaching out his Hand, and taking a Gift that is offered, is his practical Acceptance of the Gift. Yea that Act of the Soul that is in cleaving to Christ in Practice, is itself the most perfect coming of the Soul to Christ.

Practice is the most proper Evidence of **Trusting in Christ for Salvation.** The proper Signification of the Word **Trust**, according to the ordinary Use of it, both in common Speech, and in the holy Scriptures, is the Emboldening and Encouragement of a Person's Mind, to run some Venture in Practice, or in something that he does, on the Credit of another's Sufficiency and Faithfulness. And therefore the proper Evidence of his Trusting, is **the Venture he runs in what he does.** He is not properly said to run any Venture, in a Dependence on any Thing, that does nothing on that Dependence, or whose Practice is no otherwise than if

he had no Dependance. For a Man to run a Venture, on a Dependance on another, is for him to do something from that Dependance, by which he seems to express himself, and which he would not do, were it not for that Dependance. And therefore it is in complying with the Difficulties, and seeming Dangers of Christian Practice, in a Dependance on Christ's Sufficiency and Faithfulness to bestow eternal Life, that Persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in him for Salvation and Life. They depend on such Promises as that, Matthew 10:39: **He that loseth his Life for my sake, shall find it.** And so they part with all, and venture their All, in a Dependance on Christ's Sufficiency and Truth. And this is the Scripture Notion of Trusting in Christ, in the Exercise of a saving Faith in him. Thus **Abraham**, the Father of Believers, trusted in Christ, and by Faith, forsook his own Country, in a Reliance on the Covenant of Grace God established with him, **Hebrews 11:8, 9.** Thus also **Moses, By Faith, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter, choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season,** **Hebrews 11:23,** etc. So **by Faith,** others exposed themselves to be **stoned,** and **sawn in sunder,** or **slain with the Sword;** endured the **Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings, Bonds and Imprisonments, and wandered about in Sheepskins and Goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.** And in this Sense the Apostle **Paul,** by Faith, trusted in Christ, and committed himself to him, venturing himself, and his whole Interest, in a Dependance on the Ability and Faithfulness of his Redeemer, under great Persecutions, and in suffering the Loss of all Things; 2 Timothy 1:12. **For the which Cause I also suffer these**

Things, nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that Day.

If a Man should have Word brought him from the King of a distant Land, that he intended to make him his Heir, if upon receiving the Tidings, he immediately leaves his native Land, and Friends, and all he has in the World, to go to that Country, in a Dependance on it, then he may be said to venture himself, and all he has in the World upon it. But if he only sits still, and hopes for the promised Benefit, inwardly pleasing himself with the Thoughts of it; he cannot properly be said to venture himself upon it; he runs no Venture in the Case; he does nothing, otherwise than he would do, if he had received no such Tidings, by which he would be exposed to any Suffering, in case all should fail. So he that on the Credit of what he hears of a future World, and in a Dependance on the Report of the Gospel, concerning Life and Immortality, forsakes all, or does so at least so far as there is Occasion, making every Thing entirely give Place to his eternal Interest; he, and he only, may properly be said to venture himself on the Report of the Gospel. And this is the proper Evidence of a true Trust in Christ for Salvation.

Practice is the proper Evidence of a **gracious Love**, both to God and Men. The Texts that plainly teach this, have been so often mentioned already, that it is needless to repeat them.

Practice is the proper Evidence of **Humility**. That Expression and Manifestation of Humility of Heart, which God speaks of, as the great Expression of it, that he insists on; That, we should look upon as the proper Expression and Manifestation of it: But this is

walking humbly; Micah 6:8. 'He hath showed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love Mercy, and to **walk humbly** with thy God?'

This is also the proper Evidence of the true **Fear of God**. Proverbs 8:13.

'The Fear of the Lord is to hate Evil.' Psalm 34:11, etc. 'Come ye Children, hearken unto me; and I will teach you the Fear of the Lord. Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from speaking Guile; depart from Evil and do Good, seek Peace, and pursue it.' Proverbs 3:7. 'Fear the Lord, and depart from Evil.' Proverbs 16:6. 'By the Fear of the Lord, Men depart from Evil.' Job 1:8. 'Hast thou considered my Servant **Job**, A perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God, and escheweth Evil?' Chapter 2:3. 'Hast thou considered my Servant **Job**, A perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God, and escheweth Evil? And still he holdeth fast his Integrity, although thou movedst me against him.' Psalm 36:1. 'The Transgression of the Wicked, saith within my Heart, there is no Fear of God before his Eyes.'

So Practice, in rendering again according to Benefits received, is the proper Evidence of true **Thankfulness**. Psalm 116:12. 'What shall I render to the Lord, for all his Benefits towards me?' 2 Chronicles 32:25. 'But **Hezekiah** rendered not again according to the Benefit done unto him.' Paying our Vows unto God, and ordering our Conversation aright, seem to be spoken of, as the proper Expression and Evidence of true Thankfulness, in the 50th Psalm, Verse 14. 'Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the most High.' Verse 23. 'Whoso offereth Praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I show the Salvation of God.'

So the proper Evidence of **gracious Desires and Longings**, and that which distinguishes them from those that are false and vain, is that they are not idle Wishes and Wouldings, like **Balaam's**; but effectual in Practice, to stir up Persons earnestly and thoroughly to seek the Things they long for. Psalm 27:4. 'One Thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.' Psalm 63:1, 2. 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: My Soul thirsted for thee; my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, to see thy Power and thy Glory.' Verse 8. 'My Soul followeth hard after thee.' Song of Solomon 1:4. 'Draw me, we will run after thee.'

Practice is the proper Evidence of a gracious **Hope**. 1 John 3:3. **Every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.** Patient Continuance in well doing, through the Difficulties and Trials of the Christian Course, is often mentioned as the proper Expression and Fruit of a Christian Hope. 1 Thessalonians 1:3. **Remembering without ceasing, your Work of Faith, and Labour of Love, and Patience of Hope.** 1 Peter 1:13, 14. **Wherefore, gird up the Loins of your Mind, be sober, and Hope to the End, for the Grace that is to be brought unto you, at the Revelation of Jesus Christ, as obedient Children, etc.** Psalm 119:166. **Lord, I have hoped in thy Salvation, and done thy Commandments.** Psalm 78:7. **That they might set their Hope in God, and not forget the Works of the Lord, but keep his Commandments.**

A cheerful Practice of our Duty and doing the Will of God, is the proper Evidence of a truly **holy Joy**. Isaiah 64:5. **Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh Righteousness.** Psalm 119:111, 112. **Thy Testimonies have I taken for my**

Heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my Heart: I have inclined my Heart to perform thy Statutes always, even unto the End. Verse 14. **I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all Riches.** 1 Corinthians 13:6. **Charity rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.** 2 Corinthians 8:2. **The abundance of their Joy, abounded to the Riches of their Liberality.**

Practice also is the proper Evidence of Christian **Fortitude**. The Trial of a good Soldier, is not in his Chimney Corner, but in the Field of Battle; 1 **Corinthians** 9:25, 26. 2 **Timothy** 2:3, 4, 5.

And as the fruit of holy practice is the chief evidence of the truth of grace; so the degree in which experiences have influence on a person's practice, is the surest evidence of the degree of that which is spiritual and divine in his experiences. Whatever pretenses persons may make to great discoveries, great love and joys, they are no further to be regarded, than they have influence on their practice. Not but that allowances must be made for the natural temper. But that doesn't hinder, but that the degree of grace is justly measured, by the degree of the effect in practice. For the effect of grace is as great, and the alteration as remarkable, in a person of a very ill natural temper, as another. Although a person of such a temper, will not behave himself so well, with the same degree of grace, as another; the diversity from what was before conversion, may be as great; because a person of a good natural temper, did not behave himself so ill, before conversion.

Thus I have endeavored to represent the evidence there is, that Christian practice is **the chief** of all the signs of saving grace. And before I conclude this discourse, I would say something briefly, in

answer to two objections, that may possibly be made by some, against what has been said upon this head.

Objection 1. Some may be ready to say, This seems to be contrary to that opinion, so much received among good people; that professors should judge of their state, chiefly by their inward experience, and that spiritual experiences are the main evidences of true grace.

I answer, It is doubtless a true opinion, and justly much received among good people, that professors should chiefly judge of their state by their experience. But it is a great mistake, that what has been said is at all contrary to that opinion. The chief sign of grace to the consciences of Christians, being Christian practice, in the sense that has been explained, and according to what has been shown to be the true notion of Christian practice, is not at all inconsistent with Christian experience being the chief evidence of grace. Christian or holy practice is spiritual practice; and that is not the motion of a body, that knows not how, nor when, nor wherefore it moves: But spiritual practice in man, is the practice of a spirit and body jointly, or the practice of a spirit, animating, commanding and actuating a body, to which it is united, and over which it has power given it by the Creator. And therefore the main thing in this holy practice, is the holy acts of the mind, directing and governing the motions of the body. And the motions of the body are to be looked upon as belonging to Christian practice, only secondarily, and as they are dependent and consequent on the acts of the soul. The exercises of grace that Christians find, or are conscious to, within themselves, are what they **experience** within themselves; and herein therefore lies Christian experience: And this Christian experience, consists as much in those operative exer-

cises of grace in the will, that are immediately concerned in the management of the behavior of the body, as in other exercises. These inward exercises, are not the less a part of Christian experience, because they have outward behavior immediately connected with them. A strong act of love to God, is not the less a part of spiritual experience, because it is the act that immediately produces and effects some self-denying and expensive outward action, which is much to the honor and glory of God.

To speak of Christian experience and practice, as if they were two things, properly and entirely distinct, is to make a distinction without consideration or reason. Indeed all Christian experience is not properly called practice; but all Christian practice is properly experience. And the distinction that is made between them, is not only an unreasonable, but an unscriptural distinction. Holy practice is one kind or part of Christian experience; and both reason and Scripture represent it as the chief, and most important, and most distinguishing part of it. So it is represented in Jeremiah 22:15, 16. 'Did not thy Father eat and drink, and do justice and judgment?—He judged the cause of the poor and needy:—Was not this to know me? saith the Lord.' Our inward acquaintance with God, surely belongs to the head of experimental religion; but this God represents, as consisting chiefly in that experience which there is in holy practice. So the exercises of those graces of the love of God, and the fear of God, are a part of experimental religion; but these the Scripture represents as consisting chiefly in practice, in those forementioned texts. 1 John 5:3. 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.' 2 John 6. 'This is love, that we walk after his commandments.' Psalm 34:11, etc. 'Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord:—Depart from evil, and do

good.' Such experiences as these **Hezekiah** took comfort in chiefly, on his sick bed: When he said, 'Remember, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee, in truth, and with a perfect heart.' **And** such experiences as these, the Psalmist chiefly insists upon, in the 119th Psalm, and elsewhere. Such experiences as these, the Apostle **Paul** mainly insists upon, when he speaks of his experiences in his epistles; as Romans 1:9. 'God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit, in the gospel of his Son'—2 Corinthians 1:12. 'For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience,—that by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world.' Chapter 4:13. 'We having the same spirit of faith: According as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.' Chapter 5:7. 'We walk by faith, not by sight.' Verse 14. 'The love of Christ constraineth us.' Chapter 6:4–7. 'In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,—in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,—by the power of God.' Galatians 2:20. 'I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live: Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.' Philippians 3:7, 8. 'But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.' Colossians 1:29. 'Whereunto I also labor, striving, according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.' 1 Thessalonians 2:2. 'We are bold in our God, to speak unto you the gospel of God, with much contention.' Verses 8, 9, 10. 'Being affectionately desirous of you, we

were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls; because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember brethren, our labor and travail, laboring night and day.—Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you.' And such experiences as these, they were, that this blessed Apostle chiefly comforted himself in the consideration of, when he was going to martyrdom, 2 Timothy 4:6, 7. 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith.'

And not only does the most important and distinguishing part of Christian experience, lie in spiritual practice; but such is the nature of that sort of exercises of grace, wherein spiritual practice consists, that nothing is so properly called by the name of **experimental religion**. For that experience which is in these exercises of grace, that are found, and prove effectually, at the very point of trial, wherein God proves which we will actually cleave to, whether Christ or our lusts, are as has been shown already, the proper **experiment** of the truth and power of our godliness; wherein its victorious power and efficacy, in producing its proper effect, and reaching its end, is found **by experience**. This is properly Christian experience, wherein the saints have opportunity to see, by actual **experience and trial**, whether they have a heart to do the will of God, and to forsake other things for Christ, or no. As that is called experimental philosophy, which brings opinions and notions to the test of fact; so is that properly called experimental religion, which brings religious affections and intentions, to the like test.

There is a sort of external religious practice, wherein is no inward experience; which no account is made of in the sight of God; but it is esteemed good for nothing. And there is what is called experience, that is without practice, being neither accompanied, nor followed with a Christian behavior; and this is worse than nothing. Many persons seem to have very wrong notions of Christian experience, and spiritual light and discoveries. Whenever a person finds within him, an heart to treat God as God, at the time that he has the trial, and finds his disposition effectual in the experiment, that is the most proper, and most distinguishing experience. And to have at such a time that sense of divine things, that apprehension of the truth, importance and excellency of the things of religion, which then sways and prevails, and governs his heart and hands; this is the most excellent spiritual light, and these are the most distinguishing discoveries. Religion consists much in holy affection; but those exercises of affection which are most distinguishing of true religion, are these practical exercises. Friendship between earthly friends consists much in affection; but yet those strong exercises of affection, that actually carry them through fire and water for each other, are the highest evidences of true friendship.

There is nothing in what has been said, contrary to what is asserted by some sound divines; when they say, that there are no sure evidences of grace, but the acts of grace. For that doesn't hinder but that these operative, productive acts, those exercises of grace that are effectual in practice, may be the highest evidences, above all other kinds of acts of grace. Nor does it hinder but that, when there are many of these acts and exercises, following one another in a course, under various trials, of every kind, the evidence

is still heightened; as one act confirms another. A man by once seeing his neighbor, may have good evidence of his presence: But by seeing him from day to day, and conversing with him in a course, in various circumstances, the evidence is established. The disciples, when they first saw Christ, after his resurrection, had good evidence that he was alive: But by conversing with him for forty days, and his **showing himself to them alive, by many infallible proofs**, they had yet higher evidence.

The witness or seal of the Spirit that we read of, doubtless consists in the effect of the Spirit of God in the heart, in the implantation and exercises of grace there, and so consists in experience. And it is also beyond doubt, that this seal of the Spirit, is the highest kind of evidence of the saint's adoption, that ever they obtain. But in these exercises of grace in practice, that have been spoken of, God gives witness, and sets to his seal, in the most conspicuous eminent and evident manner. It has been abundantly found to be true in fact, by the experience of the Christian church; that Christ commonly gives, by his Spirit, the greatest, and most joyful evidences to his saints, of their sonship, in those effectual exercises of grace, under trials, which have been spoken of; as is manifest in the full assurance, and unspeakable joys of many of the martyrs. Agreeable to that, 1 Peter 4:14: **If you are reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are you; for the Spirit of Glory, and of God rests upon you.** And that in Romans 5:2-3: **We rejoice in hope of the Glory of God, and glory in Tribulations.** And agreeable to what the Apostle **Paul** often declares of what he experienced in his trials. And when the Apostle **Peter**, in my text, speaks of the **Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory**, which the Christians to whom he wrote, experienced; he

has respect to what they found under persecution, as appears by the context. Christ's thus manifesting himself, as the Friend and Savior of his saints, cleaving to him under trials, seems to have been represented of old, by his coming and manifesting himself, to **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego**, in the furnace. And when the Apostle speaks of the witness of the Spirit, in **Romans** 8:15, 16, 17; he has a more immediate respect to what the Christians experienced, in their exercises of love to God, in suffering persecution; as is plain by the context. He is, in the foregoing verses, encouraging, the Christian **Romans** under their sufferings, that though their bodies be dead, because of sin, yet they should be raised to life again. But it is more especially plain by the verse immediately following, Verse 18. **For I reckon that the sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us.** So the Apostle has evidently respect to their persecutions, in all that he says to the end of the chapter. So when the Apostle speaks of the **Earnest of the Spirit**, which God had given to him, in 2 Corinthians 5:5; the context shows plainly that he has respect to what was given him in his great trials and sufferings. And in that promise of **the white Stone, and new Name, to him that overcomes**, Revelation 2:17; it is evident Christ has a special respect to a benefit that Christians should obtain, by overcoming, in the trial they had, in that day of persecution. This appears by Verse 13, and many other passages in this epistle to the seven churches of **Asia**.

Objection 2. Some also may be ready to object against what has been said of Christian practice being the chief evidence of the truth of grace, that this is a **legal** doctrine; and that this making practice a thing of such great importance in religion, magnifies

works, and tends to lead men to make too much of their **own doings**, to the diminution of the glory of free grace, and does not seem well to consist with that great gospel doctrine of **Justification by Faith alone**.

But this objection is altogether without reason. Which way is it inconsistent with the freeness of God's grace, that holy practice should be a sign of God's grace? It is our works being the **price** of God's favor, and not their being the **sign** of it, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the freeness of that favor. Surely the beggar's looking on the money he has in his hands, as a **sign** of the kindness of him who gave it to him, is in no respect, inconsistent with the freeness of that kindness. It is his having money in his hand as the price of a benefit, that is the thing which is inconsistent with the free kindness of the giver. The notion of the freeness of the grace of God to sinners, as that is revealed and taught in the gospel, is not that no holy and amiable qualifications or actions in us shall be a fruit, and so a sign of that grace; but that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of any qualification or action of ours which recommends us to that grace; that kindness is shown to the unworthy and unlovely; that there is great excellency in the benefit bestowed, and no excellency in the subject as the price of it; that goodness goes forth and flows out, from the fullness of God's nature, the fullness of the fountain of good, without any amiableness in the object to draw it. And this is the notion of justification without works (as this doctrine is taught in the scripture) that it is not the worthiness or loveliness of our works, or anything in us, which is in any wise accepted with God, as a **balance** for the guilt of sin, or a recommendation of sinners to his acceptance as heirs of life. But we are justified only by the righteousness of Christ, and not by

our own righteousness. And when works are opposed to faith in this affair, and it is said that we are justified by faith and not by works; thereby is meant, that it is not the worthiness or amiableness of our works, or anything in us, which recommends us to an interest in Christ and his benefits; but that we have this interest only by faith, or by our souls receiving Christ, or adhering to, and closing with him. But that the worthiness or amiableness of nothing in us recommends and brings us to an interest in Christ, is no argument that nothing in us is a sign of an interest in Christ.

If the Doctrines of free Grace, and Justification by Faith alone, be inconsistent with the Importance of holy Practice as a Sign of Grace; then they are equally inconsistent with the Importance of any Thing whatsoever in us as a Sign of Grace, any Holiness, or any Grace that is in us, or any of our Experiences or Religion: For it is as contrary to the Doctrines of free Grace and Justification by Faith alone, that any of these should be the Righteousness which we are justified by, as that holy Practice should be so. It is with holy Works, as it is with holy Qualifications: It is inconsistent with the Freeness of Gospel Grace, that a Title to Salvation should be given to Men for the Loveliness of any of their holy Qualifications, as much as that it should be given for the Holiness of their Works. It is inconsistent with the Gospel Doctrine of free Grace, that an Interest in Christ and his Benefits should be given for the Loveliness of a Man's true Holiness, for the Amiableness of his renewed, sanctified, heavenly Heart, his Love to God, and being like God, or his Experience of Joy in the Holy Ghost, Self-emptiness, a Spirit to exalt Christ above all, and to give all Glory to him, and a Heart devoted unto him: I say, it is inconsistent with the Gospel Doctrine of free Grace, that a Title to Christ's Benefits should be

given out of Regard to the Loveliness of any of these, or that any of these should be our Righteousness in the Affair of Justification. And yet this does not hinder the Importance of these Things as Evidences of an Interest in Christ. Just so it is with Respect to holy Actions and Works. To make light of Works, because we are not justified by Works, is the same Thing in Effect, as to make light of all Religion, all Grace and Holiness, yea, true evangelical Holiness, and all gracious Experience: For all is included, when the Scripture says, we are not justified by Works: For by Works in this Case, is meant all our own Righteousness, Religion, or Holiness, and every Thing that **is in us**, all the Good we do, and all the Good which we are conscious of, all external Acts, and all internal Acts and Exercises of Grace, and all Experiences, and all those holy and heavenly Things wherein the Life and Power, and the very Essence of Religion do consist, all those great Things which Christ and his Apostles mainly insisted on in their Preaching, and endeavoured to promote as of the greatest Consequence in the Hearts and Lives of Men, and all good Dispositions, Exercises and Qualifications of every Kind whatsoever; and even Faith itself, considered as a Part of our Holiness. For we are justified by none of these Things: And if we were, we should, in a Scripture Sense, be justified by Works. And therefore if it is legal, and contrary to the evangelical Doctrine of justification without Works, to insist on any of these, as of great Importance, as Evidences of an Interest in Christ; then no more is it thus, to insist on the Importance of holy Practice. It would be legal to suppose that holy Practice justifies by bringing us to a Title to Christ's Benefits, as the Price of it, or as recommending to it by its Preciousness or Excellence; but it is not legal to suppose, that holy Practice justifies the Sincerity of a Believer, as the proper

Evidence of it. The Apostle **James** did not think it legal to say, that **Abraham our Father was Justified by Works** in this Sense. The Spirit that indited the Scripture did not think the great Importance and absolute Necessity of holy Practice, in this Respect, to be inconsistent with the Freeness of Grace; for it commonly teaches them both together; as in Revelation 21. 6, 7. God says, **I will give unto him that is Athirst, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely:** And then adds, in the very next Words, **He that overcometh shall inherit all Things.** As though behaving well in the christian Race and Warfare, were the Condition of the Promise. So in the next Chapter, in the 14th, and 15th Verses, Christ says, **Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and enter in through the Gates, into the City:** And then declares in the 15th Verse, **how they that are of a wicked Practice shall** be excluded; and yet in the two Verses next following, does with very great Solemnity, give forth an Invitation to all to come and take of the Water of Life freely; **I am the Root and the Off-spring of David, the bright and Morning Star: And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is Athirst, Come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely.** So Chapter 3. 20, 21. **Behold I stand at the Door and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me:** But then it is added in the next Words, **To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my Throne.** And in that great Invitation of Christ, Matthew 11, latter End, **Come unto me, all ye that Labour and are heavy Laden, and I will**

give you Rest; Christ adds in the next Words, **Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls: For my Yoke is easy, and my Burden is light:** As though taking the Burden of Christ's Service, and imitating his Example, were necessary in order to the promised Rest. So in that great Invitation to Sinners to accept of free Grace, Isaiah 55, **Ho, every one that thirsteth! come ye to the Waters: And he that hath no Money, come ye, buy and eat yea, come, buy Wine and Milk, without Money and without Price** Even there, in the Continuation of the same Invitation, the Sinners forsaking his wicked Practice is spoken of as necessary to the obtaining Mercy: Verse 7, **Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.** So the Riches of divine Grace, in the Justification of Sinners, is set forth, with the Necessity of holy Practice, Isaiah 1. 15, etc. **Wash you, make you clean; put away the Evil of your Doings, from before mine Eyes: Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek Judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow: Come now, let us Reason together, saith the Lord, though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.** And in that most solemn Invitation of Wisdom, **Proverbs 9**, after it is represented what great Provision is made, and how that all Things were ready, the House built, the Beasts killed, the Wine mingled and the Table furnished, and the Messengers sent forth to invite the Guests; then we have the free

Invitation, Verse 4, 5, 6, **Whoso is Simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth Understanding,** (that is has no Righteousness) **she saith to him, Come, eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled:** But then in the next Breath it follows, **Forsake the Foolish, and live, and go in the Way of Understanding** As though forsaking Sin, and going in the Way of Holiness, were necessary in order to Life. So that the Freeness of Grace, and the Necessity of holy Practice, which are thus from Time to Time joined together in Scripture, are not inconsistent one with another. Nor does it at all diminish the Honour and Importance of Faith, that the Exercises and Effects of Faith in Practice, should be esteemed the chief Signs of it; any more than it lessens the Importance of Life, that Action and Motion are esteemed the chief Signs of that.

So that in what has been said of the Importance of holy Practice, as the main Sign of Sincerity; there is nothing legal, nothing derogatory to the Freedom and Sovereignty of Gospel Grace, nothing in the least Clashing with the Gospel Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, without the Works of the Law, nothing in the least tending to lessen the Glory of the Mediator, and our Dependance on his Righteousness, nothing infringing on the special Prerogatives of Faith in the Affair of our Salvation, nothing in any wise detracting from the Glory of God and his Mercy, or exalting Man, or diminishing his Dependance and Obligation. So that if any are against such an Importance of holy Practice as has been spoken of, it must be only from a senseless Aversion to the Letters and Sound of the Word **Works**; When there is no Reason in the World to be given for it, but what may be given with equal Force, why they should have an Aversion to the Words Holiness,

Godliness, Grace, Religion, Experience, and even Faith itself: For to make a Righteousness of any of these, is as legal, and as inconsistent with the Way of the new Covenant, as to make a Righteousness of holy Practice.

It is greatly to the Hurt of Religion, for Persons to make light of, and make little of, those Things which the Scripture insist most upon, as of most Importance in the Evidence of our Interest in Christ; (under a Notion that to lay Weight on these Things is legal, and an old Covenant Way) and so to neglect the Exercises, and effectual Operations of Grace in Practice, and insist almost wholly on Discoveries, and the Method and Manner of the immanent Exercises of Conscience and Grace in Contemplation; depending on an Ability to make nice Distinctions in these Matters, and a Faculty of accurate Discerning in them, from Philosophy or Experience. It is in vain to seek for any better, or any further Signs, than those that the Scriptures have most expressly mentioned, and most frequently insisted on as Signs of Godliness. They who pretend to a greater Accuracy in giving Signs, or by their extraordinary Experience, or Insight into the Nature of Things, to give more distinguishing Marks, which shall more thoroughly search out, and detect the Hypocrite; are but subtle to darken their own Minds, and the Minds of others; their Refinings, and nice Discerning, is in God's Sight, but refined Foolishness, and sagacious Delusion. Here are applicable those Words of **Agur**. Proverbs 30:5-6. **Every Word of God is pure; he is a Shield to them that put their Trust in him: Add thou not unto his Words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a Liar.** Our Wisdom and Discerning, with Regard to the Hearts of Men, is not much to be trusted. We can see but a little Way into the Nature of the Soul,

and the Depths of Man's Heart. The Ways are so many whereby Persons' Affections may be moved without any supernatural Influence, the natural Springs of the Affections are so various and so secret, so many Things have oftentimes a joint Influence on the Affections, the Imagination, (and that in Ways innumerable and unsearchable) natural Temper, Education, the common Influences of the Spirit of God, a surprising Concourse of affecting Circumstances, an extraordinary Coincidence of Things in the Course of Men's Thoughts, together with the subtle Management of invisible malicious Spirits; that no Philosophy or Experience will ever be sufficient to guide us safely through this Labyrinth and Maze, without our closely following the Clew which God has given us in his Word. God knows his own Reasons why he insists on some Things, and plainly sets them forth as the Things that we should try ourselves by, rather than others. It may be it is because he knows that these Things are attended with less Perplexity, and that we are less liable to be deceived by them than others. He best knows our Nature; and he knows the Nature and Manner of his own Operations; and he best knows the Way of our Safety: he knows what Allowances to make for different States of his Church, and different Tempers of particular Persons, and Varieties in the Manner of his own Operations, how far Nature may resemble Grace, and how far Nature may be mixed with Grace, what Affections may arise from Imagination, and how far Imagination may be mixed with spiritual Illumination. And therefore it is our Wisdom not to take his Work out of his Hands; but to follow him, and lay the Stress of the Judgment of ourselves there, where he has directed us. If we do otherwise, no wonder if we are bewildered, confounded and fatally deluded. But if we had got into the Way of

looking chiefly at those Things, which Christ and his Apostles and Prophets chiefly insisted on, and so in judging of ourselves and others, chiefly regarding practical Exercises and Effects of Grace, not neglecting other Things; it would be of manifold happy Consequence. It would above all Things tend to the Conviction of deluded Hypocrites, and to prevent the Delusion of those whose Hearts were never brought to a thorough Compliance with the strait and narrow Way which leads to Life. It would tend to deliver us from innumerable Perplexities, arising from the various inconsistent Schemes, names and Steps of Experience. It would greatly prevent Professors neglecting Strictness of Life, and tend to promote Engagedness and Earnestness in their christian walk. It would become fashionable for Men to show their Christianity, more by an amiable distinguished Behaviour, than by an undue excessive declaring their Experiences. And we should get into the Way of appearing lively in Religion, more by being lively in the Service of God and our Generation, than by the Liveliness and Forwardness of our Tongues, and making a Business of proclaiming on the House Tops, with our Mouths, the holy and eminent Acts and Exercises of our own Hearts. And Christians that are intimate Friends, would talk together of their Experiences and Comforts, in a Manner better becoming christian Humility and Modesty, and more to each others Profit; their Tongues not running before, but rather going behind their Hands and Feet, after the prudent Example of the blessed Apostle, **2 Corinthians 12:6**. And many Occasions of spiritual Pride would be cut off. And so a great Door shut against the Devil. And a great many of the main stumbling Blocks against experimental and powerful Religion would be removed. And Religion would be declared and mani-

fested in such a Way, that instead of hardening Spectators, and exceedingly promoting Infidelity and Atheism, would above all Things tend to convince Men that there is a Reality in Religion, and greatly awaken them, and win them, by convincing their Consciences of the Importance and Excellency of Religion. Thus the Light of Professors would so shine before Men, that others seeing their good Works, would glorify their Father which is in Heaven.

PART 3.

I COME now to the SECOND Thing appertaining to the **Trial** of religious Affections, which was proposed, **namely** To take notice of some Things, wherein those Affections that are spiritual and gracious, do differ from those that are not so.

But before I proceed directly to the distinguishing Characters, I would previously mention some Things which I desire may be observed, concerning the Marks I shall lay down.

1. That I am far from undertaking to give such Signs of gracious Affections, as shall be sufficient to enable any certainly to distinguish true Affection from false in others; or to determine positively which of their Neighbors are true Professors, and which are Hypocrites. In so doing, I should be guilty of that Arrogance which I have been condemning. Though it be plain that Christ has given Rules to all Christians, to enable them to judge of Professors of Religion, whom they are concerned with, so far as is necessary for their own Safety, and to prevent their being led into a Snare by false Teachers, and false Pretenders to Religion; And though it be also beyond Doubt, that the Scriptures do abound with Rules,

which may be very serviceable to Ministers, in counseling and conducting Souls committed to their Care, in Things appertaining to their spiritual and eternal State; yet, it is also evident, that it was never God's Design to give us any Rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our Fellow-Professors are his, and to make a full and clear Separation between Sheep and Goats: But that on the Contrary, it was God's Design to reserve this to himself, as his Prerogative. And therefore no such distinguishing Signs as shall enable Christians or Ministers to do this, are ever to be expected to the World's End: For no more is ever to be expected from any Signs, that are to be found in the Word of God, or gathered from it, than Christ designed them for.

2. No such Signs are to be expected, that shall be sufficient to enable those Saints certainly to discern their own good Estate, who are very low in Grace, or are such as have much departed from God, and are fallen into a dead, carnal and unchristian Frame. It is not agreeable to God's Design (as has been already observed) that such should know their good Estate: Nor is it desirable that they should; but on the contrary, every Way best that they should not; and we have Reason to bless God, that he has made no Provision that such should certainly know the State that they are in, any other Way, than by first coming out of the ill Frame and Way they are in.

Indeed it is not properly through the Defect of the Signs given in the Word of God, that every Saint living, whether strong or weak, and those who are in a bad Frame, as well as others, can't certainly know their good Estate by them. For the Rules in themselves are certain and infallible, and every Saint has, or has had those Things in himself, which are sure Evidences of Grace; for **ev-**

ery, even the **least** Act of Grace is so. But it is through his Defect to whom the Signs are given. There is a twofold Defect in that Saint who is very low in Grace, or in an ill Frame, which makes it impossible for him to know certainly that he has true Grace, by the best Signs and Rules which can be given him. **First**, A Defect in the **Object**, or the Qualification to be viewed and examined. I don't mean an essential Defect; because I suppose the Person to be a real Saint; but a Defect in Degree: Grace being very small, cannot be clearly and certainly discerned and distinguished. Things that are very small, we can't clearly discern their Form, or distinguish them one from another; though, as they are in themselves, their Form may be very different. There is doubtless a great Difference between the Body of Man, and the Bodies of other Animals, in the first Conception in the Womb: But yet if we should view the different **Embryos**, it might not be possible for us to discern the Difference, by reason of the imperfect State of the Object; but as it comes to greater Perfection, the Difference becomes very plain. The Difference between Creatures of very contrary Qualities, is not so plainly to be seen while they are very young, even after they are actually brought forth, as in their more perfect State. The Difference between Doves and Ravens, or Doves and Vultures, when they first come out of the Egg, is not so evident; but as they grow to their Perfection, it is exceeding great and manifest. Another Defect attending the Grace of those I am speaking, is its being mingled with so much Corruption, which clouds and hides it, and makes it impossible for it certainly to be known. Though different Things that are before us, may have in themselves many Marks thoroughly distinguishing them one from another; yet if we see them only in a thick Smoke, it may nevertheless be impossible

to distinguish them. A fixed Star is easily distinguishable from a Comet, in a clear Sky; but if we view them through a Cloud, it may be impossible to see the Difference. When true Christians are in an ill Frame, Guilt lies on the Conscience; which will bring Fear, and so prevent the Peace and Joy of an assured Hope.

Secondly, There is in such a Case a Defect in the **Eye**. As the Feebleness of Grace and Prevalence of Corruption, obscures the Object; so it enfeebles the Sight; it darkens the Sight as to all spiritual Objects, of which Grace is one. Sin is like some Distempers of the Eyes, that make Things to appear of different Colors from those which properly belong to them, and like many other Distempers, that put the Mouth out of Taste, so as to disenable from distinguishing good and wholesome Food from bad, but every Thing tastes bitter. Men in a corrupt and carnal Frame, have their spiritual Senses in but poor light for judging and distinguishing spiritual Things.

For these Reasons, no Signs that can be given, will actually satisfy, Persons in such a Case: Let the Signs that are given, be never so good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not serve them. It is like giving a Man Rules, how to distinguish visible Objects in the dark: The Things themselves may be very different, and their Difference may be very well and distinctly described to him; yet all is insufficient to enable him to distinguish them, because he is in the dark. And therefore many Persons in such a Case spend Time in a fruitless Labor, in poring on past Experiences, and examining themselves by Signs they hear laid down from the Pulpit, or that they read in Books; when there is other Work for them to do, that is much more expected of them; which, while they neglect, all their Self-Examinations are like to be in vain, if they

should spend never so much Time in them. The accursed Thing is to be destroyed from their Camp, and **Achan** to be slain; and until this be done they will be in Trouble. It is not God's Design that Men should obtain Assurance in any other Way, than by mortifying Corruption, and increasing in Grace, and obtaining the lively Exercises of it. And although Self-Examination be a Duty of great Use and Importance, and by no Means to be neglected; yet it is not the principal Means, by which the Saints do get Satisfaction of their good Estate. Assurance is not to be obtained so much by **Self-Examination**, as by **Action**. The Apostle **Paul** sought Assurance chiefly this Way, even by **forgetting the Things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those Things that were before, pressing towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus; if by any Means he might attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead**. And it was by this Means chiefly that he obtained Assurance, 1 Corinthians 9:26. **I therefore so run, as not uncertainly**. He obtained Assurance of winning the Prize, more by **running**, than by **considering**. The **Swiftness of his Pace**, did more towards his Assurance of a Conquest, than the **Strictness of his Examination**. Giving all Diligence to grow in Grace, by adding to Faith, Virtue, **etc.** is the Direction that the Apostle **Peter** gives us, for **making our Calling and Election sure**, and having **an Entrance ministered to us abundantly, into Christ's everlasting Kingdom**; signifying to us, that without this, our Eyes will be dim, and we shall be as Men in the Dark, and cannot plainly see Things past or to come, either the Forgiveness of our Sins past, or our heavenly Inheritance that is future, and **far off**, 2 Peter 1:5-11.

Therefore, though good Rules to distinguish true Grace from Counterfeit, may tend to convince Hypocrites, and be of great Use to the Saints, in many Respects; and among other Benefits, may be very useful to them to remove many needless Scruples, and establish their Hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any such Rules, as shall be sufficient of themselves, without other Means, to enable all true Saints to see their good Estate, or as supposing they should be the principal Means of their Satisfaction.

3. Nor is there much Encouragement, in the Experience of present or past Times, to lay down Rules or Marks to distinguish between true and false Affections, in Hopes of convincing any considerable Number of that Sort of Hypocrites, who have been deceived with great false Discoveries and Affections, and are once settled in a false Confidence, and high Conceit of their own supposed great Experiences and Privileges. Such Hypocrites are so conceited of their own Wisdom, and so blinded and hardened with a very great Self-Righteousness, (but very subtle and secret, under the Disguise of great Humility) and so invincible a Fondness of their pleasing Conceit, of their great Exaltation, that it usually signifies nothing at all, to lay before them the most convincing Evidences of their Hypocrisy. Their State is indeed deplorable, and next to those that have committed the unpardonable Sin. Some of this Sort of Persons seem to be most out of the Reach of Means of Conviction and Repentance. But yet the laying down good Rules may be a Means of preventing such Hypocrites, and of convincing many of other Kinds of Hypocrites: And God is able to convince even this Kind, and his Grace is not to be limited, nor Means to be neglected. And besides, such Rules may be of Use to the true

Saints, to detect false Affections, which they may have mingled with true. And be a Means of their Religion's becoming more pure, and like Gold tried in the Fire.

Having premised these Things, I now proceed directly to take notice of those Things in which true religious Affections are distinguished from false.

1. Affections that are truly spiritual and gracious, do arise from those Influences and Operations on the Heart, which are **spiritual, super-natural and divine.**

I will explain what I mean by these Terms, whence will appear their Use to distinguish between those Affections which are spiritual, and those which are not so.

We find that true Saints, or those Persons who are sanctified by the Spirit of God, are in the new Testament called **spiritual** Persons. And their being **spiritual** is spoken of as their peculiar Character, and that wherein they are distinguished from those who are not sanctified. This is evident because those who are spiritual are set in Opposition to natural Men, and carnal Men. Thus the spiritual Man, and the natural Man, are set in Opposition one to another; 1 Corinthians 2:14, 15. **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. But he that is spiritual judgeth all Things.** The Scripture explains it self to mean an ungodly Man, or one that has no Grace, by a natural Man: Thus the Apostle **Jude**, speaking of certain **ungodly Men**, that had crept in unawares among the Saints, Verse 4 of his Epistle, says, Verse 19. **These are sensual, having not the Spirit.** This the Apostle gives as a

Reason why they behaved themselves in such a wicked Manner as he had described. Here the Word translated **sensual**, in the Original is *psychikos*; which is the very same, which in those Verses in 1 **Corinthians** Chapter 2 is translated **natural**. In the like Manner, in the Continuation of the same Discourse, in the next Verse but one, **spiritual Men** are opposed to **carnal Men**; which the **Context** shows mean the same, as **spiritual Men** and **natural Men** in the **preceding** Verses; **And I, Brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal**; that is as in a great Measure **carnal**. **That** by carnal the Apostle means corrupt and unsanctified only, **appears** by Romans 7:25 and 8:1, 4, 5, 6, **where** in these Texts, he intended **the Flesh**; **and** spiritual, which is opposed there to, is **spiritual** and **holy**.

And things are called spiritual in Scripture, so we also find that there are certain Properties, Qualities, and Principles, that have names given them. So we read of a **spiritual Mind**, and **spiritual Wisdom**, Colossians 1:9. And of **spiritual** things.

Now it appears that the Epithet **spiritual**, in these and other parallel Texts of the New Testament, is not used to signify the Relation of Persons or Things to the Spirit or Soul of Man, as the spiritual Part: Things are not said to be spiritual, because they have their Seat in the Soul, and not in the Body: For there are some Properties which the Scripture calls **carnal** or **fleshly**, which have their seat much in the Soul, as these Properties that are called **spiritual**. Thus it is with Pride and Self-righteousness, and a Man's trusting to his own Wisdom, which the Apostle calls **fleshly**; Colossians 2:18. Nor are Things called spiritual, because they are conversant about those Things that are immaterial, and not corporeal. For so was the Wisdom of the wise Men, and

Princes of this World, conversant about Spirits, and immaterial Beings; which yet the Apostle speaks of as **natural Men**, totally ignorant of those Things that are **spiritual**, 1 Corinthians chapter 2. But it is with Relation to the **Holy Ghost**, or **Spirit of God**, that Persons or Things are termed spiritual, in the New Testament. **Spirit**, as the Word is used to signify the third Person in the Trinity, is the Substantive, of which is formed the Adjective **spiritual**, in the holy Scriptures. Thus Christians are called spiritual Persons, because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the Indwelling and holy Influences of the Spirit of God in them. And Things are called spiritual as related to the Spirit of God; 1 Corinthians 2:13, 14. **Which Things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual Things with spiritual. But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God.** Here the Apostle himself expressly signifies, that by **spiritual Things**, he means **the Things of the Spirit of God**, and **Things which the Holy Ghost teacheth**. The same is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole Context. Again, Romans 8:6. **To be carnally minded is Death: But to be spiritually minded is Life and Peace.** The Apostle explains what he means by being carnally and spiritually minded, in what follows in the ninth Verse, and shows that by being spiritually minded, he means a having the Indwelling and holy Influences of the Spirit of God in the Heart. **But ye are not in the Flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** The same is evident by all the Context. But Time would fail to produce all the Evidence there is of this, in the New Testament.

And it must be here observed, that although it is with Relation to the Spirit of God and his Influences, that Persons and Things are called spiritual; yet not all those Persons who are subject to any Kind of Influence of the Spirit of God, are ordinarily called spiritual in the New Testament. They who have only the common Influences of God's Spirit, are not so called, in the Places cited above, but only those, who have the special, gracious and saving Influences of God's Spirit: As is evident, because it has been already proved, that by spiritual Men is meant godly Men, in Opposition to natural, carnal and unsanctified Men. And it is most plain, that the Apostle by spiritually minded, **Romans 8:6**, means graciously minded. And though the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which natural Men might have, are sometimes called spiritual, because they are from the Spirit; yet, natural Men, whatever Gifts of the Spirit they had, were not, in the usual Language of the New Testament, called spiritual Persons. For it was not by Men's having the Gifts of the Spirit, but by their having the Virtues of the Spirit, that they were called spiritual; as is apparent, by Galatians 6:1. **Brethren, if any Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness.** Meekness is one of those Virtues which the Apostle had just spoken of, in the Verses next preceding, showing what are the **Fruits of the Spirit**. Those Qualifications are said to be spiritual in the Language of the New Testament, which are truly gracious and holy, and peculiar to the Saints.

Thus when we read of spiritual Wisdom and Understanding (as in Colossians 1:9: **We desire that ye may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will**, in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding). Hereby is intended that Wisdom which is gra-

cious, and from the sanctifying Influences of the Spirit of God. For doubtless, by **spiritual Wisdom**, is meant that which is opposite to what the Scripture calls **natural Wisdom**; as the **spiritual Man** is opposed to the **natural Man**. And therefore spiritual Wisdom is doubtless the same with that Wisdom which is from above, that the Apostle **James** speaks of, James 3:17. **The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, etc.** for this the Apostle opposes to natural Wisdom, Verse 15. **This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual**—the last Word in the Original is the same that is translated **natural**, in 1 Corinthians 2:14.

So that although natural Men may be the Subjects of many Influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many Scriptures, as **Numbers** 24:2; 1 **Samuel** 10:10, and 11:6, and 16:14; 1 **Corinthians** 13:1, 2, 3; **Hebrews** 6:4, 5, 6, and many others; yet they are not in the Sense of the Scripture, spiritual Persons; neither are any of those Effects, common Gifts, Qualities or Affections, that are from the Influence of the Spirit of God upon them, called spiritual Things. The great Difference lies in these two Things.

1. The Spirit of God is given to the true Saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting Abode; and to influence their Hearts, as a Principle of new Nature, or as a divine supernatural Spring of Life and Action. The Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the Saints, but as dwelling in them as his Temple, his proper Abode, and everlasting Dwelling-Place; 1 **Corinthians** 3:16; 2 **Corinthians** 6:16; **John** 14:16, 17.

And he is represented as being there so united to the Faculties of the Soul, that he becomes there a Principle or Spring of new Nature and Life.

So the Saints are said to live by Christ living in them, **Galatians 2:20**. Christ by his Spirit not only **is** in them, but **lives** in them; and so that they live by his Life; so is his Spirit united to them, as a Principle of Life in them; they do not only drink living Water, but this **living Water becomes a Well or Fountain of Water**, in the Soul, **springing up into spiritual and everlasting Life**, John 4:14; and thus becomes a Principle of Life in them; this living Water, this Evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, **Chapter 7:38, 39**. The Light of the Sun of Righteousness does not only shine upon them, but is so communicated to them that they shine also, and become little Images of that Sun which shines upon them; the Sap of the true Vine is not only conveyed into them, as the Sap of a Tree may be conveyed into a Vessel, but is conveyed as Sap is from a Tree into one of its living Branches, where it becomes a Principle of Life. The Spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the Saints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called **spiritual**.

On the other Hand, though the Spirit of God may many Ways influence natural Men; yet because it is not thus communicated to them, as an indwelling Principle, they do not derive any Denomination or Character from it; for there being no Union it is not their own. The Light may shine upon a Body that is very dark or black; and though that Body be the Subject of the Light, yet, because the Light becomes no Principle of Light in it, so as to cause the Body to shine, hence that Body does not properly receive its Denomination from it, so as to be called a **lightsome Body**. So

the Spirit of God acting upon the Soul only, without communicating itself to be an active Principle in it, cannot denominate it **spiritual**. A Body that continues black, may be said **not to have Light**, though the Light shines upon it; so natural Men are said **yet to have the Spirit**, Jude 19. **Sensual**, or **natural** (as the Word is elsewhere rendered) **having not the Spirit**.

2. Another Reason why the Saints and their Virtues are called spiritual, (which is the principal Thing) is that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital Principle in their Souls, there produces those Effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own **proper Nature**. Holiness is the Nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in Scripture the **Holy Ghost**. Holiness, which is as it were the Beauty and Sweetness of the Divine Nature, is as much the proper Nature of the Holy Spirit, as Heat is the Nature of Fire, or Sweetness was the Nature of that holy Ointment, which was the principal Type of the Holy Ghost in the **Mosaic** Dispensation; yea, I may rather say that Holiness is as much the proper Nature of the Holy Ghost, as Sweetness was the Nature of the sweet Odour of that Ointment. The Spirit of God so dwells in the Hearts of the Saints, that he there, as a Seed or Spring of Life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine Nature, making the Soul a Partaker of God's Beauty and Christ's Joy, so that the Saint has truly Fellowship **with** the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the Communion or Participation **of** the Holy Ghost. The Grace which is in the Hearts of the Saints, is of the same Nature with the divine Holiness, as much as it is possible for that Holiness to be, which is infinitely less in Degree; as the Brightness that is in a Diamond which the Sun shines upon, is of the same Nature with the Brightness of the

Sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in Degree. Therefore Christ says, John 3:6. **That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; that is** the Grace that is begotten in the Hearts of the Saints, is something of the same Nature with that Spirit, and so is properly called a **spiritual Nature**; after the same Manner as that which is born of the Flesh is Flesh, or that which is born of corrupt Nature is corrupt Nature.

But the Spirit of God never Influences the Minds of natural Men after this Manner. Though he may influence them many Ways, yet he never, in any of his Influences, communicates himself to them in his own proper Nature. Indeed he never acts disagreeably to his Nature, either on the Minds of Saints or Sinners: But the Spirit of God may act upon Men agreeably to his own Nature, and not exert his proper Nature in the Acts and Exercises of their Minds: The Spirit of God may act so, that his Actions may be agreeable to his Nature, and yet may not communicate himself in his proper Nature in the Effect of that Action. Thus, for Instance, the Spirit moved upon the Face of the Waters, and there was nothing disagreeable to his Nature in that Action; but yet he did not at all communicate himself in that Action, there was nothing of the proper Nature of the Holy Spirit in that Motion of the Waters. And so he may act upon the Minds of Men many Ways, and not communicate himself any more than when he acts on inanimate Things.

Thus not only the Manner of the **Relation** of the Spirit, who is the **Operator**, to the Subject of his Operations, is different; as the Spirit operates in the Saints, as dwelling in them, as an abiding Principle of Action, whereas he does not so operate upon Sinners; but the Influence and **Operation itself** is different, and the

Effect wrought exceedingly different. So that not only the Persons are called **spiritual**, as having the Spirit of God dwelling in them; but those Qualifications, Affections and Experiences that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also **spiritual**, and therein differ vastly in their Nature and Kind from all that a natural Man is or can be the Subject of, while he remains in a natural State; and also from all that Men or Devils can be the Authors of: It is a spiritual Work in this high Sense; and therefore above all other Works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no Work so high and excellent; for there is no Work wherein God does so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere Creature has, in so high a Sense, a Participation of God; so that it is expressed in Scripture by the Saints **being made Partakers of the divine Nature**, 2 Peter 1:4 and **having God dwelling in them, and they in God**, 1 John 4:12, 15, 16 and Chapter 3:21 and **having Christ in them**, John 17:21 Romans 8:10 **being the Temples of the living God**, 2 Corinthians 6:16 **living by Christ's Life**, Galatians 2:20 **being made Partakers of God's Holiness**, Hebrews 12:10 **having Christ's Love dwelling in them**, John 17:26 **having his Joy fulfilled in them**, John 17:13 **seeing Light in God's Light**, and **being made to drink of the River of God's Pleasures**, Psalm 36:8, 9 **having Fellowship with God**, or **communicating and partaking with him** (as the Word signifies) 1 John 1:3. Not that the Saints are made Partakers of the Essence of God, and so are **Godded** with God, and **Christed** with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous Language and Notions of some Heretics; but, to use the Scripture Phrase, they are made Partakers of God's **Fullness**, **Ephesians** 3:17, 18, 19 **John** 1:16 that is, of God's spiritual Beauty and Happiness, according to the Measure

and Capacity of a Creature; for so it is evident the Word **Fullness** signifies in Scripture Language. Grace in the Hearts of the Saints, being therefore the most glorious Work of God, wherein he communicates of the Goodness of his Nature, it is doubtless his peculiar Work, and in an eminent Manner, above the Power of all Creatures. And the Influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being those wherein God does, in so high a Manner, communicate himself, and makes the Creature Partaker of the divine Nature (the Spirit of God communicating itself in its own proper Nature) This is what I mean by those Influences that are **divine**, when I say that **truly gracious Affections do arise from those Influences that are spiritual and divine.**

The true Saints only have that which is spiritual; others have nothing which is divine, in the Sense that has been spoken of. They not only have not these Communications of the Spirit of God in so high a **Degree** as the Saints, but have nothing of that **Nature** or **Kind**. For the Apostle **James** tells us, that **natural Men have not the Spirit**; and Christ teaches the Necessity of a New-Birth, or a being born of the Spirit, from this, that **He that is born of the Flesh, has only Flesh**, and no **Spirit**, **John** 3:6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any Degree; for the Apostle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are some of his, **Romans** 8:9, 10, 11. And an having the Spirit of God is spoken of as a certain Sign that Persons shall have the eternal Inheritance; for it is spoken of as the Earnest of it, 2 **Corinthians** 1:22 and 5:5 **Ephesians** 1:24 and an having any Thing **of the Spirit** is mentioned as a sure Sign of being in Christ, 1 John 4:13. **Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he has given us of his Spirit.** Ungodly Men, not only have not

so much of the divine Nature as the Saints, but they are not **Partakers of it**; which implies that they have nothing of it; for a being **Partaker** of the divine Nature is spoken of as the peculiar Privilege of the true Saints, 2 **Peter** 1:4. Ungodly Men are not **Partakers of God's Holiness**, Hebrews 12:10. A natural Man has no Experience of any of those Things that are spiritual: The Apostle teaches us that he is so far from it, that he knows nothing about them, he is a perfect Stranger to them, the Talk about such Things is all Foolishness and Nonsense to him, he knows not what it means, 1 Corinthians 2:14. **The natural Man receives not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Foolishness to him; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.** And to the like Purpose Christ teaches us that the World is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God, John 14:17. **Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive; because it sees him not, neither knows him.** And it is further evident, that natural Men have nothing in them of the same Nature with the true Grace of the Saints, because the Apostle teaches us that those of them who go furthest in Religion, have **no Charity**, or true Christian Love, 1 **Corinthians** Chapter 13. So Christ elsewhere reproves the Pharisees, those high Pretenders to Religion, that they **had not the Love of God in them**, John 5:42. Hence natural Men have no Communion or Fellowship with Christ, or Participation with him, (as these Words signify) for this is spoken of as the peculiar Privilege of the Saints, 1 **John** 1:3 together with Verse 6, 7 and 1 **Corinthians** 1:8, 9. And the Scripture speaks of the actual Being of a gracious Principle in the Soul, though in its first beginning, as a Seed there planted, as inconsistent with a Man's being a Sinner, 1 **John** 3:9. And natural Men are

represented in Scripture as having no spiritual Light, no spiritual Life, and no spiritual Being; and therefore Conversion is often compared to opening the Eyes of the Blind, raising the Dead, and a Work of Creation, (wherein Creatures are made entirely new) and becoming new born Children.

From these Things it is evident, that those gracious Influences which the Saints are the Subjects of, and the Effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above Nature, altogether of a different Kind from any Thing that Men find within themselves by Nature, or only in the Exercise of natural Principles; and are Things which no Improvement of those Qualifications, or Principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting them to higher Degrees, and no Kind of Composition of them, will ever bring Men to; because they not only differ from what is natural, and from every Thing that natural Men experience, in Degree and Circumstances; but also in Kind; and are of a Nature vastly more excellent. And this is what I mean by **supernatural**, when I say, that **gracious Affections are from those Influences that are supernatural**.

From hence it follows, that in those gracious Exercises and Affections which are wrought in the Minds of the Saints, through the saving Influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward **Perception** or **Sensation** of their Minds, entirely different in its Nature and Kind, from any Thing that ever their Minds were the Subjects of before they were sanctified. For doubtless if God by his mighty Power produces something that is new, not only in Degree and Circumstances, but in its whole Nature, and that which could be produced by no exalting, varying or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any Thing of the like Kind; I say, if God

produces something thus new in a Mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conscious Thing; then doubtless something entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the same Thing, there is some new Sensation or Perception of the Mind, which is entirely of a new Sort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying or compounding of that Kind of Perceptions or Sensations which the Mind had before; or there is what some Metaphysicians call a new **simple Idea**. If Grace be, in the Sense above described, an entirely new Kind of Principle; then the Exercises of it are also entirely a new Kind of Exercises. And if there be in the Soul a new Sort of Exercises which it is conscious of, which the Soul knew nothing of before, and which no Improvement, Composition or Management of what it was before conscious or sensible of, could produce, or any Thing like it; then it follows that the Mind has an entirely new Kind of Perception or Sensation; and here is, as it were, a new **spiritual Sense** that the Mind has, or a Principle of new Kind of Perception or spiritual Sensation, which is in its whole Nature different from any former Kinds of Sensation of the Mind, as Tasting is diverse from any of the other Senses; and something is perceived by a true Saint, in the Exercise of this new Sense of Mind, in spiritual and divine Things, as entirely diverse from any Thing that is perceived in them, by natural Men, as the sweet Taste of Honey is diverse from the Ideas Men get of Honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it. So that the spiritual Perceptions which a sanctified and spiritual Person has, are not only diverse from all that natural Men have, after the Manner that the Ideas or Perceptions of the same Sense may differ one from another, but rather as the Ideas and Sensations of different Senses do differ. Hence the Work of the Spirit of God in Regeneration is often in

Scripture compared to the giving a new Sense, giving Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unstopping the Ears of the Deaf, and opening the Eyes of them that were born Blind, and turning from Darkness unto Light. And because this spiritual Sense is immensely the most noble and excellent, and that without which all other Principles of Perception, and all our Faculties are useless and vain; therefore the giving this new Sense, with the blessed Fruits and Effects of it in the Soul, is compared to a raising the Dead, and to a new Creation.

This new spiritual Sense, and the new Dispositions that attend it, are no new **Faculties**, but are new **Principles** of Nature. I use the Word **Principles**, for want of a Word of a more determinate Signification. By a **Principle of Nature** in this Place, I mean that Foundation which is laid in Nature, either old or new, for any particular Manner or Kind of Exercise of the Faculties of the Soul; or a natural Habit or Foundation for Action, giving a Person Ability and Disposition to exert the Faculties in Exercises of such a certain Kind; so that to exert the Faculties in that Kind of Exercises, may be said to be his Nature. So this new spiritual Sense is not a new Faculty of Understanding, but it is a new Foundation laid in the Nature of the Soul, for a new Kind of Exercises of the same Faculty of Understanding. So that new holy Dispositions of Heart that attend this new Sense, is not a new Faculty of Will, but a Foundation laid in the Nature of the Soul, for a new Kind of Exercises of the same Faculty of Will.

The Spirit of God, in all his Operations upon the Minds of natural Men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some Way acts upon **natural Principles**; but gives no new **spiritual Principle**. Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural Man

Visions, as he did **Balaam**, he only impresses a natural Principle, **namely** the Sense of seeing, immediately exciting Ideas of that Sense; but he gave no new Sense; neither was there any Thing supernatural, spiritual or divine in it. So if the Spirit of God impresses on a Man's Imagination, either in a Dream, or when he is awake, any outward Ideas of any of the Senses, either Voices, or Shapes and Colours, it is only exciting Ideas of the same Kind that he has by natural Principles and Senses. So if God reveals to any natural Man, any secret Fact; as for Instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercising any new spiritual Principle, or giving the Ideas of any new spiritual Sense; it is only impressing, in an extraordinary Manner, the Ideas that will hereafter be received by Sight and Hearing. So in the more ordinary Influences of the Spirit of God on the Hearts of Sinners, he only assists natural Principles to do the same Work to a greater Degree, which they do of themselves by Nature. Thus the Spirit of God by his common Influences may assist Men's natural Ingenuity, as he assisted **Bezaleel** and **Aholiab** in the curious Works of the Tabernacle: so he may assist Mens natural Abilities in political Affairs, and improve their Courage, and other natural Qualifications; as he is said to have put his Spirit on the seventy Elders, and on **Saul**, so as to **give him another Heart**: so God may greatly assist natural Men's Reason, in their Reasoning about secular Things, or about the Doctrines of Religion, and may greatly advance the Clearness of their Apprehensions and Notions of Things of Religion in many Respects, without giving any spiritual Sense. So in those Awakenings and Convictions that natural Men may have, God only assists Conscience, which is a natural Principle, to do that Work in a further Degree, which it naturally

does. Conscience naturally gives Men an Apprehension of Right and Wrong, and suggests the Relation there is between Right and Wrong, and a Retribution: The Spirit of God assists Men's Consciences to do this in a greater Degree, helps Conscience against the stupefying Influence of worldly Objects and their Lusts. And so there are many other Ways might be mentioned wherein the Spirit acts upon, assists and moves natural Principles; but after all, it is no more than Nature moved, acted and improved; here is nothing supernatural and divine. But the Spirit of God in his spiritual Influences on the Hearts of his Saints, operates by infusing or exercising new, divine and supernatural Principles; Principles which are indeed a new and spiritual Nature, and Principles vastly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural Men.

From what has been said it follows, that all spiritual and gracious Affections are attended with, and do arise from some Apprehension, Idea or Sensation of Mind, which is in its whole Nature different, yea exceeding different from all that is or can be in the Mind of a natural Man; and which the natural Man discerns nothing of, and has no Manner of Idea of, (agreeable to 1 **Corinthians** 2:14) and conceives of no more than a Man without the Sense of Tasting can conceive of the sweet Taste of Honey, or a Man without the Sense of Hearing can conceive of the Melody of a Tune, or a Man born Blind can have a Notion of the Beauty of the Rainbow.

But here two Things must be observed in order to the right Understanding of this.

1. On the one Hand it must be observed, that not every Thing which in any Respect appertains to spiritual Affections, is new and entirely different from what natural Men can conceive of, and do

experience; some Things are common to gracious Affections with other Affections; many Circumstances, Appendages and Effects are common. Thus a Saint's Love to God has a great many Things appertaining to it, which are common with a Man's natural Love to a near Relation: Love to God makes a Man have Desires of the Honour of God, and a Desire to please him; so does a natural Man's Love to his Friend make him desire his Honour, and desire to please him: Love to God causes a Man to delight in the Thoughts of God, and to delight in the Presence of God, and to desire Conformity to God, and the Enjoyment of God; and so it is with a Man's Love to his Friend; and many other Things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet that Idea which the Saint has of the Loveliness of God, and that Sensation, and that Kind of Delight he has in that View, which is as it were the Marrow and Quintessence of his Love, is peculiar, and entirely diverse from any Thing that a natural Man has, or can have any Notion of. And even in those Things that seem to be common, there is something peculiar: Both spiritual Love and Natural, cause Desires after the Object beloved; but they are not the same Sort of Desires; there is a Sensation of Soul in the spiritual Desires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural Desires: Both spiritual Love and natural Love are attended with Delight in the Object beloved; but the Sensations of Delight are not the same, but entirely and exceedingly diverse. Natural Men may have Conceptions of many Things **about** spiritual Affections; but there is something in them which is as it were the **Nucleus**, or Kernel of them, that they have no more Conceptions of, than one born blind has of Colours.

It may be clearly illustrated by this: We will suppose two Men; one is born without the Sense of Tasting, the other has it; the latter loves Honey, and is greatly delighted in it because he knows the sweet Taste of it; the other loves certain Sounds and Colours: The Love of each has many Things that appertain to it, which is common; it causes both to Desire and Delight in the Object beloved, and causes Grief when it is absent, et cetera. But yet, that Idea or Sensation which he who knows the Taste of Honey, has of its Excellency and Sweetness, that is the Foundation of his Love, is entirely different from any Thing the other has or can have; and that Delight which he has in Honey, is wholly diverse from any Thing that the other can conceive of; though they both delight in their beloved Objects. So both these Persons may in some Respects love the same Object: The one may love a delicious Kind of Fruit, which is beautiful to the Eye, and of a delicious Taste; not only because he has seen its pleasant Colours, but knows its sweet Taste; the other, perfectly ignorant of this, loves it only for its beautiful Colours: There are many Things seem, in some Respect, to be common to both; both love, both desire, and both delight; but the Love, and Desire, and Delight of the one, is altogether diverse from that of the other. The Difference between the Love of a natural Man and spiritual Man is like to this; but only it must be observed, that in one Respect it is vastly greater, **namely** that the Kinds of Excellency which are perceived in spiritual Objects, by these different Kinds of Persons, are in themselves vastly more diverse, than the different Kinds of Excellency perceived in delicious Fruit, by a **tasting** and a **seeing** Man; and in another Respect it may not be

so great, **namely** as the spiritual Man may have a spiritual Sense or Taste, to perceive that divine and most peculiar Excellency, but in small Beginnings, and in a very imperfect Degree.

2. On the other Hand, it must be observed, that a natural Man may have those religious Apprehensions and Affections, which may be in many Respects very new and surprising to him, and what before he did not conceive of; and yet what he experiences be nothing like the Exercises of a Principle of new Nature, or the Sensations of a new spiritual Sense: His Affections may be very new, by extraordinarily moving natural Principles, in a very new Degree, and with a great many new Circumstances, and a new Co-operation of natural Affections, and a new Composition of Ideas; this may be from some extraordinary powerful Influence of **Satan** and some great Delusion; but there is nothing but Nature extraordinarily acted. As if a poor Man, that had always dwelt in a Cottage, and had never looked beyond the obscure Village where he was born, should in a Jest, be taken to a magnificent City and Prince's Court, and there arrayed in princely Robes, and set in the Throne, with the Crown Royal on his Head, Peers and Nobles bowing before him, and should be made to believe that he was now a glorious Monarch; the Ideas he would have, and the Affections he would experience, would in many Respects be very new, and such as he had no Imagination of before; but all is no more, than only extraordinarily raising and exciting natural Principles, and newly exalting, varying and compounding such Sort of Ideas, as he has by Nature; here is nothing like giving him a new Sense.

Upon the Whole, I think it is clearly manifest, that all truly gracious Affections do arise from special and peculiar Influences of the Spirit, working that **sensible Effect** or **Sensation** in the

Souls of the Saints, which are entirely different from all that it is possible a natural Man should experience, not only different in Degree and Circumstances, but different in its whole Nature: So that a natural Man not only cannot experience that which is individually the same, but cannot experience any thing but what is exceeding diverse, and immensely below it, in its Kind; and that which the Power of Men or Devils is not sufficient to produce the like of, or any Thing of the same Nature.

I have insisted largely on this Matter, because it is of great Importance and Use, evidently to discover and demonstrate the Delusions of **Satan**, in many Kinds of false religious Affections, which Multitudes are deluded by, and probably have been in all Ages of the Christian Church; and to settle and determine many Articles of Doctrine, concerning the Operations of the Spirit of God, and the Nature of true Grace.

Now therefore, to apply these Things to the Purpose of this Discourse.

From hence it appears that Impressions which some have made on their Imagination, or the imaginary Ideas which they have of God, or Christ, or Heaven, or any Thing appertaining to Religion, have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the Nature of true Grace. Though such Things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they have nothing that is spiritual, nor are they any Part of gracious Experience.

Here, for the Sake of the common People, I will explain what is intended by **Impressions on the Imagination**, and **imaginary Ideas**. The Imagination is that Power of the Mind, whereby it can have a Conception, or Idea of Things of an external or out-

ward Nature, (that is, of such Sort of Things as are the Objects of the outward Senses) when those Things are not present, and are not perceived by the Senses. It is called Imagination from the Word **Image**; because thereby a Person can have an Image of some external Thing in his Mind, when that Thing is not present in Reality, nor any Thing like it. All such Kind of Things as we perceive by our five external Senses, **Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting** and **Feeling**, are external Things. And when a Person has an Idea, or Image of any of these Sorts of Things in his Mind, when they are not there, and when he does not really see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an **Imagination** of them, and these Ideas are **imaginary Ideas**: And when such Kind of Ideas are strongly impressed upon the Mind, and the Image of them in the Mind is very lively, almost as if one saw them, or heard them, **etcetera** that is called an **Impression on the Imagination**. Thus Colours, and Shapes, and a Form of Countenance, they are outward Things; because they are that Sort of Things which are the Objects of the outward Sense of Seeing. And therefore when any Person has in his Mind a lively Idea of any Shape, or Colour, or Form of Countenance; that is to have an Imagination of those Things. So if he has an Idea of such Sort of Light or Darkness, as he perceives by the Sense of Seeing; that is to have an Idea of outward Light, and so is an Imagination. So if he has an Idea of any Marks made on Paper, suppose Letters and Words written in a Book; that is to have an external and imaginary Idea of such Kind of Things as we sometimes perceive by our bodily Eyes. And when we have the Ideas of that Kind of Things which we perceive by any of the other Senses, as of any Sounds or Voices, or Words spoken; this is only to have Ideas of outward Things,

namely of such Kind of Things as are perceived by the external Sense of Hearing, and so that also is Imagination. And when these Ideas are vividly impressed, almost as if they were really heard with the Ears, this is to have an Impression on the Imagination. And so I might go on, and Instance in the Ideas of Things appertaining to the other three Senses of **Smelling, Tasting** and **Feeling**.

Many who have had such Things have very ignorantly supposed them to be of the Nature of spiritual Discoveries. They have had lively Ideas of some external Shape, and beautiful Form of Countenance; and this they call spiritually seeing Christ. Some have had impressed upon them Ideas of a great outward Light; and this they call a spiritual Discovery of God's or Christ's Glory. Some have had Ideas of Christ's hanging on the Cross, and his Blood running from his Wounds; and this they call a spiritual Sight of Christ crucified, and the Way of Salvation by his Blood. Some have seen him with his Arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a Discovery of the Sufficiency of Christ's Grace and Love. Some have had lively Ideas of Heaven, and of Christ on his Throne there, and shining Ranks of Saints and Angels; and this they call seeing Heaven opened to them. Some from Time to Time have had a lively Idea of a Person of a beautiful Countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual Discovery of the Love of Christ to their Souls, and tasting the Love of Christ. And they look upon it a sufficient Evidence that these Things are spiritual Discoveries, and that they see them spiritually, because they say they do not see these Things with their bodily Eyes, but in their Hearts; for they can see them when their Eyes are shut. And in like Manner, the Imaginations of some have been impressed with Ideas of the Sense

of Hearing; they have had Ideas of Words, as if they were spoken to them; sometimes they are the Words of Scripture, and sometimes other Words. They have had Ideas of Christ's speaking comfortable Words to them. These Things they have called having the inward Call of Christ, hearing the Voice of Christ spiritually in their Hearts, having the Witness of the Spirit, and the inward Testimony of the Love of Christ, **etcetera**

The common, and less considerate and understanding Sort of People, are the more easily led into Apprehensions that these Things are spiritual Things, because spiritual Things being invisible, and not Things that can be pointed forth with the Finger, we are forced to use figurative Expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow Names from external and sensible Objects to signify them by. Thus we call a clear Apprehension of Things spiritual by the Name of **Light**; and an having such an Apprehension of such or such Things, by the Name of **seeing** such Things; and the Conviction of the Judgment, and the Persuasion of the Will, by the Word of Christ in the Gospel, we signify by **spiritually hearing the Call of Christ**: And the Scripture itself abounds with such like figurative Expressions. Persons hearing these often used, and having pressed upon them the Necessity of having their Eyes opened, and having a Discovery of spiritual Things; and seeing Christ in his Glory, and having the inward Call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for some such external Discoveries, and imaginary Views as have been spoken of; and when they have them, are confident that now their Eyes are opened, now Christ has discovered himself to them, and they are his Children; and

hence are exceedingly affected and elevated with their Deliverance and Happiness, and many Kinds of Affections are at once set in a violent Motion in them.

But it is exceedingly apparent that such Ideas have nothing in them which is spiritual and divine, in the Sense wherein it has been demonstrated that all gracious Experiences are spiritual and divine. These external Ideas are in no wise of such a Sort, that they are entirely, and in their whole Nature diverse from all that Men have by Nature, perfectly different from, and vastly above any Sensation which it is possible a Man should have by any natural Sense or Principle, so that in order to have them, a Man must have a new spiritual and divine Sense given him, in order to have any Sensations of that Sort. So far from this, that they are Ideas of the same Sort which we have by the external Senses, that are some of the inferior Powers of the human Nature; they are merely Ideas of external Objects, or Ideas of that Nature, of the same outward sensitive Kind; the same Sort of Sensations of Mind (differing not in Degree, but only in Circumstances) that we have by those natural Principles which are common to us, with the Beasts, **namely** the five external Senses. This is a low, miserable Notion of spiritual Sense, to suppose that it is only a conceiving or imagining that Sort of Ideas which we have by our animal Senses, which Senses the Beasts have in as great Perfection as we; it is, as it were, a turning Christ, or the divine Nature in the Soul, into a mere Animal. There is nothing wanting in the Soul, as it is by Nature, to render it incapable of being the Subject of all these external Ideas, without any new Principles. A natural Man is capable of having an Idea, and a lively Idea of Shapes and Colours and Sounds when they are absent, and as capable as a regenerate Man is. So there is nothing su-

pernatural in them. And it is known by abundant Experience, that it is not the advancing or perfecting human Nature, which makes Persons more capable of having such lively and strong imaginary Ideas, but that on the contrary, the Weakness of Body and Mind, and Distempers of Body, makes Persons abundantly more susceptible of such Impressions.

As to a truly spiritual Sensation, not only is the Manner of its coming into the Mind extraordinary, but the Sensation itself is totally diverse from all that Men have, or can have, in a State of Nature, as has been shown. But as to these external Ideas, though the Way of their coming into the Mind is sometimes unusual, yet the Ideas in themselves are not the better for that; they are still of no different Sort from what Men have by their Senses; they are of no higher Kind, nor a whit better. For Instance, the external Idea a Man has now of Christ hanging on the Cross, and shedding his Blood, is no better in itself, than the external Idea that the **Jews** his Enemies had, who stood round his Cross and saw this with their bodily Eyes. The imaginary Idea which Men have now, of an external Brightness and Glory of God, is no better than the Idea the wicked Congregation in the Wilderness had of the external Glory of the Lord at Mount **Sinai**, when they saw it with bodily Eyes; or any better than that Idea which Millions of cursed Reprobates will have of the external Glory of Christ at the Day of Judgment, who shall see, and have a very lively Idea of ten thousand Times greater external Glory of Christ, than ever yet was conceived in any Man's Imagination. Yea, the Image of Christ, which Men conceive in their Imaginations, is not in its own Nature, of any superior Kind to the Idea the Papists conceive of Christ, by the beautiful and affecting Images of him which they see in their

Churches; (though the Way of their receiving the Idea may not be so bad). Nor are the Affections they have, if built primarily on such Imaginations, any better than the Affections raised in the ignorant People, by the Sight of those Images, which oftentimes are very great; especially when these Images, through the Craft of the Priests, are made to move, and speak, and weep, and the like. Merely the Way of Persons receiving these imaginary Ideas, does not alter the Nature of the Ideas themselves that are received: Let them be received in what Way they will, they are still but external Ideas, or Ideas of outward Appearances, and so are not spiritual. Yea, if Men should actually receive such external Ideas by the immediate Power of the most high God upon their Minds, they would not be spiritual, they would be no more than a common Work of the Spirit of God; as is evident in Fact, in the Instance of **Balaam**, who had impressed on his Mind, by God himself, a clear and lively outward Representation or Idea of Jesus Christ, as **the Star rising out of Jacob**, when **he heard the Words of God, and knew the Knowledge of the most High, and saw the Vision of the Almighty, falling into a Trance**, Numbers 24:16, 17. But yet had no Manner of spiritual Discovery of Christ; that Day-Star never spiritually rose in his Heart, he being but a natural Man.

And as these external Ideas have nothing divine or spiritual in their Nature, and nothing but what natural Men, without any new Principles, are capable of; so there is nothing in their Nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable and unparalleled Exercise of the glorious Power of God, in order to their Production, which it has been shown there is in the Production of true Grace. There appears to be nothing in their Nature above the Power of the Devil. It is

certainly not above the Power of **Satan** to suggest Thoughts to Men; because otherwise he could not tempt them to Sin. And if he can suggest any Thoughts or Ideas at all, doubtless imaginary ones, or Ideas of Things external are not above his Power; for the external Ideas Men have are the lowest Sort of Ideas. These Ideas may be raised only by Impressions made on the Body, by moving the animal Spirits, and impressing the Brain. Abundant Experience does certainly show, that Alterations in the Body will excite imaginary or external Ideas in the Mind; as often, in case of a high Fever, Melancholy, **etcetera** These external Ideas are as much below the more intellectual Exercises of the Soul, as the Body is a less noble Part of Man than the Soul.

And there is not only nothing in the Nature of these external Ideas or Imaginations of outward Appearances, from whence we can infer that they are above the Power of the Devil; but it is certain also that the Devil can excite, and often has excited such Ideas. They were external Ideas which he excited in the Dreams and Visions of the false Prophets of old, who were under the Influence of lying Spirits, that we often read of in Scripture, as **Deuteronomy** 13:1; **1 Kings** 22:22; **Isaiah** 28:7; **Ezekiel** 13:7; **Zechariah** 13:4. And they were external Ideas that he often excited in the Minds of the heathen Priests, Magicians and Sorcerers in their Visions and Ecstasies; and they were external Ideas that he excited in the Mind of the Man Christ Jesus, when he showed him all the Kingdoms of the World with the Glory of them, when those Kingdoms were not really in Sight.

And if **Satan**, or any created Being, has Power to impress the Mind with outward Representations, then no particular Sort of outward Representations can be any Evidence of a divine Power.

Almighty Power is no more requisite to represent the Shape of Man to the Imagination, than the Shape of anything else. There is no higher Kind of Power necessary to form in the Brain one bodily Shape or Color than another. It needs a no more glorious Power to represent the Form of the Body of Man, than the Form of a Chip or Block; though it be of a very beautiful human Body, with a sweet Smile in his Countenance, or Arms open, or Blood running from Hands, Feet, and Side. That Sort of Power which can represent Black or Darkness to the Imagination, can also represent White and shining Brightness. The Power and Skill which can well and exactly paint a Straw, or a Stick of Wood, on a Piece of Paper or Canvas; the same in Kind, only perhaps further improved, will be sufficient to paint the Body of a Man, with great Beauty and in royal Majesty, or a magnificent City, paved with Gold, full of Brightness, and a glorious Throne, **etc.** So it is no more than the same Sort of Power that is requisite to paint one as the other of these on the Brain. The same Sort of Power that can put Ink upon Paper, can put on Leaf-Gold. So that it is evident to a Demonstration, if we suppose it to be in the Devil's Power to make any Sort of external Representation at all on the Fancy, (as without Doubt it is, and never anyone questioned it who believed there was a Devil, that had any Agency with Mankind) I say, if so, it is demonstrably evident that a created Power may extend to all Kinds of external Appearances and Ideas in the Mind.

From hence it again clearly appears, that no such Things have anything in them that is spiritual, supernatural, and divine, in the Sense in [which] it has been proved that all truly gracious Experiences have. And though external Ideas, through Man's Make and Frame, do ordinarily in some Degree attend spiritual

Experiences, yet these Ideas are no Part of their spiritual Experience, any more than the Motion of the Blood, and Beating of the Pulse, that attends Experiences, are a Part of spiritual Experience. And though undoubtedly, through Men's Infirmary in the present State, and especially through the weak Constitution of some Persons, gracious Affections which are very strong, do excite lively Ideas in the Imagination; yet it is also undoubted, that when Person's Affections are **founded on** Imaginations, which is often the Case, those Affections are merely natural and common, because they are built on a Foundation that is not spiritual; and so are entirely different from gracious Affections, which, as has been proved, do evermore arise from those Operations that are spiritual and divine.

These Imaginations do oftentimes raise the carnal Affections of Men to an exceeding great Height. And no wonder, when the Subjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting Persuasion, that they are divine Manifestations, which the great Jehovah immediately makes to their Souls, therein giving them Testimonies, in an extraordinary Manner, of his high and peculiar Favor.

Again, it is evident from what has been observed and proved of the Manner in which gracious Operations and Effects in the Heart are spiritual, supernatural and divine, that the immediate suggesting of the Words of Scripture to the Mind, has nothing in it which is spiritual.

I have had Occasion to say something of this already; and what has been said may be sufficient to evince it. But if the Reader bears in Mind what has been said concerning the Nature of spiritual Influences and Effects, it will be more abundantly Manifest that this is no spiritual Effect. For I suppose there is no Person of com-

mon Understanding who will say or imagine, that the bringing Words (let them be what Words they will) to the Mind, is an Effect of that Nature which it is impossible the Mind of a natural Man, while he remains in a State of Nature, should be the Subject of, or anything like it; or that it requires any new divine Sense in the Soul; or that the bringing Sounds or Letters to the Mind, is an Effect of so high, holy and excellent a Nature, that it is impossible any created Power should be the Cause of it.

As the suggesting Words of Scripture to the Mind, is only the exciting in the Mind Ideas of certain Sounds or Letters; so it is only one Way of exciting Ideas in the Imagination; for Sounds and Letters are external Things, that are the Objects of the external Senses of Seeing and Hearing. Ideas of certain Marks upon Paper, such as any of the twenty-four Letters, in whatever Order, or any Sounds of the Voice, are as much external Ideas, as of any other Shapes or Sounds whatsoever. And therefore, by what has been already said concerning these external Ideas, it is evident they are nothing spiritual; and if at any Time the Spirit of God suggests these Letters or Sounds to the Mind, this is a **common**, and not any **special** or **gracious** Influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those Affections which have this Effect for their Foundation, are no spiritual or gracious Affections. But let it be observed what it is that I say, **namely** When this Effect, even the immediate and extraordinary **Manner of Words of Scripture's coming to the Mind**, is that which excites the Affections, and is properly the Foundation of them, then these Affections are not spiritual. It may be so, that Persons may have gracious Affections going with Scriptures which come to their Minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those

Scriptures to excite them; when it is some spiritual Sense, Taste or Relish they have of the divine and excellent Things contained in those Scriptures, that is the Thing which excites their Affections, and not the extraordinary and sudden Manner of Words being brought to their Minds. They are affected with the Instruction they receive from the Words, and the View of the glorious Things of God or Christ, and Things appertaining to them, that they contain and teach; and not because the Words came suddenly, as though some Person had spoken them to them, thence concluding that God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this Foundation; the Words of some great and high Promises of Scripture come suddenly to their Minds, and they look upon the Words as directed immediately by God to them, as though the Words that Moment proceeded out of the Mouth of God as spoken to them: So that they take it as a Voice from God, immediately revealing to them their happy Circumstance, and promising such and such great Things to them: And [...] that [...] elevates them. There is no new spiritual [...] **in the Scripture**, or new spiritual [...] of the glorious Things [...] in that Part of the Bible, going before their Affection, and being the Foundation of it: All the new Understanding they have, or think they have, to be the Foundation of their Affection, is this, that the Words **are [...] to them**, because they come so [...] and extraordinarily. And so this Affection is built wholly on the [...]; because it is built on a Conclusion [...] which they have [...]. For, as has been shown, the sudden coming of the Words to their Minds, is no Evidence that the bringing them to their Minds in that Manner, was from God. And [...] was true that God brought the Words to their Minds, and they certainly know [...] that would [...] the spiri-

tual Knowledge, it may be without any spiritual [...] might know that the Words which God [...] to him, were indeed suggested to him by God, and yet have no spiritual Knowledge. So that these Affections which are built on that Notion, that Texts of Scripture are sent immediately from God, are built on no spiritual Foundation, and are vain and [...]. Persons who have their Affections thus raised, if they should be enquired [...] whether they have any new Sense of the Excellency of Things contained in these Scriptures, would probably say, [...] without Hesitation: But it is true no otherwise than [...], that when they have taken up that Notion, that the Words are spoken immediately to them, that makes them seem sweet to them, and they [...] the Things, which those Scriptures say to them, for excellent Things, and wonderful Things. As for Instance, supposing these were the Words which were suddenly brought to their Minds, **Fear not, — it [...] give you [...] Kingdom;** they having confidently taken up a Notion that the Words were as it were immediately spoken from Heaven to them, [...] an immediate Revelation, that God was their Father, and had given the Kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the Words seem sweet to them; and oh, they say, **they are excellent Things that are [...] in those Words!** but the Reason why the Promise seems excellent to them, is only because they think it is made to them immediately: All the Sense they have of any Glory in them, is only from **Self-Love**, and from their own imagined Interest in the Words: Not that they had any View or Sense of the holy and glorious Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the spiritual Glory of that God who gives it, and of his excellent Grace to sinful Men, in offering and giving them this Kingdom, of his own good Pleasure, preceding their imagined

Interest in these Things, and their being affected by them, and being the Foundation of their Affection, and Hope of an Interest in them. On the contrary, they first imagine they are interested, and then are highly affected with that, and then can own these Things to be excellent. So that the sudden and extraordinary Way of the Scriptures coming to their Mind, is plainly the first Foundation of the whole; which is a clear Evidence of the wretched Delusion they are under.

The first Comfort of many Persons, and what they call their Conversion, is after this Manner: After Awakening and Terrors, some comfortable sweet Promise comes suddenly and wonderfully to their Minds; and the Manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God **to them**: And this is the very Thing that is all the Foundation of their Faith, and Hope, and Comfort. From hence they take their first Encouragement to trust in God and in Christ, because they think that God, by some Scripture so brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promised them eternal Life: Which is very absurd; for every one of common Knowledge of the Principles of Religion, knows that it is God's Manner to reveal his Love to Men, and their Interest in the Promises, after they have believed, and not before; because they must first believe, before they have any Interest in the Promises to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of Truth, and not of Lies: He does not bring Scriptures to Men's Minds to reveal to them that they have an Interest in God's Favour and Promises, when they have none, having not yet believed: Which would be the Case, if God's bringing Texts of Scripture to Men's Minds to reveal to them that their Sins were forgiven, or that it was God's Pleasure to give them the Kingdom, or any Thing of that

Nature, went before, and was the Foundation of their first Faith. There is no Promise of the Covenant of Grace belongs to any Man, until he has first believed in Christ; for it is by Faith alone that we become interested in Christ, and the Promises of the new Covenant made in him. And therefore whatever Spirit applies the Promises of that Covenant to a Person who has not first believed, as being already his, must be a lying Spirit; and that Faith which is first built on such an Application of Promises, is built upon a Lie. God's Manner is not to bring comfortable Texts of Scripture to give Men **Assurance** of his Love, and that they shall be happy, before they have had a Faith of **Dependance**. And if the Scripture which comes to a Person's Mind, be not so properly a Promise, as an Invitation; Yet if he makes the sudden or unusual Manner of the Invitation's coming to his Mind, the Ground on which he believes that he is invited, it is not true Faith; because it is built on that which is not the true Ground of Faith. True Faith is built on no precarious Foundation: but a Determination that the Words of such a particular Text were, by the immediate Power of God, suggested to the Mind, at such a Time, as though then spoken and directed by God to [gap], because the Words came after such a Manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious Determination, as has been now shown; and therefore is a false and sandy Foundation for Faith; and accordingly that Faith which is built upon it is false. The only certain Foundation which any Person has to believe that he is invited to partake of the Blessings of the Gospel, is that the Word of God declares that Persons so qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it is true and cannot lie. If a Sinner be once convinced of the Veracity of God, and that the Scriptures are his Word, he will need no more to convince and sat-

isfy him that he is invited; for the Scriptures are full of Invitations to Sinners, to the chief of Sinners, to come and partake of the Benefits of the Gospel. He will not want any new speaking of God to him, what he has spoken already will be enough with him.

As the first Comfort of many Persons, and their Affections at the Time of their supposed Conversion, are built on such Grounds as these which have been mentioned; so are their Joys and Hopes, and other Affections, from Time to Time afterwards. They have often particular Words of Scripture, sweet Declarations and Promises suggested to them, which by Reason of the Manner of their coming, they think are **immediately** sent from God to them, **at that Time**; which they look upon as their Warrant to take them; and which they actually make the main Ground of their appropriating them to themselves, and of the Comfort they take in them, and the Confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of Conversation is carried on between God and them; and that God, from Time to Time, does, as it were, immediately speak to them, and satisfy their Doubts and testifies his Love to them, and promises them Supports and Supplies, and his Blessing in such and such Cases, and reveals to them clearly their Interest in eternal Blessings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a Course of a sudden and tumultuous Kind of Joys, mingled with a strong Confidence, and high Opinion of themselves; when indeed the main Ground of these Joys, and this Confidence is not any Thing **contained in, or taught by** these Scriptures, as they lie in the Bible, but the **Manner of their [gap] to them**; which is a certain Evidence of their Delusion. There is no particular Promise in the Word of God that is the Saint's, or is any otherwise made to him, or spoken to him, than all the Promise of the Covenant of

Grace are his, and are made to him, all spoken to him. Though it be true that some of these Promises may be more peculiarly adapted to his Case than others; and God by his spirit may enable him better to understand some than others, and to have a greater Sense of the Preciousness, and Glory, and [gap] of the Blessings contained in them.

But here, some may be ready to [gap], What, is there no such Thing as any particular [gap] Application of the Promises of Scripture by the Spirit of God? I answer, There is doubtless such a Thing as a spiritual and [gap] Application of the [gap] and Promises of Scripture to the Souls of Men: But it is also certain, that the Nature of it is wholly misunderstood by many Persons, to the great [gap] of their own Souls, and the giving **Satan** a vast Advantage against them, and against the Interest of Religion, and the Church of God. The spiritual Application of a Scripture Promise was not consist in its being immediately suggested to the [gap] by some [gap] Agent, and being borne into the Mind with this strong Apprehension, that it is particularly spoken and [gap] to them at that Time: There is nothing on the Evidence of the Hand of God in this Effect, as Events have proved in many [gap] Instances; and it is a [gap] of a spiritual Application of Scripture; there is nothing in the Nature of it at all beyond the Power of the Devil, if he [gap] by God; for there is nothing in the Nature of the Effect that is spiritual, implying any vital Communication of God. A truly spiritual Application of the Word of God is of a vastly higher Nature: as much above the Devil's Power, as it is, so to apply the Word of God to a dead Corpse, as to raise it to Life; or to a Stone, to turn it into an Angel. A spiritual Application of the Word of God consists in **applying it to the Heart**, in spiritually en-

lightening, sanctifying Influences. A spiritual Application of an Invitation or Offer of the Gospel consists in giving the Soul a spiritual Sense or Relish of the holy and divine Blessings offered, and also the sweet and wonderful Grace of the Offerer, in making so gracious an Offer, and of his holy Excellency and [gap] to fulfill what he offers, and his glorious Sufficiency for it; so leading and drawing forth the Heart to embrace the Offer; and thus giving the Man Evidence of his Title to the Thing offered. And so [gap] spiritual, Application of the Promises of Scripture, for the Comfort of the Saints, consists in enlightening their Minds to see the holy Excellency and Sweetness of the Blessings Promised, and also the holy Excellency of the Promiser, and his Faithfulness and Sufficiency, thus drawing forth their Hearts to embrace the Promiser, and Thing promised; and by this Means, giving the sensible Actings of Grace, enabling them to see their Grace, and so their Title to the Promise. An Application not consisting in this divine [gap] and Enlightening of the Mind, but consisting only in the Words [gap] borne into the Thoughts, as if immediately then spoken, so making Persons believe, on no other Foundation, that the Promise is theirs; is a blind Application, and belongs to the Spirit of Darkness, and not of Light.

When Persons have their Affections raised after this Manner, those Affections are really not raised by the Word of God; the Scripture is not the Foundation of them; it is not any Thing contained in those Scriptures which come to their Minds, that raise their Affections; but truly that Effect, [gap] the strange Manner of the Words being suggested to their Minds, and a Proposition from thence taken up by them, which indeed is not contained in that Scripture, nor any other; as that **his** Sins are forgiven him, or that

it is the Father's Good Pleasure to give **him in [gap]** the Kingdom, or the like. There are Propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that Persons of such and such Qualifications are forgiven and beloved of God: But there are no Propositions to be found in the Bible declaring that such and such particular Persons, independent on any previous Knowledge of any Qualifications, are forgiven and beloved of God: And therefore when any Person is comforted, and affected by any such Proposition, it is by another Word, a Word newly coined, and not any Word of God contained in the Bible. And thus many Persons are vainly affected and deluded.

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, **That no Revelation of secret Facts by immediate Suggestion**, is any thing spiritual and divine, in that Sense wherein gracious Effects and Operations are so.

By **secret Facts** I mean Things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which are secret in that Sense that they do not appear to the Senses, nor are known by any Argumentation, or any Evidence to Reason, nor any other Way, but only by that Revelation by immediate Suggestion of the Ideas of them to the Mind. Thus for Instance, if it should be revealed to me that the next Year this Land would be invaded by a Fleet from **France**, or that such and such Persons would then be converted, or that I myself should then be converted; not by enabling me to argue out these Events from any thing which now appears in Providence; but immediately suggesting and bearing in upon my Mind, in an extraordinary Manner, the Apprehension or Ideas of these Facts, with a strong Suggestion or Impression on my Mind, that I had no Hand in myself, that these Things would come

to pass. Or if it should be revealed to me, that this Day there is a Battle fought between the Armies of such and such Powers in **Europe**; or that such a Prince in **Europe** was this Day converted, or is now in a converted State, having been converted formerly, or that one of my Neighbours is converted, or that I my self am converted; not by having any other Evidence of any of these Facts, from whence I argue them, but an immediate extraordinary Suggestion or Excitation of these Ideas, and a strong Impression of them upon my Mind. This is a Revelation of secret Facts by immediate Suggestion, as much as if the Facts were future; for the Facts being past, present, or future alters not the Case, as long as they are secret and hidden from my Senses and Reason, and not spoken of in Scripture, nor known by me any other Way than by **immediate Suggestion**. If I have it revealed to me, that such a Revolution is come to pass this Day in the **Ottoman** Empire, it is the very same Sort of Revelation, as if it were revealed to me that such a Revolution would come to pass there this Day come twelve-month; because, though one is present and the other future, yet both are equally hidden from me, any other Way than by immediate Revelation. When **Samuel** told **Saul** that the Asses which he went to seek were found, and that his Father had left caring for the Asses and sorrowed for him; this was by the same Kind of Revelation, as that by which he told **Saul**, that in the Plain of **Tabor**, there should meet him three Men going up to God to **Bethel**, (1 **Samuel** 10:2-3) though one of these Things was future and the other was not. So when **Elisha** told the King of **Israel** the Words that the King of **Syria** spake in his Bed-chamber, it was by the same Kind of Revelation with that by which he foretold many Things to come.

It is evident that this Revelation of secret Facts by immediate Suggestion, has nothing of the Nature of a spiritual and divine Operation, in the Sense forementioned: There is nothing at all in the Nature of the Perceptions or Ideas themselves, which are excited in the Mind, that is divinely excellent, and so, far above all the Ideas of natural Men; though the Manner of exciting the Ideas be extraordinary. In those Things which are spiritual, as has been shown, not only **the Manner of producing Effect**, but **the Effect wrought** is divine, and so vastly above all that can be in an unsanctified Mind. Now simply the having an Idea of Facts, setting aside the Manner of producing those Ideas, is nothing beyond what the Minds of wicked Men are susceptible of, without any Goodness in them; and they all, either have or will have, the Knowledge of the Truth of the greatest and most important Facts, that have been, are, or shall be.

And as to the extraordinary Manner of producing the Ideas or Perception of Facts, even by immediate Suggestion, there is nothing in it, but what the Minds of natural Men, while they are yet natural Men, are capable of; as is manifest in **Balaam**, and others spoken of in the Scripture. And therefore it appears that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate Suggestion of secret Facts that is spiritual, in the Sense in which it has been proved that gracious Operations are so. If there be nothing in the Ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a Mind not sanctified, then God can put them into the Mind **by immediate Power**, without sanctifying it. As there is nothing in the Idea of a Rainbow itself, that is of a holy and divine Nature; so that there is nothing hinders but that an unsanctified Mind may receive that Idea: So God if he pleases, and when he pleases, **im-**

mediately, and in an extraordinary Manner, may excite that Idea in an unsanctified Mind. So also, as there is nothing in the Idea or Knowledge that such and such particular Persons are forgiven and accepted of God, and entitled to Heaven, but what unsanctified Minds may have and will have concerning many at the Day of Judgment; so God can if he pleases, extraordinarily and immediately suggest this to, and impress it upon an unsanctified Mind now: There is no Principle wanting in an unsanctified Mind, to make it capable of such a Suggestion or Impression; nor is there any Thing in them to exclude, or necessarily to prevent such a Suggestion.

And if these Suggestions of secret Facts be attended with **Words of Scripture**, immediately and extraordinarily brought to Mind, about some other Facts that seem in some Respects similar, that do not make the Operation to be of a spiritual and divine Nature. For that Suggestion of Words of Scripture is no more divine, than the Suggestion of the Facts themselves; as has been just now demonstrated: And two Effects together, which are neither of them spiritual, cannot make up one complex Effect, that is spiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already shown, and often repeated, that those Affections which are properly founded on such immediate Suggestions, or supposed Suggestions of secret Facts, are not gracious Affections. Not but that it is possible that such Suggestions may **be the Occasion**, or **Cause** of gracious Affections; for so may a Mistake and Delusion; but it is never properly the **Foundation** of gracious Affections: For gracious Affections, as has been shown, are all the Effects of an Influence and Operation which is spiritual, supernatural, and divine. But

there are many Affections, and high Affections, which some have, that have such Kind of Suggestions or Revelations for their very Foundation: They look upon these as spiritual Discoveries; which is a gross Delusion; and this Delusion is truly the Spring whence their Affections flow.

Here it may be proper to observe, that it is exceeding manifest from what has been said, that what many Persons call the **Witness of the Spirit** that they are the Children of God, has nothing in it spiritual and divine; and consequently that the Affections built upon it, are vain and delusive. That which many call the Witness of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate Suggestion and Impression of that Fact, otherwise secret, that they are converted, or made the Children of God, and so that their Sins are pardoned, and that God has given them a Title to Heaven. This Kind of Knowledge, **namely** Knowing that a certain Person is converted, and delivered from Hell, and entitled to Heaven, is no divine Sort of Knowledge in itself. This Sort of Fact, is not that which requires any higher or more divine Kind of Suggestion, in order to impress it on the Mind, than any other Fact which **Balaam** had impressed on his Mind. It requires no higher Sort of Idea or Sensation, for a Man to have the Apprehension of his own Conversion impressed upon him, than to have the Apprehension of his Neighbour's Conversion, in like Manner, impressed: But God, if he pleased, might impress the Knowledge of this Fact, that he had forgiven his Neighbour's Sins, and given him a Title to Heaven, as well as any other Fact, without any Communication of his Holiness: The Excellency and Importance of the Fact, do not at all hinder a natural Man's Mind being susceptible of an immediate Suggestion and Impression of it. **Balaam** had as excellent, and

important, and glorious Facts as this, immediately impressed on his Mind, without any gracious Influence; as particularly, the coming of Christ, and his setting up his glorious Kingdom, and the Blessedness of the spiritual **Israel** in his peculiar Favour and their Happiness living and dying. Yea **Abimelech** King of the **Philistines**, had God's special Favour to a particular Person, even **Abraham**, revealed to him, **Genesis** 20:6, 7. So it seems that he revealed to **Laban** his special Favour to **Jacob**, see **Genesis** 31:24 and **Psalms** 105:15. And if a truly good Man should have an immediate Revelation or Suggestion from God, after the like Manner, concerning his Favour to his Neighbour, or himself; it would be no higher Kind of influence; it would be no more than a common Sort of Influence of God's Spirit; as the Gift of Prophecy, and all Revelation by immediate Suggestion is; see 1 **Corinthians** 13:2. And though it be true, that it is not possible that a natural Man should have that individual Suggestion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, because it is not true; yet that does not arise from the Nature of the influence, or because that Kind of Influence which suggests such excellent Facts, is too high for him to be the Subject of; but purely from the want of a Fact to be revealed. The Influence which immediately suggests this Fact, when it is true, is of no different Kind from that which immediately suggests other true Facts: And so the Kind and Nature of the Influence, is not above what is common to natural Men, with good Men.

But this is a mean ignoble Notion of the Witness of the Spirit of God given to his dear Children, to suppose that there is nothing in the Kind and Nature of that Influence of the Spirit of God, in imparting this high and glorious Benefit but what is common to natu-

ral Men, or which Men are capable of, and be in the mean Time altogether unsanctified, and the Children of Hell; and that therefore the Benefit or Gift itself has nothing of the holy Nature of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of a vital Communication of that Spirit. This Notion greatly debases that high and most exalted Kind of Influence and Operation of the Spirit, which there is in the true Witness of the Spirit. That which is called **the Witness of the Spirit**, Romans 8, is elsewhere in the new Testament called **the Seal of the Spirit**, 2 Corinthians 1:22, **Ephesians** 1:13 and 4:30, alluding to the Seal of Princes, annexed to the commissions, by which they advanced any of their Subjects to some high Honour and Dignity, or peculiar Privilege in the Kingdom, as a Token of their special Favour. Which is an Evidence that the Seal of the Spirit of the Prince of Princes, in sealing his Favourites, is far from being of a common Kind; and that there is no Effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its Nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable and distinguishing of them, as nothing is more Royal than the royal Seal; nothing more sacred, that belongs to a Prince, and more peculiarly denoting what belongs to him; it being the very End and Design of it, to be the most peculiar Stamp and Confirmation of the royal Authority, and great Note of Distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the King, or belongs to him, may be known from every Thing else. And therefore undoubtedly the Seal of the great King of Heaven and Earth enstamped on the Heart, is something high and holy in its own Nature, some excellent Communication from the infinite Fountain of divine Beauty and Glory; and not merely a making known a secret Fact by Revelation or Suggestion; which is a Sort of Influence of the Spirit of God, that the Children of the Devil have often been the Subjects

of. The Seal of the Spirit is a Kind of Effect of the Spirit of God on the Heart, which natural Men, while such, are so far from a Capacity of being the Subjects of, that they can have no Manner of Notion or Idea of it; agreeable to Revelation 2:17. **To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden Manna; and I will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.** There is all Reason to suppose that what is here spoken of, is the same Mark, Evidence, or blessed Token of special Favour, which is elsewhere called the **Seal of the Spirit**.

What has misled many in their notion of that influence of the Spirit of God we are speaking of, is the word witness, its being called the **Witness** of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it, not to be any effect or work of the Spirit upon the heart, giving evidence, from whence men may argue that they are the children of God; but an inward suggestion, as though God inwardly spoke to the man, and testified to him, and told him that he was his child, by a kind of a secret voice, or impression. Not observing the sense in which the word **Witness**, or **Testimony** is often used in the New Testament; where such terms often signify, not only a mere declaring and affecting a thing to be true, but holding forth evidence from whence a thing may be argued and proved to be true. Thus, **Hebrews 2:4**, God is said to **bear Witness, with Signs and Wonders, and diverse miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost**. Now these miracles, here spoken of, are called God's witness, not because they are of the nature of affections, but evidences and proofs. So **Acts 14:3**. **Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord; which gave testimony unto the Word of his Grace; and granted Signs and Wonders**

to be done by their Hands. And John 6:36. **But I have greater Witness than that of John; for the Works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same Works that I do, bear Witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.** Again, Chapter 10:25. **The Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witness of me.** So the water and the blood are said to bear witness, 1 **John** 5:8, not that they spoke or asserted anything, but they were proofs and evidences. So God's works of providence, in the rain and fruitful seasons, are spoken of as witnesses of God's being and goodness, **that is** they were evidences of these things. And when the Scripture speaks of the **Seal** of the Spirit, it is an expression which properly denotes, not an immediate voice or suggestion, but some work or effect of the Spirit, that is left as a divine mark upon the soul, to be an evidence, by which God's children might be known. The seals of princes were the distinguishing marks of princes: And thus God's seal is spoken of as God's mark. Revelation 7:3. **Hurt not the Earth, neither the Sea, or the Trees, till we have sealed the Servants of our God in their Foreheads;** together with Ezekiel 9:4. **Set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst thereof.** When God sets his seal on a man's heart by his Spirit, there is some holy stamp, some image impressed and left upon the heart by the Spirit, as by the seal upon the wax. And this holy stamp, or impressed image, exhibiting clear evidence to the conscience, that the subject of it is the child of God, is the very thing which in Scripture is called **the Seal of the Spirit, and the Witness, or Evidence of the Spirit.** And this image instamped by the Spirit on God's children's hearts, is his own image: That is

the evidence by which they are known to be God's children, that they have the image of their Father stamped upon their hearts by the Spirit of Adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two things, **namely** The image and the name of the person whose seal it was. Therefore when Christ says to his spouse, Canticles 8:6, **Set me as a Seal upon thine Heart, as a Seal upon thine arm;** it is as much as to say, Let my name and image remain impressed there. The seals of princes were wont to bear their image; so that what they set their seal and royal mark upon, had their image left upon it. It was the manner of princes of old to have their image engraven on their jewels and precious stones; and the image of **Augustus** engraven on a precious stone, was used as the seal of the Roman Emperors, in Christ's and the Apostles' times. And the saints are the jewels of Jesus Christ, the great Potentate, who has the possession of the empire of the universe: And these jewels have his image enstamped upon them, by his royal signet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the Scripture means by the seal of the Spirit; especially when it is enstamped in so fair and clear a manner, as to be plain to the eye of conscience; which is what the Scripture calls **the Witness of the Spirit**. This is, truly an effect that is **spiritual, supernatural, and divine**. This is, in itself, of a holy nature, being a communication of the divine nature and beauty. That kind of influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this stamp upon the heart, is such that no natural man can be the subject of anything of the like nature with it. This is the highest sort of witness of the Spirit, which it is possible the soul should be the subject of: if there were any such thing as a witness of the Spirit by immediate suggestion or revelation, this would be vastly more noble and excellent, and as much above it as the

heaven is above the earth. This the Devil cannot imitate: As to an inward suggestion of the Spirit of God, by a kind of secret voice speaking, and immediately asserting and revealing a fact, he can do that which is a thousand times so like to this, as he can to that holy and divine effect, or work of the Spirit of God, which has been now spoken of.

Another thing which is a full proof that the seal of the Spirit is no revelation of any fact by immediate suggestion, but is grace itself in the soul, is that the **Seal of the Spirit** is called the **Earnest of the Spirit**, in the Scripture. It is very plain, that the seal of the Spirit is the same thing with the earnest of the Spirit, by 2 Corinthians 1:22. **Who hath also sealed Us, and given the Earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts.** And Ephesians 1:13, 14. **In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of Promise; which is the Earnest of our Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchased Possession, unto the Praise of his Glory.** Now the earnest is part of the money agreed for, given in hand, as a token of the whole, to be paid in due time; a part of the promised inheritance, granted now, in token of full possession of the whole hereafter. But surely that kind of communication of the Spirit of God, which is of the nature of eternal glory, is the highest and most excellent kind of communication, something that is in its own nature spiritual, holy and divine, and far from anything that is common; and therefore high above anything of the nature of inspiration, or revelation of hidden facts by suggestion of the Spirit of God, which many natural men have had. What is the earnest and beginning of glory, but grace itself, especially in the more lively and clear exercises of it? It is not prophecy, nor tongues, nor knowledge, but that more excel-

lent divine thing, **Charity that never faileth**, which is a prelibation and beginning of the light, sweetness, and blessedness of heaven, that world of love or charity. It is grace that is the seed of glory, and dawning of glory in the heart, and therefore it is grace that is the earnest of the future inheritance. What is it that is the beginning or earnest of eternal life in the soul, but spiritual life? And what is that but grace? The inheritance that Christ has purchased for the elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary gifts, but in his vital indwelling in the heart, exerting and communicating himself there, in his own proper, holy or divine nature: And this is the sum total of the inheritance that Christ purchased for the elect. For so are things constituted in the affair of our redemption, that the Father provides the Saviour, or Purchaser, and the purchase is made of Him; and the Son is the Purchaser and the Price; and the Holy Spirit is the great blessing or inheritance purchased, as is intimated **Galatians** 3:13, 14; and hence the Spirit is often spoken of as the sum of the blessings promised in the Gospel, **Luke** 24:49, **Acts** 1:4, and **Chapter** 2:38, 39, **Galatians** 3:14, **Ephesians** 1:13. This inheritance was the grand legacy which Christ left his disciples and church, in his last will and testament; **John** Chapter 14, and 15, and 16. This is the sum of the blessings of eternal life, which shall be given in heaven. (Compare **John** 7:37, 38, 39 and **John** 4:14 with **Revelation** 21:6 and 22:1, 17.) It is through the vital communications and indwelling of the Spirit, that the saints have all their light, life, holiness, beauty and joy in heaven: And it is through the vital communications and indwelling of the same Spirit, that the saints have all light, life, holiness, beauty and comfort on earth; but only communicated in less measure. And this vital indwelling of the Spirit in the saints, in this less

measure and small beginning, is **the Earnest of the Spirit, the Earnest of the future Inheritance, and the first Fruits of the Spirit**, as the Apostle calls it, **Romans 8:22**, where, by **the first Fruits of the Spirit**, the Apostle undoubtedly means the same vital gracious principle, that he speaks of in all the preceding part of the chapter, which he calls Spirit, and sets in opposition to flesh or corruption. Therefore this earnest of the Spirit, and first fruits of the Spirit, which has been shown to be the same with the seal of the Spirit, is the vital, gracious, sanctifying communication and influence of the Spirit, and not any immediate suggestion or revelation of facts by the Spirit.

And indeed the Apostle, when in that **Romans 8:16** he speaks of the Spirit's bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God, does sufficiently explain himself, if his words were but attended to. What is here expressed, is connected with the two preceding verses, as resulting from what the Apostle had said there, as every reader may see. The three verses together are thus, **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God: For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: The Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.** Here, what the Apostle says, if we take it together, plainly shows, that what he has respect to, when he speaks of the Spirit's giving us witness or evidence that we are God's children; is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a Spirit of Adoption, or spirit of a child, disposing us to behave towards God as to a Father. This is the witness or evidence the Apostle speaks of, that we **are Children**, that we **have the Spirit of Children**, or

Spirit of Adoption. And what is that, but the spirit of love? There are two kinds of spirits the Apostle speaks of, the spirit of a slave, or **the Spirit of Bondage**, that is **Fear**; and the spirit of a child, or **Spirit of Adoption**, and that is **Love**. The Apostle says, we have not received the Spirit of Bondage, or of slaves, which is a spirit of fear; but we have received the more ingenuous noble spirit of children, a spirit of love, which naturally disposes us to go to God, as children to a Father, and behave towards God as children. And this is the evidence or witness which the Spirit of God gives us that we are children. This is the plain sense of the Apostle: And so undoubtedly the Apostle here is speaking of the very same way of casting out doubting, and **Fear**, and the Spirit of Bondage, which the Apostle **John** speaks of, 1 **John** 4:18, **namely** By the prevailing of **Love**, that is the spirit of a child. The Spirit of Bondage works by fear, the slave fears the rod; but love cries **Abba Father**; it disposes us to go to God, and behave ourselves towards God as children; and it gives us clear evidence of our union to God as his children, and so casts out fear. So that it appears that the witness of the Spirit the Apostle speaks of, is far from being any whisper, or immediate suggestion or revelation; but that gracious holy effect of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the saints, the disposition and temper of children, appearing in sweet child-like love to God, which casts out fear, or a spirit of a slave.

And the same Thing is evident from all the Context: It is plain the Apostle speaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the Hearts of the Saints, as a gracious Principle, set in Opposition to the Flesh or Corruption: And so he does in the Words that immediately introduce this Passage we are upon, Verse thirteen. **For**

if you live after the Flesh, you shall die; but if you, through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, you shall live.

Indeed it is past Doubt with me, that the Apostle has a more special Respect to the Spirit of Grace, or the Spirit of Love, or Spirit of a Child, in its more lively Actings: For it is **perfect Love**, or **strong Love** only, which so witnesses or evidences that we are Children, as to cast out Fear, and wholly deliver from the Spirit of Bondage. The strong and lively Exercises of a Spirit of child-like, evangelical, humble Love to God, give clear Evidence of the Soul's Relation to God, as his Child; which does very greatly and directly satisfy the Soul. And though it be far from being true, that the Soul in this Case, judges only by an immediate Witness, without any Sign or Evidence; for it judges and is assured by the greatest Sign and clearest Evidence; yet in this Case, the Saint stands in no need of multiplied Signs, or any long Reasoning upon them. And though the Sight of his **relative Union** with God, and his being in his Favour, is not without a Medium, because he sees it by that Medium, **namely** his Love; yet his Sight of the **Union of his Heart** to God is immediate: Love, the Bond of Union, is seen intuitively: The Saint sees and feels plainly the Union between his Soul and God; it is so strong and lively, that he cannot doubt of it. And hence he is assured that he is a Child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a child-like Relation to God, when he plainly sees a child-like Union between God and his Soul, and hence does boldly, and as it were, naturally and necessarily cry, **Abba Father?**

And whereas the Apostle says, the Spirit bears Witness **with our Spirits**; by **our Spirit** here, is meant our Conscience, which is called the Spirit of Man; Proverbs twenty verse twenty-seven.

The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward Parts of the Belly. We elsewhere read of the Witness of this Spirit of ours; Second Corinthians one verse twelve. **For our Rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience.** And First John three nineteen, twenty, twenty-one. **And hereby do we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him. For if our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things. Beloved if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.** When the Apostle **Paul** speaks of the Spirit of God bearing Witness with our Spirit, he is not to be understood of two Spirits, that are two separate, collateral, independent Witnesses; but it is by one, that we receive the Witness of the other: The Spirit of God gives the Evidence, by infusing and shedding abroad the Love of God, the Spirit of a Child, in the Heart, and our Spirit, or our Conscience, receives and declares this Evidence for our Rejoicing.

Many have been the Mischiefs that have arisen from that false and delusive Notion of the Witness of the Spirit, that it is a Kind of inward Voice, Suggestion, or Declaration from God to a Man, that he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a Text of Scripture; and many have been the false, and vain, (though very high) Affections that have arisen from hence. And it is to be feared that Multitudes of Souls have been eternally undone by it. I have therefore insisted the longer on this Head.

But I proceed now to a second Characteristic of gracious Affections.

Two. The first objective Ground of gracious Affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable Nature of divine Things, as they are in themselves; and not any conceived Relation they bear to Self, or Self-Interest.

I say that the supremely excellent Nature of divine Things, is the **first**, or **primary and original** objective Foundation of the spiritual Affections of true Saints; for I do not suppose that all Relation which divine Things bear to themselves, and their own particular Interest, are wholly excluded from all Influence in their gracious Affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a secondary and consequential Influence in those Affections that are truly holy and spiritual; as I shall show how by and by.

It was before observed, that the Affection of Love is as it were the Fountain of all Affection; and particularly, that Christian Love is the Fountain of all gracious Affections: Now the divine Excellency and Glory of God, and Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Works of God, and the Ways of God, **etcetera** is the primary Reason, why a true Saint loves these Things; and not any supposed Interest that he has in them, or any conceived Benefit that he has received from them, or shall receive from them, or any such imagined Relation which they bear to his Interest, that Self-Love can properly be said to be the first Foundation of his Love to these Things.

Some say that all Love arises from Self Love; and that it is impossible in the Nature of Things, for any Man to have any Love to God, or any other Being, but that Love to himself must be the Foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for Want of Consideration, that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his Glory, or the Enjoyment of him, he desires

these Things as his own Happiness; the Glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his Perfections, are considered as Things **agreeable to him**, tending to make him happy; he places his Happiness in them, and desires them as Things, which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with Delight and Joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from Self-love, or a Desire of his own Happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious Perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and enquire how the Man came **to place his Happiness** in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's Perfections. There is no Doubt, but that after God's Glory, and the beholding his Perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest Happiness in these Things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own Happiness. But how came these Things to be so agreeable to him, that he esteems it his highest Happiness to glorify God, **etcetera**? Is not this the Fruit of Love? A Man must first love God, or have his Heart united to him, before he will esteem God's Good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God, as his Happiness. 'Tis not strong arguing, that because **after** a Man has his Heart united to God in Love, **as a Fruit of this**, he desires his Glory and Enjoyment as his own Happiness, that therefore a Desire of this Happiness of his own, must needs be the **Cause and Foundation** of his Love: Unless it be strong arguing, that because a Father begat a Son, that therefore his Son certainly begat him. If **after** a Man loves God, and has his Heart so united to him, as to look upon God as his chief Good, and on God's Good as his own, it will be a **Consequence and Fruit of this**, that even Self-love, or love to

his own Happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God; it will not thence follow, that this very Exercise of Self-love, went **before** his Love to God, and that his Love to God was a **Consequence and Fruit of that**. Something else, entirely distinct from Self-love might be the Cause of this, **namely** A Change made in the Views of his Mind, and Relish of his Heart; whereby he apprehends a Beauty, Glory, and supreme Good, in God's Nature, as it is in itself. This may be the Thing that first draws his Heart to him, and causes his Heart to be united to him, prior to all Considerations of his own Interest or Happiness, although after this, and as a Fruit of this, he necessarily seeks his Interest and Happiness in God.

There is such a Thing, as a Kind of Love or Affection, that a Man may have towards Persons or Things, which **does properly arise** from Self-love; a preconceived Relation to himself, or some Respect already manifested by another to him, or some Benefit already received or depended on, **is truly the first Foundation** of his Love, and what his Affection does wholly arise from; and is what precedes any Relish of, or Delight in the Nature and Qualities inherent in the Being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the first Thing that draws a Man's Benevolence to another, is the beholding those Qualifications and Properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves; and the Subject of them, on this Account, worthy of Esteem and Goodwill, Love arises in a very different Manner, than when it first arises from some Gift bestowed by another, or depended on from him, as a Judge loves and favours a Man that has bribed him; or from the Relation he sup-

poses another has to him, as a Man who loves another because he looks upon him as his Child. When Love to another arises thus, it does truly and properly arise from Self-love.

That Kind of Affection to God or Jesus Christ, which does thus properly arise from Self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual Love; as appears from what has been said already: For Self-love is a Principle entirely natural, and as much in the Hearts of Devils as Angels; and therefore surely nothing that is the mere Result of it, can be supernatural and divine, in the Manner before described. Christ plainly speaks of this Kind of Love, as what is nothing beyond the Love of wicked Men, Luke six verse thirty-two. **If you love them that love you, what thank have you? For Sinners also love those that love them.** And the Devil himself knew that that Kind of Respect to God which was so mercenary, as to be only for Benefits received or depended on, (which is all one) is worthless in the Sight of God; otherwise he never would have made use of such a Slander before God, against **Job**, as in Job one verses nine and ten. **Does Job serve God for naught? Hast thou not made an Hedge about him, and about his House,** etcetera? Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the Objection to have been good, in case the Accusation had been true, by allowing that that Matter should be tried, and that **Job** should be so dealt with, that it might appear in the Event, whether **Job's** Respect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the Proof of the Sincerity and Goodness of his Respect, upon that Issue.

It is unreasonable to think otherwise, than that the first Foundation of a true Love to God, is that whereby he is in himself lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the supreme Loveliness of his Nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What

chiefly makes a Man, or any Creature lovely, is his Excellency; and so what chiefly renders God lovely, and must undoubtedly be the chief Ground of true Love, is his Excellency. God's Nature, or the Divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea it is infinite Beauty, Brightness, and Glory itself. But how can that be **true Love** of this excellent and lovely Nature, which is not built on the Foundation of **its true Loveliness**? How can that be true Love of Beauty and Brightness, which is not for Beauty and Brightness sake? How can that be a true Prizing of that which is in itself infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the Sake of its Worthiness and Preciousness? This infinite Excellency of the divine Nature, as it is in itself, is the true Ground of all that is good in God in any Respect; but how can a Man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that Excellency in him, which is the Foundation of all that is in any Manner of Respect good or desirable in him? They whose Affection to God is founded first on his Profitableness to them, their Affection begins at the wrong End; they regard God only for the utmost Limit of the Stream of divine Good, where it touches them, and reaches their Interest; and have no Respect to that infinite Glory of God's Nature, which is the original Good, and the true Fountain of all Good, the first Fountain of all Loveliness of every Kind, and so the first Foundation of all true Love.

A natural principle of self-love may be the foundation of great affections towards God and Christ, without seeing any thing of the beauty and glory of the divine nature. There is a certain gratitude that is a mere natural thing. Gratitude is one of the natural affections of the soul of man, as well as anger; and there is a gratitude that arises from self-love, very much in the same manner that anger does. Anger in men is an affection excited **against** another,

or in opposition to another, for something in him that crosses self-love. Gratitude is an affection one has **towards** another, for loving him, or gratifying him, or for something in him that suits self-love. And there may be a kind of gratitude, without any true or proper love; as there may be anger without any proper hatred, as in parents towards their children, that they may be angry with, and yet at the same time have a strong habitual love to them. This gratitude is the principle which is in exercise in wicked men, in that which Christ declares concerning them, in the sixth of **Luke**, where he says, **Sinners love those that love them**; and which he declares concerning even the **publicans**, who were some of the most carnal and profligate sort of men, Matthew 5:46. This is the very principle that is wrought upon by bribery, in unjust judges; and it is a principle that even the brute beasts do exercise. A dog will love his master that is kind to him. And we see in innumerable instances, that mere nature is sufficient to excite gratitude in men, or to affect their hearts with thankfulness to others for kindnesses received; and sometimes towards them, whom at the same time they have an habitual enmity against. Thus **Saul** was once and again greatly affected, and even dissolved with gratitude towards **David**, for sparing his life; and yet remained an habitual enemy to him. And as men, from mere nature, may be thus affected towards men; so they may towards God. There is nothing hinders, but that the same self-love may work after the same manner towards God, as towards men. And we have manifest instances of it in Scripture; as indeed the children of **Israel, who sang God's praises** at the Red Sea, **but soon forgot God's works**; and in **Naaman the Syrian**, who was greatly affected with the miraculous cure of his leprosy, so as to have his heart engaged thenceforward to worship

the God that had healed him, and him only, excepting when it would expose him to be ruined in his temporal interest. So was **Nebuchadnezzar** greatly affected with God's goodness to him, in restoring him to his reason and kingdom, after his dwelling with the beasts.

Gratitude being thus a natural principle, it renders ingratitude so much the more vile and heinous; because it shows a dreadful prevalence of wickedness when it even overbears, and suppresses the better principles of human nature. As it is mentioned as an evidence of the high degree of the wickedness of many of the heathen, that they were **without natural affection**, Romans 2:31. But that the want of gratitude, or natural affection, are evidences of an high degree of **vice**, is no argument that all gratitude and natural affection, has the nature of **virtue**, or **saving-grace**.

Self-love, through the exercise of a mere natural gratitude, may be the foundation of a sort of love to God many ways. A kind of love may arise from a false notion of God, that men have been educated in, or have some way imbibed; as though he were only goodness and mercy, and no revenging justice; or as though the exercises of his goodness were necessary, and not free and sovereign; or as though his goodness were dependent on what is in them, and as it were constrained by them. Men on such grounds as these, may love a God of their own forming in their imaginations, when they are far from loving such a God as reigns in Heaven.

Again, self-love may be the foundation of an affection in men towards God, through a great insensibility of their state with regard to God, and for want of conviction of conscience to make them sensible how dreadfully they have provoked God to anger. They have no sense of the heinousness of sin, as against God, and

of the infinite and terrible opposition of the holy nature of God against it. And so having formed in their minds such a God as suits them, and thinking God to be such an one as themselves, who favors and agrees with them, they may like him very well, and feel a sort of love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And men's affections may be much moved towards God, from self-love, by some remarkable outward benefits received from God; as it was with **Naaman**, **Nebuchadnezzar**, and the children of **Israel** at the **Red Sea**.

Again, a very high affection towards God, may, and often does arise in men, from an opinion of the favor and love of God to them, as the first foundation of their love to him. After awakenings and distress through fears of Hell, they may suddenly get a notion, through some impression on their imagination, or immediate suggestion, with or without texts of Scripture, or by some other means, that God loves them, and has forgiven their sins, and made them his children; and this is the first thing that causes their affections to flow towards God and Jesus Christ. And then after this, and upon this foundation, many things in God may appear lovely to them, and Christ may seem excellent. And if such persons are asked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself? They would perhaps readily answer, Yes; when indeed, if the matter be strictly examined, this good opinion of God was purchased and paid for before ever they afforded it, in the distinguishing and infinite benefits they imagined they received from God. And they allow God to be lovely in himself, no otherwise, than that he has forgiven them, and accepted them, and loves them above most in the world, and has engaged to improve all his infinite power and wisdom in preferring, dignifying and exalting them, and will do for

them just as they would have him. When once they are firm in this apprehension, it is easy to own God and Christ to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. It is easy for them to own Christ to be a lovely person, and the best in the world, when they are first firm in it, that he, though Lord of the Universe, is captivated with love to them, and has his heart swallowed up in them, and prizes them far beyond most of their neighbors, and loved them from eternity, and died for them, and will make them reign in eternal glory with him in Heaven. When this is the case with carnal men, their very lusts will make him seem lovely: Pride itself will prejudice them in favor of that which they call Christ. Selfish proud man naturally calls that lovely that greatly contributes to his interest, and gratifies his ambition.

And as this sort of persons begin, so they go on. Their affections are raised from time to time, primarily on this foundation of self-love and a conceit of God's love to them. Many have a false notion of communion with God, as though it were carried on by impulses, and whispers, and external representations, immediately made to their imagination. These things they often have; which they take to be manifestations of God's great love to them, and evidences of their high exaltation above others of mankind; and so their affections are often renewedly set a-going.

Whereas the exercises of true and holy love in the saints arise in another way. They do not first see that God loves them, and then see that he is lovely; but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their hearts are first captivated with this view, and the exercises of their love are accustomed from time to time to begin here, and to arise primarily from these views; and then, consequentially, they see God's love; and great fa-

vor to them. The saint's affections begin with God; and self-love has a hand in these affections consequentially, and secondarily only. On the contrary, those false affections begin with self, and an acknowledgement of an excellency in God, and an affectedness with it, is only consequential and dependent. In the true saint God is the lowest foundation; the love of the excellency of his nature is the foundation of all the affections which come afterwards, wherein self-love is concerned as an handmaid. On the contrary, the hypocrite lays himself at the bottom of all, as the first foundation, and lays on God as the superstructure; and even his acknowledgement of God's glory itself, depends on his regard to his private interest.

Self-love may not only influence men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's kindness to them separately; but also with God's kindness to them, as parts of a community. As a natural principle of self-love, without any other principle, may be sufficient to make a man concerned for the interest of the nation to which he belongs. As for instance, in the present war, self-love may make natural men rejoice at the successes of our nation, and sorry for their disadvantages, they being concerned as members of the body. So the same natural principles may extend further, and even to the world of mankind, and might be affected with the benefits the inhabitants of the earth have, beyond those of the inhabitants of other planets; if we knew that such there were, and knew how it was with them. So this principle may cause men to be affected with the benefits that mankind have received beyond the fallen angels. And hence men, from this principle, may be much affected with the wonderful goodness of God to mankind, his great goodness in giving his Son to die for fallen man, and the marvelous love of

Christ in suffering such great things for us, and with the great glory they hear God has provided in Heaven for us; looking on themselves as persons concerned and interested, as being some of this species of creatures, so highly favored. The same principle of natural gratitude may influence men here, as in the case of personal benefits.

But these things that I have said do by no means imply that all gratitude to God is a mere natural thing, and that there is no such thing as a spiritual gratitude, which is a holy and divine affection. They imply no more, than that there is a gratitude which is merely natural, and that when persons have affections towards God only or primarily for benefits received, their affection is only the exercise of a natural gratitude. There is doubtless such a thing as a gracious gratitude, which does greatly differ from all that gratitude which natural men experience. It differs in the following respects:

1. True gratitude or thankfulness to God for his kindness to us, arises from a foundation laid before, of love to God for what he is in himself; whereas a natural gratitude has no such antecedent foundation. The gracious stirrings of grateful affection to God, for kindness received, always are from a stock of love already in the heart, established in the first place on other grounds, **namely**, God's own excellency; and hence the affections are disposed to flow out, on occasions of God's kindness. The saint having seen the glory of God, and his heart overcome by it, and captivated into a supreme love to him on that account, his heart hereby becomes tender, and easily affected with kindnesses received. If a man has no love to another, yet gratitude may be moved by some extraordinary kindness; as in **Saul** towards **David**. But this is not the same kind of thing, as a man's gratitude to a dear friend, that his heart

was before possessed with a high esteem of, and love to; whose heart by this means became tender towards him, and more easily affected with gratitude, and affected in another manner. Self-love is not excluded from a gracious gratitude; the saints love God for his kindness to them, Psalm 116:1. **I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication.** But something else is included; and another love prepares the way, and lays the foundation, for these grateful affections.

2. In a gracious Gratitude, Men are affected with the Attribute of God's Goodness and free Grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their Interest, but as a Part of the Glory and Beauty of God's Nature. That wonderful and unparalleled Grace of God, which is manifested in the Work of Redemption, and shines forth in the Face of Jesus Christ, is infinitely glorious in itself, and appears so to the Angels; it is a great Part of the moral Perfection and Beauty of God's Nature: This would be glorious, whether it were exercised towards us or no; and the Saint who exercises a gracious Thankfulness for it, sees it to be so, and delights in it as such; though his Concern in it serves the more to engage his Mind, and raise the Attention and Affection; and Self-Love here assists as an Handmaid, being subservient to higher Principles, to lead forth the Mind to the View and Contemplation, and engage and fix the Attention, and heighten the Joy and Love: God's Kindness to them is a Glass that God sets before them, wherein to behold the Beauty of the Attribute of God's Goodness: The Exercises and Displays of this Attribute, by this Means, are brought near to them, and set right before them. So that in a holy Thankfulness to God, the Concern our Interest has in God's Goodness, is not the first Foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the Heart

before, in that Stock of Love which was to God, for his Excellency in himself, that makes the Heart tender, and susceptible of such Impressions from his Goodness to us: Nor is our own Interest, of the Benefits we have received, the only, or the chief objective Ground of the present Exercises of the Affection; but God's Goodness, as Part of the Beauty of his Nature; although the Manifestations of that lovely Attribute, set immediately before our Eyes, in the Exercises of it for us, be the special Occasion of the Mind's Attention to that Beauty, at that Time, and serves to fix the Attention, and heighten the Affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object against the whole that has been said, that Text, 1 John 4:19. **We love him, because he first loved us**, as though this implied that God's Love to the true Saints were the **first Foundation** of their Love to him.

In answer to this I would observe, that the Apostle's Drift in these Words, is to magnify the Love of God to us from hence, that he loved us, while we had no Love to him; as will be manifest to any one who compares this Verse, and the two following, with the ninth, tenth and eleventh Verses. And that God loved us, when we had no Love to him, the Apostle proves by this Argument, that God's Love to the Elect, is the Ground of their Love to him. And that it is three Ways. 1. The Saints Love to God, is the Fruit of God's Love to them; as it is the Gift of that Love. God gave them a Spirit of Love to him, because he loved them from Eternity. And in this Respect God's Love to his Elect is the first Foundation of their Love to him, as it is the Foundation of their Regeneration, and the Whole of their Redemption. 2. The Exercises and Discoveries that God has made of his wonderful Love to sinful Men, by Jesus Christ, in the Work of Redemption, is one of the chief

Manifestations, which God has made of the Glory of his moral Perfection, to both Angels and Men; and so is one main objective Ground of the Love of Both to God; in a good Consistence with what was said before. 3. God's Love to a particular elect Person, discovered by his Conversion, is a great Manifestation of God's moral Perfection and Glory to him, and a proper Occasion of the Excitation of the Love of holy Gratitude, agreeable to what was before said. And that the Saints do in these Respects love God, because he first loved them, fully answers the Design of the Apostle's Argument in that Place. So that no good Argument can be drawn from hence, against a spiritual and gracious Love in the Saints, arising primarily from the Excellency of divine Things, as they are in themselves, and not from any conceived Relation they bear to their Interest.

And as it is with the Love of the Saints, so it is with their Joy, and spiritual Delight and Pleasure: the first Foundation of it, is not any Consideration or Conception of their Interest in divine Things; but it primarily consists in the sweet Entertainment their Minds have in the View or Contemplation of the divine and holy Beauty of these Things, as they are in themselves. And this is indeed the very main Difference between the Joy of the Hypocrite, and the Joy of the true Saint. The former rejoices in himself; Self is the first Foundation of his Joy: The latter rejoices in God. The Hypocrite has his Mind pleased and delighted, in the first Place, with his own Privilege, and the Happiness which he supposes he has attained, or shall attain. True Saints have their Minds, in the first Place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet Ideas of the glorious and amiable Nature of the Things of God. And this is the Spring of all their Delights, and the Cream of all their Pleasures; it

is the Joy of their Joy. This sweet and ravishing Entertainment, they have in the View of the beautiful and delightful Nature of divine Things, is the Foundation of the Joy that they have afterwards, in the Consideration of their being theirs. But the Dependance of the Affections of Hypocrites is in a contrary Order: They first rejoice, and are elevated with it, that they are made so much of by God; and then on that Ground, he seems in a Sort, lovely to them.

The first Foundation of the Delight a true Saint has in God, is his own Perfection; and the first Foundation of the Delight he has in Christ, is his own Beauty; he appears in himself the Chief among Ten Thousand, and altogether lovely: the Way of Salvation by Christ, is a delightful Way to him, for the sweet and admirable Manifestations of the divine Perfections in it; the holy Doctrines of the Gospel, by which God is exalted and Man abased, Holiness honoured and promoted, and Sin greatly disgraced and discouraged, and free and sovereign Love manifested; are glorious Doctrines in his Eyes, and sweet to his Taste, prior to any Conception of his Interest in these Things. Indeed the Saints rejoice in their Interest in God, and that Christ is theirs; and so they have great Reason; But this is not the first Spring of their Joy: They first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs: They first have their Hearts filled with Sweetness, from the View of Christ's Excellency, and the Excellency of his Grace, and the Beauty of the Way of Salvation by him; and then they have a secondary Joy, in that so excellent a Saviour, and such excellent Grace is theirs. But that which is the true Saint's Superstructure, is the Hypocrite's Foundation. When they hear of the wonderful Things

of the Gospel, of God's great Love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying Love to Sinners, and the great Things Christ has purchased, and promised to the Saints, and hear these Things livelily and eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of Pleasure, and be lifted up with what they hear: but if their Joy be examined, it will be found to have no other Foundation than this, that they look upon these Things as theirs, all this exalts them, they love to hear of the great Love of Christ so vastly distinguishing some from others; for Self-love, and even Pride itself, makes them affect great Distinction from others: No Wonder, in this confident Opinion of their own good Estate, that they feel well under such Doctrine, and are pleased in the highest Degree, in hearing how much God and Christ makes of them. So that their Joy is really a Joy in themselves, and not in God.

And because the Joy of Hypocrites is in themselves, hence it comes to pass, that in their Rejoicings and Elevations, they are wont to keep their Eye upon themselves; having received what they call spiritual Discoveries or Experiences, their Minds are taken up about them, admiring their own Experiences: And what they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the Glory of God, or Beauty of Christ, but the Beauty of their Experiences. They keep thinking with themselves, What a good Experience is this! What a great Discovery is this! What wonderful Things have I met with! And so they put their Experiences in the Place of Christ, and his Beauty and Fullness; and instead of rejoicing in Christ Jesus, they rejoice in their admirable Experiences: instead of feeding and feasting their Souls in the View of what is without them, **namely** the innate, sweet, refreshing Amiableness of the Things exhibited in the Gospel, their Eyes are off from these Things, or at least they

view them as it were sideways; but the Object that fixes their Contemplation, is their Experience; and they are feeding their Souls, and feasting a selfish Principle with a View of their Discoveries: They take more Comfort in their Discoveries than in Christ discovered, which is the true Notion of living upon Experiences and Frames; and not a using Experiences as the Signs, on which they rely for Evidence of their good Estate, which some call living on Experiences: Though it be very observable, that some of them who do so, are most notorious for living upon Experiences, according to the true Notion of it.

The Affections of Hypocrites are very often after this Manner, they are first, much affected with some Impression on their Imagination, or some Impulse, which they take to be an immediate Suggestion, or Testimony from God, of his Love and their Happiness, and high Privilege in some Respect, either with or without a Text of Scripture; they are mightily taken with this, as a great Discovery; and hence arise high Affections. And when their Affections are raised, then they view those high Affections, and call them great and wonderful Experiences; and they have a Notion that God is greatly pleased with those Affections; and this affects them more; and so they are affected with their Affections. And thus their Affections rise higher and higher, until they sometimes are perfectly swallowed up: And Self conceit, and a fierce Zeal rises withal; and all is built like a Castle in the Air, on no other Foundation but Imagination, Self-love and Pride.

And as the Thoughts of this Sort of Persons are, so is their Talk; for out of the Abundance of their Heart, their Mouth speaketh. As in their high Affections, they keep their Eye upon the Beauty of their Experiences, and Greatness of their Attainments;

so they are great Talkers about themselves. The true Saint, when under great spiritual Affections, from the Fullness of his Heart, is ready to be speaking much of God, and his glorious Perfections and Works, and of the Beauty and Amiableness of Christ, and the glorious Things of the Gospel; but Hypocrites, in their high Affections, talk more of the Discovery, than they do of the Thing discovered; they are full of Talk about the great Things they have met with, the wonderful Discoveries they have had, how sure they are of the Love of God to them, how safe their Condition is, and how they know they shall go to Heaven, **et cetera**.

A true Saint, when in the Enjoyment of true Discoveries of the sweet Glory of God and Christ, has his Mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himself, to stand at that Time to view himself, and his own Attainments: it would be a Diversion and Loss which he could not bear, to take his Eye off from the ravishing Object of his Contemplation, to survey his own Experience, and to spend Time in thinking with himself, what an high Attainment this is, and what a good Story they now have to tell others. Nor does the Pleasure and Sweetness of his Mind at that Time, chiefly arise from the Consideration of the Safety of his State, or any Thing he has in View of his own Qualifications, Experiences, or Circumstances; but from the divine and supreme Beauty of what is the Object of his direct View, without himself; which sweetly entertains, and strongly holds his Mind.

As the Love and Joy of Hypocrites, are all from the Source of Self-Love; so it is with their other Affections, their Sorrow for Sin, their Humiliation and Submission, their religious Desires and Zeal: Every Thing is as it were paid for beforehand, in God's highly gratifying their Self-love, and their Lusts, by making so much of

them, and exalting them so highly, as Things are in their Imagination. It is easy for Nature, as corrupt as it is, under a Notion of being already some of the highest Favorites of Heaven, and having a God who does so protect them and favor them in their Sins, to love this imaginary God that suits them so well, and to extol him, and submit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high Affections of many are all built on the Supposition of their being eminent Saints. If that Opinion which they have of themselves were taken away, if they thought they were some of the lower Form of Saints, (though they should yet suppose themselves to be real Saints) their high Affections would fall to the Ground. If they only saw a little of the Sinfulness and Vileness of their own Hearts, and their Deformity, in the midst of their best Duties and their best Affections, it would knock their Affections on the Head; because their Affections are built upon Self, therefore Self-knowledge would destroy them. But as to truly gracious Affections, they are built elsewhere: they have their Foundation out of Self, in God and Jesus Christ; and therefore a Discovery of themselves, of their own Deformity, and the Meanness of their Experiences, though it will purify their Affections, yet it will not destroy them, but in some Respects sweeten and heighten them.

3. Those Affections that are truly Holy, are primarily founded on the Loveliness of the moral Excellency of divine Things. Or, (to express it otherwise) a Love to divine Things for the Beauty and Sweetness of their moral Excellency, is the first Beginning and Spring of all holy Affections.

Here, for the sake of the more illiterate Reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral Excellency of divine Things.

And it may be observed that the Word Moral is not to be understood here, according to the common and vulgar Acceptation of the Word, when Men speak of **Morality**, and a **moral** Behavior meaning an outward Conformity to the Duties of the moral Law, and especially the Duties of the second Table; or intending no more at farthest, than such seeming Virtues, as proceed from natural Principles, in Opposition to those Virtues that are more inward, spiritual, and divine; as the Honesty, Justice, Generosity, Good Nature, and public Spirit of many of the Heathen, are called **moral** Virtues, in Distinction from the holy Faith, Love, Humility, and Heavenly-mindedness of true Christians: I say the Word Moral is not to be understood thus in this Place.

But in order to a right understanding what is meant, it must be observed, that Divines commonly make a Distinction between **moral** Good and Evil, and **natural** Good and Evil. By **moral** Evil, they mean the Evil of Sin, or that Evil which is against Duty, and contrary to what is right and ought to be. By **natural** Evil, they do not mean that Evil which is properly opposed to Duty; but that which is contrary to mere Nature, without any Respect to a Rule of Duty. So the Evil of suffering is called natural Evil, such as Pain, and Torment, Disgrace, and the like: These Things are contrary to mere Nature, contrary to the Nature of both Bad and Good, hateful to wicked Men and Devils, as well as good Men and Angels. So likewise natural Defects are called natural Evils, as if a Child be monstrous, or a natural Fool; these are natural Evils, but are not moral Evils, because they have not properly the Nature of the Evil of Sin. On the other Hand, as by moral Evil, Divines mean the Evil of Sin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by **moral** Good, they mean that which is contrary to Sin, or that

Good in Beings who have Will and Choice, whereby, as voluntary Agents, they are, and act, as it becomes them to be and to act, or so as is most fit, and suitable, and lovely. By **natural** Good they mean that Good that is entirely of a different Kind from Holiness or Virtue, **namely** That which perfects or suits Nature, considering Nature abstractly from any holy or unholy Qualifications, and without any Relation to any Rule or Measure of Right and Wrong.

Thus Pleasure is a natural Good; so is Honor; so is Strength; so is speculative Knowledge, human Learning, and Policy. Thus there is a Distinction to be made between the natural Good that Men are possessed of, and their moral Good; and also between the natural and moral Good of the Angels in Heaven: the great Capacity of their Understandings, and their great Strength, and the honorable Circumstances they are in as the great Ministers of God's Kingdom, whence they are called Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, is the natural Good which they are possessed of; but their perfect and glorious Holiness and Goodness, their pure and flaming Love to God, and to the Saints, and one another, is their moral Good. So Divines make a Distinction between the natural and moral Perfections of God: **By** the **moral** Perfections of God, they mean those Attributes which God exercises as a moral Agent, or whereby the Heart and Will of God are good, right, and infinitely becoming, and lovely; such as his Righteousness, Truth, Faithfulness, and Goodness; or, in one Word, his Holiness. By God's **natural** Attributes or Perfections, they mean those Attributes, wherein, according to our Way of conceiving of God, consists, not the Holiness or moral Goodness of

God, but his Greatness; such as his Power, his Knowledge whereby he knows all Things, and his being eternal, from everlasting to everlasting, his Omnipresence, and his awful and terrible Majesty.

The moral Excellency of an intelligent voluntary Being, is more immediately seated in the Heart or Will of moral Agents. That intelligent Being whose Will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent.

This moral Excellency of an intelligent Being, when it is true and real, and not only external, or merely Seeming and Counterfeit, is **Holiness**. Therefore **Holiness** comprehends all the true moral Excellency of intelligent Beings: There is no other **true Virtue**, but **real Holiness**. Holiness comprehends all the true Virtue of a good Man, his Love to God, his gracious Love to Men, his Justice, his Charity, and Bowels of Mercies, his gracious Meekness and Gentleness, and all other true Christian Virtues that he has, belong to his Holiness. So the Holiness of God in the more extensive Sense of the Word, and the Sense in which the Word is commonly, if not universally used in Scripture, is the same with the moral Excellency of the divine Nature, or his Purity and Beauty as a moral Agent, comprehending all his moral Perfections, his Righteousness, Faithfulness and Goodness. As in holy Men their Charity, Christian Kindness and Mercy, belongs to their Holiness; so the Kindness and Mercy of God, belongs to his Holiness. Holiness in Man, is but the image of God's Holiness: There are not more Virtues belonging to the Image, than are in the Original: Derived Holiness has not more in it, than is in that underived Holiness, which is its Fountain: There is no more than Grace for Grace, or Grace in the Image, answerable to Grace in the Original.

As there are two Kinds of Attributes in God, according to our Way of conceiving of him, his moral Attributes, which are summed up in his **Holiness**, and his natural Attributes, of Strength, Knowledge, **etcetera** that constitute the **Greatness** of God; so there is a twofold Image of God in Man, his **moral** or **spiritual** Image, which is his Holiness, that is the Image of God's moral Excellency; (which Image was lost by the Fall) and God's **natural** Image, consisting in Men's Reason and Understanding, his natural Ability, and Dominion over the Creatures, which is the Image of God's natural Attributes.

From what has been said, it may easily be understood what I intend, when I say that a Love to divine Things for the Beauty of their **moral Excellency**, is the Beginning and Spring of all holy Affections. It has been already shown, under the former Head, that the first objective Ground of all holy Affections is the supreme Excellency of divine Things as they are in themselves, or in their own Nature; I now proceed further, and say more particularly, that that Kind of Excellency of the Nature of divine Things, which is the first objective Ground of all holy Affections, is their moral Excellency, or their Holiness. **Holy Persons**, in the Exercise of **holy Affections**, do love divine Things primarily for their **Holiness**: They love God, in the first Place, for the Beauty of his Holiness or moral Perfection, as being supremely amiable in itself. Not that the Saints, in the Exercise of gracious Affections, do love God only for his Holiness; all his Attributes are amiable and glorious in their Eyes, they delight in every divine Perfection; the Contemplation of the infinite Greatness, Power, and Knowledge, and terrible Majesty of God, is pleasant to them. But their Love to God for his Holiness is what is most fundamental and essential in

their Love. Here it is that true Love to God begins: All other holy Love to divine Things flows from hence: This is the most essential and distinguishing Thing that belongs to a holy Love to God, with Regard to the Foundation of it. A Love to God for the Beauty of his moral Attributes, leads to, and necessarily causes a Delight in God for all his Attributes; for his moral Attributes cannot be without his natural Attributes: For infinite Holiness supposes infinite Wisdom, and an infinite Capacity and Greatness; and all the Attributes of God do as it were imply one another.

The true Beauty and Loveliness of all intelligent Beings does primarily and most essentially consist in their moral Excellency or Holiness. Herein consists the Loveliness of the Angels, without which, with all their natural Perfections, their Strength, and their Knowledge, they would have no more Loveliness than Devils. It is moral Excellency alone, that is in itself, and on its own Account, the Excellency of intelligent Beings: It is this that gives Beauty to, or rather is the Beauty of their natural Perfections and Qualifications. Moral Excellency is the Excellency of natural Excellencies. Natural Qualifications are either excellent or otherwise, according as they are joined with moral Excellency or not. Strength and Knowledge do not render any Being lovely, without Holiness; but more hateful: Though they render them more lovely, when joined with Holiness. Thus the elect Angels are the more glorious for their Strength and Knowledge, because these natural Perfections of theirs, are sanctified by their moral Perfection. But though the Devils are very strong, and of great natural Understanding, they are not the more lovely: They are more terrible indeed, but not the more amiable; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The Holiness of an intelligent Creature, is the Beauty

of all his natural Perfections. And so it is in God, according to our Way of conceiving of the divine Being: Holiness is in a peculiar Manner the Beauty of the divine Nature. Hence we often read of the Beauty of Holiness; **Psalms** 29:2, **Psalms** 96:9, and 110:3. This renders all his other Attributes glorious and lovely. It is the Glory of God's Wisdom, that it is a holy Wisdom, and not a wicked Subtlety and Craftiness. This makes his Majesty lovely, and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a holy Majesty. It is the Glory of God's Immutability, that it is a holy Immutability, and not an inflexible Obstinacy in Wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a Sight of God's Loveliness must begin here. A true Love to God must begin with a Delight in his Holiness, and not with a Delight in any other Attribute; for no other Attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our Way of conceiving of God) it derives its Loveliness from this; and therefore it is impossible that other Attributes should appear lovely, in their true Loveliness, until this is seen; and it is impossible that any Perfection of the divine Nature should be loved with true Love, until this is loved. If the true Loveliness of all God's Perfections, arises from the Loveliness of his Holiness; then the true Love of all his Perfections, arises from the Love of his Holiness. They that do not see the Glory of God's Holiness, cannot see any Thing of the true Glory of his Mercy and Grace: They see nothing of the Glory of those Attributes, as any Excellency of God's Nature, as it is in itself; though they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their Interest: For these Attributes are no Part of the

Excellency of God's Nature, as that is excellent in itself, any other-wise than as they are included in his Holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a Part of his moral Perfection.

As the Beauty of the divine Nature does primarily consist in God's Holiness, so does the Beauty of all divine Things. Herein consists the Beauty of the Saints, that they are Saints, or holy Ones: It is the moral Image of God in them, which is their Beauty; and which is their Holiness. Herein consists the Beauty and Brightness of the Angels of Heaven, that they are holy Angels, and so not Devils; **Daniel** 4:13, 17, 23; **Matthew** 25:31; **Mark** 8:38; **Acts** 10:22; **Revelation** 14:10. Herein consists the Beauty of the Christian Religion, above all other Religions, that it is so holy a Religion. Herein consists the Excellency of the Word of God, that it is so holy; Psalm 119:140. **Thy Word is very pure, therefore thy Servant loveth it.** Verse 128. **I esteem all thy Precepts, concerning all Things, to be right; and I hate every false Way.** Verse 138. **Thy Testimonies, that thou hast commanded, are righteous, and very faithful.** And 172. **My Tongue shall speak of thy Word; for all thy Commandments are Righteousness.** And Psalm 19:7, 8, 9, 10. **The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul: The Testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the Simple: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart: The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the Eyes: The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: More to be desired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; sweeter also than Honey, and the Honeycomb.** Herein does primarily consist the Amiability and

Beauty of the Lord Jesus, whereby he is the chief among ten Thousands and altogether lovely; even in that he is **the holy One of God**, Acts 3:14 and **God's holy Child**, Acts 4:27 and **he that is Holy, and he that is True**, Revelation 3:7. All the spiritual Beauty of his human Nature, consisting in his Meekness, Lowliness, Patience, Heavenliness, Love to God, Love to Men, Condescension to the Mean and Vile, and Compassion to the Miserable, et cetera, all is summed up in his Holiness. And the Beauty of his divine Nature, of which the Beauty of his human Nature is the Image and Reflection, does also primarily consist in his Holiness. Herein primarily consists the Glory of the Gospel, that it is a holy Gospel, and so bright an Emanation of the holy Beauty of God and Jesus Christ: Herein consists the spiritual Beauty of its Doctrines, that they are holy Doctrines, or Doctrines according to Godliness. And herein does consist the spiritual Beauty of the Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ, that it is so holy a Way. And herein chiefly consists the Glory of Heaven, that it is the **holy City, the holy Jerusalem, the Habitation of God's Holiness**, and so **of his Glory**; Isaiah 63:15. All the Beauties of the new **Jerusalem**, as it is described in the two last Chapters of Revelation, are but various Representations of this: See Chapter 21:2, 10, 11, 18, 21, 27; Chapter 22:1, 3.

And therefore it is primarily on Account of this Kind of Excellency, that the Saints do love all these Things. Thus they love the Word of God, **because it is very pure**. It is on this Account they love the Saints; and on this Account chiefly it is, that Heaven is lovely to them, and those holy Tabernacles of God amiable in their Eyes: It is on this Account that they love God; and on this

Account primarily it is, that they love Christ, and that their Hearts delight in the Doctrines of the Gospel, and sweetly acquiesce in the Way of Salvation therein revealed.

Under the Head of the first distinguishing Characteristic of gracious Affection, I observed that there is given to those that are regenerated, a new supernatural Sense, that is as it were a certain divine spiritual Taste, which is in its whole Nature diverse from any former Kinds of Sensation of the Mind, as Tasting is diverse from any of the other five Senses, and that something is perceived by a true Saint in the Exercise of this new Sense of Mind, in spiritual and divine Things, as entirely different from any Thing that is perceived in them by natural Men, as the sweet Taste or Honey is diverse from the Ideas Men get of Honey by looking on it or feeling of it; now this that I have been speaking, **namely** The Beauty of Holiness is that Thing in spiritual and divine Things, which is perceived by this spiritual Sense, that is so diverse from all that natural Men perceive in them: This Kind of Beauty is the Quality that is the immediate Object of this spiritual Sense: This is the Sweetness that is the proper Object of this spiritual Taste. The Scripture often represents the Beauty and Sweetness of Holiness as the grand Object of a spiritual Taste, and spiritual Appetite. This was the sweet Food of the holy Soul of Jesus Christ, John 4:32, 34. **I have Meat to eat, that ye know not of;—My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work.** I know of no Part of the holy Scriptures, where the Nature and Evidences of true and sincere Godliness, are so much of set Purpose, and so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm; the Psalmist declares his Design in the first Verses of the Psalm, and he keeps his Eye on this Design all along,

and pursues it to the End: But in this Psalm the Excellency of Holiness is represented as the immediate Object of a spiritual Taste, Relish, Appetite and Delight, **God's Law**, that grand Expression and Emanation of the Holiness of God's Nature, and Prescription of Holiness to the Creature, is all along represented as the Food and Entertainment, and as the great Object of the Love, the Appetite, the Compliance and Rejoicing of the gracious Nature, which prizes God's Commandments **above Gold, yea, the finest Gold**, and to which they are **sweeter than the Honey, and Honeycomb**; and that upon Account of their Holiness, as I observed before. The same Psalmist declares, that this is the Sweetness that a spiritual Taste relishes in God's Law, Psalm 19:8, 9, 10. **The Law of the Lord is perfect:—The Commandment of the Lord is pure: The Fear of the Lord is clean: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart:—The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: More to be desired are they than Gold, yea than much fine Gold; sweeter also than Honey and the Honeycomb.**

A holy Love has a holy Object: The Holiness of Love consists especially in this that it is the Love of that which is holy, as holy, or for its Holiness; so that it is the Holiness of the Object, which is the Quality whereon it fixes and terminates. An holy Nature must needs love that in holy Things chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that in divine Things, which above all others is agreeable to holy Nature, is Holiness; because Holiness must be above all other Things agreeable to Holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any Nature than itself; holy Nature must be above all Things agreeable to holy Nature: And so the holy Nature

of God and Christ, and the Word of God, and other divine Things, must be above all other Things, agreeable to the holy Nature that is in the Saints.

And again, an holy Nature doubtless loves holy Things, especially on the Account of that, for which sinful Nature has Enmity against them: But that for which chiefly sinful Nature is at Enmity against holy Things, is their Holiness; it is for this, that the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and against the Law of God, and the People of God. Now it is just arguing from Contraries; from contrary Causes, to contrary Effects; from opposite Natures, to opposite Tendencies. We know that Holiness is of a directly contrary Nature to Wickedness: As therefore it is the Nature of Wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate Holiness; so it must be the Nature of Holiness chiefly to tend to, and delight in Holiness.

The holy Nature in the Saints and Angels in Heaven (where the true Tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the Holiness of divine Things. This is the divine Beauty which chiefly engages the Attention, Admiration and Praise of the bright and burning **Seraphim**; Isaiah 6:3. **One cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole Earth is full of his Glory.** And Revelation 4:8. **They rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.** So the glorified Saints, Chapter 15:4. **Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name, for thou only art Holy?**

And the Scriptures represent the Saints on Earth as adoring God primarily on this Account, and admiring and extolling all God's Attributes, either as deriving Loveliness from his Holiness, or as being a Part of it. Thus when they praise God for his Power,

his Holiness is the Beauty that engages them; Psalm 98:1. **O sing unto the Lord a new Song, for he hath done marvellous Things; his right Hand and his HOLY Arm hath gotten him the Victory.** So when they praise him for his Justice and terrible Majesty; Psalm 99:2, 3. **The Lord is great in Zion, and he is high above all People: Let them praise thy great and terrible Name, for it is HOLY.** Verse 5. **Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his Footstool, for he is HOLY.** Verse 8, 9. **Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest Vengeance of their Inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy Hill; for the Lord our God is HOLY.** So when they praise God for his Mercy and Faithfulness; Psalm 97:11, 12. **Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart. Rejoice in the Lord ye Righteous, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his HOLINESS.** 1 Samuel 2:2. **There is none HOLY as the Lord; for there is none beside thee; neither is there any Rock like our God.**

By this therefore all may try their Affections, and particularly their Love and Joy. Various Kinds of Creatures show the Difference of their Natures, very much, in the different Things they relish as their proper Good, one delighting in that which another abhors. Such a Difference is there between true Saints, and natural Men: Natural Men have no Sense of the Goodness and Excellency of holy Things; at least for their Holiness; they have no Taste of that Kind of Good; and so may be said not to know that divine Good, or not to see it; it is wholly hid from them: But the Saints, by the mighty Power of God, have it discovered to them: They have that supernatural, most noble and divine Sense given them, by

which they perceive it: And it is this that captivates their Hearts, and delights them above all Things; it is the most amiable and sweet Thing to the Heart of a true Saint, that is to be found in Heaven or Earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his Soul; and that wherein, above all Things, he places his Happiness, and which he lobs upon for Solace and Entertainment to his Mind, in this World, and full Satisfaction and Blessedness in another. By this you may examine your Love to God, and to Jesus Christ, and to the Word of God, and your Joy in them, and also your Love to the People of God, and your Desires after Heaven; whether they be from a supreme Delight in this Sort of Beauty, without being primarily moved from your imagined Interest in them, or Expectations from them. There are many high Affections, great seeming Love and rapturous Joys, which have nothing of this holy Relish belonging to them.

Particularly, By what has been said you may try your Discoveries of the Glory of God's Grace and Love, and your Affections arising from them. The Grace of God may appear lovely two Ways; either as **Bonum Utile**, a profitable Good to me, that which greatly serves my Interest, and so suits my Self-Love; or as **Bonum formosum**, a Beautiful Good in itself, and Part of the moral and spiritual Excellency of the divine Nature. In this latter Respect it is that the true Saints have their Hearts affected, and Love captivated by the free Grace of God in the first Place.

From the Things that have been said, it appears, that if Persons have a great Sense of the **natural** Perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other Sight or Sense of God, than that which consists in, or implies a Sense of the Beauty of his **moral** Perfections, it is no certain Sign of Grace: As particu-

larly, Men's having a great Sense of the **awful Greatness, and terrible Majesty of God**; for this is only God's natural Perfection, and what Men may see, and yet be entirely blind to the Beauty of his moral Perfection, and have nothing of that spiritual Taste which relishes this divine Sweetness.

It has been shown already, in what was said upon the first distinguishing Mark of gracious Affections, that that which is spiritual, is entirely different in its Nature, from all that it is possible any graceless Person should be the Subject of, while he continues graceless. But it is possible that those who are wholly without Grace, should have a clear Sight, and very great and affecting Sense of God's Greatness, his mighty Power, and awful Majesty; for this is what the Devils have, though they have lost the spiritual Knowledge of God, consisting in a Sense of the Amiability of his moral Perfections; they are perfectly destitute of any Sense or Relish of that Kind of Beauty, yet they have a very great Knowledge of the natural Glory of God (if I may so speak) or his awful Greatness and Majesty; this they behold, and are affected with the Apprehensions of, and therefore tremble before him. This Glory of God all shall behold at the Day of Judgment; God will make all rational Beings to behold it to a great Degree indeed, Angels and Devils, Saints and Sinners: He will manifest his infinite Greatness, and awful Majesty to every One, in a most open, clear and convincing Manner, and in a Light that none can resist, when **he shall come in the Glory of his Father, and every Eye shall see him**; when they shall cry to the Mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the Face of him that sits upon the Throne, they are represented as seeing the Glory of God's Majesty, **Isaiah** 2. 10, 19, 21. God will make all his Enemies to behold this, and to live in a

most clear and affecting View of it, in Hell, to all Eternity. God hath often declared his immutable Purpose to make all his Enemies to know him in this Respect, in so often annexing these Words to the Threatenings he denounces against them, **and they shall know that I am the Lord**; yea, he hath sworn that all Men shall see his Glory in this Respect; Numbers 14. 21. **As truly as I live, all the Earth shall be filled with the Glory of the Lord**. And this Kind of Manifestation of God is very often spoken of in Scripture, as made, or to be made, in the Sight of God's Enemies in this World; **Exodus** 9. 16. and Chapter 14. 18. and 15. 16. **Psalms** 66. 3. and 46. 10. and other Places innumerable. This was a Manifestation which God made of himself in the Sight of that wicked Congregation at Mount **Sinai**; and deeply affecting them with it; so that all the People in the Camp trembled. Wicked Men and Devils will see, and have a great Sense of every Thing that appertains to the Glory of God, but only the Beauty of his moral Perfection. They will see his infinite Greatness and Majesty, his infinite Power, and will be fully convinced of his Omniscience, and his Eternity and Immutability; and they will see and know every Thing appertaining to his moral Attributes themselves, but only the Beauty and Amiableness of them: They will see and know that he is perfectly just and righteous and true; and that he is a holy God, of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, who cannot look on Iniquity, and they will see the wonderful Manifestations of his infinite Goodness and free Grace to the Saints; and there is nothing will be hid from their Eyes, but only the **Beauty** of these moral Attributes, and that Beauty of the other Attributes, which arises from it. And so natural Men in this World are capable of having a very affecting Sense of every Thing else that appertains to God, but

this only. **Nebuchadnezzar** had a great and very affecting Sense of the infinite Greatness and awful Majesty of God, of his supreme and absolute Dominion, and mighty and irresistible Power, and of his Sovereignty, and that he, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth were nothing before him; and also had a great Conviction in his Conscience of his Justice, and an affecting Sense of his great Goodness; **Daniel** 4. 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37. And the Sense that **Darius** had of God's Perfections, seems to be very much like his; **Daniel** 6. 25. etc. But the Saints and Angels do behold the Glory of God consisting in the **Beauty of his Holiness**: And it is this Sight only, that will melt and humble the Hearts of Men, and wean them from the World, and draw them to God, and effectually change them. A Sight of the awful Greatness of God, may overpower Men's Strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral Beauty of God be hid, the Enmity of the Heart will remain in its full Strength, no Love will be enkindled, all will not be effectual to gain the Will, but that will remain inflexible; whereas the first Glimpse of the moral and spiritual Glory of God shining into the Heart, produces all these Effects, as it were with omnipotent Power, which nothing can withstand.

The Sense that natural Men may have of the awful Greatness of God may affect them various Ways; it may not only terrify them, but it may elevate them and raise their Joy and Praise, as their Circumstances may be. This will be the natural Effect of it, under the real or supposed Receipt of some extraordinary Mercy from God, by the Influence of mere Principles of Nature. It has been shown already, that the Receipt of Kindness may, by the Influence of natural Principles, affect the Heart with Gratitude and Praise to God; but if a Person, at the same Time that he receives remarkable

Kindness from God, has a Sense of his infinite Greatness, and that he is but Nothing in Comparison of him, surely this will naturally raise his Gratitude and Praise the higher, for Kindness to one so much inferior. A Sense of God's Greatness had this Effect upon **Nebuchadnezzar**, under the Receipt of that extraordinary Favour of his Restoration, after he had been driven from Men, and had his dwelling with the Beasts: A Sense of God's exceeding Greatness raises his Gratitude very high; so that he does, in the most lofty Terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the World to do it with him: And much more, if a natural Man, at the same Time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite Greatness and Majesty, entertains a strong Conceit that this great God has made him his Child and special Favourite, and promised him eternal Glory in his highest Love; will this have a Tendency, according to the Course of Nature, to raise his Joy and Praise to a great Height.

Therefore, it is beyond Doubt, that too much Weight has been laid, by many Persons of late, on Discoveries of God's Greatness, awful Majesty, and natural Perfection, operating after this Manner, without any real View of the holy, lovely Majesty of God. And Experience does abundantly witness to what Reason and Scripture declare as to this Matter; there having been very many Persons, who have seemed to be overpowered with the Greatness and awful Majesty of God, and consequentially elevated in the Manner that has been spoken of, who have been very far from having Appearances of a Christian Spirit and Temper, in any Manner of Proportion, or Fruits in Practice in any wise agreeable; but their Discoveries have worked in a way contrary to the Operation of truly spiritual Discoveries.

Not that a Sense of God's Greatness and natural Attributes is not exceeding useful and necessary. For, as I observed before, this is implied in a Manifestation of the Beauty of God's Holiness. Though that be something beyond it, it supposes it, as the greater supposes the less. And though natural Men may have a Sense of the natural Perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the Saints, than with natural Men; and Grace tends to enable Men to see these Things in a better Manner, than natural Men do. And not only enables them to see God's natural Attributes, but that Beauty of those Attributes, which (according to our Way of conceiving of God) is derived from his Holiness.

4. Gracious Affections do arise from the Mind's being enlightened, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine Things.

Holy Affections are not Heat without Light; but evermore arise from some Information of the Understanding, some spiritual Instruction that the Mind receives, some Light or actual Knowledge. The Child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine Things than he did before, more of God or Christ and of the glorious Things exhibited in the Gospel; he has some clearer and better View than he had before, when he was not affected; Either he receives some Understanding of divine Things that is new to him; or has his former Knowledge renewed after the View was decayed; 1 John 4. 7. **Every one that loveth, knoweth God.** Philippians 1. 9. **I pray that your Love may abound more and more, in knowledge and in all Judgment.** Romans 10. 2. **They have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge.** Colossians 3. 10. **The new Man, which is renewed in Knowledge.** Psalms 43.

3, 4. O send out thy Light and thy Truth; let them lead me, let them bring me into thy holy Hill. John 6. 45. It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God: Every Man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Knowledge is the Key that first opens the hard Heart and enlarges the Affections, and so opens the Way for Men into the Kingdom of Heaven; Luke 11. 52. **Ye have taken away the Key of Knowledge.**

Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding. And when it is thus, it is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high. Indeed they have some new apprehensions which they had not before. Such is the nature of man, that it is impossible his mind should be affected, unless it be by something that he apprehends, or that his mind conceives of. But in many persons these apprehensions or conceptions that they have, where with they are affected, have nothing of the nature of knowledge or instruction in them. As for instance; when a person is affected with a lively idea, suddenly excited in his mind, of some shape, or very beautiful pleasant form of countenance, or some shining light, or other glorious outward appearance: Here is something apprehended or conceived by the mind; but there is nothing of the nature of instruction in it: persons become never the wiser by such things, or more knowing about God, or a Mediator between God and man, or the way of salvation by Christ, or any thing contained in any of the doctrines of the Gospel. Persons by these external ideas have no further acquaintance with God, as to any of the attributes or perfections of his natures; nor have they any further understanding of his word, or any of his ways or works. Truly spiritual and gracious

affections are not raised after this manner: These arise from the enlightening of the understanding to understand the things that are taught of God and Christ, in a new manner, the coming to a new understanding of the excellent nature of God, and his wonderful perfections, some new view of Christ in his spiritual excellencies and fulness, or things opened to him in a new manner, that appertain to the way of salvation by Christ, whereby he now sees how it is, and understands those divine and spiritual doctrines which once were foolishness to him. Such enlightenings of the understanding as these, are things entirely different in their nature, from strong ideas of shapes and colours, and outward brightness and glory, or sounds and voices. That all gracious affections do arise from some instruction or enlightening of the understanding, is therefore a further proof, that affections which arise from such impression on the imagination, are not gracious affections, besides the things observed before, which make this evident.

Hence also it appears, that affections arising from texts of Scripture coming to the mind are vain, when no instruction received in the understanding from those texts, or any thing taught in those texts, is the ground of the affection, but the manner of their coming to the mind. When Christ makes the Scripture a means of the heart's burning with gracious affection, 'tis **by opening the Scriptures to their understandings**; Luke 24:32. **Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?** It appears also that the affection which is occasioned by the coming of a text of Scripture must be vain, when the affection is founded on something that is supposed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it, nor in any other Scripture; because such sup-

posed instruction is not real instruction, but a mistake, and misapprehension of the mind. As for instance, when persons suppose that they are expressly taught by some Scripture coming to their minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, or that their sins are forgiven, that God is their Father, and the like: This is a mistake or misapprehension; for the Scripture no where reveals the individual persons who are beloved, expressly; but only by consequence, by revealing the qualifications of persons that are beloved of God: And therefore this matter is not to be learned from Scripture any other way than by consequence, and from these qualifications: For things are not to be **learned from** the Scripture any other way than they are **taught in** the Scripture.

Affections really arise from ignorance, rather than instruction, in these instances which have been mentioned; as likewise in some others that might be mentioned. As some when they find themselves free of speech in prayer, they call it God's being with them; and this affects them more; and so their affections are set a going and increased: When they look not into the cause of this freedom of speech; which may arise many other ways besides God's spiritual presence. So some are much affected with some apt thoughts that come into their minds about the Scripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. So they ascribe many of the workings of their own minds, which they have a high opinion of, and are pleased and taken with, to the special immediate influences of God's Spirit; and so are mightily affected with their privilege. And there are some instances of persons, in whom it seems manifest that the first ground of their affection is some bodily sensation. The animal spirits, by some cause, (and probably sometimes by the Devil) are suddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable

motion, causing person to feel pleasantly in their bodies; the animal spirits are put into such a motion as is accustomed to be connected with the exhilaration of the mind: and the soul, by the laws of the union of soul and body, hence feels pleasure. The motion of the animal spirits does not first arise from any affection or apprehension of the mind whatsoever; but the very first thing that is felt, is an exhilaration of the animal spirits, and a pleasant external sensation, it may be in their breasts. Hence, through ignorance, the person being surprised, begins to think, surely this is the Holy Ghost coming into him. And then the mind begins to be affected and raised: There is first great joy; and then many other affections, in a very tumultuous manner, putting all nature, both body and mind, into a mighty ruffle: For though, as I observed before, 'tis the soul only that is **the Seat of the Affections**; yet this hinders not but that bodily sensations, may in this manner, be **an Occasion of Affections** in the mind.

And if men's religious affections do truly arise from some instruction or light in the understanding; yet the affection is not gracious, unless the light which is the ground of it be spiritual. Affections may be excited by that understanding of things, which they obtain merely by human teaching, with the common improvement of the faculties of the mind. Men may be much affected by knowledge of things of religion that they obtain this way; as some philosophers have been mightily affected, and almost carried beyond themselves, by the discoveries they have made in mathematics and natural philosophy. So men may be much affected from common illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God assists men's faculties to a greater degree of that kind of understanding of religious matters, which they have in some degree, by only the or-

dinary exercise and improvement of their own faculties. Such illuminations may much affect the mind; as in many whom we read of in Scripture, **that were once enlightened:** But these affections are not spiritual.

There is such a thing, if the Scriptures are of any use to teach us any thing, as a spiritual, supernatural understanding of divine things, that is peculiar to the saints, and which those who are not saints have nothing of. 'Tis certainly a kind of understanding, apprehending or discerning or divine things, that natural men have nothing of, which the Apostle speaks of, 1 Corinthians 2:14. **But 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.** 'Tis certainly a kind of seeing or discerning spiritual things, peculiar to the saints, which is spoken of, 1 John 3:6. **Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.** 3 John 11. **He that doth evil hath not seen God.** And John 6:40. **This is the will of him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life.** Chapter 14:19. **The world seeth me no more; but ye see me.** Chapter 17:3. **This is eternal life, that that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.** Matthew 11:27. **No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.** John 12:45. **He that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.** Psalm 9:10. **They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.** Philippians 3:8. **I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.** Verse 10.

That I may know Him. And innumerable other places there are, all over the Bible, which show the same. And that there is such a thing as an understanding of divine things, which in its nature and kind is wholly different from all knowledge that natural men have, is evident from this, that there is an understanding of divine things, which the Scripture calls spiritual understanding; Colossians 1:9. **We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding.** It has been already shown, that that which is **spiritual**, in the ordinary use of the word in the New Testament, is entirely different in nature and kind, from all which natural men are, or can be the subjects of.

From hence it may be surely inferred, wherein spiritual understanding consists. For if there be in the saints a kind of apprehension or perception, which is in its nature, perfectly diverse from all that natural men have, or that it is possible they should have, till they have a new nature; it must consist in their having a certain kind of ideas or sensations of mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the minds of natural men. And that is the same thing as to say, that it consists in the sensations of a new spiritual sense, which the souls of natural men have not; as is evident by what has been before, once and again observed. But I have already shown what that new spiritual sense is, which the saints have given them in regeneration, and what is the object of it. I have shown that the immediate object of it is the supreme beauty and excellency of the nature of divine things, as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the Scripture: The Apostle very plainly teaches that the great thing discovered by spiritual light, and understood by spiritual knowledge, is the glory of divine things, 2

Corinthians 4:3, 4. **But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them:** together with Verse 6. **For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:** And Chapter 3:18 preceding, **But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.** And it must needs be so, for as has been before observed, the Scripture often teaches that all true religion summarily consists in the love of divine things. And therefore that kind of understanding or knowledge, which is the proper foundation of true religion, must be the knowledge of the **loveliness of divine things**. For doubtless, that knowledge which is the proper foundation of **love**, is the knowledge of **loveliness**. What that beauty or loveliness of divine things is, which is the proper and immediate object of a spiritual sense of mind, was showed under the last head insisted on, **namely**, That it is the beauty of their moral perfection. Therefore it is in the view or sense of this, that spiritual understanding does more immediately and primarily consist. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing else; for (as has been shown) there is nothing pertaining to divine things besides the beauty of their moral excellency, and those properties and qualities of divine things which this beauty is the foundation of, but what natural men and devils can see and know, and will know fully and clearly to all Eternity.

From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual understanding consists; **namely**, That it consists in **a sense of the heart, of the supreme beauty and sweetness of the holiness or moral perfection of divine things, together with all that discerning and knowledge of things of religion, that depends upon, and flows from such a sense.**

Spiritual Understanding consists primarily in **a Sense of Heart of that spiritual Beauty.** I say, a **Sense of Heart**; for it is not Speculation merely that is concerned in this Kind of Understanding: Nor can there be a clear Distinction made between the two Faculties of Understanding and Will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this Matter. When the Mind is sensible of the sweet Beauty and Amiableness of a Thing, That implies a Sensibleness of Sweetness and Delight in the Presence of the Idea of it: And this Sensibleness of the Amiableness or Delightfulness of Beauty, carries in the very Nature of it, **the Sense of the Heart**; or an Effect and Impression the Soul is the Subject of, as a Substance possessed of Taste, Inclination and Will.

There is a Distinction to be made between a mere **rational Understanding**, wherein the Mind only beholds Things in the Exercise of a speculative Faculty; and **the Sense of the Heart**, wherein the Mind does not only **speculate** and **behold**, but [$\langle \diamond \rangle$] and [$\langle \diamond \rangle$]. That Sort of Knowledge, by which a Man has a sensible Perception of Amiableness and Loathsomeness, or of Sweetness and Nauseousness, is not just the same Sort of Knowledge with that, by which he knows what a Triangle is, and what a Square is. The one is mere speculative Knowledge; the other sensible Knowledge, in which more than the mere Intellect is

concerned; the Heart is the proper Subject of it, or the Soul as a Being that not only Beholds, but has Inclination, and is pleased or displeased. And yet there is the Nature of Instruction in it; as he that has perceived the sweet Taste of Honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon and felt of it.

The Apostle seems to make a Distinction between mere speculative Knowledge of the Things of Religion, and spiritual Knowledge, in calling that **the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth**; Romans 2:20. **Which hast the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth in the Law.** The Letter is often represented by relishing, smelling, or tasting; 2 Corinthians 2:14. **Now Thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus, and maketh manifest the Savour of his Knowledge, in every Place.** Matthew 16:23. **Thou savourest [〈◇〉] the Things that be of God, [〈◇〉] Things that be of Men.** 1 Peter 2:2, 3. **As new born Babes, [〈...〉] Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby; if so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.** Canticles 1:3. **Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth; therefore do the Virgins love thee;** compared with 1 John 2:20. **But you have an Unction from the holy One, and you know all Things.**

Spiritual Understanding primarily consists in this **Sense, or Taste of the moral Beauty of divine Things**; so that no Knowledge can be called Spiritual, any further than it arises from this, and has this in it. But **secondarily**, it includes **all that Discerning and Knowledge of Things of Religion, which depends upon, and flows from such a Sense.**

When the true Beauty and Amiableness of the Holiness or true moral Good that is in divine Things, is discovered to the Soul, it as it were opens a new World to its View. This shows the Glory of all the Perfections of God, and of every Thing appertaining to the divine Being: For, as was observed before, the Beauty of all arises from God's moral Perfection. This shows the Glory of all God's Works, both of Creation and Providence: For it is the special Glory of them, that God's Holiness, Righteousness, Faithfulness and Goodness are so manifested in them; and without these moral Perfections, there would be no Glory in that Power and Skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral Perfections, is the special End of all the Works of God's Hands. By this Sense of the, moral Beauty of divine Things, is understood the Sufficiency of Christ as a Mediator: For it is only by the Discovery of the Beauty of the moral Perfection of Christ, that the Believer is let into the Knowledge of the Excellency of his Person, so as to know any Thing more of it than the Devils do: And it is only by the Knowledge of the Excellency of Christ's Person, that any know his Sufficiency as [〈◇〉] Mediator; for the latter depends upon, and arises from the [〈◇〉]. It is by seeing the Excellency of Christ's Person, that the Saints are made sensible of the Preciousness of his Blood, and its Sufficiency to atone for Sin: For therein consists the Preciousness of Christ's Blood, that it is the Blood of so excellent and amiable a Person. And on this depends the Meritoriousness of his Obedience, and Sufficiency and Prevalence of his Intercession. By this Sight of the moral Beauty of divine Things, is seen the Beauty of the Way of Salvation by Christ: For that consists in the Beauty of the moral Perfections of God, which wonderfully shines forth in every Step of this Method of Salvation, from Beginning to

End. By this is seen the Fitness and Suitableness of this Way: For this wholly consists in its Tendency to deliver us from Sin and Hell, and to bring us to the Happiness which consists in the Possession and Enjoyment of moral Good, in a Way sweetly agreeing with God's moral Perfections. And in the Way's being contrived so as to attain these Ends, consists the excellent Wisdom of that Way. By this is seen the Excellency of the Word of God: Take away all the moral Beauty and Sweetness in the Word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead Letter, a dry, lifeless, tasteless Thing. By this is seen the true Foundation of our Duty; the Worthiness of God to be so esteemed, honoured, loved, submitted to, and served, as he requires of us, and the Amiableness of the Duties themselves that are required of us. And by this is seen the true Evil of Sin: For he who sees the Beauty of Holiness, must necessarily see the Hatefulness of Sin, its Contrary. By this Men understand the true Glory of Heaven, which consists in the Beauty and Happiness that is in Holiness. By this is seen the Amiableness and Happiness of both Saints and Angels. He that sees the Beauty of Holiness, or true moral Good, sees the greatest and most important Thing in the World, which is the Fulness of all Things, without which all the World is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worse than nothing. Unless this is seen, nothing is seen, that is worth the Seeing: For there is no other true Excellency or Beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood, that is worthy of the Exercise of the noble Faculty of Understanding. This is the Beauty of the Godhead, and the Divinity of Divinity, (if I may so speak) the Good of the infinite Fountain of Good; without which God himself (if that were possible to be) would be an infinite Evil: Without which, we ourselves had better never have been; and without which there

had better have been no Being. He therefore in Effect knows nothing, that knows not this: His Knowledge is but the Shadow of Knowledge, or the Form of Knowledge, as the Apostle calls it. Well therefore may the Scripture represent those who are destitute of that spiritual Sense, by which is perceived the Beauty of Holiness, as totally blind, deaf and senseless, yea dead. And well may Regeneration, in which this divine Sense is given to the Soul by its Creator, be represented as opening the blind Eyes, and raising the Dead, and bringing a Person into a new World. For if what has been said be considered, it will be manifest, that when a Person has this Sense and Knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before; though before he **knew all Things after the Flesh, yet henceforth he will know them so no more; and he is become a new Creature, old Things are past away, behold all Things are become new;** agreeable to 2 **Corinthians** 5:16, 17.

And besides the Things that have been already mentioned, there arises from this Sense of spiritual Beauty, all true experimental Knowledge of Religion; which is of itself, as it were a new World of Knowledge. He that sees not the Beauty of Holiness, knows not what one of the Graces of God's Spirit is; he is destitute of any Idea or Conception of all gracious Exercise of Soul, and all holy Comforts and Delights, and all Effects of the saving Influences of the Spirit of God on the Heart: And so is ignorant of the greatest Works of God, the most important and glorious Effects of his Power upon the Creature: And also is wholly ignorant of the Saints as Saints; he knows not what they are: And in Effect is ignorant of the whole spiritual World.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that spiritual supernatural Sense which has been spoken of, makes a great Change in a Man. And were it not for the very imperfect Degree, in which this Sense is commonly given at first, or the small Degree of this glorious Light that first dawns upon the Soul; the Change made by this spiritual Opening of the Eyes in Conversion, would be much greater, and more remarkable, every Way than if a Man, who had been born Blind, and with only the other four Senses, should continue so a long Time, and then at once should have the Sense of seeing imparted to him, in the midst of the clear Light of the Sun, discovering a World of visible Objects. For though Sight be more noble than any of the other external Senses; yet this spiritual Sense which has been spoken of, is infinitely more noble than that, or any other Principle of Discerning that a Man naturally has, and the Object of this Sense infinitely greater and more important.

This Sort of Understanding or Knowledge is that Knowledge of divine Things from whence all truly gracious Affections do proceed. By which therefore all Affections are to be tried. Those Affections that arise wholly from any other Kind of Knowledge, or do result from any other Kind of Apprehensions of Mind, are vain.

From what has been said may be learned wherein the most essential Difference lies between that Light or Understanding which is given by the common Influences of the Spirit of God, on the Hearts of natural Men, and that saving Instruction which is given to the Saints. The Latter primarily and most essentially lies in beholding the Beauty that is in divine Things; which is the only **true** moral Good, and which the Soul of fallen Man is by Nature totally blind to. The Former consists only in a further Understanding,

through the Assistance of natural Principles, of those Things which Men may know, in some Measure, by the alone ordinary Exercise of their Faculties. And this Knowledge consists only in the Knowledge of those Things pertaining to Religion, which are **natural**. Thus for Instance, In those Awakenings and Convictions of Conscience, that natural Men are often subject to, the Spirit of God gives no Knowledge of the true **moral** Beauty which is in divine Things; but only assists the Mind to a clearer Idea of the Guilt of Sin, or its Relation to a Punishment, and Connection with the **Evil of Suffering** (without any Sight of its true **moral** Evil, or Odiousness as Sin) and a clearer Idea of the **natural** Perfections of God, wherein consists, not his holy Beauty and Glory, but his awful and terrible Greatness. It is a clear Sight of this, that will fully awaken the Consciences of wicked Men at the Day of Judgment, **without any spiritual Light**. And it is a lesser Degree of the same, that awakens the Consciences of natural Men, **without spiritual Light**, in this World. The same Discoveries are in some Measure given in the Conscience of an awakened Sinner in this World, which will be given more fully in the Consciences of Sinners at the Day of Judgment. The same Kind of Sight or Apprehension of God, in a lesser Degree, makes awakened Sinners in this World, sensible of the dreadful Guilt of Sin; against so great and terrible a God, and sensible of its amazing Punishment, and fills them with fearful Apprehensions of divine Wrath; that will thoroughly convince all wicked Men, of the infinitely dreadful Nature and Guilt of Sin, and astonish them with Apprehensions of Wrath, when Christ shall come in the Glory of his Power and Majesty, and every Eye shall see him, and all the Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him. And in those com-

mon Illuminations, which are sometimes given to natural Men, exciting in them some Kind of religious Desire, Love and Joy, the Mind is only assisted to a clearer Apprehension of the **natural Good** that is in divine Things. Thus sometimes, under common Illuminations, Men are raised with the Ideas of the natural Good that is in Heaven; as its outward Glory, its Ease, its Honour and Advancement, a being there the Objects of the high Favour of God, and the great Respect of Men and Angels, **et cetera**. So there are many Things exhibited in the Gospel, concerning God and Christ, and the Way of Salvation, that have a **natural Good** in them, which suits the natural Principle of Self-love. Thus in that great Goodness of God to Sinners, and the wonderful dying Love of Christ, there is a natural Good, which all Men love, as they love themselves; as well as a spiritual and holy Beauty, which is seen only by the Regenerate. Therefore there are many Things appertaining to the Word of God's Grace delivered in the Gospel, which may cause natural Men, when they hear it, **anon with Joy to receive it**. All that Love which natural Men have to God, and Christ, and Christian Virtues, and good Men, is not from any Sight of the Amiableness of the Holiness, or true **moral** Excellency of these Things; but only for the sake of the **natural Good** there is in them. All natural Men's Hatred of Sin, is as much from Principles of Nature, as Men's Hatred of a Tiger for his Rapaciousness, or their Aversion to a Serpent for his Poison and Hurtfulness: And all their Love of Christian Virtue, is from no higher Principle than their Love of a Man's good Nature, which appears amiable to natural Men; but no otherwise than Silver and Gold appears amiable in the Eyes of a Merchant, or than the Blackness of the Soil is beautiful in the Eyes of the Farmer.

From what has been said of the Nature of spiritual Understanding, it appears that spiritual Understanding does not consist in any new doctrinal Knowledge, or in having suggested to the Mind any new Proposition, not before read or heard of: For it is plain that this suggesting of new Propositions, is a Thing entirely diverse from giving the Mind a new Taste or Relish of Beauty and Sweetness. It is also evident that spiritual Knowledge does not consist in any new doctrinal Explanation of any Part of the Scripture; for still, this is but doctrinal Knowledge, or the Knowledge of Propositions; the doctrinal explaining of any Part of Scripture, is only giving us to understand, what are the Propositions contained or taught in that Part of Scripture.

Hence it appears, that the **spiritual Understanding** of the Scripture, does not consist in opening to the Mind the mystical Meaning of the Scripture, in its Parables, Types and Allegories; for this is only a doctrinal Explication of the Scripture. He that explains what is meant by the stony Ground, and the Seed's springing up suddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what Propositions or Doctrines are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by **Jacob's** Ladder, and the Angels of God ascending and descending on it, or what was typified by **Joshua's** leading **Israel** through **Jordan**, only shows what Propositions are hid in these Passages. And many Men can explain these Types, who have no spiritual Knowledge. It is possible that a Man might know how to interpret all the Types, Parables, Enigmas, and Allegories in the Bible and not have one Beam of spiritual Light in his Mind; because he may not have the least Degree of that spiritual Sense of the holy Beauty of divine Things which has been spoken of, and may see nothing of this Kind of Glory in any Thing contained in

any of these Mysteries, or any other Part of the Scripture. It is plain, by what the Apostle says, that a Man might understand all such Mysteries, and have no saving Grace: 1 Corinthians 13:2. **And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.** They therefore are very foolish, who are exalted in an Opinion of their own spiritual Attainments, from Notions that come into their Minds, of the mythical Meaning of these and those Passages of Scripture, as though it was a spiritual Understanding of these Passages, immediately given them by the Spirit of God, and hence have their Affections highly raised: And what has been said shows the Vanity of such Affections.

From what has been said, it is also evident, that it is not spiritual Knowledge, for Persons to be informed of their Duty, by having it immediately suggested to their Minds, that such and such outward Actions or Deeds are the Will of God. If we suppose that it is truly God's Manner thus to signify his Will to his People, by immediate inward Suggestions, such Suggestions have nothing of the Nature of spiritual Light. Such Kind of Knowledge would only be one Kind of doctrinal Knowledge: A Proposition concerning the Will of God, is as properly a Doctrine of Religion, as a Proposition concerning the Nature of God, or a Work of God: And an having either of these Kinds of Propositions, or any other Proposition, declared to a Man, either by Speech, or inward Suggestion, differs vastly from an having the holy Beauty of divine Things manifested to the Soul, wherein spiritual Knowledge does most essentially consist. Thus there was no spiritual Light in **Balaam**; though he

had the Will of God immediately suggested to him by the Spirit of God from Time to Time, concerning the Way that he should go, and what he should do and say.

It is manifest therefore, that a being led and directed in this Manner, is not that holy and spiritual **Leading of the Spirit of God**, which is peculiar to the Saints, and a distinguishing Mark of the Sons of God, spoken of Romans 8:14. **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.** Galatians 5:18. **But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law.**

And if Persons have the Will of God concerning their Actions, suggested to them by some Text of Scripture, suddenly and extraordinarily brought to their Minds, which Text, as the Words lay in the Bible before they came to their Minds, related to the Action and Behaviour of some other Person, but they suppose, as God sent the Words to them, he intended something further by them, and meant such a particular Action of theirs; I say, if Persons should have the Will of God thus suggested to them with Texts of Scripture, it alters not the Case. The Suggestion being accompanied with an apt Text of Scripture, does not make the Suggestion to be of the Nature of spiritual Instruction. As for Instance, If a Person in **New-England**, on some Occasion, were at a Loss whether it was his Duty to go into some popish or heathenish Land, where he was like to be exposed to many Difficulties and Dangers, and should pray to God that he would show him the Way of his Duty; and after earnest Prayer, should have those Words which God spoke to **Jacob, Genesis 46**, suddenly and extraordinarily brought to his Mind, as if they were spoken to him; **Fear not to go down into Egypt; and I will go with thee; and I will also surely bring thee up again.** In which Words, though

as they lay in the Bible before they came to his Mind, they related only to **Jacob**, and his Behaviour; yet he supposes that God has a further Meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that thus they are to be understood in a new Sense, that by **Egypt** is to be understood this particular Country he has in his Mind, and that the Action intended is his going thither, and that the Meaning of the Promise is that God would bring him back into **New-England** again. There is nothing of the Nature of a spiritual or gracious Leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the Nature of spiritual Understanding in it. Thus to understand Texts of Scripture, is not to have a spiritual Understanding of them. Spiritually to understand the Scripture, is rightly to understand what **is in** the Scripture, and what **was in** it before it was understood: It is to understand rightly, what **used to be contained in** the Meaning of it; and not the making of a new Meaning. When the Mind is enlightened spiritually and rightly to understand the Scripture, it is enabled to see That in the Scripture, which before was not seen, **by Reason of Blindness**. But if it was by Reason of Blindness; that is an Evidence that the same Meaning was in it before; otherwise it would have been no Blindness not to see it: It is no Blindness not to see a Meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the Eyes to understand the Scripture, is **to open the Eyes**, Psalm 119:18. **Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law**; which argues that the Reason why the same was not seen in the Scripture before, was that the Eyes were **shut**; which would not be the Case, if the Meaning that is now understood was not there before, but is now newly added to the Scripture, by the Manner of the Scripture's coming to my Mind. This making a new Meaning to the Scripture,

is the same Thing as making a new Scripture: It is properly adding to the Word; which is threatened with too dreadful a Curse. Spiritually to understand the Scripture, is to have the Eyes of the Mind opened, to behold the wonderful spiritual Excellency of the glorious Things contained in the true Meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever since it was written; to behold the amiable and bright Manifestation of the divine Perfections, and of the Excellency and Sufficiency of Christ, and the Excellency and Suitableness of the Way of Salvation by Christ, and the spiritual Glory of the Precepts and Promises of the Scripture, **et cetera**. Which Things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been seen before, if it had not been for Blindness, without having any new Sense added by the Words being sent by God to a particular Person, and spoken anew to him, with a new Meaning.

And as to a gracious **Leading of the Spirit**, it consists in two Things; partly in **instructing** a Person in his Duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully **inducing** him to comply with that Instruction. But so far as the gracious Leading of the Spirit lies in Instruction, it consists in a Person's being guided by a spiritual and distinguishing Taste of that which has in it true moral Beauty. I have shown that spiritual Knowledge primarily consists in a Taste or Relish of the Amiableness and Beauty of that which is truly good and holy: This holy Relish is a Thing that discerns and distinguishes between Good and Evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the Trouble of a Train of Reasoning. As he who has a true Relish of external Beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking upon it: He stands in no need of a Train of Reasoning about the Proportion of the Features, in order to determine whether that which he sees be a beautiful Countenance or no: He needs nothing,

but only the Glance of his Eye. He who has a rectified musical Ear, knows whether the Sound he hears be true Harmony: He does not need first to be at the Trouble of the Reasonings of a Mathematician, about the Proportion of the Notes. He that has a rectified Palate, knows what is good Food, as soon as he tastes it, without the Reasoning of a Physician about it. There is a holy Beauty and Sweetness in Words and Actions, as well as a natural Beauty in Countenances and Sounds, and Sweetness in Food; Job 12:11. **Does not the Ear try Words, and the Mouth taste his Meat.** When a holy and amiable Action is suggested to the Thoughts of a holy Soul; that Soul, if in the lively Exercise of its spiritual Taste, at once sees a Beauty in it, and so inclines to it, and closes with it. On the Contrary, if an unworthy unholy Action be suggested to it, its sanctified Eye sees no Beauty in it, and is not pleased with it; its sanctified Taste relishes no Sweetness in it, but on the contrary, it is nauseous to it. Yea its holy Taste and Appetite leads it to think of That which is truly lovely, and naturally suggests it; as a healthy Taste and Appetite naturally suggests the Idea of its proper Object. Thus a holy Person is led by the Spirit, as he is instructed and led by his holy Taste, and Disposition of Heart; whereby, in the lively Exercise of Grace, he easily distinguishes Good and Evil, and knows at once, what is a suitable amiable Behaviour towards God, and towards Man, in this Case and the other; and judges what is right as it were spontaneously, and of himself, without a particular Deduction, by any other Arguments than the Beauty that is seen, and Goodness that is tasted. Thus Christ blames the **Pharisees**, that they **did not, even of their own selves, judge what was right**, without needing Miracles to prove it, **Luke** 12:57. The Apostle seems plainly to have Respect

to this Way of judging of spiritual Beauty, in Romans 12:2. **Be you transformed by the Renewing of your Mind, that you may prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable Will of God.**

There is such a Thing as **good Taste** of **natural** Beauty, (which learned Men often speak of) that is exercised about **temporal** Things, in judging of them; as about the Justness of a Speech, the Goodness of Style, the Beauty of a Poem, the Gracefulness of Deportment, **etc.** A late great Philosopher of our Nation, writes thus upon it: To have **a Taste**, is to give Things their real Value, to be touched with the Good, to be shocked with the Ill; not to be dazzled with false Lustres, but in Spite of all Colours, and every Thing that might deceive or amuse, to judge soundly. **Taste** and **Judgment** then, should be the same Thing; and yet it is easy to discern a Difference. The **Judgment** forms its Opinions from Reflection: The Reason on this Occasion fetches a Kind of Circuit, to arrive at its End; it supposes Principles, it draws Consequences, and it judges; but not without a thorough Knowledge of the Case; so that after it has pronounced, it is ready to render a Reason of its Decrees. **Good Taste** observes none of these Formalities; before it has Time to consult, it has taken its Side; as soon as ever the Object is presented it, the Impression is made, the Sentiment formed, ask no more of it. As the Ear is wounded with a harsh Sound, as the Smell is soothed with an agreeable Odour, before ever the Reason have meddled with those Objects to judge of them, so the **Taste** opens itself at once, and prevents all Reflection. They may come afterwards to confirm it, and discover the secret Reasons of its Conduct; but it was not in its Power to wait for them. Frequently it happens not to know them at

all, and what Pains soever it uses, cannot discover what it was determined it to think as it did. This Conduct is very different from That the **Judgment** observes in its Decisions: Unless we choose to say, that **good Taste** is as it were a first Motion, or a Kind of Instinct of right Reason, which hurries on with Rapidity, and conducts more securely, than all the Reasonings she could make: It is a first Glance of the Eye, which discovers to us the Nature and Relations of Things in a Moment.

Now as there is such a Kind of **Taste** of the Mind as this, which Philosophers speak of, whereby Persons are guided in their Judgment of the natural Beauty, Gracefulness, Propriety, Nobleness and Elegance of Speeches and Actions, whereby they judge as it were by the Glance of the Eye, or by inward Sensation, and the first Impression of the Object; so there is likewise such a Thing as a **divine Taste**, given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the Hearts of the Saints, whereby they are in like Manner led and guided in discerning and distinguishing the true spiritual and holy Beauty of Actions; and that more easily, readily and accurately, as they have more or less of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. And thus **the Children of God are led by the Spirit of God, in their Behaviour in the World.**

A holy Disposition and spiritual Taste, where Grace is strong and lively, will enable a Soul to determine what Actions are right and becoming Christians, not only more speedily, but far more exactly, than the greatest Abilities without it. This may be illustrated by the Manner in which some Habits of Mind, and Dispositions of Heart, of a Nature inferior to true Grace, will teach and guide a Man in his Actions. As for Instance, if a Man be a very good natured Man, his good Nature will teach him better how to act benev-

olently amongst Mankind, and will direct him, on every Occasion, to these Speeches and Actions, which are agreeable to Rules of Goodness, than the strongest Reason will a Man of a morose Temper. So if a Man's Heart be under the Influence of an entire Friendship, and most endeared Affection to another; though he be a Man of an indifferent Capacity, yet this Habit of his Mind will direct him, for more readily and exactly, to a Speech and Deportment, or Manner of Behaviour, which shall in all Respects be sweet and Kind, and agreeable to a benevolent Disposition of Heart, than the greatest Capacity without it. He has as it were a Spirit within him, that guides him: The Habit of his Mind is attended with a Taste, by which he immediately relishes that Air and Mien which is benevolent, and disrelishes the contrary, and causes him to distinguish between one and the other **in a Moment**, more precisely, than the most accurate Reasonings can find out **in many Hours**. As the Nature and inward Tendency of a Stone, or other heavy Body, that is let fall from a Loft, shows the Way to the Centre of the Earth, more exactly in an Instant, than the ablest Mathematician, without it, could determine, by his most accurate Observations, in a whole Day. Thus it is that a spiritual Disposition and Taste teaches and guides a Man in his Behaviour in the World. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable Disposition, will direct a Person of mean Capacity to such a Behaviour, as is agreeable to Christian Rules of Humility, Meekness and Charity, far more readily and precisely, than the most diligent Search, and elaborate Reasonings, of a Man of the strongest Faculties, who has not a Christian Spirit within him. So also will a Spirit of Love to

God, and holy Fear and Reverence towards God, and filial Confidence in God, and an heavenly Disposition, teach and guide a Man in his Behaviour.

It is an exceeding difficult Thing for a wicked Man, destitute of divine Principles in his Heart, to guide him, to know how to demean himself like a Christian, with the Life, and Beauty, and heavenly Image of a truly holy, humble Soul. He knows not how to put on those Garments; neither do they fit him. Ecclesiastes 10:15. **It is Labour of the Fool, wearies every one of them; because he knows not how to go to the City.** Proverbs 10:32. **The Lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable.** Chapter 15:2. **The Tongue of the Wise uses Knowledge aright; but the Mouth of Fools pours out Foolishness.** And Chapter 16:23. **The Heart of the Righteous teaches his Mouth, and adds Learning to his Lips.**

The Saints in thus judging of Actions by a spiritual Taste, have not a particular Recourse to the express Rules of God's Word, with Respect to every Word and Action that is before them, the Good or Evil of which they thus judge of: But yet their Taste itself in General, is Subject to the Rule of God's Word, and must be tried by that, and a right Reasoning upon it. As a Man of a rectified Palate judges of particular Meats by his Taste: But yet his Palate itself must be judged of, whether it be right or no, by certain Rules and Reasons. But a spiritual Taste of Soul, mightily helps the Soul, in its Reasonings on the Word of God, and in judging of the true Meaning of its Rules; as it removes the Prejudices of a depraved Appetite, and naturally leads the Thoughts in the right Channel, casts a Light on the Word of God, and causes the true Meaning, most naturally to come to Mind, through the Harmony there is be-

tween the Disposition and Relish of a sanctified Soul, and the true Meaning of the Rules of God's Word. Yea, this Harmony tends to bring the Texts themselves to Mind, on proper Occasions; as the particular State of the Stomach and Palate, tends to bring such particular Meats and Drinks to Mind, as are agreeable to that State. Thus **the Children of God are led by the Spirit of God** in judging of Actions themselves, and in their Meditations upon, and judging of, and applying the Rules of God's holy Word: And so God **teaches them his Statutes, and causes them to understand the Way of his Precepts**; which the Psalmist so often prays for.

But this Leading of the Spirit is a Thing exceeding diverse from that which some call so; which consists not in teaching them God's Statutes and Precepts, that he has already given; but in giving them new Precepts, by immediate inward Speech or Suggestion; and has in it no Tasting the true Excellency of Things, or judging or discerning the Nature of Things at all. They do not determine what is the Will of God by any Taste or Relish, or any Manner of Judgment of the Nature of Things, but by an immediate Dictate concerning the Thing to be done: There is no such Thing as any Judgment or Wisdom in the Case. Whereas in that Leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's Children, is imparted that true Wisdom, and holy Discretion, so often spoken of in the Word of God; which is high above the other Way, as the Stars are higher than a Glowworm; and that which **Balaam** and **Saul** (who sometimes were led by the Spirit in that other Way) never had, and no natural Man can have, without a Change of Nature.

What has been said of the Nature of spiritual Understanding, as consisting most essentially in a divine supernatural Sense and Relish of the Heart, not only shows that there is nothing of it in this falsely supposed **Leading of the Spirit**, which has been now spoken of; but also shows the Difference between spiritual Understanding, and all Kinds and Forms of Enthusiasm, all imaginary Sights of God and Christ and Heaven, all supposed Witnessing of the Spirit, and Testimonies of the Love of God by immediate inward Suggestion; and all Impressions of future Events, and immediate Revelations of any secret Facts whatsoever; all enthusiastical Impressions and Applications of Words of Scripture, as though they were Words now immediately spoken by God to a particular Person, in a new Meaning, and carrying something more in them, than the Words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all Interpretations of the mystical Meaning of the Scripture, by supposed immediate Revelation. None of these Things consist in a divine Sense and Relish of the **Heart**, of the holy Beauty and Excellency of divine Things; nor have they any Thing to do with such a Sense; but all consist in Impressions in the **Head**; all are to be referred to the Head of **Impressions on the Imagination**, and consist in the exciting external Ideas in the Mind, either in Ideas of outward Shapes and Colours, or Words spoken, or Letters written, or Ideas of Things external and sensible, belonging to Actions done, or Events accomplished, or to be Accomplished. An enthusiastical supposed Manifestation of the Love of God, is made by the exciting an Idea of a smiling Countenance, or some other pleasant outward Appearance, or by the Idea of pleasant Words spoken, or written, excited in the Imagination, or some pleasant bodily Sensation. So when Persons

have an imaginary Revelation of some secret Fact, it is by exciting external Ideas; either of some Words, implying a Declaration of that Fact, or some visible or sensible Circumstances of such a Fact. So the supposed Leading of the Spirit, to do the Will of God, in outward Behaviour, is either by exciting the Idea of Words (which are outward Things) in their Minds, either the Words of Scripture, or other Words, which they look upon as an immediate Command of God; or else by exciting and impressing strongly the Ideas of the outward Actions themselves. So when an Interpretation of a Scripture Type or Allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary Way, strongly suggested, it is by suggesting Words, as though one secretly whispered, and told the Meaning; or by exciting other Ideas in the Imagination.

Such Sort of Experiences and Discoveries as these commonly raise the Affections of such as are deluded by them, to a great Height, and make a mighty Uproar in both Soul and Body. And a very great Part of the false Religion that has been in the World, from one Age to another, consists in such Discoveries as these, and in the Affections that flow from them. In such Things consisted the Experiences of the ancient **Pythagoreans** among the Heathen, and many others among them, who had strange Ecstasies and Raptures, and pretended to a divine **Afflatus**, and immediate Revelations from Heaven. In such Things as these seem to have consisted the Experiences of the **Essenes**, an ancient Sect among the **Jews**, at, and after the Times of the Apostles. In such Things as these consisted the Experiences of many of the ancient **Gnostics**, and the **Montanists**, and many other Sects of ancient Heretics, in the primitive Ages of the Christian Church. And in such Things as these consisted the pretended immediate Converse,

with God and Christ, and Saints and Angels of Heaven, of the **Monks, Anchorites, and Recluses**, that formerly abounded in the Church of **Rome**. In such Things consisted the pretended high Experiences, and great Spirituality of many Sects of Enthusiasts, that swarmed in the World after the Reformation; such as the **Anabaptists, Antinomians, and Familists**, the Followers of **Nicholas Stork, Thomas Munzer, John Becold, Henry Pfeifer, David George, Casper Swenckfield, Henry Nicolas, Johannes Agricola Eislebius**; and the many wild Enthusiasts that were in **England** in the Days of **Oliver Cromwell**; and the Followers of Mistress **Hutchinson**, in **New-England**; as appears by the particular and large Accounts given of all these Sects, by that eminently holy Man, Mister **Samuel Rutherford**, in his **Display of the spiritual Antichrist**. And in such Things as these consisted the Experiences of the late **French Prophets**, and their Followers. And in these Things seems to lie the Religion of the many Kinds of Enthusiasts of the present Day. It is by such Sort of Religion as this chiefly that **Satan** transforms himself into an Angel of Light: And it is that which he has ever most successfully made use of to confound hopeful and happy Revivals of Religion, from the Beginning of the christian Church to this Day. When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious Work, then the old Serpent, as fast as possible, and by all Means introduces this Bastard Religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from Time to Time soon brought all Things into Confusion. The pernicious Consequence of it is not easily imagined or conceived of, until we see and are amazed with the awful Effects of it, and the dismal Desolation it has made. If the Revival of true Religion be very great in its Beginning, yet if

this Bastard comes in, there is Danger of its doing as **Gideon's** Bastard **Abimelech** did, who never left until he had slain all his Threescore and ten true born Sons, excepting one, that was forced to flee. Great and strict therefore should be the Watch and Guard that Ministers maintain against such Things, especially at a Time of great Awakening: For Men, especially the common People, are easily bewitched with such Things; they having such a glaring and glistening Show of high Religion; and the Devil hiding his own Shape, and appearing as an Angel of Light, that Men may not be afraid of him, but many adore him.

The Imagination seems to be that wherein are formed all those Delusions of **Satan**, which those are carried away with, who are under the Influence of false Religion, and counterfeit Grace and Affections. Here is the Devil's grand Lurking-Place, the very Nest of foul and delusive Spirits. It is very much to be doubted whether the Devil can come at the Soul of Man, at all to affect it, or to excite any Thought or Motion, or produce any Effect whatsoever in it, any other Way, than by the Fantasy; which is that Power of the Soul, by which it receives, and is the Subject of the Species, or Ideas of outward and sensible Things. As to the Laws and Means which the Creator has established, for the Intercourse and Communication of unbodied Spirits, we know nothing about them; we don't know by what Medium they manifest their Thoughts to each other, or excite Thoughts in each other. But as to Spirits that are united to Bodies, those Bodies God has united them to, are their Medium of Communication: They have no other Medium of acting on other Creatures, or being acted on by them, than the Body. Therefore it is not to be supposed that **Satan** can excite any Thought, or produce any Effect in the Soul of Man, any otherwise,

than by some Motion of the animal Spirits, or by causing some Motion or Alteration in something which appertains to the Body. There is this Reason to think that the Devil cannot produce Thoughts, in the Soul immediately, or any other Way, than by the medium of the Body, **namely** That he cannot immediately see or know the Thoughts of the Soul: It is abundantly declared in the Scripture to be peculiar **to the** omniscient God to do that. But it is not likely that the Devil can **immediately produce** an Effect which is out of the Reach of his **immediate View**. It seems unreasonable to suppose that his immediate Agency, should be out of his own Sight, or that it should be impossible for him to see what he himself immediately does. Is it not unreasonable to suppose that any Spirit or intelligent Agent, should by the Act of his Will, produce Effects, according to his Understanding, or agreeable to his own Thoughts, and that immediately; and yet the Effects produced, be beyond the Reach of his Understanding, or where he can have no immediate Perception or Discerning at all? But if this be so, that the Devil cannot produce Thoughts in the Soul immediately, or any other Way than by the animal Spirits, or by the Body; then it follows, that he never brings to pass any thing **in** the Soul, but by the Imagination or Fantasy, or by exciting external Ideas. For we know that Alterations in the Body, do immediately excite no other Sort of Ideas in the Mind, but external Ideas, or Ideas of the outward Senses, or Ideas which are of the same outward Nature. As to Reflection, Abstraction, Reasoning, **etcetera** and those Thoughts and inward Motions which are the Fruits of these Acts of the Mind, they are not the next Effects of Impressions on the Body. So that it must be only by the Imagination, that **Satan** has Access to the Soul, to tempt and delude it, or suggest any

Thing to it. And this seems to be the Reason why Persons that are under the Disease of Melancholy, are commonly so visibly and remarkably subject to the Suggestions and Temptations of **Satan**: That being a Disease which peculiarly affects the animal Spirits, and is attended with Weakness of that Part of the Body which is the Fountain of the animal Spirits, even the Brain, which is, as it were, the Seat of the Fantasy. It is by Impressions made on the Brain, that any Ideas are excited in the Mind, by the Motion of the animal Spirits, or any Changes made in the Body. The Brain being thus weakened and diseased, it is less under the Command of the higher Faculties of the Soul, and yields the more easily to extrinsic Impressions, and is overpowered by the disordered Motions of the animal Spirits; and so the Devil has greater Advantage to affect the Mind, by working on the Imagination. And thus **Satan**, when he casts in those horrid Suggestions into the Minds of many **melancholy** Persons, in which they have no Hand themselves, he does it by **exciting** imaginary Ideas, either of some dreadful Words or Sentences, or other horrid outward Ideas. And when he tempts other Persons who are not melancholy, he does it by presenting to the Imagination, in a lively and alluring Manner, the Objects of their Lusts, or by exciting Ideas of Words, and so by them exciting Thoughts; or by promoting an Imagination of outward Actions, Events, Circumstances, **etcetera**. Innumerable are the Ways by which the Mind might be led on to all Kind of evil Thoughts, by exciting external Ideas in the Imagination.

If Persons keep no Guard at these Avenues of **Satan**, by which he has Access to the Soul, to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And especially, if instead of guarding against him, they lay themselves open to him, and seek and invite

him, because he appears as an Angel of Light, and counterfeits the Illuminations and Graces of the Spirit of God, by inward Whispers, and immediate Suggestions of Facts and Events, pleasant Voices, beautiful Images, and other Impressions on the Imagination. There are many who are deluded by such Things, and are lifted up with them, and seek after them, that have a continued Course of them, and can have them almost when they will; and especially when their Pride and Vain-glory has most Occasion for them, to make a Show of them before Company. It is with them, something as it is with those who are Professors of the Art of telling where lost Things are to be found, by Impressions made on their Imaginations; they laying themselves open to the Devil, he is always at Hand to give them the desired Impression.

Before I finish what I would say on this Head of Imaginations, counterfeiting spiritual Light, and Affections arising from them, I would renewedly (to prevent Misunderstanding of what has been said) desire it may be observed, that I am far from determining that no Affections are spiritual which are attended with imaginary Ideas. Such is the Nature of Man, that he can scarcely think of any Thing intensely, without some Kind of outward Ideas. They arise and interpose themselves unavoidably, in the Course of a Man's Thoughts; though oftentimes they are very confused, and are not what the Mind regards. When the Mind is much engaged, and the Thoughts intense, oftentimes the Imagination is more strong, and the outward Idea more lively; especially in Persons of some Constitutions of Body. But there is a great Difference between these two Things, **namely Lively Imaginations arising from strong Affections, and Strong Affections arising from lively Imaginations.** The former may be, and doubtless often is,

in Case of truly gracious Affections. The Affections do not arise from the Imagination, nor have any Dependence upon it; but on the contrary, the Imagination is only the accidental Effect, or Consequent of the Affection, through the Infirmary of human Nature. But when the latter is the Case, as it often is, that the Affection arises from the Imagination, and is built upon it, as its Foundation, instead of a spiritual Illumination or Discovery; then is the Affection, however elevated, worthless and vain. And this is the Drift of what has been now said, of Impressions on the Imagination. Having observed this, I proceed to another Mark of gracious Affections.

5. Truly gracious Affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual Conviction of the Judgment, of the Reality and Certainty of divine Things.

This seems to be implied in the Text that was laid as the Foundation of this Discourse, **Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet BELIEVING, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.**

All those who are truly gracious Persons have a solid, full, thorough and effectual Conviction of the Truth of the great Things of the Gospel. I mean that they no longer halt between two Opinions, the great Doctrines of the Gospel cease to be any longer doubtful Things, or Matters of Opinion, which, though probable, are yet disputable; but with them, they are Points settled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their All upon their Truth. Their Conviction is an **effectual** Conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious, and invisible Things of the Gospel, have the **Influence** of real and certain Things upon them; they have the **Weight** and **Power** of real

Things in their Hearts; and accordingly rule in their Affections, and govern them through the Course of their Lives. With Respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, and the great Things he has revealed concerning Himself, and his Father, and another World, they have not only a predominating Opinion that these Things are true, and so yield their Assent, as they do in many other Matters of doubtful Speculation; but they **see that it is really so:** Their Eyes are opened, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as to the Things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal Purposes and Designs, concerning fallen Man, and the glorious and everlasting Things prepared for the Saints in another World, they see that they are so indeed: And therefore these Things are of great Weight with them, and have a mighty Power upon their Hearts, and Influence over their Practice, in some Measure answerable to their infinite Importance.

That all true Christians have such a Kind of Conviction of the Truth of the Things of the Gospel, is abundantly manifest from the holy Scriptures. I will mention a few Places of many; Matthew 16:15, 16, 17. **But whom do you say that I am?** Simon Peter answered and said, **Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, blessed are you** Simon Barjona:—**my Father which is in Heaven, hath revealed it unto you.** John 6:68, 69. **Thou hast the Words of eternal Life: And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.** John 17:6, 7, 8. **I have manifested thy Name to the Men which thou gavest me out of the World.—Now they have known that all Things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: For I have**

given unto them, the Words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me. Acts 8:37. If you believe with all your Heart, you may. 2 Corinthians 4:11, 12, 13, 14. We who live, are always delivered unto Death, for Jesus sake:—Death worketh in us;—we having the Spirit of Faith; according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak: Knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. Together with Verse 16. For which Cause, we faint not. And Verse 18. while we look not at the Things which are seen, etc. And Chapter 5:1. For we know that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God,— And Verse 6, 7, 8. Therefore we are always confident; knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord: For we walk by Faith, not by Sight; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord. 2 Timothy 1:12. For the which Cause, I also suffer these Things: Nevertheless, I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that Day. Hebrews 3:6. Whose House are we, if we hold fast the Confidence, and the Rejoicing of the Hope, firm unto the End. Hebrews 11:1. Now Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen: Together with that whole Chapter. 1 John 4:13, 14, 15, 16. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in

us; because he hath given us of his Spirit; and we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us. Chapter 5:4, 5. For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World: And this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith. Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Therefore truly gracious Affections are attended with such a Kind of Conviction and Persuasion of the Truth of the Things of the Gospel, and Sight of their Evidence and Reality, as these and other Scriptures speak of.

There are many religious Affections, which are not attended with such a Conviction of the Judgment. There are many Apprehensions and Ideas which some have, that they call divine Discoveries, which are affecting, but not convincing. Though for a little while, they may seem to be more persuaded of the Truth of the Things of Religion, than they used to be, and may yield a forward Assent, like many of Christ's Hearers, who believed for a while; yet they have no thorough and effectual Conviction; nor is there any great abiding Change in them, in this Respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great Things of the Gospel, now these Things, with Regard to Reality and Certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them quite in another View than they used to do. There are many Persons who have been exceedingly raised with religious Affections, and think they have been converted, they do not go about the World any more con-

vinced of the Truth of the Gospel, than they used to be; or at least, there is no remarkable Alteration: They are not Men who live under the Influence and Power of a realizing Conviction of the infinite and eternal Things which the Gospel reveals: If they were, it would be impossible for them to live as they do. Because their Affections are not attended with a thorough Conviction of the Mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a Snow and Noise they make, it is like the Blaze of Tow, or Crackling of Thorns, or like the forward flourishing Blade on stony Ground, that has no Root, nor Deepness of Earth to maintain its Life.

Some Persons, under high Affections, and a confident Persuasion of their good Estate, have that, which they very ignorantly call a Seeing the Truth of the Word of God, and which is very far from it, after this Manner; they have some Text of Scripture coming to their Minds, in a sudden and extraordinary Manner, immediately declaring to them (as they suppose) that their Sins are forgiven or that God loves them, and will save them; and it may be have a Chain of Scriptures coming one after another, to the same Purpose; and they are convinced that it is Truth; **that is** they are confident that it is certainly so, that their Sins are forgiven, and God does love them, **etc.**—; they say they know it is so; and when the Words of Scripture are suggested to them, and as they suppose immediately spoken to them by God, in this Meaning, they are ready to cry out, **Truth, Truth! It is certainly so! The Word of God is true!** And this they call a Seeing the Truth of the Word of God. Whereas the Whole of their Faith amounts to no more, than only a strong Confidence of their own good Estate, and so a Confidence that those Words are true, which they suppose tell them they are in a good Estate: When indeed (as

was shown before) there is no Scripture which declares that any Person is in a good Estate directly, or any other Way than by Consequence. So that this, instead of being a real Sight of the Word of God, is a Sight of nothing but a Phantom, and is all over a Delusion. Truly to see the Truth of the Word of God, is to see the Truth of the Gospel; which is the glorious Doctrine the Word of God contains, concerning God, and Jesus Christ, and the Way of Salvation by him, and the World of Glory that he is entered into, and purchased for all them who believe; and not a Revelation that such and such particular Persons are true Christians, and shall go to Heaven. Therefore those Affections which arise from no other Persuasion of the Truth of the Word of God than this, arise from Delusion, and not true Conviction; and consequently are themselves delusive and vain.

But if the religious Affections that Persons have, do indeed arise from a strong Persuasion of the Truth of the Christian Religion; their Affections are not the better, unless their Persuasion be a **reasonable** Persuasion or Conviction. By a reasonable Conviction, I mean a Conviction founded on real Evidence, or upon that which is a good Reason, or just Ground of Conviction. Men may have a strong Persuasion that the Christian Religion is true, when their Persuasion is not at all built on Evidence, but altogether on Education, and the Opinion of others; as many **Muslims** are strongly persuaded of the Truth of the **Muslim** Religion, because their Fathers, and Neighbours, and Nation believe it. That Belief of the Truth of the Christian Religion which is built on the very same Grounds, with **Muslims** Belief of the **Muslim** Religion, is the same Sort of Belief. And though the Thing believed happens to be better; yet That does not make the Belief it-

self, to be of a better Sort: For though the Thing believed happens to be true; yet the Belief of it is not owing to this Truth, but to Education. So that as the Conviction is no better than the **Muslims** Conviction; so the Affections that flow from it, are no better, in themselves, than the religious Affections of **Muslims**.

But if that Belief of christian Doctrines, which Persons Affections arise from, be not merely from Education, but indeed from Reasons and Arguments which are offered, it will not from thence necessarily follow, that their Affections are truly gracious: For in order to that, it is requisite, not only that the Belief which their Affections arise from, should be a **reasonable**, but also a **spiritual** Belief or Conviction. I suppose none will doubt but that some natural Men do yield a Kind of Assent of their Judgments to the Truth of the christian Religion, from the rational Proofs or Arguments that are offered to evince it. **Judas**, without Doubt, thought **Jesus** to be the **Messiah**, from the Things which he saw and heard; but yet all along was a Devil. So in **John** 2. 23, 24, 25. we read of **many that believed in Christ's Name, when they saw the Miracles that he did**; whom yet Christ knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So **Simon the Sorcerer** believed, when he beheld the Miracles and Signs which were done; but yet remained **in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity**, Acts 8. 13, 23. And if there is such a Belief or Assent of the Judgment in some natural Men, none can doubt but that religious Affections may arise from that Assent or Belief; as we read of some who **believed for a while**, that were greatly affected, and **anon, with Joy received the Word**.

It is evident that there is such a Thing as a **spiritual** Belief or Conviction of the Truth of the Things of the Gospel, or a Belief that is peculiar to those who are spiritual, or who are regenerated, and have the Spirit of God, in his holy Communications, and dwelling in them as a vital Principle. So that the Conviction they have, doesn't only differ from that which natural Men have, in its Concomitants, in that it is accompanied with good Works; but the Belief itself is diverse, the Assent and Conviction of the Judgment is of a Kind peculiar to those who are spiritual, and that which natural Men are wholly destitute of. This is evident by the Scripture, if anything at all is so; John 17. 8. **They have believed that thou didst send me.** Titus 1. 1. **According to the Faith of God's Elect, and the acknowledging of the Truth which is after Godliness.** John 16. 27. **The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.** 1 John 4. 15. **Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.** Chapter 5. 1. **Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.** Verse 10. **He that believes on the Son of God, has the Witness in himself.**

What a **spiritual Conviction** of the Judgment is, we are naturally led to determine from what has been said already, under the former Head of a **spiritual Understanding**. The Conviction of the Judgment arises from the Illumination of the Understanding: The passing of a right Judgment on Things, depends on having a right Apprehension or Idea of Things. And therefore it follows, that a spiritual Conviction of the Truth of the great Things of the Gospel, is such a Conviction, as arises from having a spiritual View or Apprehension of those Things in the Mind. And this is also evi-

dent from the Scripture, which often represents, that a saving Belief of the Reality and Divinity of the Things proposed and exhibited to us in the Gospel, is from the Spirit of God's enlightening the Mind, to have right Apprehensions of the Nature of those Things, and so as it were unveiling Things, or revealing them, and enabling the Mind to view them and see them as they are: Luke 10. 21, 22. **I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast HID these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast REVEALED them unto Babes: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy Sight. All Things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no Man knows who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will REVEAL him.** John 6. 40. **And this is the Will of him that sent me; that every one that SEES the Son, and BELIEVES on him, may have everlasting Life.** Where it is plain, that true Faith arises from a spiritual Sight of Christ. And John 17. 6, 7, 8. **I have MANIFESTED thy Name unto the Men which thou gavest me out of the World—Now they have known that all Things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee; for I have given unto them the Words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.** Where Christ's manifesting God's Name to the Disciples, or giving them a true Apprehension and View of divine Things, was that whereby they knew that Christ's Doctrine was of God, and that Christ himself was of him, and was sent by him. Matthew 16. 16, 17. Simon Peter **said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, Blessed are you,**

Simon Bar-jona, **for Flesh and Blood has not REVEALED it unto you, but my Father which is in Heaven.** 1 John 5. 10. **He that believes on the Son of God, has the Witness in himself.** Galatians 1. 14, 15, 16. **Being more exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of my Fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my Mother's Womb, and called me by his Grace, to REVEAL his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen, immediately I conferred not with Flesh and Blood.**

If it be so, that That is a spiritual Conviction of the Divinity and Reality of the Things exhibited in the Gospel, which arises from a spiritual Understanding of those Things; I have shown already what that is, **namely** a Sense and Taste of the divine, supreme and holy Excellency and Beauty of those Things. So that then is the Mind spiritually convinced of the Divinity and Truth of the great Things of the Gospel, when that Conviction arises, either directly or remotely, from such a Sense or View of their divine Excellency and Glory as is there exhibited. This clearly follows from Things that have been already said; and for this the Scripture is very plain and express. 2 Corinthians 3. 3, 4, 5, 6. **But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this World has blinded the Minds of them that BELIEVE not, lest the Light of the GLORIOUS GOSPEL of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake. For God, who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, has shined in our Hearts, to give the LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD, in the Face of Jesus Christ.** Together with

the last Verse of the foregoing Chapter, which introduces this, **But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass, the GLORY OF THE LORD are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.** Nothing can be more evident then that a saving Belief of the Gospel, is here spoken of, by the Apostle, as arising from the Mind's being enlightened, to behold the divine Glory of the Things it exhibits.

This View or Sense of the divine Glory, and unparalleled Beauty of the Things exhibited to us in the Gospel, has a Tendency to convince the Mind of their Divinity, two Ways; **directly**; and more **indirectly**, and **remotely**. 1. A View of this divine Glory **directly**, convinces the Mind of the Divinity of these Things, as this Glory is in itself a direct, clear, and all-conquering Evidence of it; especially when clearly discovered, or when this supernatural Sense is given in a good Degree.

He that has his Judgment thus **directly** convinced and assured of the Divinity of the Things of the Gospel, by a clear View of their divine Glory, has a **reasonable** Conviction; his Belief and Assurance is altogether agreeable to Reason; because the divine Glory and Beauty of divine Things is in itself, real Evidence of their Divinity, and the most direct and strong Evidence. He that truly sees the divine, transcendent, supreme Glory of those Things which are divine, does as it were know their Divinity intuitively; he not only argues that they are divine, but he sees that they are divine; he sees That in them wherein Divinity chiefly consists; for in this Glory, which is so vastly and inexpressibly distinguished from the Glory of artificial Things, and all other Glory, does mainly consist the true Notion of Divinity: God is God, and distinguished from all other Beings, and exalted above them, chiefly by his divine

Beauty, which is infinitely diverse from all other Beauty. They therefore that see the Stamp of this Glory in divine Things, they see Divinity in them, they see God in them, and so see them to be divine; because they see that in them wherein the truest Idea of Divinity does consist. Thus a Soul may have a Kind of intuitive Knowledge of the Divinity of the Things exhibited in the Gospel; not that he judges the Doctrines of the Gospel to be from God, without any Argument or Deduction at all; but it is without any long Chain of Arguments; the Argument is but one, and the Evidence direct; the Mind ascends to the Truth of the Gospel but by one Step, and that is its divine Glory.

It would be very strange, if any professing Christian should deny it to be possible that there should be an Excellency in divine Things, which is so transcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other Things, that if it were seen, would evidently distinguish them. We can't rationally doubt, but that Things that are **divine**, that appertain to the supreme Being, are vastly different from Things that are **human**; that there is a god-like, high, and glorious Excellency in them, that does so distinguish them from the Things which are of Men, that the Difference is ineffable; and therefore such, as, if seen, will have a most convincing, satisfying Influence upon any one, that they are what they are, **namely** divine. Doubtless there is that Glory and Excellency in the divine Being, by which he is so infinitely distinguished from all other Beings, that if it were seen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreasonable to deny that it is possible for God, to give Manifestations of this distinguishing Excellency, in Things by which he is pleased to make himself known; and that this distinguishing Excellency may be clearly seen in them. There are **nat-**

ural Excellencies that are very evidently distinguishing of the Subjects or Authors, to any one who beholds them. How is the Speech of an understanding Man different from that of a little Child! And how greatly distinguished is the Speech of some Men of great Genius, as **Homer, Cicero, Milton, Locke, Addison,** and others, from that of many other understanding Men! There are no Limits to be set to the Degrees of Manifestation of mental Excellency, that there may be in Speech. But the Appearances of the **natural** Perfections of God, in the Manifestations he makes of himself, may doubtless be unspeakably more evidently distinguishing, than the Appearances of those Excellencies of Worms of the Dust, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with Mankind, and their Works, by viewing the Sun, may know it is no human Work. And it is reasonable to suppose, that when Christ comes at the End of the World, in the Glory of his Father, it will be with such ineffable Appearances of Divinity, as will leave no Doubt to the Inhabitants of the World, even the most obstinate Infidels, that he who appears is a divine Person. But above all, do the Manifestations of the **moral** and **spiritual** Glory of the divine Being (which is the proper Beauty of the Divinity) bring their own Evidence, and tend to assure the Heart. Thus the Disciples were assured that Jesus was the Son of God, for **they beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth,** John 1. 14. When Christ appeared in the Glory of his Transfiguration to his Disciples, with that outward Glory, to their bodily Eyes, which was a sweet and admirable Symbol and Semblance of his spiritual Glory, together with his spiritual Glory it self, manifested to their Minds; the Manifestation of Glory was such, as did perfectly, and with good

Reason, assure them of his Divinity; as appears by what one of them, **namely** the Apostle **Peter**, says concerning it, 2 Peter 1. 16, 17, 18. **For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty: For he received from God the Father, Honour and Glory; when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. And this Voice which came from Heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount.** The Apostle calls that Mount, **the holy Mount**, because the Manifestations of Christ which were there made to their Minds, and which their Minds were especially impressed and ravished with, was the Glory of his **Holiness**, or the Beauty of his **moral Excellency**; or, as another of these Disciples, who saw it, expresses it, **His Glory**, as **full of Grace and Truth**.

Now this distinguishing Glory of the divine Being has its brightest Appearance and Manifestation, in the Things proposed and exhibited to us in the Gospel, the Doctrines there taught, the Word there spoken, and the divine Counsels, Acts and Works there revealed. These Things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing Representations and Exhibitions of the Glory of God's moral Perfections, that ever were made to the World. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential Manifestation of divine Glory in the Gospel, it is reasonable to suppose that there may be such a Thing as Seeing it: What should hinder but that it may be seen? It is no Argument that it can't be seen, that some don't see it; though they may be discerning Men in temporal Matters. If there be such ineffable, distinguishing, evidential Excellencies in the Gospel, it is

reasonable to suppose that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special Influence and Enlightenings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon Force of Mind to discern the distinguishing Excellencies of the Works of Authors of great Genius: Those Things in **Milton**, which to mean Judges, appear tasteless and Imperfections, are his inimitable Excellencies in the Eyes of those who are of greater Discerning, and better Taste. And if there be a Book, which God is the Author of, it is most reasonable to suppose that the distinguishing Glories of his Word are of such a Kind, as that the Sin and Corruption of Men's Hearts, which above all Things alienates Men from the Deity, and makes the Heart dull and stupid to any Sense or Taste of those Things wherein the moral Glory of the divine Perfections consists; I say, it is but reasonable to suppose, that this would blind Men from discerning the Beauties of such a Book; and that therefore they will not see them, but as God is pleased to enlighten them, and restore an holy Taste, to discern and relish divine Beauties.

This Sense of the spiritual Excellency and Beauty of divine Things, does also tend **directly** to convince the Mind of the Truth of the Gospel, as there are very many of the most important Things declared in the Gospel, that are hid from the Eyes of natural Men, the Truth of which does in Effect consist in this Excellency, or does so immediately depend upon it and result from it; that in this Excellency's being seen, the Truth of those Things is seen. As soon as ever the Eyes are opened to behold the holy Beauty and Amiableness that is in divine Things, a Multitude of most important Doctrines of the Gospel, that depend upon it, (which all appear strange and dark to natural Men) are at once seen to be true. As for Instance, hereby appears the Truth of what the Word of God

declares concerning the exceeding Evil of Sin; for the same Eye that discerns the transcendent Beauty of Holiness, necessarily therein sees the exceeding Odiousness of Sin: The same Taste which relishes the Sweetness of true moral Good, tastes the Bitterness of moral Evil. And by this Means a Man sees his own Sinfulness and Loathsomeness; for he has now a Sense to discern Objects of this Nature; and so sees the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning the exceeding Sinfulness of Mankind, which before he did not see. He now sees the dreadful Pollution of his Heart, and the desperate Depravity of his Nature, in a new Manner; for his Soul has now a Sense given it to feel the Pain of such a Disease: And this shows him the Truth of what the Scripture reveals concerning the Corruption of Man's Nature, his original Sin, and the ruinous undone Condition Man is in, and his need of a Saviour, his need of the mighty Power of God to renew his Heart and change his Nature. Men by seeing the true Excellency of Holiness, do see the Glory of all those Things, which both Reason and Scripture show to be in the divine Being; for it has been shown that the Glory of them depends on this: And hereby they see the Truth of all that the Scripture declares concerning God's glorious Excellency and Majesty, his being the Fountain of all Good, the only Happiness of the Creature, etc. And this again shows the Mind the Truth of what the Scripture teaches concerning the Evil of Sin against so glorious a God; and also the Truth of what it teaches concerning Sin's just Desert of that dreadful Punishment which it reveals; and also concerning the Impossibility of our offering any Satisfaction, or sufficient Atonement, for that which is so infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shows the Truth of what the Scripture reveals concern-

ing the Necessity of a Saviour, to offer an Atonement of infinite Value for Sin. And this Sense of spiritual Beauty that has been spoken of, enables the Soul to see the Glory of those Things which the Gospel reveals concerning the Person of Christ; and so enables to see the exceeding Beauty and Dignity of his Person, appearing in what the Gospel exhibits of his Word, Works, Acts and Life: And this Apprehension of the superlative Dignity of his Person, shows the Truth of what the Gospel declares concerning the Value of his Blood and Righteousness, and so the infinite Excellency of the Offering he has made to God for us, and so its Sufficiency to atone for our Sins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God discovers the Way of Salvation by Christ: Thus the Soul sees the Fitness and Suitableness of this Way of Salvation, the admirable Wisdom of the Contrivance, and the perfect Answerableness of the Provision that the Gospel exhibits, (as made for us) to our Necessities. A Sense of true divine Beauty being given to the Soul, the Soul discerns the Beauty of every Part of the Gospel Scheme. This also shows the Soul the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning Man's chief Happiness, as consisting in holy Exercises and Enjoyments. This shows the Truth of what the Gospel declares concerning the unspeakable Glory of the heavenly State. And what the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and the Writings of the Apostles declare concerning the Glory of the Messiah's Kingdom, is now all plain; and also what the Scripture teaches concerning the Reasons and Grounds of our Duty. The Truth of all these Things revealed in the Scripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appear to the Soul, only by imparting that spiritual Taste of divine Beauty, which has been spoken of. They being hidden Things to the Soul before.

And besides all this, the Truth of all those Things which the Scripture says about experimental Religion, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the Soul that one who knew the Heart of Man, better than we know our own Hearts, and perfectly knew the Nature of Virtue and Holiness, was the Author of the Scriptures. And the opening to View, with such Clearness, such a World of wonderful and glorious Truth in the Gospel, that before was unknown, being quite above the View of a natural Man, but now appearing so clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible Influence on the Soul, to persuade of the Divinity of the Gospel.

Unless Men may come to a reasonable solid Persuasion and Conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, by the internal Evidences of it, in the Way that has been spoken, namely, By a Sight of its Glory; it is impossible that those who are illiterate, and unacquainted with History, should have any thorough and effectual Conviction of it at all. They may without this, see a great deal of Probability of it; it may be reasonable for them to give much Credit to what learned Men, and Historians tell them; and they may tell them so much, that it may look very probable and rational to them, that the Christian Religion is true; and so much that they would be very unreasonable not to entertain this Opinion. But to have a Conviction, so clear, and evident, and assuring, as to be sufficient to induce them, with Boldness, to sell all, confidently and fearlessly to run the Venture of the Loss of all Things, and of enduring the most exquisite and long-continued Torments, and to trample the World under Foot, and count all Things but Dung, for Christ; the Evidence they can have from History, cannot be sufficient. It is impossible that Men, who have not something of a general View of

the historical World, or the Series of History from Age to Age, should come at the Force of Arguments for the Truth of Christianity, drawn from History, to that Degree, as effectually to induce them to venture their all upon it. After all that learned Men have said to them, there will remain innumerable Doubts on their Minds: They will be ready, when pinched with some great Trial of their Faith, to say, How do I know this, or that? How do I know when these Histories were written? Learned Men tell me these Histories were so and so attested in the Day of them; but how do I know that there were such Attestations then? They tell me there is equal Reason to believe these Facts, as any whatsoever that are related at such a Distance; but how do I know that other Facts which are related of those Ages, ever were? Those who have not something of a general View of the Series of historical Events, and of the State of Mankind from Age to Age, cannot see the clear Evidence from History, of the Truth of Facts, in distant Ages; but there will endless Doubts and Scruples remain.

But the Gospel was not given only for learned Men. There are at least Nineteen in Twenty, if not Ninety-nine in a Hundred, of those for whom the Scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual Conviction of the divine Authority of the Scriptures, by such Arguments as learned Men make use of. If Men who have been brought up in Heathenism must wait for a clear and certain Conviction of the Truth of Christianity, nor have I Learning and Acquaintance with the History of Ages enough to see clearly the Force of such Kind of Arguments: it will make the Evidence of the Gospel, to them, immensely difficult, and will render the Propagation of the Gospel among them infinitely difficult. Miserable is the Condition of the **Heathen**, and others who have

lately manifested a Desire to be instructed in Christianity: if they can come at no Evidence of the Truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in no other Way but this.

It is unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided for his People, no more than probable Evidences of the Truth of the Gospel. He has with great Care, abundantly provided, and given them, the most convincing, assuring, satisfying and manifold Evidence of his Faithfulness in the Covenant of Grace; and as **David** says, **made a Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure.** Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same Time, he would not fail of ordering the Matter so, that there should not be wanting, as great, and clear Evidence, **that this is his Covenant,** and that these Promises are his Promises; or which is the same Thing, that the Christian Religion is true, and that the Gospel is his Word. Otherwise in vain are those great Assurances he has given of his Faithfulness in his Covenant, by confirming it with his Oath, and so variously establishing it by Seals and Pledges. For the Evidence that it is his Covenant, is properly the Foundation on which all the Force and Effect of those other Assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some Sort of Evidence which God has given, that this Covenant, and these Promises are his, beyond all mere Probability; that there are some Grounds of Assurance of it held forth, which, if we are not blind to them, tend to give an higher Persuasion, than any arguing from History, human Tradition, **et cetera** which the Illiterate, and Unacquainted with History, are capable of; yea, that which is good Ground of the highest and most perfect Assurance, that Mankind have in any Case whatsoever; agreeable to those high Expressions which the Apostle uses, Hebrews 10:22. **Let us**

draw near in FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH. And Colossians 2:2. **That their Hearts might be comforted, being knit together in Love, and unto ALL RICHES, OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, to the Acknowledgment of the Mystery of God and of the Father, and of Christ.** It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest Evidence, of those Things which are greatest, and the Truth of which is of greatest Importance to us: And that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest Desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect Assurance of. But it is certain, that such an Assurance is not to be attained, by the greater Part of them who live under the Gospel, by Arguments derived from ancient Traditions, Histories, and Monuments.

And if we come to Fact and Experience, there is not the least Reason to suppose, that One in a Hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a Heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their Conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, this Way. If we read over the Histories of the many Thousands that died Martyrs for Christ, since the Beginning of the Reformation, and have cheerfully undergone extreme Tortures, in a Confidence of the Truth of the Gospel, and consider their Circumstances and Advantages; how few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured Persuasion, this Way; those for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an Assurance, from such Arguments! Many of them were weak Women and Children, and the greater Part of them illiterate Persons, many of whom had been brought up in Popish Ignorance and Darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in Times, wherein those Arguments for the Truth of

Christianity from Antiquity and History, been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, it is but very lately that these Arguments have been set in a clear and convincing Light, even by learned Men themselves: And since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough Believers, among those who have been educated in the true Religion: Infidelity never prevailed so much, in any Age, as in this, wherein these Arguments are handled to the greatest Advantage.

The true Martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in Opinion that the Gospel of Christ is true, but **those that have seen the Truth of it**; as the very Name of Martyrs or Witnesses (by which they are called in Scripture) implies. Those are very improperly called Witnesses of the Truth of any Thing, who only declare they are very much of Opinion that such a Thing is true. Those only are proper Witnesses who can, and do testify that they have seen the Truth of the Thing they assert; John 3:11. **We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.** John 1:34. **And I saw, and bear Record, that this is the Son of God.** 1 John 4:14. **And we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son, to be the Saviour of the World.** Acts 22:14, 15. **The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his Will, and see that just One, and shouldest hear the Voice of his Mouth: For thou shalt be his Witness unto all Men, of what thou hast seen and heard.** But the true Martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his Witnesses: and all the Saints, who by their holy Practice under great Trials, declare that Faith, **which is the SUBSTANCE of Things hoped for, and the EVIDENCE of Things not seen**, are called Witnesses; **Hebrews** 11:1 and 12:1 because by their Profession and Practice,

they declare their Assurance of the Truth and Divinity of the Gospel, having had the Eyes of their Minds enlightened, to see Divinity in the Gospel, or to behold that unparalleled, ineffably excellent, and truly divine Glory shining in it, which is altogether distinguishing, evidential, and convincing: So that they may truly be said to have seen God in it, and to have seen that it is indeed divine: And so can speak in the Style of Witnesses: and not only say, that **they think** the Gospel is divine, but say, that **it is divine**, giving it in as their Testimony, because they have seen it to be so. Doubtless **Peter, James, and John**, after they had seen that excellent Glory of Christ in the Mount, would have been ready, when they came down, to speak in the Language of Witnesses, and to say positively that **Jesus is the Son of God**; as **Peter** says, **they were Eye-witnesses**, 2 Peter 1:16. And so all Nations will be ready positively to say this, when they shall behold his Glory at the Day of Judgment; though what will be universally seen, will be only his natural Glory, and not his moral and spiritual Glory, which is much more distinguishing. But yet, it must be noted, that among those who have a spiritual Sight of the divine Glory of the Gospel, there is a great Variety of Degrees of Strength of Faith, as there is a vast Variety of the Degrees of Clearness of Views of this Glory: But there is no true and saving Faith, or spiritual Conviction of the Judgment, of the Truth of the Gospel, that has nothing in it, of this Manifestation of its internal Evidence, in some Degree. The Gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad a begging for its Evidence, so much as some think; it has its highest and most proper Evidence in itself. Though great Use may be made of external Arguments, they are not to be neglected, but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly serviceable to awaken Unbelievers,

and bring them to serious Consideration, and to confirm the Faith of true Saints: Yea they may be in some Respects subservient **to the begetting** of a saving Faith in Men. Though what was said before remains true, that there is no spiritual Conviction of the Judgment, but what arises from an Apprehension of the spiritual Beauty and Glory of divine Things: For, as has been observed, this Apprehension or View has a Tendency to convince the Mind of the Truth of the Gospel, two Ways, either directly or indirectly. Having therefore already observed how it does this directly, I proceed now

2. To observe how a View of this divine Glory does convince the Mind of the Truth of Christianity, more indirectly.

First, It does so as the Prejudices of the Heart against the Truth of divine Things are hereby removed, so that the Mind thereby has open to the Force of the Reasons which are offered. The Mind of Man is naturally full of Enmity against the Doctrines of the Gospel; which is a Disadvantage to those Arguments that prove their Truth, and causes them to lose their Force upon the Mind: But when a Person has discovered to him the divine Excellency of Christian Doctrines, this destroys that Enmity, and removes the Prejudices, and sanctifies the Reason, and causes it to be open and free. Hence is a vast Difference, as to the Force that Arguments have to convince the Mind. Hence was the very different Effect, which Christ's Miracles had to convince the **Disciples**, from what they had to convince the **Scribes** and **Pharisees**: Not that they had a stronger Reason, or had their Reason more improved; but their Reason was sanctified, and those blinding Prejudices, which the **Scribes** and **Pharisees** were under, were removed, by the Sense they had of the Excellency of Christ and his Doctrine.

Secondly, It not only removes the Hindrances of Reason, but positively helps Reason. It makes even the speculative Notions more lively. It assists and engages the Attention of the Mind to that Kind of Objects which causes it to have a clearer View of them, and more clearly to see their mutual Relations. The Ideas themselves, which otherwise are dim and obscure, by this Means have a Light cast upon them, and are impressed with greater Strength; so that the Mind can better judge of them, as he that beholds the Objects on the Face of the Earth, when the Light of the Sun is cast upon them, is under greater Advantage to discern them, in their true Forms, and mutual Relations, and to see the Evidences of divine Wisdom and Skill in their Contrivance, than he that sees them in a dim Starlight, or Twilight.

What has been said, may serve in some Measure to show the Nature of a spiritual Conviction of the Judgment of the Truth and Reality of divine Things; and so to distinguish truly gracious Affections from others; for gracious Affections are evermore attended with such a Conviction of the Judgment.

But before I dismiss this Head, it will be needful to observe the Ways whereby some are deceived, with respect to this Matter; and take Notice of several Things, that are sometimes taken for a spiritual and saving Belief of the Truth of the Things of Religion, which are indeed very diverse from it.

1. There is a Degree of Conviction of the Truth of the great Things of Religion, that arises from the common Enlightenings of the Spirit of God. That more lively and sensible Apprehension of the Things of Religion, with Respect to what is **natural** in them, such as natural Men have who are under Awakenings and common Illuminations, will give some Degree of Conviction of the Truth of

divine Things, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For hereby they see the Manifestations there are, in the Revelation made in the holy Scriptures, and things exhibited in that Revelation, of the natural Perfections of God, such as his Greatness, Power, and awful Majesty; which tends to convince the Mind, that this is the Word of a great and terrible God. From the Tokens there are of God's Greatness and Majesty in his Word and Works, which they have a great Sense of, from the common Influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater Conviction that these are indeed the Word and Works of a very great invisible Being. And the lively Apprehension of the Greatness of God, which natural Men may have, tends to make them sensible of the great Guilt, which Sin against such a God brings, and the Dreadfulness of his Wrath for Sin. And this tends to cause them more easily and fully to believe the Revelation the Scripture makes of another World, and of the extreme Misery it threatens, there to be inflicted on Sinners. And so from that Sense of the great natural Good there is in the Things of Religion, which is sometimes given in common Illuminations, Men may be the more induced to believe the Truth of Religion. These Things Persons may have, and yet have no Sense of the Beauty and Amiableness of the moral and holy Excellency that is in the Things of Religion; and therefore no spiritual Conviction of their Truth. But yet such Convictions are sometimes mistaken, for saving Convictions, and the Affections flowing from them, for saving Affections.

2. The extraordinary Impressions which are made on the Imaginations of some Persons, in the Visions, and immediate strong Impulses and Suggestions that they have, as though they saw Sight, and had Words spoken to them, may, and often do

beget a strong Persuasion of the Truth of invisible Things. Though the general Tendency of such Things, in their final Issue, is to draw Men off from the Word of God, and to cause them to reject the Gospel, and to establish Unbelief and Atheism; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident Persuasion of the Truth of some Things that are revealed in the Scriptures; however their Confidence is founded in Delusion, and so nothing worth. As for Instance, if a Person has by some invisible Agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his Imagination, the Appearance of a bright Light, and glorious Form of a Person seated on a Throne, with great external Majesty and Beauty, uttering some remarkable Words, with great Force and Energy; The Person who is the Subject of such an Operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible Agents, spiritual Beings from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no Hand himself in this extraordinary Effect, which he has experienced: And he may also be confident that this is Christ, whom he saw and heard speaking: And this may make him confident that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a Throne in Heaven, as he saw him; and may be confident that the Words which he heard him speak are true, **et cetera** —In the same Manner, as the lying Miracles of the Papists, may for the present, beget in the Minds of the ignorant deluded People, a strong Persuasion of the Truth of many Things declared in the New Testament. Thus when the Images of Christ, in popish Churches, are on some extraordinary Occasions, made by Priestcraft to appear to the People as if they wept, and shed fresh Blood, and moved, and uttered such and such Words; the People may be verily persuaded that it is a Miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that

what they are told of his Death and Sufferings, and Resurrection, and Ascension, and present Government of the World is true; for they may look upon this Miracle, as a certain Evidence of all these Things, and a Kind of ocular Demonstration of them. This may be the Influence of these lying Wonders for the present; though the general Tendency of them is not to convince that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, but finally to promote Atheism. Even the Intercourse which **Satan** has with Witches, and their often experiencing his immediate Power, has a Tendency to convince them of the Truth of some of the Doctrines of Religion; as particularly the Reality of an invisible World, or World of Spirits, contrary to the Doctrine of the **Sadducees**. The general Tendency of **Satan's** Influences is Delusion: But yet he may mix some Truth with his Lies, that his Lies may not be so easily discovered.

There are multitudes that are deluded with a counterfeit Faith, from Impressions on their Imagination, in the Manner which has been now spoken of. They say they know that there is a God, for they have seen him; they know that Christ is the Son of God, for they have seen him in his Glory; they know that Christ died for Sinners, for they have seen him hanging on the Cross, and his Blood running from his Wounds; they know there is a Heaven and a Hell, for they have seen the Misery of the damned Souls in Hell, and the Glory of Saints and Angels in Heaven, (meaning some external Representations, strongly impressed on their Imagination;) they know that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and that such and such Promises in particular, are his Word, for they have heard him speak them to them, they came to their Minds suddenly and immediately from God, without their having any Hand in it.

3. Persons may seem to have their Belief of the Truth of the Things of Religion greatly increased, when the Foundation of it is only a Persuasion they have received, of their Interest in them. They first, by some Means or other, take up a Confidence that, if there be a Christ and Heaven, they are theirs; and this prejudices them more in favour of the Truth of them. When they hear of the great and glorious Things of Religion, it is with this Notion, that all these Things belong to them; and hence easily become confident that they are true: They look upon it to be greatly for their Interest that they should be true. It is very obvious what a strong Influence Men's Interest and Inclinations have on their Judgments. While a natural Man thinks that, if there be a Heaven and Hell; the Latter, and not the Former, belongs to him; then he will be hardly persuaded that there is a Heaven or Hell: But when he comes to be persuaded, that Hell belongs only to other Folks, and not to him; then he can easily allow the Reality of Hell, and cry out of others Senselessness and Sottishness in neglecting Means of Escape from it: And being confident that he is a Child of God, and that God has promised Heaven to him, he may seem strong in the Faith of its Reality, and may have a great Zeal against that Infidelity which denies it.

But I proceed to another distinguishing Sign of gracious Affections.

6. Gracious Affections are attended with **evangelical Humiliation**.

Evangelical Humiliation is a Sense that a Christian has of his own utter Insufficiency, Despicableness, and Odiousness, with an answerable Frame of Heart.

There is a Distinction to be made between a **legal** and **evangelical** Humiliation. The Former is what Men may be the Subjects of, while they are yet in a State of Nature, and have no gracious Affection; the Latter is peculiar to true Saints: The Former is from the common Influence of the Spirit of God, assisting natural Principles, and especially natural Conscience; the Latter is from the special Influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exercising supernatural and divine Principles: The Former is from the Mind's being assisted to a greater Sense of the Things of Religion, as to their natural Properties and Qualities, and particularly of the natural Perfections of God, such as his Greatness, terrible Majesty, **et cetera** which were manifested to the Congregation of **Israel**, in giving the Law at Mount **Sinai**; the Latter is from a Sense of the transcendent Beauty of divine Things in their moral Qualities: In the Former a Sense of the awful Greatness, and natural Perfections of God, and of the Strictness of his Law, convinces Men that they are exceeding sinful, and guilty, and exposed to the Wrath of God, as it will wicked Men and Devils at the Day of Judgment; but they do not see their own **Odiouness** on the Account of Sin; they do not see the hateful Nature of Sin; a Sense of this is given in **evangelical Humiliation**, by a Discovery of the Beauty of God's Holiness and moral Perfection. In a **legal Humiliation**, Men are made sensible that they are little and nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly insufficient to help themselves; as wicked Men will be at the Day of Judgment: But they have not **an answerable Frame of Heart**, consisting in a Disposition to abase themselves, and exalt God alone: This Disposition is given only in evangelical Humiliation, by overcoming the Heart, and changing its Inclination, by a Discovery of God's

holy Beauty: In a legal Humiliation, the Conscience is convinced; as the Consciences of all will be most perfectly at the Day of Judgment: but because there is no spiritual Understanding, the Will is not bowed, nor the Inclination altered: This is done only in evangelical Humiliation. In legal Humiliation Men are brought to despair of helping themselves; in Evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themselves: In the Former they are subdued and forced to the Ground; in the Latter, they are brought sweetly to yield, and freely and with Delight to prostrate themselves at the Feet of God.

Legal Humiliation has in it no spiritual Good, nothing of the Nature of true Virtue; whereas evangelical Humiliation is that wherein the excellent Beauty of christian Grace does very much consist. Legal Humiliation is useful, as a Means in order to Evangelical; as a common Knowledge of the Things of Religion is a Means requisite in order to spiritual Knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no **Humility**; as the Wicked at the Day of Judgment will be thoroughly convinced that they have no Righteousness, but are altogether sinful, and exceeding guilty, and justly exposed to eternal Damnation, and be fully sensible of their own Helplessness, without the least Mortification of the Pride of their Hearts: But the Essence of evangelical Humiliation consists in such **Humility**, as becomes a Creature, in itself exceeding sinful, under a Dispensation of Grace; consisting in a mean Esteem of himself, as in himself nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a Mortification of a Disposition to exalt himself, and a free Renunciation of his own Glory.

This is a great and most essential thing in true religion. The whole frame of the Gospel, and everything appertaining to the new Covenant, and all God's dispensations towards fallen man, are calculated to bring to pass this effect in the hearts of men. They that are destitute of this, have no true religion, whatever profession they may make, and how high soever their religious affections may be; Habakkuk 2:4. **Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith: that is** He shall live by his faith on God's righteousness and grace, and not his own goodness and excellency. God has abundantly manifested in his word, that this is what he has a peculiar respect to in his saints, and that nothing is acceptable to him without it; Psalm 34:18. **The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.** Psalm 51:17. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.** Psalm 138:6. **Though the Lord be high, he hath respect unto the lowly,** Proverbs 3:34. **He giveth grace unto the lowly.** Isaiah 57:15. **Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.** Isaiah 66:1, 2. **Thus saith the Lord, the Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool:—But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.** Micah 6:8. **He hath showed you, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord your God require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your**

God? Matthew 5:3. **Blessed are the poor in spirit: For theirs is the kingdom of God.** Matthew 18:3, 4. **Verily I say unto you, Except you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.** Mark 10:15. **Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.** The **centurion**, that we have an account of **Luke 7**, acknowledged that **he was not worthy that Christ should enter under his roof**, and that **he was not worthy to come to him**. See the manner of the woman's coming to Christ that was a sinner, **Luke 7:37**, etcetera. **And behold a woman in the city which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head.** She did not think the hair of her head, which is the natural crown and glory of a woman, (**1 Corinthians 11:15**) too good to wipe the feet of Christ withal. Jesus most graciously accepted her, and says to her, **Your faith hath saved you, go in peace.** The woman of **Canaan** submitted to Christ, in his saying, **It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs**, and did as it were own that she was worthy to be called a dog, whereupon Christ says unto her, **O woman, great is your faith; be it unto you, even as you will.** Matthew 15:26, 27. The **prodigal son** said, **I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your**

son; make me as one of your hired servants, Luke 15:18, etcetera. See also Luke 18:9, etcetera. **And he spoke this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others, etcetera. —The publican standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Matthew 23:12. And they came, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Colossians 3:12. Put you on, as the elect of God, —Humbleness of mind. Ezekiel 20:41, 43. I will accept you with your sweet savor, when I bring you out from the people, etcetera. —And there shall you remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein you have been defiled; and you shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils that you have committed. Chapter 36:26, 27, 31. A new heart also will I give unto you, —and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, etcetera. —Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Chapter 16:63. That you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth any more, because of your shame; when I am pacified toward you, for all that you have done, saith the Lord. Job 42:6. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**

As we would therefore make the holy Scriptures our rule, in judging of the nature of true religion, and judging of our own religious qualifications and state; it concerns us greatly to look at this humiliation, as one of the most essential things pertaining to true Christianity. This is the principal part of the great Christian duty of **Self-denial**: That duty consists in two things, **namely First**, In a man's denying his worldly inclinations, and in forsaking and renouncing all worldly objects and enjoyments; and **Secondly**, In denying his natural self-exaltation, and renouncing his own dignity and glory, and in being emptied of himself; so that he does freely, and from his very heart, as it were renounce himself, and annihilate himself. Thus the Christian does, in evangelical humiliation. And this latter is the greatest and most difficult part of self-denial: Although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural men can come much nearer to the former than the latter. Many **Anchorites** and **Recluses** have abandoned (though without any true mortification) the wealth, and pleasures, and common enjoyments of the world, who were far from renouncing their own dignity and righteousness; they never denied themselves for Christ, but only sold one lust to feed another, sold a beastly lust to pamper a devilish one; and so were never the better, but their latter end was worse than their beginning; they turned out one black devil, to let in seven white ones, that were worse than the first, though of a fairer countenance. It is inexpressible, and almost inconceivable, how strong a self-righteous, self-exalting disposition is naturally in man; and what he will not do and suffer, to feed and gratify it; and what lengths have been gone in a seeming self-denial in other respects, by **Essenes** and **Pharisees** among the **Jews**, and by **Papists**, many sects of

heretics, and enthusiasts, among professing Christians; and by many **Mahometans**; and by **Pythagorean** philosophers, and others, among the heathen: And all to do sacrifice to this **Moloch** of spiritual pride or self-righteousness; and that they may have something wherein to exalt themselves before God, and above their fellow-creatures.

That humiliation which has been spoken of, is what all the most glorious hypocrites, who make the most splendid show of mortification to the world, and high religious affection, do grossly fail in. Were it not that this is so much insisted on in scripture, as a most essential thing in true grace; one would be tempted to think that many of the heathen philosophers were truly gracious, in whom was so bright an appearance of many virtues, and also great illuminations, and inward fervors and elevations of mind, as though they were truly the subjects of divine illapses and heavenly communications.

It is true that many hypocrites make great pretenses to humility, as well as other graces; and very often there is nothing whatsoever which they make a higher profession of. They endeavor to make a great show of humility in speech and behavior; but they commonly make bungling work of it; though glorious work in their own eyes. They can't find out what a humble speech and behavior is, or how to speak and act so that there may indeed be a savor of Christian humility in what they say and do: That sweet humble air and mien is beyond their art, being not **led by the Spirit**, or naturally guided to a behavior becoming holy humility, by the vigor of a lowly spirit within them. And therefore they have no other way, many of them, but only to be much in declaring that they be humble, and telling how they were humbled to the dust at such and

such times, and abounding in very bad expressions which they use about themselves; such as, **I am the least of all saints, I am a poor vile creature, I am not worthy of the least mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked heart! my heart is worse than the devil! Oh, this cursed heart of mine,** etcetera. Such expressions are very often used, not with a heart that is broken, not with spiritual mourning, not with the tears of her that washed Jesus's feet with her tears, not as **remembering and being confounded, and never opening their mouth more, because of their shame, when God is pacified,** as the expression is, Ezekiel 16:63. But with a light air, with smiles in the countenance, or with a pharisaical affectation: And we must believe that they are thus humble, and make themselves so vile, upon the credit of their **Say so;** for there is nothing appears in them of any savor or humility, in the manner of their deportment and deeds that they do. There are many that are full of expressions of their own vileness, who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright saints by others, as their due; and it is dangerous for any, so much as to hint the contrary, or to carry it towards them any otherwise, than as if we looked upon them some of the chief of Christians. There are many that are much in crying out of their wicked hearts, and then great shortcomings, and unprofitableness, and speaking as though they looked on themselves as the meanest of the saints; who yet, if a minister should seriously tell them the same things in private, and should signify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians, and thought they had reason solemnly to consider of their great barrenness, and unprofitableness, and falling so much

short of many others; it would be more than they could digest: they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be danger of a rooted prejudice in them against such a minister.

THANKS FOR READING



If you spotted a typo or have feedback, the email is **sam@goodsoilapps.com** — or use the in-app feedback form in *Christian Reader*.