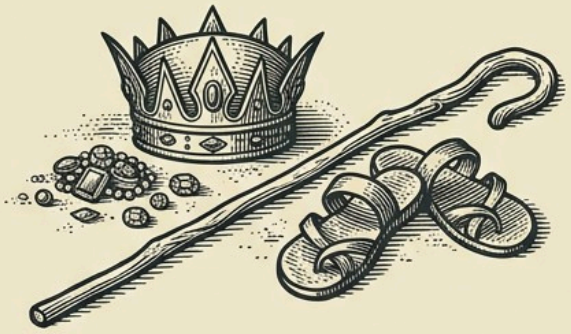
MOSES CHOICE

JEREMIAH BURROUGHS



Moses Choice

Jeremiah Burroughs

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About this Book

A rich Puritan exposition of Hebrews 11:25–26, tracing Moses's **faith-driven choice** to suffer with God's people rather than enjoy Egypt's fleeting pleasures. Burroughs unfolds the **afflicted condition of the saints**, the superior worth of **communion with God's people**, the nature of **reproach as Christ's reproach**, and the glorious **recompense of eternal reward**. Spanning 58 chapters, it is a sustained call to count the cost of godliness and find it infinitely worthwhile.

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To the Right Honorable, Robert Earl of Warwick, Baron of Leeze, One of the Lords of his Majesties most Honorable Privy Councel

• • •

Right Honorable,

AS those who have been of late, and in these days yet are of the Antichristian party, may well be accounted men born in an evil time; because howsoever heretofore was the time of Gods long suffering towards such,the time of permission of them to prosper, the set time of Antichrists downfall then being further off then now it is. But now Gods time of setting his face against Antichrist, and all the Antichristian party, is come, in which GOD is determined to fight against them, and to ruine them; most wretched men therefore are they who now have spirits set for the upholding, the pleading for that which God has set himself against. So happy especially now are those whose hearts have been, and still are set to countenance, maintain, to further and honor the truth of the Gospel, in the power and purity of it; These are born and raised up by God, and for God, in a most blessed time, in which God stretches out his holy Arm together with them, their

hearts are guided by God himself, to the furtherance of that work which is the greatest work that God has to do in this latter age of the world; namely, To bring in his Truth and Ordinances with glory and power, to set up Jerusalem as the praise of the earth, to make godliness, and the powerful profession of it, as honorable as ever it has been contemptible. And now (Right Honorable) God has been pleased to bless your Noble Family for many years past, with this so great a blessing,as to make it instrumental to this great work of his, and yourself have had a plentiful share in this so great a happiness: Your Honor has discountenanced superstitious time-serving spirits, but as for the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, and the most sincere and godly of your Countrey, your Honor has cast much respect upon them, and been the encourager of them, which reflects Honor, as upon Gods name and his truth, so upon your noble Family; I believe there has not ascended to Heaven more praises to God from any County in England for any Noble Family, in regard of the placing of a godly, painful, conscientious Ministery, as has ascended from that County, in which your Honor, and your truly Noble Father, has had such a large opportunity of service for God, and doing good to his people: And I may further confidently affirm, That no Noble Family in England has more prayers of the Saints ascending to Heaven for a blessing upon it, then that family of yours; neither is there any Noble Family this day, shall I say in England? I may without presumption reach it further, which the Lord has blessed, in regard of some Branches of it, with more beauty and power of godliness then he has blessed yours; in regard whereof, it would be the most miserable thing that could be, if ever the succession of the countenancing and honoring the ways of godliness, should be cut off from

such a noble Family. Cursed be that man who shall be the cutter off of the succession of so great an Honor to such an Honorable Family. Psalm 72:17 it is said, The name of Christ should endure for ever; Filiabitur nomine ejus, so the words are, it shall be begotten, as one generation is begotten of another, and so there shall be a succession of Christs name. It is a most blessed thing when in a Family there is a begetting of the name of Christ, and so it is left unto the succeeding generation, as the name of the Family is left unto it: Pliny tells us, that it was accounted a great honor, yea the height of felicity, that in one house and Race of the Curio's, there were known to be three excellent Orators one after another, by descent from the Father to the Son; and that the Fabii afforded three Presidents of the Senate, in course one immediately succeeding the other. If this succession be so honorable, so happy, how honorable, how happy does the succession of Religion from Father to Son, make Families to be?

This succession in your noble Family, is the subject of the prayers of many precious spirits, exceedingly dear to God: And my Lord, although God has made you exceeding instrumental for much good to his people, which is one of the greatest blessings under heaven, yet let not your Lordship rest in this: Gods warning to Solomon, 1 Kings 9:4 is very observable, after Solomon had finished that glorious Temple for the honor of the Lord, after he had assembled all the Elders of Israel, to bring up the Ark of the Lord with all solemnity, after he had made such an excellent Prayer before all the people, after he had offered to the Lord two and twenty thousand Oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and in his rejoicing in this great work done to the honor of God, he made a great Feast to all the people seven days, and to them he

added seven days more, and sent away the people with joyful and glad hearts; yet after this, God says to him, If you will walk before me as David your father walked, in integrity of heart, and up rightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom. Though the things that you have done be great things, yet I expect walking according to all that I have commanded you, or else all is nothing. It were infinite pity, and God forbid so great an evil, that any one way of sin should ever stand up, to hinder the blessing upon a noble spirit, and such worthy services for the Church as you have done, well beseeming that true nobility of such a spirit.

Your Honor has appeared much for the Honor, the Safety, Peace, Liberties of the Saints and your Countrey; and how many now have their consciences check them, and shame is upon their faces for that base cowardise and vile time-serving, that the true nobility of your Lordships spirit (scorning such baseness) delivered you from. God has now appeared for his people more then ever, in our or our Forefathers time, do you now appear more then ever for them; As God has mightily enlarged the opportunity of service, so the good God enlarge and heighten with true Nobility and Christian generousness your Noble spirit, that you may be as a chosen shaft in the Quiver of the Lord, reserved to these times, to be in a high degree instrumental to his praise.

It is now near three years since that your Lordship lying sick, not without apprehension that Gods time to call you from the Land of the living was come, I was then for some time daily with your Lordship, and all the desires you expressed for life were, That you might live to do God service here: God then spared your life, and now my Lord, I beseech your Honor to give me leave to mind your

Lordship of these desires, and those Covenants you made with God if ever he restored you. Surely the Vows of God are upon you, God has now put an opportunity into your hand to fulfil them, and all other you have ever made unto him, and now he expects the performance of them; now there are opportunities of that service that may draw forth all that nobility of your spirit, in which you may give testimony of thankfulness for all mercies so abundantly heaped upon you, and be faithful in performing of all your vows, and blessed be God for this opportunity: This is your honor, to account opportunity of service for God and his people your greatest honor upon earth.

Go on and prosper, and the Lord recompence all that respect you have shown to his servants, and amongst others to myself; Therefore in duty to you I here present your Honor with this Treatise of Moses his Choice, which ventures to come to the view of the world for furtherance and encouragement in such a happy choice, blessed with such a happy reward as the eye of Moses in this his choice was fixed upon; And herein I gladly takethe occasion to make an honorable mention of your Name, that I might testify not only to your Honor, but to all the world, my thankful remembrance and due acknowledgement of your Lordships undeserved respects toward me, who am and ever shall be,

Your Honors in all humble and due observance, Jeremiah Burroughs.

Part 1

HEB. 11:25_Chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Chapter I: God will sometimes be honored, rather with the sufferings of men in high Places, then with their services

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HAving finished Moses his SELF-DENIAL, namely, what he refused, together with the circumstance of time, and the principle by which he was enabled thereunto: Now what it was that he chose, we are to consider; his appearing for, and the joining himself with the afflicted people of God, although he knew he must needs partake with them in their afflictions; he saw that God would rather be honored by him in an afflicted estate, then in the enjoyment of all his glory that he might have had; he was willing to submit to God in that way.

Yet he might have had many reasonings in himself, that might have drawn his heart another way; he might have thought, that in his keeping of the honor and power he had in the Court, he might have done a great deal of service for God, in the improving of his favor with Pharaoh and his Nobles for the people of God; he might have been of great use for them, that it was a thing of great consequence, for them to have a friend in the Court, that might do them so much good, as it was probable he might have done: Yea, he

might have thought with himself, Surely God intends to use me here in some great service for his people, for how wonderful has his Providence been towards me, in bringing me to, in raising of me up, and continuing me in this honor? what a strange and extraordinary Providence of God was it, to dispose of my Parents hearts, to hide me in such a manner as they did amongst the rushes? and that the Daughter of Pharaoh must come at that time to the River, and that I must be found by her, and no body else; and that God should dispose of her heart so, as to commiserate my condition, and to be so enclined towards me as she was, that she should not only preserve my life, but have me brought up as her own Son; that she should have care, that my education might be such, as I might be meet for honor and advancement in her Fathers house, whereas she might have brought me up in some base and servile manner, according to the quality of a Bondslaves childe, of an Hebrew childe, so much abhorred and hated by the Egyptians; and that God should give me that understanding and capacity, that I should come to be learned in all the learning of the Egyptians; and that God should encline the heart of Pharaoh to me likewise, that he should countenance me, and prefer me; and that the favor of Pharaohs daughter, and of Pharaoh himself, should continue so long as it does, even to my growth up to forty-years; that I should have favor in the eyes of his Nobles, and of all the Court, none of them seeking to undermine me, to alienate Pharaohs heart from me? surely God intended to use me in some great service here in the Court; if I should now do any thing to provoke Pharaoh against me, to lose that favor, that honor, that power I have, what a loss would this be to the people of God? what would become of them? little hope then of any good to them: yea, if Pharaoh and the Court

should frown upon me, it is like they will be more enraged against them, and rather make their burden heavier, and their bondage sorer: Now then what a grievous thing would it be, that such an opportunity as I have in my hands should be lost?

But Moses seeing Gods mind, that he would rather have him venture himself in joining with his people in affliction, and that this was the way, whereby God would honor himself by him, he was content to let go all those reasonings, and yield up himself to Gods own way: God will sometimes rather be honored by the sufferings and afflictions of men in great Places (who one would think had large opportunities of service) then in any service that they shall or can do; and such men should be willing to submit to God herein: It is not what I or others think, how God may be honored this way or another, but what the will of God is, which way he will be honored; and God expects from men, not only that they should seek his honor, but that they should seek it his own way: All the intentions and aims at the glory of God that can possibly be, are nothing; God cares not for them, if they be out of his own way. It was an excellent resolution of David, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. If I shall finde favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me back again, but if he thus say, I have no delight in you; behold, here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him. We reade of Heman, a man of admirable wisdom, one of the wisest upon earth in his time, as appears 1 King. 4:31 and yet Psalm 88. God kept him down, and low by afflictions all his days from his youth. This God does;

First, to show his sovereignty over his creature, that he has the absolute dispose of all, to use them as he will.

Secondly, to show that he has no need of any for his service, for the bringing about his own ends, he has thousand thousands of ways to effect his own will, without help from men, although in never such eminent places.

Thirdly, because he would not have us to put any confidence in man, to think that the work must needs be done by such and such; God will cast them aside, and bring the work about by other means, that we least thought of.

Fourthly, that he might have a proof of the self-denial of these men, of their absolute subjection to him; in the exercise of which grace, God takes exceeding delight.

Fifthly, that he might teach such, whilest they do enjoy their opportunities of service, to walk in dependence upon him, humbly before him, not attributing much to themselves: therefore let such men learn not to set too high a price upon their condition, that God has raised them unto above others: although it is true, that it is one of the greatest happinesses under heaven, to have large opportunities of service for God and his Church, yet we should not so value them, as to stretch conscience in the least degree, for the continuance or improvement of them: look to the word, keep close to it, and then regard not what men shall suggest, what a deal of good you might do, how much service, what honor you might bring to God; why will you hazard yourself and the loss of all?

There is much danger in listning to these reasonings, because the opportunities for service, and the keeping up yourself in that condition in which you are, being involved together, there may lie much self-love, under the pretense of doing service, and that so secretly, as without diligent and faithful search into your own hearts,

you shall not perceive it yourselves; therefore while you see God offering opportunities of service, while you see his mind in improving you thus, follow it on with all your might, let no opportunity slip, do to the utmost you can for God; and when you see his mind to lay you aside, and to use you in another way, although it be of affliction, and grievous sufferings, yet be as willing to yield to God in this, as in the former way; and thereby,

First, you shall show the most glorious work of self-denial that may be; it is more to deny ones self here then in outward things, there is nothing goes more near to a true generous heart, then to be laid aside, and to be denyed to be used in service.

Secondly, it may be, if you bring your hearts to lie at Gods dispose in this, he will use you the rather, and you shall not be taken off; this may be the means of continuance of you in his work.

Thirdly, if you go on with such a disposition as this, it is more like that God will bless your service, while he does use you.

Fourthly, or if you shall be taken off for a while, and put into an afflicted condition; in which it shall not appear that you are of any great use, (although sometimes sufferings are the greatest services) yet your afflictions shall but prepare you for higher service afterwards, as it did in Moses: How did God use him afterwards in great and high employments? few men that ever lived upon the earth, were employed more for God then he was. The Magdeburgenses Centuriatores think that Barnabas the Apostle was the same that Joseph was, who was one of the two, upon whom the lot was cast for the Apostleship, when it fell upon Matthias, and he was refused, Acts 1. which Joseph was afterwards called Barnabas by the Apostles, Acts 4:36 in stead of Barsabas;

they making Joses to be the same with Joseph: Joseph was a gracious man, and when he saw it was Gods mind not to use him in that work, he was content to go on in that way which God would have him, although it were in a far lower condition, then in the work of an Apostle, and therefore afterwards God called him to that high and honorable work.

Fifthly, howsoever, your reward shall be as great, as if you were used in the greatest service, in the highest highest work you could have desired to be used in: But if you shall not be willing to lay down all when God calls you thereunto, and to be put into any low suffering condition that he shall please to put you into, it is an evident sign that you went on before in your way with self-confidence, that you aymed at yourself, that you did not give God the glory of your service; and if so, although God might use you for the good of others, yet there will come no blessing of it upon yourselves. This in the general.

Chapter 2: The opening of the words, with the several doctrines in this Text

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But for a more particular handling this verse, I shall first give a short paraphrase of it; secondly, show the several doctrinal conclusions contained in it. [He chose] Choice notes a comparing of one thing with another, and the deliberating of the mind about the things compared, and at the last a free determination of the will which way to go. Thus Moses compares the estate of Gods people, and the pleasures of sin, one with another; he deliberates in his mind, which is the safest, and the best way for him to go, and at last freely, yet throughly and fully determines the case; He chose rather to suffer affliction: he did not choose affliction absolutely, for affliction in it self is an evil, but rather then the pleasures of sin, afflictions are to be chosen: Job 36:21 Elihu charges Job, that he chose sin rather then affliction; this choice is an ill choice, Moses his choice was a wise and gracious choice; he chooses affliction rather then sin. [Affliction] that is, any affliction, not this or that affliction, but whatever affliction God should think fit: Many think themselves willing to suffer affliction in the general, until they be called unto some particular affliction, and then

they think, Oh, if it were any other we could bear it, but this we know not how to bear; whereas the true subjection of the heart to God, is to bear what God himself shall appoint. He chose [to suffer affliction,] not to bring affliction upon himself: Religion teaches no man, rashly and headily to bring himself into misery. [To suffer affliction with the people of God:] That is, either in joining with the people of God in the ways of godliness, in which they were; or in appearing for them; or in joining in communion with them. [Then to enjoy the pleasures of sin.] The words are in the Original, Then the enjoyment of sin. [The pleasures of sin;] that is, either such pleasures as are in themselves sinful: or secondly, such as cannot be enjoyed, or maintained but in a way of sin: or thirdly, such us would be means to draw the heart unto sin. [The pleasures of sin for a season:] that is, either for a short season, or for an uncertain season.

The doctrinal Conclusions in the words are these:

First, the usual condition of Gods people in the world, it is an afflicted condition.

Secondly, when Gods people in Gods way are under grievous afflictions, wicked men in the way of sin have much pleasure.

Thirdly, afflicted godliness is to be chosen, rather then pleasant wickedness.

Fourthly, a spiritual eye can see an excellency in Gods people, though they be in never such a low afflicted condition.

Fifthly, a gracious heart is willing to appear for Gods people, to be on their side, although it be with much hazard to its self.

Sixthly, there is so much good to be had with Gods people, that it is worth the enduring hard things to be with them.

Seventhly, nothing that is but for a season can satisfy a gracious heart, that which must satisfy it, must be beyond any temporary thing, it must be an eternal good.

Chapter 3: God's people, though dear to God, yet usually have been in an afflicted estate

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For the first: Gods people, although dear and precious in his eyes, yet they have usually been an afflicted people in all generations unto this day. When God was making his Covenant with Abraham, Gen. 15:12 at the going down of the Sun a deep sleep fell upon him: and lo, a horror of great darkness was on him, and ver. 17. a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp passed between his sacrifice, and the Lord tells him of the bondage of his seed in Egypt. The afflicted condition of Gods people who were to come from Abraham, was shown by the horror of darkness, and the smoking furnace: And this is observable, As at the first great Promise that was made for Gods choosing of a people to himself out of Abrahams loyns, their afflicted estate was set out; so where we have the great promise of the Gospel, the largest of any in the Gospel, for the encouragement of those who are willing to part with any thing for Christ, even there perfecution is annexed▪ for so the words are, Mark 10. 29, 30. There is no man that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the Gospels, but he shall receive a

hundred fold now in this life, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions, and in the world to come eternal life; Persecutions come in amongst all those great things that are there promised. Israel is a people afflicted from their youth, Psalm 129:1 When God appeared to Moses, to send him a deliverer of his people, he appeared to him in a burning bush, to set out the afflicted estate of his people.

If the people of God might have a Herald to give Arms to them, as some other Professions and Societies have, the best and most sutable, would be such as Mr. Hooper that holy Martyr had, when he was made Bishop of Worcester, A Lamb in a flaming bush, with rayes of the Sun from Heaven shining on it: a Lamb for meekness, in a bush burning, amongst wicked men, who are as brambles and thorns, burning with malice, and yet the sweet influence and comfortable light of heaven let out upon it.

When Ignatius came to the wilde beasts, to be devoured of them, and his bones crushed between their teeth; Now (says he) I begin to be a Christian: Blessed Mr. Bradford writing to the Town of Walden, to encourage them to suffer, says, that that Christian has not learned his A. B. C. in Christianity, who has not learned the lesson of the Cross. A. Christian is a Cross-bearer, says Luther. As God made the evening and the morning to be the first day, and so the second, &c. So the day of Gods people, God has made to be the evening of troubles here, and the everlasting morning of glory and happiness hereafter. It is an expression of Mr. Calvin, The godly (says he) have their dark shadow of troubles before them, and their brightness of glory behinde to come hereafter, but the men of the world have their brightness before them.

Men use to bring out their best first, and reserve the worst till afterwards, but Gods dealing with his people is otherwise, their worst is first with them. The way to Canaan is through the wilderness, even after a sore and tedious bondage; yea, and when God brought his people into Canaan, he brought them into the worst part of Canaan first, into the southern part, which was the most dry and barren part of the land. The way to Zion is through the valley of Baca, Psalm 84:6 Many are the troubles of the righteous, says David, Psalm 34:19 According to that of the Apostles, Acts 14:22 Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God. Psalm 22. is a prophetical Psalm of Christs sufferings, and the title is upon Aijeleth Shehar, which signifies the morning Hart or Stag, such a one as the Huntsmen sever out in the morning from the rest, to hunt for that day. Such was Christ, and such is his Church, as the morning Stag severed out to be hunted and worried by the world. In the world ye shall have tribulation, says our Savior to his disciples, John 16:33 we cannotfollow Christ, and be his Disciples, but upon these terms, Mat. 16:24 Others use to invite Followers with promises of honors and riches, but Christ tells the worst at first, what we are like to finde; we must be content to take up our cross, not to endure it by compulsion, and constraint, but to take it up willingly and cheerfully: Secondly, not what cross we will, we must not choose our cross, but what is appointed for us.

He must take up his cross. But this cross it may be shall be but now and then.

Yes, Luke 9:23 He must take up his cross daily.

But if every day, I hope it is an easie cross.

Nay, it is a killing cross; 1 Cor. 15:31 I dye daily, says St. Paul.

But yet I hope there may be refreshings some part of the day.

Not so neither; Rom. 8:36 For your sake are we killed all the day long; that is, in regard of the danger of death: Secondly, in regard of some beginnings that we suffer: Thirdly, in regard of our willingness to undergo it.

Since the days of John Baptist the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force, Mat. 11:12 this is ordinarily taken for the greediness of the peoples embracing Johns Ministery, but it rather seems to be spoken of another kinde of violence, namely, the violence of opposition and persecution, in which the enemies of the Gospel seek to lay violent hands upon it; for he tells them presently, Verse 16, 17, 18. that the Jews were as wayward children, that nothing would please them, but said that John had a Devil; they were therefore rather violent against his Ministery, then violent in embracing of his Ministery.

2 Tim. 3:12 All that will live godly, must suffer persecution: First all] Every one must expect it, although it is true, God calls not all to the like sufferings, yet he exempts none from some degree or other, let him be as wise, and as discreet as he will, yet if godly, he shall not escape. Christ was the best Preacher that ever was, he lived the most inoffensively that ever any did, and yet while he was preaching, the Pharisees blew their noses at him in scorn and derision; for so the word signifies in the Original, Luke 16:14 which is translated, derided him. And at another time they would have broke his neck, by casting him from a steep hill, after he had done his Sermon. Saint Paul the most famous Preacher next to Christ, that ever was, and yet he was accounted a babler, a pestilent fellow, his Sermons were accounted factious and seditious.

Secondly, He that will live godly.] The Devil will let a man have many wishes and desires, these are not persecuted; but he that will, if he be set upon it, absolutely resolved that he will, and nothing shall hinder, then he must make account to suffer: When the woman in the Revelations, Chap. 12. was ready to bring forth her Childe, the Dragon sought to devour it, he medled not with her all the while she was a breeding.

Thirdly, he that will live.] If he keep his godliness in his heart, and not discover it in his life, he may go on well enough, but these shows of godliness the world cannot endure. Wickedness must appear with open face, but godliness must keep within doors: Wickedness trades openly, but godliness must keep in as a bankrupt, that dare not be seen.

Fourthly, he that will live godly.] Not civilly only, for a man to live fairly, lovingly, justly amongst men, to keep from crying sins, and here to rest, this man perhaps may escape sufferings; but if he begins to live godly, to go beyond morality in his profession, then he must expect to suffer.

Fifthly, he that will live godly in Christ Jesus: that is, in the vertue, strength and power of Christ Jesus; The other may be done without knowledge of Christ, but this godliness in Christ Jesus is that which is persecuted in the world [godly in Christ Jesus.]

That is, first real and true godliness, not the shadow of godliness: A Wolf flies not upon a painted sheep, we can look upon a painted toad with delight: There are some forms, and shadows of godliness entertained in the world, but the reality and truth of godliness is that which is hated, and opposed.

Secondly, godliness in Christ Jesus, is exact godliness, it carries a soul to a higher pitch then morality does; now a man begins to live in a higher course of Religion, to be strict in his ways, to tremble at the least sin, to devote himself wholly to God, this man must expect to suffer.

Thirdly, the godliness that is in Christ Jesus, is a stirring godliness: if a man will be lukewarm, and as Gallio, not caring which way things go, then many will speak well of him, he is no busiebody, not so hot, and fierce as others are. We reade Exod. 8:28 Pharaoh was content to let the people go, only he would not have them go far; so, many are content that men should be Religious, so be it they do not go too far, Revel. 2:2 Christ says to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, I know your labor and your patience; mark how these two are joined: If the Angel had not labored so much, it is like he had not suffered so much: If Ministers and Christians will be idle and do little, they are not like to suffer much, a little patience will serve turn; but those who put forth themselves, who are stirring, active, who labor much, they must expect to suffer much. It is very observable that of the seven Churches we reade of in the Revelations, there are only two of whose troubles there are no mention; and which are they? the first is Sardis, of which it is said, She had a name that she lived, and was dead: the other was Laodicea, that was neither hot nor cold: These two escaped troubles, but none of the other.

Fourthly, the godliness that is in Christ Jesus, is a powerful godliness, that will not yield and give in; such as the Lord requires in Ieremy, Let them come in to you, do not you go to them: Let men say what they will, let them threaten, rail, flatter, persuade, yet this yields not. Now the world judges this to be pride, stub-

bornness, not knowing what the power of godliness means: A reed that yields, is not shattered by the wind: So those who will be time-servers, whose consciences will bow any way, those shall suffer no great matter; but if men be unyieldable, especially in things that are counted small, as many of the Christians in the Primitive times, who would not cast one grain of frankincense into the fire to save their lives, these are hated, contemned and persecuted in the World: Antichrist is content to let the name and profession of Religion alone, but he persecutes the power of godliness, it is that which witnesseth against him, Revel. 11:8 He slays the witnesses, but he lets their carcasses lie openly; he cares not for the name and profession, so be it the witnessing power be slain.

Fifthly, Godliness in Christ Jesus, is world-condemning godliness; Noah condemned the world by that he did: Other men should be accounted well of, were it not for these; but this darkens their light, and condemns their way, which they are not able to abide, 1 Pet. 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange (says the Apostle) concerning the fiery tryal, as though some strange thing happened unto you; be not moved at it, as at the coming of a stranger unexpectedly, you must entertain troubles as ordinary daily guests.

It has been, is, and will be the order of Gods providence towards his people, that they shall be in an afflicted condition, and that many times in great extremities; and hence, Chap. 5:10 the Apostle prays, That the God of all grace would make them perfect, after they had suffered a while; as if prayer might not be made for perfection, until we have suffered a while. As soon as St. Paul was manifested to be a chosen vessel for the honor of God, it was

shown unto him, what things he should suffer for the name of Christ, as if that were a necessary concomitant to the profession of godliness.

Look over the whole Book of God, and consider the history of the lives of Gods people in all ages, both in Scripture, and in other records, and you shall finde them usually in a poor afflicted condition; as soon as we hear of any work of Religion, we hear of the persecution of Abel. Noahs Ark on the waters, was a type of the condition of the Church in afflictions. What hard things did Abraham, and the rest of the Patriarchs endure in their generations? How sore was the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt? Their passage through the Red sea and the dismall Wilderness into Canaan, was a type of the afflicted condition of Gods people in after ages, through which they were to pass to Heaven: How was David hunted as a Partridge in the wilderness? What bitter and sore complaints do we hear, of the grievous suffering he met withal? Psalm 129. the Church there bemoans her condition, that from her youth up she had been afflicted: What hard usage did the blessed Prophets of the Lord finde? Eliah was persecuted, and must flie for his life, while four hundred false Prophets were fed at Iezabels table: Micaiah must be fed with the bread of affliction, and the water of adversity.

Histories tell us, that Isaiah was sawn asunder with a wooden saw; Ieremy was put into a dungeon, sticking in the mire (as some stories say) even up to the ears, and after was stoned to death in Egypt; Ezekiel was slain in Babylon; Micah was thrown down a steep place, and his neck broke; Amos was smitten with a club, and so brained: The Story of the persecutions of the Maccabees prophesied of, Dan. 11:36 and recorded by the Apostle, Heb. 11. from the

35 Verse to the end, is exceeding lamentable; the Texts says, That they were tortured, that they had the tryal of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, were sawn asunder, slain with the sword, wandred up anddown in Sheep-skins and Goats-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, they wandred in deserts, and mountains, and dens, and caves in the earth.

And after, for the Christian Church, we know what Christ himself, the great leader of his people suffered, what contradiction of sinners? what contempts? miseries? scorns? scourges? cursed, cruel, shameful death? When Stephen the first Christian Martyr was stoned, Dorotheus witnesseth, that two thousand others which believed on Christ, were put to death the same day. All the twelve Apostles after many sore and grievous afflictions endured, suffered many violent deaths, John only excepted: who yet, as the Scripture testifieth, was banished into Patmos, and as some Histories, that he was by Domitian thrown into a Tun of scalding lead, yet as they say, delivered by a miracle.

Peter was crucified with his heels upward, because he would not be as Christ was, thinking himself unworthy of that honor: Andrew was crucified by Egeas King of Edessa: Iames was slain by the sword of Herod, as we finde Acts: 12. the beginning: Philip was crucified, and stoned to death at Hieropolis, a City in Phrygia: Bartholomew, after divers persecutions, was beaten down with staves as he was preaching in a City of Armenia, and then crucified, and after his skin flead off, and beheaded: Thomas was slain with a Dart at Calamina in India: Matthew was run through with a sword, or as some write, slain with a spear: Iames the son of Alpheus, who was called the just man, was set upon the pinacle of

the Temple, and thrown down, and yet having some life left in him, he was brained with a Fullers club; some Histories say, that Paul before his conversion, had a special hand in this: Lebbeus was slain by Agbarus King of Edessa: Simon the Canaanite was crucified in Egypt, or as others say, he and Iude was slain in a tumult of the people: Matthias that came into the number in stead of Iudas, was stoned, and then beheaded: Paul was beheaded at Rome, under Nero.

Those ten fearful Perfecutions in the Primitive times, from the time of Domitius Nero, unto Constantine, does set out fully unto us the truth of this argument: for three hundred years together, the name of a Christian was death, except now and then, the Churches had some little breathings. Brightman speaking of the stories of those times, says, that every page, and leaf, is as it were all red, coloured in blood: the Covenant of grace is a bloody Covenant, both in regard of the blood of Christ, first sealing it, and the blood of the blessed Martyrs, adding likewise their seals in confirming of it. In that Treatise that goes under the name of Cyprian, de duplici Martyrio; speaking of that place, 1 Iohn 5:8 Three bear witness on earth, the Spirit, water and blood; the third is applyed to the blood of the Martyrs in those times.

It is a most heart-breaking meditation to consider the ragings, madness and fury of the Heathens against the Christians in those times. Ierome in an Epistle to Cromatius, says, that there was no day in a whole year, unto which the number of five thousand Martyrs cannot be ascribed, except only the first day of Ianuary. Vincentius reports, that at Aquileia, the Emperor gave leave to every man that would, to kill the Christians; All the policy, wit, strength of invention, of men and devils, were exercised and

stretched out to the utmost, for devising the most miserable torments, and exquisite tortures; as plates of Iron burning hot, laid upon their naked flesh; pinsers red hot, pulling off the flesh from the bones; bodkins, pricking and thrusting all over their bodies: casting into lime kilns, and into caldrons of scalding lead: whippings until almost all the flesh was torn off their bodies, and their bones and bowels appeared, and then laid flat upon sharp shels and knives: their skins were flead off alive, and then their raw flesh was rubbed with salt and vineger: their bodies were beaten all over with clubs, until their bones and joynts were beat asunder: they were laid upon gridirons, rosted, and basted with salt and vineger: one member was pulled from another; by fastening them to the boughs of trees, they rent their bodies apieces: they were tossed upon the horns of Bulls, with their bowels hanging out; they were cast among dogs to be devoured; they were put under the Ice naked into Rivers; they were tortured on the rack, on the wheel, and on the gibbet, with flaming fire under them: they made it their sports, to see them devoured by wilde beasts; and in the night, in stead of torches, they burnt the bodies of the Saints, to give them light for their pastimes.

To give you an instance or two, that you may see the miserable extremities the Saints of God in former times passed through. I read of one Sanctus, upon whom when such intolerable tortures were inflicted, as the Persecuters thought, surely they should have heard some words of blasphemy coming from him, yet they could get nothing but this, Sum Christianus, I am a Christian; at which they being mad, they clapt on plates of brass red hot, to the most tender parts of his body, wherewith although his Spirit shrunk not, but still continued constant, yet his body was so drawn together,

that it lost the proper shape of a man; and after he lying in prison a while, they brought him forth again to the common scaffold in the face of the people, and put him to all kinde of torments they could devise, as though he had been put to none before, as scourgings, tearings by wilde beasts; his body being thus torn, they brought an iron chair red hot with fire, and set him in it, and so fryed and scorched him as upon a gridiron: Thus he being made the whole day a spectacle to the people, in stead of their games and sights, they could get nothing from him, but his firt confession, Christianus sum, I am a Christian.

The example of Romanus, who was of noble birth, but more noble in his Martyrdom, is very famous; he was first whipped with knaps of lead at the ends of the cords; he desired them not to spare him for his Nobility, Not the blood of my progenitors, says he, but Christian profession makes me noble: then they lanced him with knives, until the bones appeared white, his face was buffeted, his eye-lids torn with their nails, his hair pulled from his face; the Captain being astonished at his constancy, commanded them to cease from tortures; he was after brought forth and scourged again upon his old sores; they plucked out his tongue by the roots: the Captain being yet more astonished to see him continue constant, commanded him to be brought into prison, and there be to strangled.

The example of Vincentius is as remarkable as any; he was first wracked, all his joynts being stretched out of their place; then his body was indented with grievous and deadly wounds; then they tortured his flesh, by saking upon it with iron combs sharply filed; and then they laid his body upon a grate of iron, opening his flesh with iron hooks, they seared it with fiery plates, sprinkling it with

hot burning salt; then they drew him into a dungeon, where the floor was spread with the sharpest shells that could be gotten, they laid his body upon them, and so left him without all succor.

Take an example of a woman or two; one Blandina was miserably whipped, tortured by wilde beasts, tormented, and scorched upon a gridiron, and then put into a net, and cast unto the wilde Bulls to be gored, and so slain. We read of one Eulalila a yong Gentlewoman, famous for her godliness and constancy, who was pulled away from the seat of her Persecuters by the hair of her head, then one joynt was pulled from another, and the flesh from the bones by cushes and claws of wilde beasts; then they harrowed her flesh with an iron hurdle, they burnt her body on every side before and behinde with flaming torches, and at last cast her into fire, and consumed her body unto ashes.

How lamentable is the hearing of these things unto nice and curious women? who now must not have the wind to blow on them, who are ready to dye if they be but crossed a little of their wills. It was an excellent speech of a woman Martyr, Iulitta by name, who being to be put into the fire, spoke unto other women thus, Cease to acouse the fragility ofthe feminine sex: What? are not we made of the same matter that men are? yea, after Gods image are we made as well as they; God did not use flesh to make women of in token of infirmity, we are bone of his bone, in token we must be strong in the living God. These were the sufferings of those times; we shrink at every thing, at every scorn and frown.

As for after times, it pleased God to stir Constantine a Christian Emperor, and then the Church had some rest; to which some apply that place, Rev. 20:2 Satan was bound a thousand years, not to rage for a thousand years after, so as he then did, un-

til Antichrist got strength: but the Text will not bear this interpretation; we read Rev. 8:1 at the opening the first seal, there was silence in Heaven half an hour; that is, a space of intermission, in which the Church had some little breathing for a while, but yet continued not long; for Licinius, who first joined in the maintenance of Christian Religion, fell off and turned an outragious persecuter. After that the Church endured infinite troubles by the heresie of Arrianism, that spread it self mightily abroad, so that the whole world almost was become an Arrian; at this time says Hilary, the Church was so obscured, as it was not to be sought in any external pomp in publique places, but in prisons and dens; Non in tect is, & exteriori pompa, sed potius in carceribus & speluncis. Arrius was a man of excellent parts, and forward in good, but through pride, being disappointed of his expected preferment, fell off. Mr. Brightman upon Revelations 8:11 thinks it was he, that was meant by that Star which fell, which was called wormwood, by which the third part of the materswere made bitter, and many dyed of the waters.

After that Antichrist began to rise more and more, and to bring a fearful darkness over the face of the Church; of which times the holy Ghost prophesies, Rev. 8:12 The moon, sun, and stars were smitten. The first open and bloody persecution of Antichrist, was that of the Waldenses, in the year 1160. and 1260. and so on: there is a whole volumn written of the lamentable extremities that these poor people endured, the reading whereof might cause the hardest heart that lives to break. A special agent in this persecution was one Dominick, father of the Dominicans, of whom his mother dreamed when she was with childe with him, that she had a Wolf flaming with fire out of his mouth in her body.

In after times we read of the most famous instruments of Gods glory, what hard things they endured: as Wickliff, Huss, Ierame of Prague, and others. The first time that ever any Law was made for burning those that opposed the Pope in England, was in Henry the Fourths time: so it went on to those bloody Marian days; What imprisonments? what starvings? stranglings? gibbets? fire? banishments were there then? What grievous miseries did Gods people endure in France, especially in that bloody savage Massacre in the year 1572? the History of it tells us, that near the Archbishops Prison in Lyons, the blood ran warm reeking in the streets, into the River: in thirty days space, there were an hundred thousand poor orphans, widows, and succorless creatures, wandring about without relief.

Thus both Scripture, and the Histories of all times, hold forth unto us the truth of this point, that theestate of Gods people is an afflicted estate; they cry out aloud unto us, that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. This has been the way of God even towards those who have been dearest to him, and it is so at this day, but yet a great difference has God made, between us, and those in former times, in regard of the degree of afflictions; yea, between us and others of his Servants, in other places now: we feel but little of those hard things that many of Gods people have felt, and still do feel: we sit under our vines, and fig-trees, in peace and plenty, not only under the shadows of them, but we taste and eat plentifully of the fruit of them, they are not empty vines, nor empty fig-trees unto us.

Chapter 4: What use we should make of God's sparing us from the woful afflictions which have befaln, and do befal others

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NOw what use should we make of this difference? First, we had need examine whether our prosperity be in love or not, whether it be sanctified unto us or not; for we have a great deal more then Gods people use to have: And we shall know it by this, if the chief thing we rejoice in, in the enjoyment of our prosperity, be the opportunity of service for God, that we have by it.

Secondly, let us admire Gods goodness to us, and bless his name: How favorable is the Lord to us, who spares us, that we suffer little or nothing in comparison of what others have done? We are weak, and if we should have felt such things as others have, what should have become of us? They endured spoiling of their goods, imprisonment, tortures, but we may go to Heaven, and have peace, comfort, the use of the creature, houses, lands, friends: had we only the blessings of the upper springs, although we wanted wholly the blessings of the nether, we were happy; but oh the goodness of our God unto us, we do plentifully enjoy both!

Though a man do lose all the world, and win his soul, although he beg his bread from door to door, if he be saved at last, he is a happy man, happy that ever he was born: but we may save our souls, and yet have the good things of the world too.

But it may be said, A suffering condition is the joyful condition, why then should we thus bless God that we are freed from it?

Answ. 1. Sufferings in themselves have no good, but as God uses them, and turns them unto good; now God can use and turn prosperity into good as well if he please, and prosperity has good in it self, and in the use of it too.

2. The Apostle Saint Iames, Cap. 1:6 calls for joy in both conditions; Let the brother of high degree rejoice, when he is abased, and the brother of low degree, in that he is exalted; it seems we are not fit for sufferings, and therefore our present condition is a mercy.

Thirdly, seeing God spares us so much from sufferings, and calls us not to such passive obedience as formerly he has called his servants, let us therefore labor to be more abundant in active obedience, in giving God the glory of that peace and many liberties, and those comforts that we do enjoy, which we might have been deprived of by the malice of men; let our strength now be employed for God, in doing service, which might have been spent in suffering the rage of man, yea, might have been spent in bearing the wrath of God himself: O how much better is it, that we have it to spend it in doing service for God in an active way, for his praise and our own comfort! The more peace and outward comforts, the more service is due to God. It is observable that Solomons Altar was four times as big as Moses's. We read Exod. 27:1 That Moses

was to make an Altar five cubits long, and five broad, and three high, but Solomon made an Altar twenty cubits long, and twenty cubits broad. Moses was in the wilderness, in an unsetled condition, full of troubles: Solomon on his Throne, in a peaceable condition, full of prosperity; as our peace and prosperity is more then others, so our service should be more then theirs, and that in a due proportion.

Salvian writing about the condition of Gods people in their suffering of affliction, answers an Objection which some might make. But we do not live under persecuting Emperors, as formerly Christians did. To that he says, By how much the less they were in their passive obedience, by so much the more they should be in their active obedience. God is content, says he, that our peace should serve him, that we should please him, in the purity of actions undefiled, in the holiness of a life unspotted; by so much the more is our faithfulness and devotion indebted to him, because he requires of us smaller things, and has granted greater things unto us: and therefore seeing Princes are Christians, there is no persecution, Religion is not disturbed, we are not compelled to manifest the proof of our faith by harder tryals, we ought so much the more to please the Lord in inferior duties. He instanceth in divers particulars: as Christ (says he) commands us not to strive, and contend with one another, but rather to put up wrong, let us obey him in this, seeing he frees us from such great and dreadful miseries, which others have suffered before us. Again, Christ would have us do that to others, which we would have others do to us, let us obey him in this. He commands us by his Apostle, that we should not seek that which is our own, but every one seek the good of another: he requires of us to love our enemies, and to take heed of the occa-

sions of evil, &c. Although duties be never so hard to flesh and blood, yet let us set upon them. It was an excellent speech of Eusebius Emesenus, Our forefathers did strive against sharp piercing griefs, let us be willing to strive against the most excellent pleasures; They overcame the torments of the flames, let us overcome the fiery darts of vices.

Fourthly, let us take heed of the least froward murmuring and repining at little crosses, that sometime we meet withal. What, are we discontented at such small afflictions? at such light things? when as others (our betters) have suffered such hard, such grievous, such lamentable things; that our hearts do ake at the very hearing of. What is our flesh better then theirs, that we must have ours so pampered, when as theirs was so grievously tormented? How far are you from resisting unto blood? O what an unworthy thing is this in Christians, to vex and fret at every small cross; when they read and hear what others have suffered before them! all our troubles are but as the slivers and chips of that cross, upon which they have been crucified.

Fifthly, be willing to abate somewhat of your delight in the creature that you do enjoy, do not give liberty to yourselves, to satisfy yourselves to the full: Is it seemly that when Gods choice Servants have suffered, and still do suffer such hard things, that you should delight and rejoice to the utmost in giving content unto the flesh? You know how it was with Uriah, while the Ark, and his Lord Joab was in the field, he would not go down to his house to solace himself there. Josephus de bello Iudaico lib. 6. reports of Titus, when he had by his conquest brought the Jews into miserable extremities, that some of the Priests petitioning him for their lives, he commanded them to be slain, saying, they were of degen-

erous mindes that they desired to live, when their people and Religion suffered so much as it did: Titus a Heathen judged thus of them; of what degenerous mindes then are those, who not only desire to live, but to live in pomp, in bravery, in giving liberty to themselves in all sensual delights, in abating nothing of their carnal contentments, when they see and hear of the Churches of God suffering grievous things, brought unto lamentable straights under the burden of most heavy and sore afflictions? The like we finde related of Anchises Aeneas his father; when Aeneas would have saved his life, Far be it from me, says he, that I should desire to live when Troy suffers that it does:

Absit, ut excisa possim supervivere Troia.

Far then be it from us to desire to live diliciously, when not Troy, but the Churches of God suffer such things as they do. It is reported of Alexander, that being in extream thirst, when a little water was offered to him, he thought it a hard thing and not Princely, for him alone to quench his thirst, when others in his Army had not wherewithal to abate theirs; therefore he gives back again the cup with this speech, saying, I cannot bear to drink alone, and here is not enough to divide amongst the rest.

Sixthly, let us learn to be compassionate towards them that do suffer; while the bowels of others are torn out by the rage of men, let the bowels of our compassions work towards them, let us be even in bonds with those that are bound, in all our peace, liberties, and comforts, let us remember them, let us pray for them, and as much as we are able, relieve them, and help to bear their burthens.

Seventhly, let us lay hold upon our opportunities of peace and liberties that we do enjoy, to edifie ourselves in our most holy faith: let us make use of our peace to prepare us for the times of affliction, which God may call us unto. This was the care of the Churches, when they had got a little rest from their enemies, Acts 9:31 Then had the Churches rest through all Iudea, Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the holy Ghost, were multiplyed. It is wisdom while our ship is in the haven, to mend it there, and to prepare it for storms, that it may meet withal at sea; when storms arise, it is no time then: ships lie in the harbor on purpose to prepare them for the dangers they meet withal afterwards in Sea. Naturalists tell us, that while the Halcyon bird is brooding her eggs, and bringing forth her yong ones, there is usually fair weather; from whence we call pleasant weather, Halcyon days; she neglects not any of those days, but is diligent in bringing forth her yong: God gives us fair weather, much peace, that we may be diligent in our work, to provide for after-times: let none of those Halcyon days be lost.

Chapter 5: The Reasons of the afflicted estate of God's people, from the malice of the Devil and wicked men

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But what are the reasons why it must needs be, that the estate of Gods people must be an afflicted estate?

First, as long as there is a Devil in the world it must needs be; he in his instruments is that red Dragon, red with fury and rage; he is that old Serpent, full of poyson and deadly malice. Pliny speaks of the Scorpion, that there is not one minute, in which it does not put forth the sting, as being unwilling to lose any opportunity of doing mischief. He is called Satan, an adversary, the destroyer, roaring Lyon, he infinitely hates God, and sins that sin, that is the sin against the holy Ghost, every moment: he hates the holiness of God, and the glory of God, (which especially shines in his Saints) with deadly hatred: he is cast out himself, and therefore envies and vexes at the Salvation of any: as one that had committed the sin against the holy Ghost said, he wished that his wife, and children, and all the world might be damned together with him: hence he is resolved, that if any be saved, it shall be with as great difficulty as he can procure.

Secondly, the poyson of this old Serpent, ungodly men have sucked up, they swell with it, and by it are enraged against godliness. It is reported of Tygers, that they enter into a rage upon the scent of fragrant spices; so do ungodly men at the blessed savor of godliness. I have read of some barbarous Nations, who when the Sun shines hot upon them, they shoot up their arrows against it; so do wicked men at the light and heat of godliness. There is a natural antipathy between the spirits of godly men, and the wicked; Gen. 3:15 I will put enmity between your seed, and her seed; Prov. 29:27 An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked. Now the contrariety of antipathy is:

First, deep rooted, in the very natures of the things: a contrariety of act is not so much, as a contrariety of nature; two sheep may oppose one another, but there is not that opposition between them, as between a wolf and a sheep.

Secondly, it is an active opposition, that will presently stir at the first appearance; the wicked will presently discern a godly man, and their hearts do quickly rise up against him.

Thirdly, it is a strong vehement opposition.

For first, it breaks all bonds of nature, the bond between father and childe, between brother and brother; and all bonds of love and kindeness: we have a remarkable example for this, Numb. 22. 3, 4. Moab was irked because of Israel, or did fret and vex, so the words; the same with that, Exod. 1:12 There was no cause for the Moabites thus to fret, they were allyed to Israel, for Moab was of Lot, to whom Abraham was Uncle: Israel passed by them in peace, and by the slaughter of the Amorites they had freed them from evil

Neighbors, which had before taken away part of their Land, and were likely in time to take away more; yet being of a different Religion, malice breaks all these bonds. The like ver. 4. of the Midianites, who came of Abraham, Gen. 25. 1, 2. The Israelites had freed them from Sihons yoak, and yet they conspire against them, and seek their ruine.

Secondly, it is mighty bitter where it is: Psalm 7:13 it is said, that God has ordained his arrows against the persecutors; the word signifies, such as burn in danger and malice against the godly; and the word translated ordained, signifies God has wrought his arrows: he does not shoot them at random, but he works them against the wicked. Illiricus has a story, which may be a Commentary upon this Text, in both the parts of it. One Felix Earl of Wartenburg, one of the Captains of the Emperor Charls the fifth, swore in the presence of divers at supper, that before he dyed, he would ride up to the spurs in the blood of the Lutherans; here was one that burnt in malice, but behold how God works his arrows against him: that very night the hand of God so struck him, that he was strangled and choaked in his own blood; so he rode not, but bathed himself, not up to the spurs, but up to the throat, not in the blood of the Lutherans, but in his own blood before he dyed. Saint Paul, Acts 26:11 says of himself before his conversion, that he was exceeding mad against the Saints of God; this bitter malice that is in the hearts of wicked men, against the godly, puts them upon ways of opposition against all reason and common sence. After John Huss was burnt, his adversaries got his heart, which was left untouched by the fire, and beat it with their staves. St. Paul in 2 Thess. 3:2 desires the brethren to pray, That they might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; the word

is, absurdmen. The malice of wicked mens hearts against the godly, makes them break all bounds of humanity, and go against Laws or any thing, in way of opposition against the servants of God. In the History of the persecution of the Merindolians, we read of the Bishop of Aix, being full of rage against them, when the President Cassaneus would have allayed it a little, telling him that the arrest of Merindol was not definitive, and that the Laws and Statutes of the Realm did not permit the execution thereof without further process; then said the Bishop, If there be either Law or Statute that do hinder or let you, we carry in our sleeves to dispense therewithal: the President answered, It were a great sin to shed innocent blood; then said the Bishop, The blood of them of Merindol be upon us, and upon our successors; then said the President, I am very well assured, that if the arrest of Merindol be put in execution, the King will not be well pleased to have such destruction made of his Subjects: the Bishop answered, Although the King at the first do think it evil done, we will so bring it to pass, that within a short space, he shall think it well enough, for we have the Cardinals on our side, and especially the most reverend Cardinal of Tournon. We read likewise of the unreasonableness of the malice of wicked men against Gods servants, in the History of the Waldenses: they petitioning, that seeing it was permitted to the Turks, Saracens, and Jews, (who are mortal enemies to Christ) to dwell peaceably in the fairest Cities of Christendom, that pity and compassion might be showed to them, who have their whole Religion founded upon the Gospel, and worshipping the Lord Jesus; and that they might be suffered to live quietly in desolate Mountains, and desarts, and valleys, protesting that they would live in all fear and reverence of God, with all due subjection and

obedience to their Lord and Prince, and to his Lieutenants and Officers; and yet this Petition could not be granted. We read likewise, that when that worthy Servant of God, John Frith, who was a learned and godly Minister, was burnt at the stake, together with one Andrew Hewet; that one Doctor Cook a Parson in London, openly admonished all the people, that they should in no wise pray for them, no more then they would for a dog. O what bitterness and rage is there in the hearts of wicked men, against Gods servants! No marvel then, seeing they live amongst them, they suffer so much affliction as they do. The Lord tells Ezekiel, that he lived amongst bryars and thorns, and that he dwelt amongst scorpions. Thus all Gods people, living with the men of the world, may be said to live amongst bryars and thorns, and to dwell amongst Scorpions; no marvel then though they be so torn and stung as they are; some have only snarling, wrangling, railing spirits, and there is all they can do; the worst is but to prick and tear the flesh, as a bryar and thorn; but others are scorpions, able to do a great deal more mischief.

Fourthly, this opposition of wicked men against the godly, is an universal opposition.

As first, opposing all that do belong unto the ways of godliness: as Luke 9:53 it is said of the Samaritans, that they would not receive Christ, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem; their hearts were against any inclination, against any thing that tended that way.

Secondly, if they can have advantage against any one, who makes any show of Religion, they let flye against all, they rage against all, as Haman against the whole people of the Jews, when he was provoked against Mordecai.

Yea thirdly, they even hate their children after them, they shall fare something the worse for the forwardness of their Parents.

Fifthly, it is a secret opposition, for so Antipathies are, there can be no reason given for it, but as he said, This only can I say, I do not love you, but I cannot say therefore: they are convinced that they are better then themselves, in their most serious thoughts, they wish to dye their death, to be in their condition, and yet their hearts do rise against them: as they were wont to say of Caius Seius, he was a good man, but he was a Christian. But it may be said, there is a reason for our opposition, we do not oppose them for their goodness, but because they oppose Laws, and we would see the Laws to be obeyed; we do not oppose them for their godliness, but for their hypocrisie. For answer, the Devil never opposed Religion, but under some color. Pharaoh cryes out of the people of Israel that they were idle. Haman says, that it was not for the Kings profit to suffer the Jews. Tobiah and Sanballat cryes out of them, that they were enemies to Kings and Government. Saint Paul was accused of sedition. But surely it is not for the execution of Laws, that mens hearts do so rise against such as are forward in the ways of Religion, for in other things they count men too busie, when they seek the execution of Law. It was Tertullians appology in the behalf of the Christians against the Gentiles, who objected the same thing against them; O says he, there are other Laws more for the good of the Commonwealth, that you do not execute; as he instanceth in Laws that were made to restrain men from sumptuousness in feastings, and in apparel, and housholdstuff, and in their excessive costs about their Shows and Games, yea, and many ancient Laws about Religion they regarded not. And as for that plea of hypocrisie, take this one evidence, that it is not that which is op-

posed, but Religion it self: if it were hypocrisie that were opposed, then the better they did grow when they were in their most serious moods, the more they would oppose it; for that which is evil must needs be so much the more opposed, by how much the more any grows better; but it is apparent, that howsoever men in the heat of their pride and lusts, set themselves against the servants of God, under that name of hypocrisie, by which they blinde their own consciences; yet when at any time they are in any serious mood, and their hearts grow into any better disposition, then they are not so set against them as before; whereas if it were evil that they hate them for upon their sick beds, and death-beds, they would hate them most of all; but we know it is not so.

Sixthly and lastly, the opposition that comes from Antipathy, is an irreconcileable opposition; it may be curbed and restrained a little, and for a time, but reconciliation can never be made, except one of the natures be changed; no arguments, no persuasions, no means can do any good here, it is only change of nature that can help. Now then seeing that there is such an antipathy between the people of God, and the men of the world, with whom they live, how is it possible but that while they live with them, they must needs be afflicted by them?

Chapter 6: Many Reasons why God orders things in his providence so, as his beloved should be under sore afflictions in this world

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But though it be true, that the Devil and world are malicious; yet, does not God rule over all? why then will God suffer his beloved ones thus to be troubled and afflicted?

Answ. Psalm 97:1 The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice; it is well for us that the Lord reigns, or else his people could never stand before the rage of the world, and Devil; one or two wolves, were able to devour a flock of sheep, what then would many wolves do amongst sheep, if there were not an over-ruling hand? but as Psalm 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise you, the remainder of wrath shall you restrain; God suffers, and orders this so, that he might turn all to his own praise. For,

First, sometimes by this means, he scatters his people abroad in the world to disperse his truth, to spread his Gospel further then otherwise it would be; as Acts 8. 3, 4. it is said, Saul made havock of the Church, haling men and women, committing them to prison,

therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the Word; according to the prophesie of Daniel, chap. 12:4 prophesying of the times of the troubles of the Church, he says, Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

Secondly, this God suffers for the manifestation of his glorious power, and that four ways,

First, in the continuing of his Church, and the profession of his truth, notwithstanding all the rage of men and devils; Gods power was seen in preserving the bush from being consumed, though it were all on a light fire: to preserve a spark of fire alive, in the midst of the waves of the sea, and to keep a light set up, in the midst of storms and tempests, is a great work; there appears as great a power of God, in preserving his Church in the midst of so much opposition, notwithstanding their grievous afflictions and persecutions, as there did appear in the preservation of the three Children in the fiery furnace. Eliah would have water poured upon the sacrifice, he would have it covered with water, that the power of God might more appear in the fire that came down from Heaven upon it; so God will have afflictions, persecutions, troubles, to befal his people, that he may manifest his power so much the more in their preservation.

Secondly, the power of God appears not only in the upholding, but in the raising the spirits of this servants in their afflictions, with what courage, holy magnanimity, heavenly chearfulness that appears in them: even weak women and children, triumphing over the most sore afflictions, and grievous distresses, which made a Heathen, one Calocerius beholding this, break forth with this acclamation, Of a truth, great is the God of the Christians! Bernard says, Those whom God frees from troubles, have experience how

sweet the Lord is; and those whom he exercises with many troubles, have experience how strong the Lord is. The glory of Gods power is as clear in the raising the spirits of his servants in suffering, as if he should deliver them from suffering by miracle. And therefore Rupertus says, that God did more gloriously triumph in St. Laurence his patience and constancy when he was broiled on the Gridiron, then if he had saved his body from burning by a miracle.

3. The power of God is glorious, not only in preserving his Church, in raising the spirits of his servants in their greatest afflictions, but in increasing his Church by them: if it be a wonder to be upheld in them, it is much more to be encreased by them; the more we are cut down, the more still we are, says Tertullian. The Church never grew so fast, as when it was under most affliction. Sulpitius says of the Christians in the primitive times, that they then were as greedy of Martyrdom, as in his time men were greedy of Bishopricks. The blood of Martyrs was the seed of the Church. Pliny reports of the lilly, that it is increased by its own juyce that drops from it: so the Church which is the lilly that grows among the thorns, the very blood that falls from them, multiplies them; the sufferings of one begets many to the love of the truth. Mr. Knox in his History of Scotland, reports of a Gentleman one John Lindsay, familiar to Bishop James Bettoun, that he said to the Bishop upon the occasion of the burning of Mr. Patrick Hamilton, My Lord, if you burn any more, you will destroy yourselves; if you will burn them, let them be burnt in hallow cellars, for the smoak of Mr. Patrick Hamilton has infected as many as it blew upon. It is a report of one Cecilia a Virgin, that by her constancy and exhorta-

tions, before and at her Martyrdom, was the means to convert four hundred people. By blood and prayer the Church converts the whole world, says Luther.

Fourthly, God shows the glory of his power, in doing such great things as he does, by a few afflicted, distressed, persecuted, contemptible people: The greatest things that ever God has done in the world, have been by these: the more afflicted, the more mean and despised they have been, the more has the arm of the Lord appeared in them. Gods power is made perfect in weakness, 2 Cor. 12. What great things has God done by a few afflicted, persecuted fishermen, the Apostles? What great things by St. Paul? who many times had not rags to cover his nakedness; who was whipped up and down, and put into stocks, and counted the basest and vilest of men, the very off-scouring of men, and the filth of the earth: and yet never were such great things done in the world, by those who had the greatest learning, the most power, the most valor, the most glory in the world, as was done by these; they did even subdue the world unto them, and that by preaching the Gospel, a Doctrine so above nature, so contrary unto nature. Chrysostom in a Sermon upon the 10. of Matthew, speaking concerning this argument, calls forth Plato, and Pythagoras, and the rest of the Phylosophers, and challenges them to show what they had done in comparison of these. But because some might say that amongst the Heathens there have been most famous Captains, who have done great things, as Themistocles and Pericles: If you compare, says he, what they have done, with what has been done by these poor fishermen, all their bravest acts will appear but childes plays, and the enterprizes of simple men.

Thirdly, that which God aims at, is the tryal of the graces of his people: an afflicting condition is a trying condition: Hence, Dan. 11:35 Some shall fall and be tryed: This is a prophesie of the times of the Maccabees under Antiochus Epiphanes: in the 11. Heb. we have the History of this, where verse 36. we have the like expression: others had tryals of cruel mockings and scourgings: We read of Queen Elizabeth in her sister Queen Maries days, when she was locked up close in the prison, at first she was much daunted, but after she brake forth into this speech, The skill of a Pilot is unknown, but in a tempest; the valor of a Captain is unseen, but in battel; and the worth of a Christian does not appear, but in time of tryal and temptation. Fire tryes mettals what dross is in them; strong winds, storms, and tempests, try what our foundation is, whether we be built upon the rock, or upon the sands: they discover what sap the leaves have from the root; withered leaves when the wind rises, fall off, the green leaves that have sap holds on: they try what soundness is in us: if you hang heavy weights upon the boughs of trees that are rotten, they presently break, but if upon sound, they bear them: hard weather tryes what soundness and health there is in the body; so afflictions and troubles, what soundness the Spirit has. Wooden or earthen vessels, if they be set to the fire empty, they are soon riven, and break, but not when they are filled with liquor: so empty hearts, when they feel the heat of afflictions, they soon break, but if filled with grace, and the comforts of the holy Ghost, they hold sound. When a mans cloaths are on, the deformities of his body cannot be seen: but when he is stripped naked, then all appears. In Summer time, when the trees are covered with leaves, you cannot see the knots, and rifts, and mossiness of the tree; but in winter when the leaves are gone, then

you may see all. Hence the Hebrew word that is used for Winter, comes from a word, that signifies disgrace and shame, because winter takes away the glory and beauty of the earth, and puts a kinde of shame and disgrace upon it. The deformities and distempers of mens hearts, are much discovered in the winters of their affliction: although there was much glory and beauty on their profession before, yet now they appear most vile and base. We read Luke 2:35 That Christ was appointed for the fall of many, and for a rock of offense, that is, in regard of the sufferings that should follow upon the profession of the Gospel: and mark what God aims at in this, it is that the thoughts of mens hearts might be revealed; there are many secret thoughts, secret haunts of evil in mens hearts, secret windings and turnings of mens spirits, that are not revealed until then: when the cause of God, and our own ends come in competition, when they must part one from the other, then is the tryal what we are: as when a serving-man follows two Gentlemen, you know not whose he is, until they part one from the other: as we read Ezek. 21:21 the King of Babylon stood at the parting way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination; the best divining of men, is at the parting way: although the times of afflictions, in regard of the darkness of them, one way be called the night of afflictions, yet they have light in them, and may be called a day, in regard of the discovery they make of a man what he is. In prosperity a man is apt to judge amiss of himself, not only because ignorance deceiveth the mind; but because of the present contentment he has, he is unwilling to be disquieted with any thoughts of disparagement: Adversity though it be a hard Tyrant, yet it is a true Judge; though it speaks roughly, yet it speaks truly.

We read Deut. 8:2 that God led his people through the wilderness to humble them, and to prove them, and to know what was in their hearts: God knew before, but he would make themselves and others to know. I read of Nazianzen, walking by the Sea shore, seeing how the sea wrought in a storm, that it cast up light and empty things, but not things solid and heavy; he applies this to afflictions, and says, that light and empty spirits are tossed up and down by them, and keep not their constancy; but solid spirits are like the rock that stands firm, and abides the same: men do not know their own hearts, they finde their hearts otherwise when troubles come, then ever they thought before; they never thought they had had so much pride, so much impatience, so much unbelief; they thought before they could have submitted to the hand of God, that they could have born more then is now upon them with patience and meekness; but now they finde their wretched hearts murmure, repine, fret, vex; now they finde corruptions stir exceedingly: they had thought they could have depended upon God in straits; but now they finde their hearts sinking, they finde they have base shifting hearts. When the fire comes to green wood, there comes out abundance of watery stuff that was not discerned before; so when the fire of affliction comes, much evil runs out that you saw not, that neither you nor others thought to be in your hearts before. When a Pond is empty, then appears the mud and the filth, and Toads in the bottom: so when God empties men, when he takes from them his blessings, then much filth, many crawling lusts appear that did not before: sometimes more grace appears in afflictions then did before: some of Gods people are low in their own eyes, they suspect and fear themselves, they think their graces will fail them in trouble, that their peace is false; yet when it

pleases God to bring them into trouble, they finde more peace, more assurance, more strength then ever they did before, or then they thought they should have done; never such sweet joy, never such full assurance, never such use of faith, and patience, and love, as in the sorest and strongest afflictions. This indeed is very rare, there are few that finde more good in their hearts in afflictions, then they thought they had before; but where this is, it may be a sweet seal to the soul, of the sincerity of it ever after. When Corn stands in the field we may guess what it may yield, but we cannot know fully, till it come to the flail, and then it yields sometime more, though often less then we made account of. When grapes come to be pressed, then is discerned what is in them.

Fourthly, an afflicted condition gives opportunity for much exercise of grace, it calls forth whatever grace there is in the heart to the exercise of it. Rev. 13:10 St. John speaking of the sufferings of the Saints, Here (says he) is the faith and the patience of the Saints; here is matter for their faith and patience to be exercised about, this calls for the working of their faith and patience; and so for other graces, as humility, self-denyal, love to God. Physick stirs up natural heat, and makes it active; so afflictions the souls Physick. What mighty prayers, and lively stirrings of spirit are there many times in afflictions? Esay 26:16 They pour out a prayer, when your chastening was upon them: our prayers do but drop out before, now they are poured out, and one work of heart do's so follow another, that there is no intermission, it is all but one prayer they have poured out, not prayers, but a prayer; and it is observable, the word that here is translated prayer, is a word that is used for inchantment [⟨ in non-Latin alphabet ⟩] because such words were conceived to be full of efficacy, containing much in a little

room. So the prayer now is not an empty thing, but full of efficacy, containing much in a few words. The graces of Gods Spirit are the most lovely things in the world in Gods eyes, and therefore God delights much to see the exercise of them. When spices are beaten, then they send forth their fragrant smell; so when Gods servants are in afflictions, then their graces send forth their sweetness, in the activeness of them: when the box is broken, and the precious oyntment is poured forth, then it sends forth its delightful savour; so when the heart is broken with afflictions, and the grace is poured forth, then they give a sweet smell in the nostrils of God and men. A tool that is daily used, is kept bright and shining; and so grace, when it is most exercised, it it is most beautiful: The glory of the things of the world minishes in the use of them, but grace is ever better for the wearing.

Fifthly, in afflictions the power of grace does much appear; the abiding strong against opposition, is a true argument of strength: this was the honor of Josephs strength in his blessing, Gen. 49. 23, 24. The archers have sorely grieved him, yet his bow abode in strength. It is nothing for a man to go on in the profession of Religion, while all things are well about him, while he feels no trouble, but God hedges about his way: if God should always prosper his people in outward things, who would not be a professor of godliness? When the people saw how Mordecai was raised, then many became Jews. I read of one Pamachius a Heathen, that he said to the Pope, Make me a Bishop, and I will be a Christian. Every bird can sing in fair sun-shine weather: but here is the power of grace, not to be offended in Christs sufferings: Blessed are they who are not offended in me, says Christ, to desire to know nothing, but Christ and him crucified: To embrace Christ in his

rags, in his poverty, in his shame, in his afflictions and sorrows; this argues a power of grace indeed: it argues the power of love, that much water cannot quench it. It is a note that Josephus has, writing the History of the time of Christ; At that time, says he, Jesus a wise man did many miracles, and although he was condemned to the cross, yet did not those that followed him from the beginning forbear to love him, notwithstanding the ignominy of his death; He notes it is an argument of great love in his followers, as it was indeed, that they did not forbear to love, notwithstanding his ignominious death. As it is a sign our love to sin is strong, when we have many afflictions to quench our love, when we meet with much trouble and opposition in a way of sin, and yet our love to it is not abated; so it argues our love to God and godliness is very strong, when the greatest opposition cannot prevail against it: to account Christ precious as a tree of life, although we be fastened to him as to a stake to be burned, this is love indeed. It was the glory of Scipio, in which he much boasted, that there was not any of his Soldiers, but would venture his life for him, if it were to leap into the Sea, to cast themselves from a high Tower, or any other way that he should require of them, this argued their strong love to him; and it is the glory of the Lord in which the Lord delights, that he has a people whose hearts are closely knit to him, in the most afflicted distressed condition that can befal them, who are content to suffer any thing for him, to submit to his blessed will, to honor him any way that he shal please, though it be in the loss of dearest comforts, and suffering the sorest and hardest afflictions.

Sixthly, by afflictions the graces of the Saints are much increased, as Israel never increased so much as when Pharaoh most oppressed; for two hundred and fifteen years before, they in-

creased but to seventy; but in less time, when they were oppressed, they increased to more then six hundred thousand men fit for War, besides women and children: thus the spiritual increase of the true Israel of God is much in afflictions more usually then at other times. Gods people to whom afflictions are sanctified, never thrive so much in grace, as when they are watered with their own tears. The Rose is sweeter in the Still, then upon the stalk. Fish thrive better in cold and salt waters, then in warm and fresh: the largest fish are not in the fresh Rivers, but in the coldest salt Seas. The ground is most fruitful that is most harrowed. The most plentiful Summer, follows after the hardest Winter: The face of Religion is never so beautiful, as when it is washed with its own tears. The Walnut tree is most fruitful when it is most beaten: Camomel flourishes most, when it is most trodden on, and pressed down: suffering for truths does much confirm men in them; that which a man has bought at a dear rate, he is loath to part with: thus we finde it in men who suffer for errors, they are ever the more stiff in them: like the Merchants, holding up their commodity, because it cost them dear. All oppositions, if they do not overcome, they strengthen that which they do oppose: as water cast upon the fire, it makes that fire burn hotter, that it does not quench. Wind shaking the tree, makes it grow more steady. Thus the tribulations of the godly, and the persecutions they suffer, do oppose their graces, but because they cannot overcome them, they strengthen them: As we read Psalm 45. when the Church forsakes all, when she leaves her fathers house, and her kindred, then does the King greatly delight in her beauty, her beauty is great then, and exceeding delightful in the eyes of the Lord: Cant. 2:14 O my dove (says Christ to the Church) your voyce is sweet, your countenance is comely: let me

hear your voyce, let me see your countenance: This is spoken of the state of the Church, after her deliverance from great afflictions, after her return from captivity; before her captivity she was loathsom and vile in Gods eyes; God hateth her, as appears, Jer. 12:8 Mine heritage is unto me as a Lyon in the forrest; it cryeth out against me, therefore I have hated it: but now she is delightful; Christ bids her arise his love, his fair one, and come away. God before cared not for her solemn meetings, they were a burden to him, as appears Esay 1. 11, 12, 13, &c. but now he expresseth his desire of their solemn meetings, O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs, you who worshippest me in secret places, in holes and corners, let me see your face, let me see you assembled into the face of a Church in my Sanctuary; let me hear your voice, let me hear you there calling upon me, singing-praises unto me, Psalm 66:12 We went through fires, and through waters (says the Church) but you broughtest us into a wealthy place. Thus God deals with his Church spiritually, by bringing them through the fire and water of afflictions, he brings them to a wealthy place, a wealthy estate. The Church of Iudah before the Captivity, was as a Vine that brought forth wilde Grapes, upon whom the Lord resolved to command the clouds not to rain, and from whom he would take the hedge of his protection, Esay 5. but after the captivity he speaks otherwise of it, Esay 27. 2, 3. In that day sing ye unto her, a Vineyard of red wine (which was the best wine) now the Lord will keep it, and water it every moment. I have read of a Fountain, that at noon-day is cold, at midnight it grows warm: it is thus with many, they are coldest in their prosperity, and the nights of afflictions contract their heat, and intends it: fire never burns so hot as in frosty weather. The winter time of afflic-

tion, sometimes proves to be the most fruitful time of a Christians life; contrary to the work of nature, for all things seem dead then, and they flourish and grow only in the Summer; but a Christians Winter is sometime better then his Summer; grace flourishes and grows most in his Winter. Our Benoni's, sons of sorrow, prove oftentimes our best Benjamins, sons of our right hand: the best corn is that which lies under the clods in frost and snow; Paul rejoiced much in Onesimus, whom he had begotten in his bonds, Philem. ver. 10. Basil in his Sermon upon the forty Martyrs, calls them the stars of the world, the flowers of the Church. And Chrysostome upon Acts 12. speaking of those who were praying for Peter in the night, says, That they were made by afflictions more pure then the Heaven. And some of the Ancients, as Chrysostom and Salvian, have called afflictions the mother of Vertue. Manasses his chain was more profitable to him then his Crown. Hebr. 12:10 God is said to chastise his people for their profit, that they might be partakers of his holiness: God communicates of his own holiness unto the souls of his people by their chastisements, in a special manner: love is often encreased in affliction; sheep run together when the dog is set on them: after the Church was delivered from violent persecution, it suffered much by divisions, the very bowels were rent by their dissentions, it was then in a worse condition then before, the fire of their dissentions being worse then the fire of their persecutions; the one hindred, but the other furthered their growth. John 15:2 Every branch in me my Father purgeth, that it may bring forth more fruit: as Vines are made fruitful by pruning, so are Gods people by the pruning knife of afflictions; and hence it is, when the Lord has some great employment, some great service for any of his people, he first sends them unto, and trains them in

the school of afflictions, as Joseph and David. And as our Benoni's, our sons of sorrows, that which we get out of our sorrows, proves oftentimes our chiefest Benjamins; so Gods chiefest Benjamins, whom he uses as the sons of his right hand in special services, are first Benoni's, sons of sorrow. There is a great deal of difference, says Luther, between a Divine in outward pomp, and a Divine under the cross. It is a rare thing to have any mans eyes opened as Jonathans were, by tasting of honey, by prosperity; but in afflictions many are: afflictions prove to them, as the clay to the poor mans eyes that gave him sight. They that are afflicted, do better understand Scripture, says Luther, but those who are secure in their prosperity, read them as a verse in Ovid. Amongst many others, this is one special means whereby an afflicted condition comes to be useful for the increase of grace, because in it the soul gains much experience; experience of God and of his ways, experience of the good there is in, and faithfulness of his word; as we read, Psalm 107. Those who go down into the Sea, see the wonders of the Lord; much more those who come into the seas of troubles and afflictions, how do they see the wonders of the Lord? they can tell their friends much of the wonders of the Lord towards them: so Israel in the time of trouble cryes out, Hos. 8:2 My God we know you; now we know you otherwise then before we did: and experience of the evil of sin. It was a speech of a Germane Divine in his sickness, Gasper Olevianus; In this disease I have learned how great God is, and what the evil of sin is, I never knew what God was to purpose before, nor what sin meant. When God spoke to Job out of the whirlwind, cap. 38. he answers, cap. 40. 3, 4. Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer you? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. And experience likewise of our weakness, and the van-

ity of the Creature more now then ever, Psalm 39:11 When you with rebukes doest correct man,you makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity, Selah: he can then say Surely, and that with a Selah, that every man is vanity. It is very observable, that of all the seven churches that Christ wrote unto, in the second & third Chapters of the Revelations, there are only two which he charges no evil upon; the Church of Smyrna, and the Church of Philadelphia: and these two were exercised with much trouble; as the Church of Smyrna, cap. 2:9 is said to have endured much tribulation, and to be in poverty, yet Christ commends her, and says she is rich: her poverty made her rich, her tribulations made her glorious in the eyes of Christ. And the Church of Philadelphia, cap. 3. 8, 10. she had but a little strength, she was in a low, poor, afflicted, contemptible condition; yet she denyed not the name of Christ, she kepe the word of Christs patience, that word for which she suffered much, being strengthened thereunto by the patience she received from Jesus Christ.

Seventhly, afflictions preserve from much sin, they are blessed preventing physick: our falls into sore afflictions, keep us from falls into sin. Hosea 2:6 God says, he will hedge the way of his people; if the hedge of the command will not keep us from transgression, it is a mercy for God to hedge in our way by another hedge, the hedge of afflictions, they are blessed stumbling blocks cast in the way of sin, to hinder us in it. I have read of Augustine, that once by wandring out of his way, he escaped one who lay in wait to mischieve him; it falls out so many times with us, if afflictions did not put us out of our way, we should fall into the power of some sin or other which would mischieve us. Gregory says of Solomon, that

he left the house of wisdom, because the discipline of afflictions did not preserve him. Salt brine preserves from putrifaction: the salt marshes keep the sheep from the rot.

Eightly, by afflictions, decayed grace comes to be recovered: These are Gods files, that file off the rust of security. Physitians use to cure a Lethargy, by putting their patient into a feaver: the spiritual Lethargy of security, is often cured by hot and strong afflictions. When men are in a swound, we use to nip and pinch them, and strike them, and cast cold water upon their faces: Gods strokes, and the cold water of afflictions being sanctified by him, recover many from spiritual swounds: many who have so far decayed in their spiritual vigor and activeness, that they have seemed to be even dead, yet they have been recovered this way. Job 36:15 God opens their ears in oppression; many mens ears are clogged up with the world, but when God gives them up for a while to the oppressions of men, then their ears are opened. It is good for me, says David, that I was afflicted, for before I went astray, but now have I learned your word. In the 2. Hosea, God threatens the Church to strip her naked, and to set her as in the day that she was born, and to make her as a wilderness, to hedge her way with thorns; and thus the Lord did to that Church: but mark what he says shal be the fruit of all, verse 7. Then shall she say, I will go and return unto my first husband, for then was it better with me then it is now. When Absolom sent for Joab once and again, yet he came not unto him, until Absolom caused his corn fields to be set on fire, and then he comes: God speaks and calls to his people who are grown secure, once and again, but they neglect God, until God comes with the fire of afflictions, and then they come. Afflictions are like the prick at the Nightingales brest, that awakes her, and

puts her upon her sweet and delightful singing. Gulielmus Parisensis says of Musk, when it has lost its sweetness, if it be put into the sink amongst filth, it recovers it; this he applyed to decayed grace in the times of afflictions, in afflictions it revives, and recovers.

Ninthly, afflictions are of great use to mortifie lusts, to purge out filth and corruption. Isa. 27:9 By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit thereof. When Physitians purge the body, they purge out that which is good, as well as that which is evill, but when God purges in the sanctified use of afflictions, he only purges out the evil, this is all the fruit thereof. As Aloes kills worms, so do bitter afflictions crauling lust in the heart. Cold and hard winters do destroy much vermine, which otherwise would be very noisom: so cold and hard afflictions vermine lusts. Violent storms and thunder clear the air, strong afflictions clarifie the heart; by them we are as it were poured from vessel to vessel, from whence the ill savour of our heart-distempers comes to be taken away. Ier. 48:11 Foul and stained cloathes are made white by laying abroad in cold frosty nights, so the defiled heart. Salt marshes purge rank humours, so do the saltness of afflictions rank lusts. Men let their armour lye rusting by them in the time of peace, but in the time of war they scour all bright, to make fit for service: so mens hearts in the time of peace grow foul, but in times of trouble, they are then cleansed. It is a great mercy to have the act of sin hindered; afflictions are very useful for this, and therefore, Hosea. 2:6 they are; as you heard, called a hedge of thorns; whereby the ways to sin are hedged up: but to have the inward lusts mortified, this is a greater good. All the Prophets preachings

could not purge the Jews from idolatry, so as the Babylonish captivity: it is observed, never since that time have idols been found amongst them.

Tenthly, Gods people are often in an afflicted condition, as chastisements for their sins, they bring many evils upon themselves, by their loose walkings, by their indiscretions, by their pride, by their selfseeking, by their forwardness, by their wilfulness, and worldliness: God chastens even whom he loves: the Apostle tells the Corinthians, that they were chastened of the Lord, that they might not be condemned with the world. Those whom God would never condemn, yet he will chasten: God will have his children feel something of the evil of their sins, and will have them and others see how displeasing sin is to him, in the fruits of his displeasure, upon those who are his beloved ones, who are exceeding dear, and precious in his eyes: because the Lord is careful of his honor, therefore if his children sin, he will chastise them, hence the Greek word for chastisement, signifies care of honor. GODS children may come to be children under anger, though not children of wrath: yea God usually holds a more strict hand over his people, then over any, he quickly brings them under the rod, when he lets other go on, and rot in their sins; yet he comes not upon his children as a revenging Judge, to destroy the person for the sins sake: but as a gracious Father, to destroy the sin for the persons sake: he is angry that they have sinned, but especially angry that they might sin no more.

Eleventhly, that which God aims at in the afflictions of his people, is to make them conformable to Christ their head, that they may enter into their glory, as Christ did into his. Ought he not to suffer these things, and so to enter into his glory? Luke 24:26 We

read of S. Paul, Phil. 3:10 that he earnestly desired to be partaker of the fellowship of Christs sufferings, and to be conformable to his death; God will have a conformity to the death of his Son. We read of Godfrey of Bulloin, that he would not be crowned in Jerusalem with a crown of gold, where Christ was crowned with a crown of thorns; because he would not have such a great disproportion between him and Christ. It is reported of Origen, when Alexander Severus the Emperor sent for him, he appearing to be meanly cloathed, there were divers costly garments prepared for him, and sent to him, but he refused them, and when he came near to Rome, there was a Mule and a Chariot sent for him, that he might choose which liked him best, but he refused them likewise, and would not go in pomp to the Emperor, saying, He was less then his Master Christ, of whom he never read that he rode but once.

Twelfthly, the afflictions of Gods people are in just judgement a rock of offense, and a stumbling block to the ungodly. Christ in regard of the afflictions that attend the profession of the Gospel, is said to be a rock of offense, and so appointed for the fall of many, Luke 2:34 How many thousands perish, because they are offended at the mean, afflicted, persecuted estate of Christ in this life? Your heart is set upon vanity and outward pomp, this persecuted estate of godliness is your stumbling block, at which God in his wrath lets you stumble, that you mightest fall, break your neck, and perish for ever: hence is that speech of Christ, Blessed are they that are not offended in me: O its a great mercy of God, not to let this be a stumbling block, it is a mercy that God grants but to a few; here and there a poor soul, who is able to see the beauty and glory of godliness, through all the dark clouds of troubles, afflictions, per-

secutious, that attend it: but for the generality of men, this is that which hides the glory of it from them, unto their everlasting perdition.

Lastly, Gods people are here afflicted, that Christ in them, and they in Christ, may in the conclusion of all be the more glorified.

First, in the overcoming of all evils, in the final destruction of all their enemies.

Secondly, in their happiness after so many evils endured: the bitterness of foregoing grief, commends the sweetness of following joys.

Thirdly, their afflictions work to the increase of their glory. 2 Cor. 4:18 Our light afflictions work for us an exceeding weight of glory. Gordius that blessed Martyr (whom St. Basil so much commends in an Oration of his) accounted it a loss to him, not to suffer many kindes of tortures; he says, that tortures are but tradings with God for glory.

Tertullian has an expression to that purpose, Thegreater the combates, the greater are the following rewards. Bernard says of persecuters, that they are but his Fathers goldsmiths, who are working to adde pearls to the crowns of the Saints. The seeds of happiness are sown in the deep furrows of affliction, and the deeper the furrows are, the more precious are the seeds that are there sown, and the more glorious and plentiful will the harvest be. When a curious glorious picture is to be drawn, the grounds use to be laid in black, but not in dirt: so our grounds may be laid here in afflictions, but let them not be laid in sin. Here then we see, that although afflictions are a bitter root, yet there spring from them fair flowers, and pleasant fruit: no marvel then though God has a

hand in ordering things so, that his people should be in such an afflicted condition in this world: from Gods determining things to be thus, let us learn,

Chapter 7: What use we should make of God's ordering his people to an afflicted condition

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First, that our rest is not here in this world; let us not promise to ourselves any such matter, let us not seek it here: the promise will not bear it, the promise will bear no further, then that we should have only so much of the things of this world, as shall be sutable to our condition; That which the Prophet speaks in another case, Micah 2:10 we may apply to all the things and places of the world; Arise, here is not your rest: this is not the place, this is not the time, here are not the things that God has appointed for our rest: this is the place and time for troubles, and sorrows, and afflictions, our warfare is here. No man in his warfare, will build himself a strong and sumptuous house in the field; if we seek for our rest here, we mistake; as if a man floating upon the waves of the sea, upon a board after shipwrack, should think to lie down and sleep, and settle himself there: or as a bird should build her nest in a bush, floating in the midst of the waves of the sea.

God, says Bernard, has not cast man out of Paradise, for him to think to finde out another Paradise in this world; no, man is born to labor. Why do you seek the living amongst the dead? why do you seek for living comforts, where you must expect to dye daily? It is only Heaven that is above all winds, storms, and tempests; rest must be after labor, our rest is the crown of our labor; to seek it here, is to seek it preposterously, and Why do you require that in one place (says S. Ambrose) which is due in another? Why would you preposterously have the crown before you have overcome? Imagine the most setled condition you can in this world, and although you had it, yet it were but vanity: so says the Psalmist, Psalm 39:5 Man in his best estate, is vanity: the word is in the Original, in his setled estate he is vanity; not only vain, but vanity it self.

It was a heavy charge that S. James, cap. 5. laid upon some, that they lived in pleasure upon earth: as if he should have said, earth is not the place for pleasure; this is the place of sorrow, of trouble, of mourning, of affliction. Thus Abraham charged Dives, In your life time, says he, you had your pleasure: the emphasis lies there, in your life time, that should not have been the time: let us take heed we be not too hasty in seeking our rest, our pleasure and delight; we may perhaps have a little for the while to the flesh, and because we will not be content with that condition that God has appointed for his people, here we may lose our parts in that glorious eternal rest which God has prepared for his people hereafter. Seek for that which ye do, namely for rest, but do not seek for it where ye do: if we seek our rest in this world, notwithstanding we meet with so many troubles in it, what would we do if the Lord should let us prosper? Behold (says an Ancient) the world is trou-

blesome, and yet it is loved, what would it be if it were peaceable? you embrace it though it be filthy, what would you do if it were beautiful? you cannot keep your hands from the thorns, how earnest would you be then in gathering the flowers?

Secondly, hence it appears, that prosperity is not always a sign of love and favor from God. Rome makes it a note of the true Church: if that were so, then the Egyptians were in a righter way then the Israelites: the Philistims, the Ammonites, the Midianites, and afterward the Babylonians and the Persians, might have pleaded that their gods were true gods, and to be worshipped rather then the God of Israel: and when the ten Tribes broke off from Judah, and yet often prevailed against Judah, and were more prosperous, they might have pleaded that they were in the right, that their worshipping of God was more accepted, then that which was at Jerusalem. And afterwards the Heathens might have pleaded this argument against the Christians; and thus indeed they did, as we finde in the 30. Epistle of Ambrose: he answers to one Symmachus, a great man, who pleaded strongly against the Christians, and for the maintenance of Idols, by this argument, saying, That they prospered and flourished more in worshipping of their gods, then the Christians did in the worshipping of theirs. Certainly, the ancient godly Fathers could not have heard this argument of outward prosperity, of outward pomp and glory in the world, pleaded as a sign of the true Church, and of Gods love, but with much indignation; How cross is this to Scripture? where we finde the estate of Gods people has usually been a poor afflicted estate. And surely, the Papists could not always plead this argument; time has been when the Goths, Vandals, Hunnes, and Turks, have been more prosperous then they. The Emperor, Henry the fourth,

was much hated by the Bishop of Rome, and yet he was not unprosperous in his way: when the Pope cursed him, and made another Emperor, namely, Rodulphus King of Swevia; yet this Emperor of his setting up, prospered not at all, but was overcome, and slain by Henry: The Pope after set up another, and he was slain by a woman: yea, he set up a third after him against Henry the fourth; he likewise was taken in a Mill, and slain by the Emperor: at the last, the Pope himself was cast out of his Seat, and cast into Prison, and dyed in extreme dolours of mind, for that he had so wronged the Emperor; and as it is reported, he asked pardon of him.

And as outward prosperity has not been always an argument that they could make use of; so we hope that time will come, when they shall make use of it no more, when their judgements shall be altered, and this argument in which now they boast, shall for ever fail them; but for the present, though now she be crowned with Diamonds, and cloathed with Scarlet, yet still she is the mother of Harlots, and the abominations of the earth. I have not, says Luther, a stronger argument against the Papal Kingdom, thenthis, that it is without the cross.

Let none amongst us deceive themselves, by resting upon outward prosperity, as an argument of Gods love, for their everlasting estates. Many have no other hold to lean upon for their salvation but this; all those solemn protestations of God against this in his word; all the works of Gods providence towards his own people, in leading them on in an afflicted condition, and towards the wicked in giving them the fat of the earth, will not take mens hearts off from this false reasoning, but still they will think, if God did not love them, surely he would not let them prosper so as he does. A

painted face is as certain an argument of a good complexion, as this is of a good condition. When God shall come hereafter, to take up his own to himsef, he will not look so much amongst the great ones of the earth, the rich, the gorgious attires, sumptuous houses, furnished tables, as amongst the the persecuted, contemned, scorned company; out of them he will finde his own; Mal. 3:17 In that day when I make up my jewels, says the Lord: the phrase notes, that Gods jewels now do lie scattered in the dirt, and God has his time to make them up; God passes by Pallaces, and looks in at cottages; he passes by the rich, and takes the poor; he passes by the honorable, and takes the despised ones.

Thirdly, hence we have a confirmation of another life after this; certainly these things cannot always continue, it is impossible that the godly should always be in this poor, afflicted, distressed condition: it is not against the rule of justice to suffer this for a while, that way may be made to other of Gods intentions, but that there never should be any righting of their cause, that there should never be seen a difference between him that fears God, and him that fears him not; that God should never appear to judge in the Earth, that there should never be a reward for the righteous, this cannot be. The souls that are under the Altar, which were of those who were put to death for the Testimony of Christ, they cry, How long, O Lord, holy and true, will it be before you avengest yourself for the blood of your Saints? S. Paul reasons strongly from this argument, 1 Cor. 15:19 to prove the resurrection; For, says he, if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. When therefore we see the godly to be wronged, and persecuted, when we see iniquity to be in the place of righteousness, and wickednes in the place of judgement, let us not be offended, but

say in our hearts, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a time for every purpose and every work; And as Chap. 5:8 When you seest the oppressionof the poor, and violent perverting of judgement, marvel not at the matter, for he that is higher then the highest regardeth. If God should always prosper his servants in this life, then it would be thought he intended no other for them; but he withdraws his hand here, that we might be taught to look for another.

In the times under the Law, God did usually more prosper his people in outward things, then now he does, and the reason may be because then Christ was but darkly revealed, the riches of spiritual mercies were not much made known; there was but little mention made of that eternal life, which is to come hereafter, we have very few texts of Scripture in the Old Testament, in which there is any clear mention made of eternal life, but in the times of the Gospel, God calls his people to a more suffering condition then he did then; and therefore the mystery of Christ, the glorious promises of the Gospel, the Doctrine of the resurrection, and the ways of God in that eternity which is to come hereafter, are more clearly and fully revealed. It is an excellent expression that Luther has to this purpose: Bodily promises, says he, is as the shell or husk that covers the nut, which is Christ, and eternal life; therefore Christ coming, the shell, the husk, is broken and taken off, that is, temporal promises cease, and the spiritual succeed; he means in comparison of that it was under the Law.

The Reason why the Pharisees scorned at Christ preaching against seeking the things of the world, Luke 13:14 was, because the promises were so large for temporal things. Therefore when Christ would teach them not to seek those which they conceived

the chief blessings of God contained in the promises, they deride him; hence Christ tells them ver. 16. The Law and the Prophets were till Iohn, till then the promises ran much upon temporal things, but now the Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, there is now another manner of kingdom revealed, sought after in another way then ever formerly. I dare appeal to your conscience, whoever you art; can you think otherwise in your conscience, but that those who walk close with God, subjecting their hearts and lives unto his fear, must be most beloved of him? they must needs be nearer that eternal good, and fountain of all happiness, then vile wretched sinners, who walk according to their lusts, who are vile and abominable in their ways. When you seest Gods people to be so low, so distressed, so afflicted, either you must be convinced strongly that there is a time, in which all shall be called over again, or else you art an Atheist; God will convince you another day by this argument, Did you not see what were the ways of my providence towards my people? Might you not have gathered from thence, that there was another time a coming?

Fourthly, Learn we hence to judge wisely of the poor, of the afflicted, and persecuted. Psalm 41:1 Far be it from us to think they are forsaken of God: let us not be offended at Religion, because troubles follow the profession of it; the blessing that comes by profession of the truth, consists not in such a peace as frees from trouble, but in giving peace and rest to the soul in the middest of troubles. Luther has an excellent speech for this in one of his Epistles ad Tonitorem.

You seek and affect peace, but preposterously, such as the worlds peace, not Christs, who gives peace in the middest of troubles; as he says, Rule you in the middest of your Enemies. Now the

cause of the Church calls for a wise judging: How many carnal people are ready to think that Popery is rather the truth, and that the Religion of Protestants is not right, because God has of late years so grievously afflicted his Church? What, would God suffer his own people (say they) his own truth thus to be beaten down? As they formerly said of Christ, Let him save him, seeing he delighted in him, so if God delighted in this way, surely he would have saved it, he would not have suffered opposition so far to have prevailed against the professors of it. It is no argument that Christ is not in the ship, because tempests and storms arise. It is no argument that our cause is not Gods, that Christ is not with us, because of our afflictions, it may be we have not awakened him by our prayers, we are not yet fit to enjoy the sweetness of a calm.

Salvian was fain to write a whole Treatise, above eleven hundred years ago, to answer this argument that men had against the people of God, and the profession of the Gospel. Turks judge all things according to outward success, and so did the heathens of old. We read of Brutus, being overcome by Anthony, he cryes out, Whatever things are disputed concerningvertue, are but meer toys and fancies; for fortune rules in all humane things: but it beseems not Christians to judge by this rule. Clemens Alexandrinus cites Plato, expressing himself thus, Although a righteous man be tormented, although his eyes be digged out, yet he remains a blessed man. Let none judge worse of himself meerly because of afflictions: before you were of the world, it may be you prospered, it shined upon you; but now since you have given your name to Christ, many troubles and afflictions follow you: this is no other but that has been, is, will be the estate of Gods people in this life: we must not draw ill consequences from, or make ill constructions

of our afflictions, for this is to charge God foolishly, which Job did not, Chap. 1:22 There are some kinde of sufferings that a man meets with, that have a kinde of sweet seal of God with them, even in the time of suffering, by which a man is more confirmed in his way to be from God, then ever he was before.

Fifthly, what shall become then of ungodly and wicked men? Thus Saint Peter argues, 1. Epist. 4. 17, 18. Iudgement must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end of them be, that obey not the Gospel of God? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear? If it be done thus to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry? Behold, they whose judgement was not to drink of the cup, have assuredly drunken, and art tbou he that shall go altogether unpunished? you shall not go unpunished; but you shall assuredly drink of it, Ier. 49:12 certainly there is shame and confusion for you, there are tortures prepared for you. You heard what the Martyrs have suffered, but all that is nothing to the least spark of Gods revenging wrath, when it is mingled with hatred.

That is a fearful expression that we have, Psalm 35:6 Let their way be slippery, and the angel of the Lord persecuting them. It is a more fearful thing to have the Angel of the Lord persecute, then to be persecuted by men; but how fearful a thing is it, when God himself, that infinite Deity, when he persecutes a man? when Divine justice follows a man from one place to another and persecutes him? You look upon those poor despised misused Servants of God, and you think vilely of them; let those spectacles strike terror into your hearts every time you see them! O what is reserved for me then?

Sixthly, if this be the usual estate of Gods people, let us learn then to prepare for afflictions before they come; although we have escaped many years, yet we may be called to such an estate at last. Polycarpus escaped till he was fourscore and six years old, and then he was called to Martyrdom. In the first ten persecutions in the primitive times, the Christians in England escaped all the nine, although the Gospel not many years after Christ was professed in England, yet the tenth and last persecution fell heavy upon them. Iulius Caesar escaped fifty several battels, in which he was personally present, and yet at last in the Senate house, he was unexpectedly murthered.

Now all is well with you, lay up for times of trouble: this is a gathering time, that will be a spending time; know that that which will serve turn now, will not serve turn then: many are not able to hold out now, what will they do then? O what will you do in the day of your visitation? Jer. 12:5 If thefootmen have wearied you, how can you contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, how will you do in the swelling of Jordan? We read of Polycarpus, that as he lay in his bed, he saw in a vision the bed set on fire under his head, forewarning him of his Martyrdom; we in our ease should seriously think of our sufferings, now while Sun-shine days of peace continue, we should consider of the days of darkness which may be many. Oftentimes we are thinking of, and seeking after great things, when we should be preparing for suffering hard things: as Mat. 20:20 when Christ had been speaking to prepare for sufferings, Zebedees children most unseasonably come, seeking for the highest places in his kingdom. This was the fault of Baruc, Jer. 45. when God was bringing sore and grievous afflictions to his people, he was seeking great things for himself.

Chapter 8: Eleven Rules for preparation to suffer afflictions

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First, make account of them, do not say, I shall never be removed; although you know not what particular afflictions shall befal you, yet make an account, that an afflicted condition will be your portion: according to that of the Apostle, Acts 20. 22, 23. And now I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befal me there; save that the holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. It is our wisdom thus to make an account of afflictions, that when they come, they may be no other then were expected before. As is reported of Anaxagoras, that when news came to him of the death of his Son, and it was thought he would have been much troubled at it; he answered, I begat him mortal: so when any troubles befal us, we should entertain them with these thoughts, I knew my condition was to be an afflicted condition, I entred upon the ways of godlines upon these terms, to be willing to be in an afflicted condition; this is Gods ordinary way towards his people, it is Gods mercy, it is no worse, I expect yet greater tryals then these.

If we make use of the Scriptures, foretelling troubles beforehand, we cannot for shame complain, when we meet with those we acknowledge we were foretold of. It is a good expression Augustine has, in one of his Epistles to Victorianus, We must not be so contrary to ourselves, as to believe what we read, and yet to complain when the same things are fulfilled. If we make account of evils aforehand, we may have time to gather together the forces of our mindes, which being united are strong, otherwise they will come upon us, when our strength is scattered, and so be very grievous unto us, and likely to prevail against us. Those evils, says Seneca, that others overcome by a long time suffering, as being used to them, the wise man overcomes by thinking before hand.

Secondly, the rule of Christ that we have Matt. 16:26 is of great use; If any will follow me, let him deny himself, and so take up his cross. Where self is renounced, the cross is easily born: it is self that makes the cross pinch: things puft up with wind, break when they come to the fire, so those who are puft up, and filled with self; the soul emptied of its self, is only fit to suffer: there is a six fold self that must be denyed.

First, self-opinion: We must be willing to lie quietly under the truth, to be convinced, and to be guided by it.

Secondly, self-counsels, and self-reasonings, must be denyed; we must take heed of conferring with flesh and blood: as it was the care of Saint Paul, Gal. 1:16 immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, if he had begun to do it, he had been in danger.

Thirdly, self-excellencies; our parts, our priviledges, our credits, and all those things that are great in our own eyes, and that make us great in the eyes of the world.

Fourthly, self-will: We must not think it so grievous a thing to have our wills crossed, we must not expect to have our conditions brought to our wills; and therefore it is our wisdom, whatever our condition be, that we bring our wills unto them. As it is reported of Socrates, that when the Tyrant threatned death unto him, he answered, He was willing: nay then, says he, You shall live against your will; he answers again, Nay whatever you do with me, it shall be my will: How much more ought Christians to have their wills bow to the holy and blessed will of God in every thing? the providence of God discovers his will, as well as his word.

Fifthly, self-comforts: Those who give liberty to themselves, to satisfy themselves to the utmost, although in lawful comforts, will be unfit to suffer hardship when God shall call thereunto. Tertullian has such an expression in his Treatise de cultu foeminarum, I fear that neck that is used to pearl chains, that it will not give it self to the sword.

Sixthly, self-ends must be denied; we must aim at God, and not at ourselves, in all our ways, and then how easie will it be for us to bear crosses, considering that Gods ends do go on, though our ends be crossed?

Thirdly, be sure to lay a good foundation, in a through work of humiliation: the more you art willing to bear Gods hand in the work of humiliation for sin, the lighter will all the burthens of afflictions be unto you; the seed that fell upon the stony ground withered; and although for a while it was received with joy, yet when tribulation and persecution arises, by and by he is offended, Mat. 13:21 Mark the expression of the Holy Ghost there, by and by, he is presently offended, and all because there was not depth of earth, there was not a through work of humiliation. We read, Acts

9:16 that God would show S. Paul, what great things he must suffer for his Names sake: and how did God prepare his heart? You shal finde in the former part of the Chapter, that God smote him down to the ground, his heart was smote lower then his body; he comes trembling and astonished before the Lord, saying, Lord, what will you have me to do? He was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink; this was a great preparation of his heart, to those great things he suffered afterwards. You think the burthens of afflictions great, because you never felt what the weight and burden of sin meant; I dare pawn my life for that soul, who constantly exerciseth it self in the work of humiliation for sin, who burthens it self with the weight of its sins, and is willing to lie under it, for the further breaking of spirit, that it shall be able to endure crosses, and stand under strong afflictions; and this must needs be so,

First, because the soul is acquainted with the sense of an evil, infinitely greater then any evil it can meet withal in afflictions; the sense whereof must needs swallow up the sense of lesser evils: as those who are acquainted with the pains of the stone, and strangury, and other dreadful diseases, account lesser pains (which yet are very grievous unto others) as nothing.

Secondly, a soul exercised in the work of humiliation, by it is put under the power of Gods sovereignty, dreadful authority, and infinite majesty: it is not man that can terrifie that soul from duty, that lies under the power of these.

Thirdly, this burden of sin, felt in the work of humiliation, mortifies those inward lusts, puls down the strength of them, which are so ready to rise against, and withdraw the heart from the truths, and ways of God.

Fourthly, this soul knows how dear comfort is, if it has any comfort, it cost dear before it was got, and therefore it will not easily be parted withal.

Fiftly, where conscience by this is throughly wounded, and deeply struck, it cannot easily gather any such film upon it, as not to remain tender, but it soon feels the evil, yea it is sensible of the danger of the least sin.

Sixthly, if ever God has manifested any love in Christ unto it, the souls love to God and Christ must needs be exceeding great.

Fourthly, be careful to preserve your inward peace, your peace with God, and your own conscience: If vapours be not got into the earth, and stir not there, they are not all the storms and tempests abroad that can make an earthquake; but if vapours be within, and work there, an earthquake is caused: so where there is peace within, all troubles and oppositions without, cannot shake the heart; but if there be no peace within, every little thing troubles the spirit: terrours without, and terrours within, both are very hard, Be not you a terrour to me, O Lord, says Jeremy, chap. 17:17 for you art my hope in the day of evil. I care not though all the world be a terrour to me, so be it you beest not a terrour; if I have peace with you, it is enough, what ever evil befal me: Oh therefore maintain, and keep this peace above all, it is no matter whether you have peace or no with the world, so be it you have the peace of the Gospel in your hearts: it is one special part of that spiritual armory we read of, Ephes. 6. to be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: that is, that blessed peace of the Gospel, which is a strong preparation to endure any troubles or afflictions that Christians meet withal: the reason of that phrase to be shod, is this, because we are to go amongst briars and thorns, in our way to Heaven; we

are to meet with many hard things we are to pass through, therefore we had need be well shod; if a man be not so, he will be as one that goes upon sharp flints bare-foot, or a mongst thorns, or bushes, so that the blood tricles down his feet every step he takes, surely such a man cannot hold out long; thus it is with the soul that is not fenced with the Gospel of peace: Be careful in nothing, let not your spirits be divided (for so is the word) Phil. 4. 6, 7. And the peace of God which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and mindes; the word is, shall guard your hearts: afflictions and troubles are as enemies, compassing us about, but the peace of God guards our hearts from the evil of them: this enables Gods children, though not in the letter, yet in some sort to tread upon the Adder and Asp, to shake off Vipers, and receive no hurt. Having peace with God, we gloryin tribulations; we are not only patient under them, but we glory in them; How were the spirits of those blessed Martyrs, we read, and hear so much of, strengthened with this blessed peace of the Gospel?

Take heed therefore, that you never maintain peace with any sin. Great peace have they that love your Law, and nothing shall offend them, Psalm 119:165 Oh, how many of you have broke your peace with God! at least the comfort of it is exceedingly darkned: you would fain have outward ease, and peace, but you have neglected the comforts of this peace, and that is the reason you have no strength, to suffer any thing for the truth, Nehem. 8:10 The joy of the Lord is your strength, that joy that comes from this inward peace, but where this is not, there is nothing to sweeten sorrows, and therefore they must needs be very bitter. That time therefore that God gives you yet respite from afflictions, let it be spent in making up your peace more with God then ever, and getting

clearer evidence, and sense of his love. If ever you knew what peace with God meant, I appeal unto you, when at any time, the sense of it has enlarged your hearts with joy; whether then, have you not found yourselves willing to suffer any thing for God? you could then go through fire, and water, your spirits could triumph with the Apostle, I am per swaded that neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, shal ever be able to seperate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Fifthly, labor to see more into the fulness of all good in God: the Lord told Abraham, that he was God all-sufficient, as the only means to strengthen him, against whatever evils he was like to meet withal. Labor to have the insight into Gods fulness, in these three particulars.

First, look at all the excellency, beauty, comfort, and good in the creature, and know that it is all in him, in a most eminent and glorious manner. There is no good in the effect, but the causes together have it in them: now God is the first cause, and so all causes have their principle in him, and therefore all good must needs be in him.

Secondly, all possible good is in the Lord; that is, as there is no actual good, but is for the present in him; so there can be none, but it is in him already; there is such fulness of good in him, that it is impossible that there should be any good added to him in the least degree.

Thirdly, look at God as taking infinite delight in communicating himself, in letting out his goodness to his creature; let God be seen thus, and let these three meditations of the fulness of good in

God, be wrought upon the heart, and they will mightily support the spirit in all afflictions: for what is the loss of any thing to me, when I see where I can have it made up? what is any bitterness, when I see such infinite sweetness to sweeten all. When tempests come upon Mariners, and they be in narrow seas, where they want sea-room, there is danger, but if they have sea-room enough, there is no fear. Thus if we are acquainted with the infinite fulness of good in God, we should see ourselves safe in the midst of all tempests, we should feel our spirits quiet under the sorest afflictions.

Sixthly: A sixt preparation, for the bearing further crosses, is an humble cheerful bearing of present afflictions, and an humble submitting to the present condition: That soul that is willing to yield to God in the present condition, God will fit it for the future: many cast about in their thoughts what they shall do hereafter, if troubles should befal them, and yet in the mean time they neglect the duties of their present condition. Go on therefore humbly, and patiently in the performance of the duties that God calls now for, and they will prepare you for whatever duties shall be required of you hereafter: there is no good to be expected from any in a new condition, who are not careful to perform the duties of the present: many are ready to promise, When we shall be in such a condition, then we will do thus or thus; but what do you in your present? never think to be able to suffer, if God call you to a new condition, if you cannot be patient under the troubles you meet with now, especially when these troubles are small and petty, in comparison of those you are like to meet withal. MrBilney the Martyr used to put his finger into the candle, to prepare him for the burning of his whole body; A patient bearing of less troubles for the present, will prepare the heart for the bearing of greater afterwards.

Seventhly, enjoy all your comforts of prosperity as from God, and God in them, and them all for God.

First, from God: therefore whatever he takes away, it is but his own; and what are we, that we must always have comfort, and content, who are poor beggerly creatures, who have nothing of our own?

Secondly, enjoy God in all: the enjoyment of God in all, is a mystery the world is not acquainted with, only a gracious heart knows what it is; it looks at all creatures but as the pipe of conveyance, the sweet, and comfort, and blessing, is God in them; therefore in any affliction that befals, so long as God may be enjoyed, the comfort, and sweet, and blessing of all is not lost, although the creature be lost.

Thirdly, all for God: Why then should not God have the glory of all his own way? We in the general acknowledge God should have glory from all that we are or have, but we would have him have it our way, so as may stand with our ease, with our liberties, peace, and ends: but God must have the honor of all, that way that is good in his own eye.

And againe, if all we have be for God, then when he is honored by any thing we do enjoy, it has its end and perfection: a comfort is then the most perfect comfort, when God has the glory of it, when it is resigned to him, either in a way of service, or suffering, as he calls for it.

And lastly, if our comforts be enjoyed for God, then our hearts are not let out to any of them, further then leads us to God; and if so, then when God calls for the parting with them, in a suffering way, the enjoyment of them cannot lead to God any further, but

would draw off the spirit from God; and therefore such a heart is willing now to part with them, it is not grievous to it to leave them, because the excellency of them is not now in the enjoyment of them, but in the parting with them.

Eighthly, be often renewing your resignations of all unto God, and your covenant with him, to be at his dispose, that so when any trouble comes at any time, this resignation of heart, and renewal of covenant, may be fresh upon your spirits: the soul will be ready to suffer much, if it be called to it, when an actual resignation, and renewing of covenant has been a little before, and the power of it is now fresh upon the heart: sometimes immediately after a day of solemn humiliation, where this has been, the soul thinks then it could do or suffer any thing; but in a little time, except this be renewed again, the heart grows drossie, and cleaves to present things, and mingles it self with them: the often renewing of this, keeps the heart very loose from the creature; a thing that hangs loose from another, may soon be taken off from it, but if it cleaves to it, it is not taken off without difficulty, it oftner rends in the taking off: thus it is when the heart cleaves to any creature-content.

Ninthly, lay up provision against an evil day: There is a threefold provision we should treasure up to prepare us for our afflictions;

First, treasure up the consolations of God that he affords upon occasion, that at any time you feel in the performance of duties, in the exercises of graces, in the use of Ordinances.

Secondly, treasure up the experiences of Gods ways towards you, and his gracious dealings with you in former straights.

Thirdly, treasure up soul-supporting, soul-quickning, soul-reviving, soul-comforting promises, and that of several kindes, sutable to several afflictions, for you knowest not what kinde of afflictions you mayest meet with.

Tenthly, labor much to strengthen every grace, it is strong grace that is suffering grace: a strong wing will flye against the wind: as it is said of the horse, Job 33. because he has strength, he mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted, neither turns he back for the sword, ver. 22. A candle will hold light in the house, but if we go abroad in the air, there is need of a torch, there must be a stronger light there; weak grace may serve turn to uphold us now, but in time of afflictions it had need be strong, a little grace will soon be spent then, as a candle is soon spent, when it stands in the wind.

Lastly, set much before you the example of Christ and Gods people, who have endured very hard things. In the example of Christ, consider, first, who it was that suffered: the Son of God, who was God blessed for ever, the glory of the Father; when we suffer, base worms worthy to be trodden under foot, suffer.

Secondly, what he suffered: even the wrath of God, and the curse of the Law, he was made a curse in the abstract as the Scripture speaks, which was another manner of thing, then any of our afflictions.

Thirdly, for whom he suffered: it was for us vile worms, wretched sinful creatures, who were enemies to him: we suffer for God, who is infinitely blessed, to whom we owe all we are or have.

Fourthly, how freely he suffered: it was of his own accord, his own free grace moved him to it, he laid down his life, none could take it from him: it is not in our liberty, whether we will suffer or

no, we are under the power of another.

Fifthly, how meekly he suffered: he was as a sheep before the shearer, his suffering no way disquieted his spirit, but it kept in a sweet quiet frame in the middest of all.

Sixthly, consider how his strength is with you in your sufferings.

And lastly, how he is honored in them: He strives with us in the combate, he joins with us in the fight of our agony, he crowns and is crowned, says Cyprian.

Bernard would have us never to let go out of our mindes, the thoughts of a crucified Christ, Let these says he, be meat and drink unto you, let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation, your contemplation, your life, death and resurrection: Would you learn obedience? would you learn contempt of honors? would you see the highest patience? set a suffering Christ before you: Sureus reports of a noble Earl Elzearius, when his wife wondred at his exceeding patience under fore afflictions, he answers her thus, What good will it be to be angry and impatient? certainly none at all: but I will open my heart unto you; you know sometimes my heart is ready to rise with indignation against such as wrong me, but I presently turn me to the thoughts of the wrongs offered to Christ, and I say thus to myself, desiring to imitate him, Although my servants should pull my beard, and strike me on the face, these were nothing to those which your Lord suffered, he suffered more and greater things; and know assuredly, says he to his wife, I never

leave off thinking of the wrongs my Savior endured, till my mind be still and quiet. He that is afraid to suffer, cannot be his disciple who suffered so much, says Tertullian.

Certainly the example of Christ, in humbling himself to suffer so much for us, should be mightily prevalent with us; if he emptyed himself so much, to become the Son of man, how much more should we be willing to empty ourselves, that we may be the Sons of God? Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, he is worthy of all honor from us, who being Lord of all, was content to be in the form of a servant, to suffer for us, and how can we express our honoring of him, our respect to him, better then in being to suffer for him? I have read of a Roman servant, who knowing his Master was sought for by officers to be put to death, he put himself into his masters cloaths, that he might be taken for him, and so he was, and was put to death for him: whereupon his master, in memory of his thankfulness to him, and honor of him, erected a brazen statue. Christ who was not a servant, but our Lord, yet when he saw we were like to dye, he took upon him the form of a servant, he came in our likeness, that he might dye for us, and he dyed; he requires not us to erect up brazen statues in memory of him, in honor to him, but that we should be willing to suffer for him, when he calls us thereunto; let not us put off the cloaths of our Christian profession, that we may avoid sufferings for him (as many do) who put on the cloaths of our humanity, yea of our servility, that he might suffer for us.

The example of the servants of God in all times, suffering in his cause, is likewise a special help to us in our way of suffering: Let us warm our hearts often at the meditation of the fiery tryal of the Martyrs. Consider, what precious choycespirited men they were,

how holy, heavenly, spiritual, what service they did for God, and yet that they should suffer such hard things as they did; what are we in comparison of them? Chrysostom in an Oration upon two famous Martyrs, raising their honor, and speaking how the worthies of God in former times endured hard things, How is it, says he, that you, ô Christian, must be so delicate, a Soldier so dainty? can you overcome without fight, triumph without combate? And in his Sermons upon the Colossions, Remember the chains of Paul, and consider what an absurd thing it is, that he should be in bonds, and you should live deliciously: Does the desire of pleasures take? remember the Prison of Paul: Wouldest you be cloathed in silks? remember Pauls chains, and silken cloaths will be more vile to you then filthy rags: Wouldest you be adorned with gold? remember Pauls chains, and they will show you that such ornaments are no better then the dirt under your feet: Would you be beautiful with your hair? think of the filth of the deformity of Paul in the Prison, and your heart will rise with indignation against such beauty, and will account it extream deformity: What, would you have sweet oyntments? consider of his tears.

I have read of Phocion an Athenian Captain, when he was condemned to death by his ungrateful Countrey, he saw one Tudippus condemned to the same death, but very fearful, he comforts him with these words, Is it not enough for you, Tudippus, that you art to dye with Phocion? so we may say to our own hearts, Is it not enough for us, that we have such a cloud of witnesses, such a noble Army of Martyrs before us and with us? be not therefore so afraid of the ways of God, because of afflictions, as you hast been, but submit yourself to God in this way of his.

Chapter 9: Duties required of us when God calls us to an afflicted condition

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SEeing God has so ordered things, that his people must be in an afflicted estate in this world, when God calls us to suffer afflictions, let us know there are three duties required of us.

First, that we be willing to yield to Gods call, to come under that condition he has appointed us unto.

Secondly, that we behave ourselves Christianly with all humble submission, patience, contentedness, in this condition.

Thirdly, that we labor to improve our affliction that shall be layed upon us.

For the first, when our cross comes, we must be willing to take it up freely, and readily to submit unto it. It was the honor of the three children in Daniel, that they yielded their bodies to those fiery flames they were cast into, Dan. 3:28 Let us not seek to put off sufferings by distinctions; certainly the best policy in dangerous times, is the greatest purity. The Lacedemonians were wont to say, It is a shame for any man to flye, in time of danger; but for a Lacedemonian, it is a shame for him to deliberate: How much

more truly may this be said of a Christian, when God calls him to suffer? he should be such a resolved man beforehand, that it should be a shame now for him even to deliberate.

It is argument enough for a Christian to suffer any thing, because it is the will of God, out of bare submission to God; but when it is not only so, but in the cause of God, in witness to his truth, in vindicating his honor, this call to suffer comes with strength indeed: it is unworthy of a Christian, once to deliberate the avoyding of this; How much better is it, to suffer a little to prevent a sin, and so prevent Gods wrath, then by avoyding sufferings to fall into sin, which being once committed, Gods wrath incensed by it cannot be pacified, though we should be willing to suffer a thousand times as much. Our condition is such, that we must suffer one way or another, while we live here; Is it not better then to suffer for God then any other way? This was Chrysostoms argument in his Sermons upon the 2 Cor. chap. 12. Sermon 26. If you suffer not for Religion, you will suffer for some other unprofitable light cause: Seeing then, says he, we following this or the other course of life, we must suffer affliction, why do we not choose such a suffering, which with the affliction brings unspeakable glory? Certainly it is infinitely better to suffer for Christ, then for our sin. We read of Peace-offerings that were offered, there might be oyl mixed, but not so in Sin-offerings: in those afflictions we endure for Christ, we offer up ourselves as Sacrifices of Peace-offerings, and in them there is joy, much oyl of gladness is mixed in such offerings; but when we suffer for our sins, there is no oyl of gladness mixed there; Let us take heed, that we be not found guilty before the Lord, when the secrets of all hearts shall be opened, of being shy of the ways of Religion, because of affliction; many when they see

they must suffer in those ways, although they be convinced of them, yet they are ready to say with Augustine, as he confesses of himself, I do not love to pass through those straits, it is too hard and narrow away for them. If such thoughts work in you at any time, take these considerations, for the rebuking of yourself, and the raising of your heart, to a more Christian magnanimity of spirit.

First, at what a low rate doest you prize the ways of God, the glory of God, that such and such more low comforts must not be laid down for them, that such light afflictions must not be endured for the maintenance of them?

Secondly, consider if Christ had stood upon such terms, as to have said, I could be content indeed that these poor creatures might be delivered from misery, but seeing such grievous evils must be suffered for their deliverance, let them perish; I am not willing to be their deliverer upon such hard terms; What had become of us, if Christ had reasoned thus, if this argument had prevailed with him against us, as it prevails with us against him.

Thirdly, you who art so shy of suffering, mayest be forced to suffer in spight of your heart; and what a sad thing will that be to you? What a sad thing was it to Cranmer? after he had recanted for fear of sufferings, yet he was forced to suffer; what a darkning was it to this spirit, his cause, and name? Mr. Fox relates of a Smith in King Edwards time, who was the means of conversion of a friend of his, who in Queen Maries time was cast into prison; whereupon he sends to this Smith, who had been the means of his conversion, wondring that he hears not of his apprehending and imprisonment; this Smith sends him word again, that it was true, that he had taught him such and such things, and those things were cer-

tain truths; but for his part, he could not burn; but a while after, the house of this Smith was on fire, and he was burnt in it; God made him burn whether he would or no: and so may he make you suffer, whether you will or no, who refuse to suffer for his truth.

Fourthly, whatever prosperity you enjoyest when God calls you to suffer for him, is cursed unto you, if you blessest yourself in your estate, your liberty, your name, your life that you enjoyest, having avoided the way of suffering that God called you unto, you deceivest yourself, for there is no blessing in them, they are all accursed unto you.

Fifthly, all duties of Religion that now you performest out of a suffering condition, are not now accepted of God; you must not think now, having avoided suffering for Gods truth, that because you art willing to perform duties, to be diligent in some service for God, that God now accepts of you; No, it was another work that God called you unto, a work of suffering; seeing you hast refused this, do what you can, God casts it as dung in your face and regards it not; this is a sad condition, What joy can such a man have of his life, if he has an enlightned conscience?

Sixthly, what intolerable pride, and delicacy is this in you, that you will not venter the loss of any thing, the enduring of any thing for God, and his truth? the least truth of God is worth more then heaven and earth; and what is your ease, your liberty, your name, your life to it? You art too delicate, O Christian, says Tertullian, who must have pleasure in this world.

Seventhly, How vile is the unbelief of your heart, who darest not trust God with your name, estate, liberty? How can you trust God with your soul, your eternal estate? How lightly doest you re-

gard all the faithfulness, the mercy, goodness, wisdom, power of God, working for his people in their suffering conditions? Of what little account are all these gracious blessed promises of the Lord, for their encouragement herein? your base shyness, and cowardise of spirit is such, as if there were no God, no faithfulness, mercy, wisdom, power to help, as if there were no promise to support and relieve you.

Eighthly, there is a necessity of your miscarrying in the ways of eternal life; for if God has so ordered things in his providence, as that such ways must be in ways of affliction; and your heart cannot bear affliction, how is it possible, but that you must needs miscarry in them? It is a woeful thing, to have a mans heart opposite to Gods order, in any thing, but much more in things of infinite consequence; if afflictions be a block to you in the way of life, you must have this block.

Ninthly, How little love is there in your heart to God, when you art so shy of any thing to be suffered for God? love rejoyces in suffering for the beloved. The avoiding hell, and the getting Heaven, are no great things, says Chrysostome, where the love of God is: then surely the avoiding outward troubles, and the enjoyment of outward comforts, would be no great matter to us, if the love of God were in us.

Tenthly, Did you never suffer affliction in your ways of sin? and will you not now be willing to suffer as much in the ways of God? Shall your sins have a greater testimony of respect to them from you, then God himself? Art you nor confounded at the mention, the thought of such a thing as this, so unreasonable, so vile?

Eleventhly, What honor should God have in the world? where would there be any witness to truth, against the rage and malice of devil and wicked men, if all should do as you doest? If there be any Christian blood left in you, if any spirit worthy of your profession, be ashamed of your baseness this way, and be not so shy of afflictions.

Secondly, when you art under afflictions, let there be an humble contented frame of spirit, as beseems a Christian; seeing you art now under an Ordinance of God, take heed of the least murmuring, repining against God, as if he were a hard Master; or as if his ways were hard and burthensom, because of the afflictions you meetest withal: when your spirit begins any way to rise in such workings, charge your soul to be silent unto God; it is a great shame for a Christian, not to be well skilled in that art, instructed in that mystery of Christian contentation. Say with your Savior, Shall not I drink of that cup my Father has given me to drink? It is Gods appointment, that his people should be in an afflicted estate in this world; it is the cup of my Father, and shall not I quietly, and contentedly drink of that cup? Now you hast an opportunity to manifest the power and excellency of your grace, to show what your grace can enable you to do; strength of reason wil go far, in quieting and calming of the heart under afflictions; but grace surely, where it is true, will go farther.

It is the most unseemly sight in the world, to see a murmuring fretting Christian; if your God, if Christ, if Heaven were lost, it were not much to see wringing of hands, and sinking of heart; but to see this upon loss of a few outward comforts, upon enduring of a few outward afflictions, this is a most unseemly, a vile and an abominable thing in you. S. Augustine upon the 12. Psalm, brings

in God, rebuking a discontented Christian, thus: What is your faith? have I promised you these things? what, were you made a Christian, that you shouldest flourish here in this world? Well may God, and Conscience, and all the Saints, upbraid a murmuring fretting Christian; What didst you expect in the entrance upon profession of Christianity? what was your aim? what, didst you make account to live at ease? to have no trouble to the flesh? Where there is not quiet of spirit in passive obedience, the sincerity of active obedience may be suspected: How far art you from rejoicing in tribulations, who hast not a quiet contented spirit in tribulations?

I will not enlarge myself in this argument now, intending a Treatise by its self of Christian contentation: only for the present take this one argument, which surely has much strength in it, to quiet the heart under any affliction; It is this, God is willing to accept of your service, that you tendrest up to him, though it be mixed with much sin; why should not you accept of his ways towards you, though there be a mixture of much affliction? The sin of our service should be a greater cause for God to be displeased with what comes from us, then the sorrow and affliction that comes in the ways of his providence, can be to cause us to be displeased with what comes from him: that surely is worse that is mixed with sin, then that which is mixed with sorrow; yet as the one is accepted by God from us, let then the other be accepted by us from God.

Lastly, let us not only be contented under Gods afflicting hand, but labor to thrive under it, to improve all our afflictions that befal us; Certainly, there is a blessing in every Ordinance of God, if we have wisdom and care to draw it forth, to make it our own; and so in this way of God towards his people, it is indeed a gracious work,

to get our hearts lye quietly under affliction, but it is too low a work for a Christian to rest there, he must look to improve every affliction for his advantage. By improving them we make our Benonies, our Benjamins; that is, the sons of our sorrow, the sons of our right hand. Although waters in the Sea be salt, yet if they be raised up to the Heavens, and sent down again, then they are sweet; so though afflictions be brackish, yea brine-salt, yet a spiritual heart can spiritualize them, and make them sweet, and wholesom. Afflictions are great opportunities for spiritual advantage, if we have hearts to improve them; and the loss of an affliction is a great loss. S. Augustine in his second book of the City of God, cries out against such, who did not profit by Gods judgement; You, says he, have lost the profit of the calamity: he speaks of it as a great loss to them, that it was over, and they had got nothing by it: As it is a sign of great wickedness, to turn blessings into curses; so it is a sign of great grace, to turn curses into blessings. By this improvement we shall not only get water, but honey out of the rock.

But how should we improve afflictions?

First, be jealous of yourselves, lest it should pass away unsanctified; be more afraid of the affliction leaving of you thus, then of the continuing of it upon you; and therefore, lay out your strength more for a sanctified use of it, then for deliverance from it.

Secondly, labor to know Gods mind in your afflictions. The man of wisdom sees Gods name upon this rod, and understands what God intends. First, whether he sends them for sin, or for other ends; and if for sin, for what particular.

For the first, it is true, God sends affliction sometimes for trial, and other ends, rather then for sin, yet it is sin that makes us capable of such a way of trial; were we not sinful, God would not deal with us that way, he would bring about his purposes by us some other way, therefore it is good in all to be humbled for sin; you may be helped in the knowledge of Gods end.

First, if the affliction be extraordinary, and come in an extraordinary way, and upon examination you finde yourself not guilty of any special evil, besides daily incursions, then you may comfortably hope, Gods intentions are not specially for sin, but for some other end; so it was in Job and Joseph.

Secondly, you may know from the work of the affliction, which way it tends, and how God follows it, whether in it God settles not sin upon your heart, for humiliation, more then ordinary: or whether the work of Gods spirit be not rather for the stirring up of the exercise of some other grace; for God in his dealings with his people, will work for the attaining the ends he aims at.

Thirdly, much may be learned from the issue of an affliction; when God comes chiefly for trial, in the issue his grace does much abound towards his servants, as it did in Joseph and in Job; what honor was Joseph advanced unto? and Job had given him twice as much as he had before, chap. ult. ver. 10. In all the land there were no women so fair as the daughters Iob, ver. 15. but when the afflictions is for sin, it does not use to have such an issue, it is well if the sinner may be restored into such a comfortable condition as he was in before: When David was afflicted for his sin, some scars stuck by him after his deliverance, he scarce ever was brought into that comfortable condition he was in before.

But how may we finde out the particular sin?

First, look what sins and afflictions the word has coupled together; although every sin deserves all kinde of affliction, yet the word joins some special correction, to special transgressions; as God sorts several promises to several graces, so he sorts several afflictions to several sins.

Secondly, consider what sins and afflictions providence couples in respect of similitude; God often stamps the likeness of the sin, upon the judgement, Iudges 1. 7, 8.

Thirdly, enquire at the mouth of God, by prayer and humiliation, as David did, 2 Sam. 21. and Job cap. 10:2 and those in Jeremy, cap. 16. 10, 11.

Fourthly, hearken to the voice of conscience, that is Gods officer in your soul, especially in time of affliction, conscience will deal impartially; and take this rule for your help herein, After much humiliation, and seeking of God, then listen to the voice of conscience: for as it is with an Officer whom you would have search the Records, if you would have him diligent indeed in the search, you must give him his fee, else he will do the work but slightly: so you must give conscience, Gods Register, his fee; that is, let conscience have much prayer, and humiliation which it calls for, and then it will tell you Gods mind more fully.

Fifthly, consider what truths have been most pressed upon your hearts before the affliction, for afflictions do use to come as seals to instructions, as Iob 33:16 A writing has not that authority with it before it be sealed, as it has after; but when the seal is set on, then it comes with authority: so it is in regard of Gods instructions; before, they did not come with power to your hearts, now

God seals them, that they may prevail; and by considering what those instructions were, you may be helped to finde out what God aims at in your afflictions.

A third Rule is, when you have found out your sin, stir up your heart against it with indignation: This is that which has caused me all this wo, that has brought all this trouble and smart. As Acts 21:28 the Jews took hold on Paul, crying, Men of Israel, help, This is the man, that teaches every where against the people: So should we take hold on our sin, that we have found out, and cry to the Lord, Help, O Lord, this is that sin that has made the breach, this is that sin that has been the cause of so much evil unto me. As we read of Antonius, after Julius Caesar was murthered, he brought forth his coat all bloody and cut, and laid it before the people, Look here, says he, you have your Emperors coat thus bloody and torn: whereupon the people were presently in an uproar, and cryed out to slay those murtherers, and they took their tables and stools that were in the place, and set them on fire, and ran to the houses of those who had slain Caesar, and burnt them. Thus the looking upon our afflictions, and considering what mischief sin has done us, our hearts should be raised to flye upon our sin with indignation, and not to be satisfied without the destruction of that which would have destroyed us.

A fourth rule is, when God stirs your heart in affliction, to promise and covenant reformation; begin the work while the affliction is upon you, do something now presently, do not put off all till you be well, till you be recovered, and think then I will do it: there is much deceit of the heart this way, many miscarry in their vows to God upon this ground, because they put off all till they be out of their affliction, and by that time, the impression that was upon

their spirits is abated, their hearts are cooled, and so the duty is neglected; therefore do something presently, and be always in doing, till that which is vowed be fully performed.

Fifthly, let every affliction drive you much to God in prayer. Is any man afflicted? let him pray, says S. James. It is a similitude of Chrysostom, As clouds darken the heavens, & cause lowring weather, but being distilled into drops, then sweet Sun-shine and fair weather follows: so sorrows and cares in the soul, cloud the soul, till they be distilled in prayer, into tears, and poured forth before the Lord, then the sweet beams of Gods grace come in, and much blessing follows.

Sixthly, treasure up all the experiences you have had of God, and your own heart in the time of your affliction, keep them fresh in your heart, and work them upon your spirit, and make use of them as God offers occasion.

Seventhly, what you wished you had done then, be sure now to set about, and never rest till it be done; that when affliction comes again, it may not finde it undone, if it does, it will make the affliction very bitter unto you. It was the advice of one Theodoricus, to Segismund the Emperor, who asked him how he should be happy, Do, says he, that now, which when you have been tormented with a fit of the stone or the gout, you would wish you had done: that which he said of that particular afflictions, is true of others: We should have glorious reformations, if this rule were well observed; surely, that which is true in times of affliction, is true out of it, and that which conscience upon ground judges to be right and good then, is right and good now.

Eighthly, take heed of trusting to your own promises, that you have made to God for obedience, rather then to his promises that he has made to you for assistance.

Ninthly, often call yourself to account after the affliction is over; What is become of it? how was it with me then? and how is it now? have I more peace now, then I had then? and how comes it about? Has my peace grown upon good grounds, so as it may-hold? I had workings of Spirit then, what are become of them? have I been faithful to God, and to mine own soul? And thus we have finished this doctrine of affliction, which by Gods ordinance is the portion of his people in this world. They have been, are, and shall be an afflicted people.

Chapter 10: Wicked men have pleasures in ways of sin, while God's people endure much hardship in ways of holiness

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THe second point is, that God sometimes gives wicked men pleasure in the ways of sin, whilesthe suffers his own people to endure much affliction. The Israelites make the brick, and are under sore bondage, and the Egyptians dwell in houses, living in jollity and mirth. Thus it was with Elijah, he must flye for his life, and live in caves, and be fed by ravens, whilest four hundred false prophets are fed deliciously at Jezabels table. While the King and Haman sits drinking in the city, Shushan is in perplexity, Esther 3:15 Job says of the wicked, Thatthey take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the soundof the Organ, they spend their time in wealth; but of himself he says, that his calamity was heavier then the sand of the sea, that the arrows of the Almighty were within him, that the poyson of them drank up his spirit, that the terrors of God did set themselves in battle array against him. Chap. 6. 1, 2, 3. And David says of the wicked, that they are not in trouble as other men, their eyes stands out with fatness, they have more

then their heart could wish; but for himself, all the day long he was plagued, and chastened every morning, Psalm 73. Christ tells his Disciples, the world shall rejoice, but they shall have trouble.

But why does God thus suffer wicked men, to enjoy their pleasure thus in the ways of sin?

First, here is their portion, they are never like to have any other consolation, but that they have here, here is their All. This is as it were their Kingdom; They are upon their own dunghil.

Secondly, God has time enough hereafter to torment them, to make sin bitter unto them, and therefore he does not care though they have their pleasure, and go on for a while in the enjoyment of their delights: And God has time enough to glorifie his Saints, to give them everlasting consolation, and therefore although here they be cut short of the pleasures of the flesh, God does not regard that.

Thirdly, God hereby would show to all the world, his own fulness, and how little he esteems of these carnal things; they are but bones, therefore he gives them to dogs; they are but swill, even the very cream of them, therefore he lets swine have them. Luther in his Comment upon Genesis, cap. 21. has a notable vilifying expression of the great things of the world, which God gives to wicked men; The Turkish Empire, says he, as great as it is, it is but a crust of bread, which the rich master of the family casts to dogs: When retainers, when dogs have such allowance, it is a sign of a great deal of plenty in the house.

Fourthly, God grants pleasure and prosperity in just judgement to them, to ripen their sin, to harden them in it. The Sun-shine of prosperity ripens the sins of the wicked apace, and so fits them for

destruction; this hardens them against the ways of God, it makes them bless themselves in their way, They spend their days in wealth, therefore they say to God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of your ways; What is the Almighty, that we should servehim? There is no truer misery, then false joy, says Bernard. There is a great difference between the prosperity of the wicked, and that which the godly have; God carries his people when he exalts them, as the Eagle her yong upon her wings, he exalts them to safety, according to that expression that we have, Job 5:11 that those which mourn, may be exalted to safety; but when God exalts the wicked, he lifts them up as the Eagle lifts up her prey in her talons, he lifts them up to destroy them. It was a speech of Augustine upon the 26 Psalm; Many aremiserable, by loving hurtful things, but they are more miserable by having them; it is not what men enjoy, but the principle from whence it comes, that makes them happy.

Fifthly, God is a patient God, and in the day of his patience, even the wicked are suffered to enjoy their hearts desire.

Obj. But it may be said, God is patient towards his people, and yet they are afflicted.

Answ. Those afflictions that come upon Gods people, may better stand with the glory of patience, then if the same things should be upon the wicked, because in the afflictions of the Saints, there is no revenge, there is no hatred in them, but if God should inflict the same things upon the wicked, they would come out of revenge against them, and hatred of them, and so there would not be such manifestation of that glory of patience, that God has to manifest here in this world.

Hence let Gods people learn not to be greedy in their desires after outward pleasures; they are but the portion of dogs and reprobates. It is true, godly men may have them, but never as their portion, God has afforded you better pleasures, has he not reserved better things for you? As when we enjoy outward prosperity, we must not bless ourselves in it, because it is that which wicked men have; so when we are afflicted, our hearts must not be dejected, because we are only deprived of that, which God gives most many times to those that he hates most. God will keep his people from being prevailed against by this temptation. David was in this temptation, Psalm 73. but he says, verse 23. that God held him by his right hand: When men see how the world lives in pleasure, and the Saints are afflicted, they are in danger of stumbling, but God holds his own by his right hand, that they fall not.

Secondly, let us learn, not to envy the men of the world, who live in pleasures, who wallow in the sensual delights of this life. The reason why they take so much delight in such things, is, because they know no better, they seek after no better.

Ambrose in his first Book de officiis, brings in godly men objecting thus, Why do the wicked rejoice? why do they riot it out? why do not they labor as well as I? He answers, They have not put in for the crown; yea, says he, if you object thus, the wicked may answer you as the spectators in their Olympiack games, if those that labor and wrastle in them, should call the spectators, and say, Come you, and labor, and strive here as well as we; the spectators would answer, You without us shall get the glory of the crown, if you overcome.

Besides, there is little cause we should envy all their jollity, they must give an account for it, and dear. When a Soldier was to dye for taking a bunch of grapes against the Generals command, and going to execution he went eating his grapes, one of his fellows rebuked him, What, are you eating your grapes now? The poor man answers, I pray you friend do not envy me these grapes, for they cost me dear; so they did indeed, for they cost him his life: and so will these vain delights of wicked men, they will cost them their lives.

And yet further consider, ere long things will turn, Gods people shall have pleasure, and the world shall have afflictions: Affliction did I say? nay, Misery with torment; time is at hand, when it shall be said to every wicked man, Son, remember in your life time you hadst pleasure, and my servants who walked faithfully with me had affliction, but now you art tormented, and they are comforted. Time is at hand when that Scripture shall be fulfilled, Esay 65. 13, 14. Behold, my servants shall eat, and ye shall be hungry; my servants shall drink, and ye shall be thirsty;my servants shall rejoice, and ye shall be ashamed; my servants shall sing for joy of heart, and ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

Thirdly, let not wicked men bless themselves in the enjoyment of their pleasures; you have no other then thousands have had before you, who are now in Hell. If that you have were of any great worth, you might be sure you should not have it; if you knew how the Lord brings about your destruction by your pleasures, you would have little cause to rejoice in them; Haman rejoiced, when Esther invited him rather then others to the banquet, but if he had known that in his banquet there was a snare laid for his life, his

heart would have faln, it would have been but a sad banquet to him: certainly there is a great deal of evil, and misery, and wrath, in being suffered to go on with delight and pleasure in a sinful way.

Bernard says, when God spares men in a sinful way, it is because God is not only angry with men, but hates them, he calls his mercy more cruel then all indignation. Origen in his Sermon upon Ex. 20. quotes that place, Hos. 4:14 I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom; and he has this pathetical expression upon it, God chastiseth every soul whom he loves: but would you hear the terrible voyce of Gods indignation, hear him by the Prophet Hosea, when he had reckoned up many wicked things which the people had committed, and he adds this, I will not visit your daughters when they commit whoredom; this is terrible, this is in the height. And Bernard speaking of the same thing, in the 42 Sermon upon the Canticles, At the hearing only of this, says he, I tremble, then God is most angry, when he shows no anger; God keep me from this mercy, this kinde of mercy is worse then all anger.

Luther has an expression much like, upon the 37. of Genesis, O unhappy, and miserable men, whom God leaves to themselves, not resisting their lusts; wo to them whose sins God seems to wink at. And Jerome writing to a sick friend, has this expression, I account it a part of unhappiness, not to know adversity, I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable. Bernard in his Book de consolat. cap. 3. Freedom from punishment, is the mother of security, the step-mother of vertue, the poyson of Religion, the moth of holiness. Yea, this was seen by the purblinde eyes of the Heathen. Seneca in his fourth Chapter of his Book of Providence, has the same words, that before was said of Jerome, Ijudge him

miserable, that was never miserable. And Demetrius, Nothing seems more unhappy to me, then he to whom no adversity has happened. It were easie to multiply abundance in this kinde; it may be, testimonies of men may have some force to prevail with such, who are given up by God to their pleasures, to the enjoyment of earthly prosperity, and sensual delights; certainly they are not so happy as they judge themselves to be; that which God denies to another in mercy, he may give you in wrath. And thus much for this. I come to that which is a main thing in Moses choice.

Chapter 11: Afflicted godliness, is better then delightful wickedness

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NOtwithstanding both these, though Gods people are afflicted, and the wicked have pleasure; yet, afflicted godliness, is better then delightful wickedness. It is better to join with Gods people in a way of godliness, in all afflictions, then to enjoy all the pleasures that possibly any man in the world can have, in any way of sin: the tears of the godly, are better then all the jollities of the wicked: it is an expression of an Ancient, The very tears of those that are seeking of God, are more sweet, then the joys that any have in the world; the worst part of godliness, is better then the best part of any way of sin: though Christ be a crucified Christ, and bring never such afflictions, hard things to his people, yet he is more delightful to them, then all the pleasures that are in the earth, and delightful in another way. It is a notable speech Luther has, I had rather fall with Christ, then stand with Caesar; rather suffer any thing in the world with Christ, then stand and enjoy all the pleasure of Caesars Court.

Thus a godly man, a gracious heart considering and musing of things, and laying one thing with another, had rather have affliction with the people of God, then enjoy all the pleasures of the world for a season. Now the main work in this point, is to show unto you, how a godly heart does reason with its self, and cast about its self, as it were to bring himself, and his thoughts to this issue, to choose rather afflicted godliness, then all the pleasure of sin.

First, it casts about what the ways of godliness are.

Secondly, what those afflictions are that do attend the ways of godliness.

Thirdly, it casts about what the ways of sin are, and what the afflictions and pleasures are, that do attend upon them, and puts them into a ballance, and compares them both together, and so makes its choice.

First, a gracious heart considers the ways of godliness. If I walk in them, then I walk with God, I live to the honor of the blessed God, who is infinitely worthy of all honor and praise from his Creature; those ways are the ways of infinite wisdom, they are the ways of holiness, of righteousness, in those ways I attain to that end for which I was made.

Secondly, in those ways I enjoy peace, peace of conscience to my soul; whatever trouble I meet withal abroad, I am sure I shall have peace within: a little with outward peace, is better then a great deal where outward peace is wanting; Eccles. 4:6 Better is a handful with quietness, then both the hands full with travel, and vexation of spirit: A little with outward quiet, is better then a great deal with vexation; if a man be in a quiet family, a little there, is

better then to be where there is a great deal with frowardness and vexation; surely, a little is better with inward peace, with peace of conscience, then a great deal without; therefore these ways in which I walk with Gods people, though the world may rage and persecute, I shall have joy in my own spirit; A good conscience will be a continual feast: while they rail, conscience will encourage.

Thirdly, again, when I walk in these ways, my soul shall enjoy the love of God, and that little I have, I shall have it in love, and from the love of God; Now your love, O Lord, is better then wine, better then all the comforts of the world. The Lord satisfies his people with love, as with marrow and fatness; a little that the soul has that comes from the love of God, by vertue of a promise, how sweet is it? how sweet is sleep when it comes from that promise? You will give your beloved sleep, and all comes this way; I have all in the love of God, though I have but a little in the world, and though I be in affliction, & am short of that which others have.

Fourthly, and in those ways, my soul shall enjoy communion with God; God will let out himself to me in a gracious manner, he will reveal the secrets of heavenly joys to my soul, and one beam of the light of his face, is more worth then all the world, and is able to carry through all the hardships of the world. My soul shal have communion with Jesus Christ; and Cursed is that man, says that noble Marquess Galeacius, that counts all the world comparable to one days enjoyment of communion with Christ.

Fifthly, while I walk in these ways, I shall be safe for eternity, I shall not be in danger there; and when the fear of eternity falls upon the heart, it sees it is a most dreadful thing to miscarry to eternity; the thoughts of eternity work mightily upon my spirit, let me be safe for eternity, whatever become of me in these ways. It is

reported of one Myrogenes, when great gifts were sent unto him, he sent them back, I only desire this one thing at your Masters hand, to pray for me, that I may be saved for eternity. Now in these ways of godliness, I shall walk with God, I shall have peace of conscience, I shall have that I have in love, I shall enjoy communion with the Father, with Christ, and with the holy Ghost; and I shall be safe for eternity: surely there can be no evil that can countervail this good, whatever I suffer, whatever I endure in this world, yet my soul shall say, It is good for me to draw near to God; sure I shall choose, and like well of the ways of godliness, whatever I endure.

But you look only upon the best side of godliness, but turn the other side, you shall finde a great many afflictions that attend the ways of godliness, and when you see them, you will not be so in love with these ways. A gracious heart is willing to examine both sides.

What are the afflictions you speak of, that will discourage any from delighting in Gods ways?

First, they are but such as are upon the body, those things that do afflict the godly are bodily things, they do therefore but bring pain and trouble to this carcase, to this body of clay, to this lump of earth, to this body of sin, to that body that is to be beaten down in this world: to that body of vileness, for so it is called, Phil. 3:21 Who shall change our vile body; in the Original it is, this body of vileness. It was the speech of a Heathen, when as by the Tyrant he was commanded to be put into a morter, and be beaten to pieces with an Iron pestel, he cryes out to his persecutors, You do but beat the vessel of Anaxarchus, you do not beat me, You do but beat the Caseand Vessel, that contains another thing; yea, the word in

the Greek, that Clemens Alex: has, relating the Story, signifies a husk; his body was to him but as a husk: A Heathen counted his body but the Case, the husk; he counted his soul himself: If a man had a precious Jewel in a Case, and the Case was torn in pieces, and the Jewel be safe, it is no matter; and so by all these afflictions a gracious heart knows, it is but the Case that is torn in pieces, the Jewel is safe. Fear not, says Christ, those that can kill the body, and do no more; Christ would have us know, afflictions that do but reach the body, are but slight things.

And for these troubles, let them be the most terrible that can be, they are such as may stand with Gods love, the dearest of Gods love, such as the dearest of Gods people have met withal: says God in Ieremiah, I gave the dearly beloved of my soul, into the hands of her enemies. Indeed if they were such as could not fal, but from Gods hatred, it were another matter; but they may stand with Gods love, yea, with the very same love wherewithal God the Father did love Jesus Christ, and would you have better love then that? you may be sure that all your afflictions that you do endure for godliness, and the ways of godliness, they are not such but you may have them in the same love that God loved Jesus Christ, and one would think that were enough to satisfy any soul in the world. John 17. ult. there Christ prays, that his Disciples might be loved, with the same love wherewith he was loved: now notwithstanding the love of the Father to the Son, he was afflicted, and suffered as much trouble, as you are like to suffer; and if you in suffering may be in no worse case then he was, and may have the same love that he had, notwithstanding your sufferings, sure your sufferings are no great matter; there is no more evil in your sufferings, then may stand with the love of God to your souls, the same love wherewith

God loved Christ: and if a soul knows this, it will not be discouraged from the ways of godliness, notwithstanding afflictions: indeed if in affliction there were the venome of Gods wrath, and the curse of the Law, it were something, but the sting and venome is taken out, and there is no great evil.

Again, these afflictions that the world so speak of, they may not only stand with Gods dearest love, but are such as may proceed from Gods dearest love; as thus, they may come as fruits of the love of God, and therefore sure they are no great discouragements from the ways of godliness; you heard what abundance of good God brought out of the afflictions of his people, and therefore there may be abundance of love from whence they come, they may be only but to fit, and square, and fashion the soul, to be fit to be laid in the highest place of new Jerusalem: The stones that are laid below in some mean place, are not hewed and hacked, as the stones that are in the highest part of the building, or the forefront of the building, to the view of all; those that are most for the beauty of the building, are most hacked, and framed; and so those that God does intend to be the most beautiful stones in that glorious Temple that is in Heaven, God suffers them here to be fashioned and hacked, most afflicted, and therefore they may come from love.

Besides, they are no great matter, take them at the worst, they are but little things; these light afflictions: there is no such grievous burden in them, as the world thinks there is, for there is the hand of Christ, to hold them up in all their afflictions: they are but such things, as rather seem grievous then are grievous indeed, as Heb. 12:11 No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; they are things that are grievous in appearance, and in

show only, rather then in truth; as the prosperity of the wicked is but in show, so the affliction of Gods people are rather shows, they do rather seem grievous, then have any realty of grief in them, and therefore they are not so much to be feared.

Again, they are but for a little time, but for a moment: As it was the speech of Athanasius, when he was banished, and his friends came to bewail his misery, says he, It is but a little cloud, and will quicklybe gone: All the time of the rage and malice of wicked men, is but as an hour; says Christ, This is their hour, and the power of darkness; it is but an hour, and is quickly gone. Christs sufferings both in himself and in his Church, is but drinking of the brook, not a spring of water for perpetuity.

Besides, the afflictions of Gods people are in theirseason; it is now the very season to be afflicted, and shall we be troubled to have affliction in its season? this time of our life is appointed for this end, it is our winter time; will a man be troubled to see frost and snow in winter time? It is better to see frost and snow in winter time, then to see the corn blooming or earing in January and February: so while we are in the body, the winter of affliction is in season, it is not the time to be delivered from affliction now, that is hereafter, and therefore why should we be troubled that we meet with affliction?

Lastly, these afflictions that you say will discourage, they will bring forth a gracious end, they are but as a dark entry into your Fathers house, a dirty lane to a Palace; do but shut your eyes, and there will be a change, and as a Martyr said, Though we have an ill breakfast, we shall have a good dinner: Now put all these together, what great matter is there to discourage any from the ways of God?

But now come to the other part: A gracious heart discourses of the ways of sin, what if I should choose the pleasure of sin, and should go on that way? 1. If I go on in those ways, I shall be sure to go on in a way of direct opposition against the God of all the world, and so treasure up to myself the wrath of an infinite God. And is it nothing for a poor creature to go on in a way of opposition and enmity to an infinite Diety? how much better were it for me if I had never been born, then thus to do? 2. I shall be sure to have no peace in those ways, in my own spirit, in conscience; I shall have within me a conscience galling, girding, and lashing of me, the worm gnawing of my heart, my conscince continually damping of my soul, telling of me, Surely I am not in those ways an immortal soul should walk in; I shall never have any pleasure, but when my conscience shall be stopped; and what cursed pleasure is this for a man that he can never have it, but only when he can stop his conscience? if his conscience had but the mouth open, he could not have pleasure, and all the pleasure that he has, he must steal it at that time, when his conscience is asleep, he can never have it upon other terms; if a mans conscience be enlightned, and awaked, it is impossible to have pleasure in the ways of sin: it is poor living, when a servant or childe can get no victuals, but as they steal it, when the master or mistress is asleep, or is on the to side; and so it is poor pleasure that the world has, when it must be stoln when conscience is asleep; What good is it for a man to have a broken leg, and a silken stocking? and what great content is it for a man to have outward pleasure, and inward dampings of spirit?

3. Again, in these ways of sin, as I shall have no peace, so do what I can, I shall have some trouble in spight of my heart; let me go on in the ways of sin as I will, and seek for my contentment, I

shall have some trouble in spight of me; and how grievous will that trouble be, that shal come with the curse of God, and the wrath of God, and the hatred of God? what shall I have to support me in trouble? A little water in a leaden vessel is heavy, so a little trouble in an evil conscience.

4. And in these ways of sin, I shall be sure to be a stranger from God, never to know what any communion with God means, go up and down in the world as a forlorn, forsaken creature of God; that when as others of Gods people have communion with God, and with Christ, and have the light of Heaven, and the joy of Angels, I shall be set to my swill.

5. And as for my eternal estate, I shall hazard to miscarry therein; and oh my soul, dost know what it is to miscarry to eternity? Surely there need be some great matter, that should procure the least peace to a man in the way of sin, much more to procure delight to a man.

But you will say, You take sin at the worst side at first, sin has a delightful side, and that will please you, and allure you, though the other would not; therefore let us see the fairest side of sin; a gracious heart will look on every side.

The pleasures that you speak of, what are they? are they not fleshly? only reach to the sensual part? What, must God, Heaven, eternal life be neglected for these? What shall that body, that must within a while be gnawn on by worms, and lie rotting as a filthy carcase, now be so regarded, now have such content given to it, as all that is to be had in God and Jesus Christ, must be neglected for it? When you shall hereafter at the great Day meet with this wretched carcase of your, and see how vile it is, what confusion

will be upon you? when you shall think, Was this the vile carcase that must have such content, for which God, and Heaven, and all the good in Christ is now lost for ever?

Secondly, it has been the care of all Gods dearest servants to keep down their bodies, to deny contentment to the flesh, and will you give it all the content you can? Daniel was afraid of taking liberty to his flesh, in eating the Kings meat; and the time when he had his, [⟨◇⟩]heavenly visions, he ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in his mouth, neither did he anoint himself at all. You know the mean provision that Iohn the Baptist, the Forerunner of Christ had, his fare was locusts and wilde honey, and yet there was not a greater born of a woman before him. St. Paul was careful to beat down his body, to club it down, even till it was black and blew, so the word signifies. Timothy although he was sickly, yet would not take liberty to drink a little wine, but only water, till Paul wrote to him; and in that liberty there was but a little granted, and that for his stomacks sake, and his often infirmities, not for his lusts sake, and to maintain riotousness. If I should tell you of the mean provision for the flesh, that many of the Ancients, who were the most worthy instruments of God, the most eminent in all true excellency, were contented withal, and that before the superstition of Popery prevailed, it would be even incredible unto you.

Basil in an Epistle to Iulian mentions the mean fare he and others with him lived withal, he ate no flesh, they had need of no Cook, the leaves of plants, and a little bread, was all their provision. And Ierome reports of Hilarion, that he never ate any thing before the Sun went down, and that which at any time he ate was very mean: From the fifteenth year of his age to the twentieth, his

only diet was fifteen dryed figs a day; for three years after that, only bread and water; for nine years together, six ounces of barley bread in a day; yet he lived till he was fourscore years old. And Ierome himself lived exceedingly abstemiously, with cold water, and a few dryed figs, so that by him, and others with whom he lived, to eat any thing boyled, was even accouted luxury. And Augustine has such an expression concerning himself; You Lord hast taught me this, that I should go to mymeat as to a medicine: He meant not to satisfy his appetite, but to repair nature.

And amongst the Heathen likewise, such as have been most eminent with them, have been most above sensual pleasures. When one asked Plato, how he got so much knowledge, his answer was, I have spent more oyl in the Lamp then wine in the cup. We read of Cato, seeing a Roman who pampered his belly, had this speech of him, Wonder if this man ever do any thing for the honor or good of the Commonwealth. These who provide so much for their bellies, have their brains sunk down into the quagmire of their bellies. Their parts, those common gifts of understanding they were wont to have, are now as the light of a snuff sunk into the socket, even drowned with the filth of their lusts, and what are such as these fit for? A fat belly, says Bernard, seldom produceth any witty invention.

Thirdly, what are these pleasures, but such as may stand with the infinite hatred of God, such as reprobates have had as large a portion in, as you can? And art you so eager upon that, which is no other portion then a Reprobate may have? To have no other portion then a beast may have, is low enough; but to have no other then a reprobate may have, is lower: How many are now in Hell under the eternal hatred of the infinite God, who when they lived,

had as much pleasure as ever you hast had, or ever shall have? as many merry meetings, sate it out in drinkings, gamings, riot, chambering, wantonness, sports, pastimes; now what pleasure is it to them to think what mirth and jollity once they had?

Fourthly, take them at the best, yet they are such, as the excellency of true vertue consists in the moderation of them, yea, in the raising the heart above them, so as to disdain and contemn them, if they would come in as our portion; certainly if they were the highest good, the glory of vertue would be in expatiating the heart towards them, in letting out the heart fully to them, in enlarging the heart in enjoyment of them, in satisfying the heart in the sweetness received from them; but it is otherwise, much of the commendation of vertue, has been in the ability to moderate affections towards them, to deny themselves in them. It is the beginning of a good mind, says Seneca, not to rejoice in vain things. Yea, there is no greater pleasure, says Tertullian, then the contempt of pleasures.

Fifthly, there is much evil in sensual pleasures; as,

First, there is much mixture of much inward sadness, many damps of heart; in the midst of laughter the heart is sad. Ambrose has a notable expression for this, You seest, says he, the wicked mans feasting, but question with his conscience, does not that stink more filthily then any sepulchre? you seest his joy, his lustiness, you wondrest at the abundance of his riches, children; but look within, and see the wounds, the strokes of his soul, the sadness of his heart.

Secondly, they keep out better delights then themselves: There is an opposition between them and spiritual delights. Those who long after the onyons of Egypt, cannot taste the spiritual Manna: Divine comfort is a delicate thing, says Bernard, and it is not given to him that admits any other.

Thirdly, there is a mixture of a curse with them: What good is there in having a brave sute with the plague in it? Is not plain russet or leather better that is free? What delight is there in feeding upon dainty dishes sweetly poisoned? Is not mean wholsom fare rather to be desired? We read of Agrippina, in poisoning her husband Claudius, she tempered it in the meat he most delighted in; poison in wine works more furiously then in water: Poor men who are wicked, have Gods curse mingled with the water of their poverty; and rich men who are wicked, have Gods curse mingled with the wine of their prosperity.

Fourthly, there is much bodily evil comes in by these, they make the bodies of men cinques of filth, and all manner of loathsom diseases. Basil has an expression of the evil of intemperance, that it turns men into mire and dirt, and makes men like vessels, rotten and putrified, fit for no use. The Romans were wont to have their funerals at the gates of Venus Temple: This they did, says Plutarch, to signifie that lust was the hastner of death. And Clemens Alexandrinus observes, that the Graecians called the intemperate, and those who wanted health, by the same name, only with difference of one letter, to show the great affinity there is between intemperance and sickness: And again in the same place, he says, The Graecians call Gluttony by the name of Bellyphrensie; for what greater madness, then for a short brutish pleasure to lose the comfort of continual health, and endure the long and tedious pains

of sickness, and miserable torturing diseases? what a folly is it to fill a Ship with water, and then to hire pumps to pump it out; so by intemperance, to fill our bodies with noisom humors, and then to hire Physicians to purge them out? Chrysostom in his Sermon upon the third to the Philippians, demands, What do men gain by their riches, but drunkenness, gluttony, and absurd pleasures of all sorts, which do more hurt and torment us, then most cruel Masters their slaves and bondmen? Give me, says he, a voluptuous man that is idle, that has his health, you cannot finde one; though he had many hundred Physicians, it would not be.

Fifthly, There is an evil of soul-abasement, they make men become vile. Cicero a Heathen, thought not that man worthy of the name of a man, who spent a whole day together in sensual pleasures. And Plutarch tells of Agesilaus, that he cast off voluptuous pleasures to his slaves, as better beseeming a base quality and servile nature, then himself. You mayest think to live in pleasure is a brave life, but it is the basest life that is; so God judges it: Hence the same word which the Scripture uses for the sensual glutton, Deut. 21:20 is used for a vile person, Jer. 15:19 the word is the same in the Hebrew. Luxurious sporting people have high conceits of themselves, as if they lived the only brave lives, but 2 Pet. 2:13 they are called spots and blemishes, for they are indeed base, the most base spirited men that live. These do most vilely lowre mans nature, they are infinitely beneath the happiness of an immortal soul.

The Heathen accounted a life of pleasure, a life of beasts: What man would not rather dye, says Tully, cited by Lactantius, then to be turned into the form of a beast, though he should retain the mind of a man? How much more miserable is it for one to be in the

form of a man, and to have the mind of a beast, yea, of a wilde beast? Guliel. Parisiensis calls luxury a scab, and says, the salt-water of tribulation must purge it; and he brings in Augustine giving the same name unto it, confessing that he was wont to delight in the scab of his lusts. This scab, says Parisiensis, makes the mind of man ulcerous, running with filthy putrified stuff, and abominable to God, above that, that any man would think, which no bodily filth does.

Sixthly, The evil of nourishing of all manner of wickedness: All sin in Scripture is called flesh, and the work of the flesh, because the pleasure of the flesh is the cause of so much sin in us. When Christ spoke of the servant who gave himself to riotousness in his Masters absence, he calls him the evil servant. There are swarms of all manner of evils in sensual hearts; they are the fennish grounds, that breed filthy poysonsom creatures; so all venemous-lusts are bred and nourished by these, Job 40:21 it is said, the Behemoth lieth in the fens, which Guliel. Parisiensis applies to the Devil in sensual hearts; he lies in moist places, says he; that is, in those whose spirits are moistened by their lusts: Therefore it is said of the unclean spirit, That he walks in dry places; seeking rest, and found none; But, says he, men giving themselves to pleasures, they seek what they can to give the Devil rest in their hearts, and to keep off all that may hinder his quiet. Flies and Wasps use to come to honey and sugar, and such sweet things: The Devil who is called Beelzebub, that is, the God of flyes, loves to be in souls glutted with sensual pleasures, yea swarms of Devils love to follow such: Hence such as these are most desperate enemies unto godliness, contemners and scorners of all Religion; That which is honest, is vile and contemptible to him, who makes too much of his body, says a

Heathen; Where pleasures reign, vertue connot be, says another. When the Jews accuse Christ of the worst their malice could devise, they call him a Wine-bibber.

Seventhly, they likewise harden in all manner of evil; when men are heat in sensual delights, their hearts are so glutted, that they never think of their pain. It is observed, that when the people of Israel had got Aaron to make the Calf, and they set down to drink, and rose up to play, they offered burnt-offerings, but no sin-offerings were thought of: These beset the heart, and make it even uncapable of any spiritual good. St. Paul says of the Widows that live in pleasures, they are dead while they live, 1 Tim. 5:6 Let us eat and drink, to morrow we shall dye: Why do you say, to morrow? says Chrysostom, ye are dead already. We read Ezek. 47:11 that when the waters of the sanctuary flowed, the miry places could not be healed: How seldom does the waters of the Sanctuary heal miry souls? Augustine says of such, As the earth by too much rain becomes nothing but mire and dirt, so as it is made unfit for tillage; so these, Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart, Hos. 4:11

Who are the most desperate enemies to the Cross of Christ, but such whose God is their belly, Phil. 3. 18, 19. Who are they that cannot cease from sin, but such as sport themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast amongst you, having eyes full of adultery? 2 Pet. 2. 13, 14. Who are those that are wholly void of the Spirit, and even uncapable of it? such as walk after their own ungodly lusts, and sensual, Jude 18, 19. Who are they that say to God, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of your ways, but such as take the Timbrel and Harp, and rejoice at the sound of the Organ, and spend their days in wealth? Job 21. 11, 12, 13. Pleasures

do not so much delight the flesh, as they endanger the soul; therefore better it is a great deal to be preserved in brine, then to rot in honey, to be fed upon the salt marshes, and short commons, and to live, then to be glutted in rank pastures, and so fatted up for destruction.

And thus you see the evil of them, whereupon Chrysostom in one of his Sermons concerning the Martyrs, The joys of this present world are to be feared by Christians; and certainly so they are, rather then to be desired.

Sixthly, if there were not so much evil, yet they are vain flashy things, there is no reality in them, they are all res nihili, things of nought. The Heathen could say, Believe me, true joy is no light thing; but what windy frothy contents are these pleasures to the flesh? do they leave any sweetness behinde them, after they are over? as it was wont to be said of Plato's feast, his discourse of Phylosophy at the table, though the chear was mean, was sweet divers days after: soul-delights leave a sweet relish in the spirit, after their acts are past; but the day after fleshly pleasures, what is left but bitter humors in the body, and a sting in conscience? what wise man can please his thoughts after his pleasures are over, in thinking what pleasures he has had? much less will any man of wisdom, glory in what he has eat or drunk, or that he has filled his sensual appetite with all the delights he could: Who can at night, after a day of sports, and fulness of delights to the flesh, bless God from his soul, that he has had a day so full of pleasure in his flesh?

Plutarch in his Morals has an excellent discourse upon this argument, to prove, that according to the Rules of Epicurus, No man can live a true pleasurable life; not that by his Rules no man can live a vertuous life, that perhaps would be granted by many; but

that no man can have a life of pleasure by those Rules, that is the thing that he undertakes to prove, and amongst other arguments he has these:

First, That it is not probable for any modest and temperate men, to give way to let their thoughts abide upon any such pleasures, he accounts them so vain and slight; for the pleasures of the mind, men that are wise and sober, delight in the thoughts of such.

A second argument that he uses, is, That never, as he says, to this day, were known any that would offer sacrifice to their God, in thankfulness for the enjoyment of their pleasures with their Minions; but wise men have offered sacrifices, in thankfulness for the pleasures of their mind; as he instances in Pythagoras.

A third argument that he uses, That we never heard of any so given to their appetite, that would boast of their pleasure, that they had devoured so much, or given to their lusts, that would boast of their lust, how they had satisfied it: (although if he lived in these days, he might hear of such men; it seems men are grown more sensual, then they were in those times) but for the pleasures of the mind, many would break forth in rejoicing and glorying expressions, that they had had them: as he instances in Archimedes, when he had found out a Phylosophical experiment, that he was so filled with joy, that he ran up and down, crying, I have found it, I have found it.

A fourth argument, That no man would so prize their pleasures in belly-chear, as to be willing presently to dye, that they might be filled therewith; for the pleasures of the mind, many have so delighted in them, so prized them, as they have been willing presently to dye for the enjoyment of them: as he instances in Eudoxus,

who would be willing to be burnt up by the Sun presently, upon condition he might be admitted to come so near it, as to learn the nature of it. Thus Heathens could argue against the slightness and vanity of sensual pleasures, and the solidness and excellency of the pleasures of the mind.

Seventhly, as they are slight for the present, so they are soon gone, they are not only vain, but vanishing.

First, they vanish in us, even in the enjoying.

Secondly, they vanish from us, so that we cannot enjoy them long.

For the first, The fashion of this world passes away, and the lust of it; it does not only pass away at the last, but the lust of it passes away, before the thing it self be gone. Although at first sensual things delight, yet within a while they come to be used as necessaries, not as delights, the delightfulness is over, and yet they cannot be without them: in this, such are more miserable then other men, for those things that are superfluous to others, are necessary to them. The more things a man wants that he cannot be without, the more miserable he is. It is Gods infinite happiness, that he has need of nothing out of himself: and the less need a creature has of any thing out of its self, the nearer it comes to happiness: all their pleasurable things do but serve to make up that imperfection in them, which is not in others; their pleasures now are but to help against the diseases of Nature, now these cannot be so delightful as the true natural delights, that are surable to the principles of Nature, which others enjoy.

But secondly, they vanish from us presently: Solomon compares all the prosperity of the wicked to a candle; How soon is the candle of the wicked blown out? All are like a mountain, yea, like a little hill of snow, that melts away presently. Pleasure gives us a deadly wound, and is gone, it makes us miserable, and then it leaves us.

Eighthly, if they should not be soon gone from me, yet I must be soon gone from them. It were something if you mightest abide by them, and they abide with you, but within a while, you and all your pleasures together must vanish away, you must be dragged from them, if death draw the curtains and look in upon you, then you must bid a farewel to all; never laugh more, never have merry meetings more, never be in jollity more; All, All, now is gone, as the Pope Adrian said, when he was to dye, O my soul, whither goest you? you shall never jest it, sport it out more; when you shall be called to eternity, then all your delights will leave you, and bid you farewel for ever: if you should call to them, O now go with me, now I have most need of you; alas, they cannot, all now is but a shadow, but a dream that is passed away; Alas, I was made for eternity, and what good is it for me to have such pleasures for a season? What is it to be jocund, to trifle up and down a year or two, and there an end? O how doleful will this sound be to you, Your season is done, you have had your time, it is gone, it is past, and cannot be recalled!

And yet this is not the season neither, that should be for pleasure. Son, remember in your life time, you hadst your pleasure; it should not have been then: St. James, cap. 5. lays it as a great charge upon those in his time, that they lived in pleasure upon the earth; this is a charge of folly. This is a time for vertuous actions, to

do the great business for which we were born. It is a notable expression we finde in that Tractate, in Plutarch's Morals, before quoted; he puts this case there: Suppose (says he) any man were to dye, and either God, or the King, who had power of his life, should lengthen it out one hour, that he might make use of that hour, either to do some famous action, or to spend it in pleasure, and when that hour is at an end, then to dye again; What is it like that this man would do? What, would he rather have his lust with Lais? (that was in those times a famous Whore) or would he rather drink strong and delightful Wine? or not rather do some famous exploit for his Countrey; as to slay Archias, and to deliver Athens? and he determines the case; I am persuaded, says he, no man in such a case, but would rather choose the latter: Surely our lives are in Gods hands, we know not whither so much as an hour be granted us or not, we may be gone to our long home the next hour; but what do we choose to do?

Certainly, did we know that our eternity depended upon this little uncertain time of our lives, we would not think sensual pleasures to be in season now; this time should be spent, in seeking to make our peace with God, to humble our souls, to get off the guilt of sin: this is a time of suing out our pardon, of mourning, of sorrow, and trouble of spirit, and not the time for jollity and fleshly delights. If a condemned man had two or three days granted him, that he might sue out his pardon, were that a time for pleasure? and sports? thus it is with you, the sentence of death is upon you, only a little uncertain time is granted you to get a pardon; know then what is your work you hast to do, and apply yourself to it.

And were it that you hadst your pleasure freely, it were another matter; but they must all be called for again and you must give a strict account for them all; Eccles. 11:19 Rejoyce O yong man in your youth, walk in the way of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes, live after your lusts, and do what you will; a thing that yong men love as their lives: it is an Ironical confession: but remember withal, there must be an account for these things; know then this is certain, it is no fancy, a conceit; know it, be throughly convinced of it, as a thing most certain: for all these things, there is not one merry meeting, not one hour spent in pleasure, yea, not one pleasurable act or thought, but an account must be given for it; God will bring you, though you be unwilling to come, yet you can not avoid it, God will bring you to judgement. You think such delights as you have, are no such things as God takes notice of, they are but matters of sport; you thinkest you hast liberty in them, to do what you listest, you shall never hear of them again; but assure yourself, God will bring you to judgement, to be examined, condemned and punished. Of all men, voluptuous men least think of judgement, they put far from them the evil day, Amos 6:2 but above all men, God has an eye upon them, to bring them to judgement, and therefore 2 Pet. 2. 9, 10. The Lord reserves the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished, but chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness; mark, chiefly them; if it were possible for any to escape, it is impossible for you, for God looks at you chiefly. You now art riotous, and callest for all the delights you hast a mind to, but there comes a reckoning behinde that will damp all.

There are three heads, upon which the enquiry at the day of judgement will be concerning your pleasures.

First, What kinde of pleasures they were, whether wicked in their own natures, or not.

Secondly, What time was spent in them.

Thirdly, How far your heart was let out upon them.

Lastly, let the fearful end of these delightful things be considered. Those morsels which were so sweet in going down, they must come up again as bitter as gall: Job 20. 12, 13. Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth, yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of Asps within him. And Prov. 23. 31, 32. it is said of the wine that moveth its self, sparkling in the cup, at the last, it biteh like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder. The yong man that follows the enticings of the Whore, Prov. 7. 22, 23. He goes as an Ox to slaughter, and as a fool to the stocks, till a dart strike through his liver, he knows not that it is for his life. And cap. 5. ver. 11. he is said to mourn at the last, when his flesh and his body is consumed; and he cryes out, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof? and have not obeyed the voyce of my teachers, nor enclined mine ear to them that instructed me? Sensual pleasure leads to, and fits for destruction. Esay 5:14 Hell has enlarged her self, and opened her mouth without measure, he that rejoyceth shall descend into it: Job 21. 12, 13. They take the Timbrel and Harp, and rejoice at the sound of the Organ, they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to hell.

The fish swim down pleasantly in Jordan, but fall at last into the dead sea: the black sea of eternal horror, is the conclusion of all these sweet delights. As Abner to Ioab, 2 Sam. 2:26 Knowest

you not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? These are they who come to a fearful end, yea many times in this life; as Esay 50:11 Behold, all ye that kindle afire, that compass about yourselves with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that you have kindled, this shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow. You now frame a delightful life to yourself; well, walk in the light of your fire, enjoy your delight, satisfy yourselves in your own ways, but this shall you have of the Lord, You shall lie down in sorrow, yea, and that in proportion to your pleasure; Rev. 18:7 How much she has glorified her self, and lived deliciously, so much torment give her.

And how grievous will eternal pain be to you, who art now altogether for delight and pleasure? You can not now endure any sad thoughts, you cryest out, they make you melancholy; how will you endure the dismal thoughts of an accusing tormenting conscience everlastingly? those fearful gnawings of that never-dying worm that was bred in your sweet delights? Now your flesh is dainty, delicate and tender, it must lie soft, and fare deliciously, it must have all to satisfy it that can be devised; how will it endure those everlasting burnings? If after every intemperate draught, there should be a draught of scalding lead poured down, how grievous would it be? the end of your intemperate pleasures will be worse; for, as Iob 21:20 You shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty, and this shall be the portion of your cup, now you delightest in your long sittings at it, you shall drink of this eternally, those cursed delights in burning lusts, shall end in eternal burnings.

Chapter 12: Who are the truly wise men; with the encouragement to the Saints in the happy choice they have made

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HEre you see who are the wise men in the earth; wisdom does most discover its self in choice, for choice requires understanding to compare and weigh things: The will of every man is for some good he would have; every man wills to be happy; this is as natural for every reasonable Creature, as for the fire to burn: But herein appears wisdom, to make a right choice of those means that may bring us to that happiness that we do will; here is the infinite mistake of the world, they would be happy, but they choose means that are quite contrary to happiness; but those that choose right, and pitch upon the means that will indeed bring to that happiness that an immortal soul is capable of, surely those are wise; this is the wisdom that is from above, that can dispose of such means, as to obtain this end, and the greater the means are, and the more excellent the end is, the greater is the wisdom that orders thereunto, & guides therein: every one can propound an ordinary end to himself, and means to attain it; but if the business be of high consequence, as for a General to manage an Army, his end

is a high end, that concerns the prosperity of a whole Countrey, and because his end is so high, that wisdom that can order means to attain this end, is admired in the world, it is not an ordinary skil that is able to do this.

Now the attaining of God himself, the being blessed to all eternity, if there be any end that is high, this must be it; for one therefore to be able to order and dispose of means, so as not to miscarry in such a high end as this, such a glorious and great work as this, it must be wonderful wisdom. The men of the world think themselves wise men, and bless themselves in their wisdom, because they can order and dispose of means to get money and fine cloaths; they are poor, and base, and low spirits, who mind and regard no higher, and no better things then these base things that are below; whereas the godly, because God has let the fear of eternity fall upon them, and they regard nothing but in subordination to that, therefore they sometimes miscarry in the things of the world; upon this the men of the world looking at them, and seeing no higher end but the enjoyment of pleasure, and the like, they count them a company of fools that will undo themselves, and prove to be beggers, and so slight them in that respect.

But there is an infinite mistake in this; were it that Gods servants did propound that end to themselves, and had no higher then that which other men have, they would shift as well as they; but because they have a higher end, therefore their thoughts in wisdom are drawn out about that: As St. Paul said, 1 Cor. 2:12 We have not received the spirit of the world; we cannot shift and plot in the world; but we have received the Spirit of God, that spirit that shall order us, and dispose us to enjoy communion with God and his Angels for ever. A swine that wanders up and down, can make

better shift to get home to the trough, then a sheep that wanders to get home to the fold: The men of this world are indeed wiser in their generation then the children of light, but the children of light have their ends and ways, in which their wisdom appears to be full of excellency and glory.

The wisdom of Politicians is seen in this, They will let go things that are low, and be content to be crossed in things that are mean, if their great plots may go on; so it is in all true spiritual wisdom: A gracious heart, when it looks at the enjoyment of God in the way of godliness, so be it that great plot may go on, it does not so much look at things that are under: and therefore let men know that there is a mistake in this, one day God will make it known, who are those that are wise on the earth. Surely the world did not commend Daniel for his wisdom, that he would not omit prayer one day to save his life, but had rather lose all: Would not the worldly-wise say, What a foolish thing is this, not to omit prayer one day to save a mans life, and he must open his window too; that spiritual wisdom which God gives unto his people, it is foolishness to a carnal heart; and therefore you shall have some Parents themselves, when children come to be strict in their way, will say, What, shall we have a fool of you? And one neighbor to another, when they see any have a tender conscience, who before gave himself to the pleasure of the flesh, We shall have a fool of you now: Though you count them fools, they know your way is folly. They think the matters of Religion are but niceties, and and to venture the loss of so much for such niceties, what a foolish thing is it? As Pilate wondered at Christ, when his life was in question, he talks of truth, What is truth? Your life is in danger, and do you now talk of truth?

That which is honest and vertuous, is vile and contemptible to him whose body and sensual part is dear to him, says Seneca. I remember Lactantius brings in a Heathen scorning at the ways of Christians in this manner, thinking Christians to be fools, when they see they should endure such things, and yet they would be Christians; says he, Scorn us, contemn us,and despise us, we know our foolishness profits us, let us alone with our foolishness, we do not envy your wisdom: We do not care though you count us fools, so you disturb us not in our way. True wisdom, says he, lies hid there, where there is the title of folly; for God with affliction, and with the name of folly, does hide the beauty of godliness from the eyes of men; but this is the only wisdom, to know God, to worship God, to be Religious; and for this, says the same Author, with the greatest voyce that I can speak, I testify and proclaim, and denounce, That this is the greatest wisdom. Let us be established in this, that it is the only wisdom to choose the ways of God upon any terms, let come what will come, let all sorrows and afflictions to the outward man come that possibly can come, this is the absolute wisdom, and this, says he, is my opinion and judgement, it is that I am throughly convinced of, and shall for ever rest, and be setled in.

Mark how Solomon so glorious for wisdom testifies of grace, Prov. 1. 2, 3, 4, 5. he heapeth up several expressions to manifest what wisdom comes to the heart by godliness, for that is the scope there; it causes, 1. To know Wisdom; 2. Instruction; 3. To perceive the words of Understanding; 4. To receive the instruction of Wisdom, Justice, Judgement, Equity. 5. To give subtilty to the simple; not only understanding, but subtilty; and that notwithstanding all natural simplicity, in those who the world accounts simple ones, yet are by grace made subtile, they can descry the danger of

subtile temptations, they will not be undermined for their souls, they will not be cousened and cheated by the subtile policies of Devil or World, in the matter of their souls, and the great things of eternal life, so as the great wise men of the world are. 6. Knowledge and discretion to the yong man; of all men, yong men are most ignorant, most rash and heady; but grace gives knowledge and discretion both, even to the yong man; How many gracious yong men have more understanding in the ways of God, and can guide their way to Heaven more discreetly then many ancient men, who have repute in the world for wise and understanding men? Yea, 7. grace teaches wise counsels; their counsels about their spiritual estates are wise. Who now dare accuse the ways of godliness, of folly, when the holy Ghost has honored them with so many several expressions of wisdom in them? This then is true wisdom, to choose with Moses, rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Secondly, here is much encouragement to all Gods people in their way and choice that they have made. Has God given you a heart to make choice of his ways? O bless God! There was a time when you went on in giving pleasure to the flesh, and you saw then no better thing then such a kinde of life, and the Lord has been pleased to discover better things to you, so as to make you renounce your former ways, and to make choice of another way, in which your souls have found other manner of comforts, and satisfactions, and contentments then ever you did before: bless God as David did, Blessed be the Lord that has given me counsel, and made me to understand aright: So may such a soul say, for had I been left to the counsels of mine own heart, I know what should have become of me. I have as vile a heart as any, and my heart did

take as much delight in the flesh as any, and I should have gone on, God knows whither, and might by this time have plunged myself into the bottomless pit: my friends would have given me other counsels to harden me in my ways of sinful pleasure, but blessed be God that has overpowered my heart. How many do I see every day, whose parts of nature exceed mine, and yet they are mistaken in the things that concern their everlasting welfare; they mind no other things but the pleasures of the flesh, and stumble at the meanness of Gods people, and this hides the beauty of godliness from their eyes; and what a great mercy is this, that God has taken this stumbling block from me, and that he has opened mine eyes to see pearls, though wrapped up in rotten rags, and to see the excellency of godliness, notwithstanding all afflictions that do attend upon them? Certainly it is no other but a beam of Gods own light from Heaven, that has shined into your heart.

It is a remarkable passage that we have Esay 44. 20, 21. where God showing the difference between those who forsook the true God, and his people who chose him to be their God; stirs up his people to remember for ever this mercy of God towards them, that they should be delivered from the deceit and vanity whereby others were deluded, and guided in a right and safe way, to be the servants of the blessed God; As for the Idolater, he feeds upon ashes, a deceived heart has turned him aside that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lye in my right hand? Now mark what follows, Remember these, O Jacob and Israel, for you art my servant, &c. As if he should say, Do you see how others have left God, and God has left them? They feed upon ashes, a seduced heart has deceived them; but it is otherwise with you, God has put it into your hearts to be my servants, to choose me for your God:

Remember for ever these things, O Jacob! here is a mercy indeed, never to be forgotten; How comes it to pass that your hearts should not be so seduced as theirs? it is Gods free grace and rich mercy towards you.

And his mercy is the greater, in that it is in such a weighty thing, that the Lord has given you counsel to make a right choice in: If a man makes an ill choice in a matter that is of moment, that will bring him trouble in his life, how is he grieved? as in marriage, when he is to make choice in that one thing, upon which he knows, the comfort or trouble of his life does much depend; if the Lord has so provided for him, that he has made a good choice only in that, how does he bless God? it is that which sweetens all his life: If it be such a mercy, to be guided to make a good choice in marriage; what a mercy is it to be guided to make a good choice for ones soul, to be happy to all eternity? if the Lord should leave a soul in that choice, what a lamentable condition had the soul been in? And therefore, those that have any savour of godliness, if they be to change the condition of their lives, they will seek God, and be earnest that God would guide them, and not leave them to themselves, and take advantage to punish their former sins, in their choice now. If you be to make a choice that concerns the outward comforts of your lives, you will earnestly desire God, not to leave you there; Now you are to make your choice for your eternal condition, if God should leave you now, what a lamentable condition would you be in, as he does leave most in the world?

As soon as we come to years of discretion, we come to make our choice, to go on in the ways of God, or in the ways of death; How many yong ones make a woful choice in the beginning, and go on, and are hardened in their choice, and perish for ever? And has

the Lord looked upon you, and considered how like you would be to fail in your choice? And has the Lord been pleased to come in with his Spirit, and a light from Heaven to show you the way? Have you heard a voyce from heaven, saying, This is the way, walk in it? Though God should leave you in all outward things, yet you are made for ever; and therefore you mayest say as Judas, not Iscariot; Lord, therefore is it that you revealest yourself to us; and not to the world? Lord, therefore is it, that in this great business of my choice, that concerns my eternal estate, you art pleased to reveal yourself to me, a poor contemptible creature, rather then to the world?

1. Hence it is, because you art one of the chosenones of the Lord, because the Lord has made a choice of you, and has separated you from all eternity, to do good to your soul: hence it is manifest, that you art the chosen one of the Lord; when you seest most in the world, to follow the pleasures of the world, if God has given you a heart to choose his ways upon any terms, take this as an argument, that you art a chosen vessel of God. Reciprocal signs of Gods grace are the most sweet; as if I love God, this is an argument God loves me; if Gods honor be dear to me, then my soul is near to God; so if I choose God, then God has chosen me.

2. This choice is that for which thousands of Gods people have blessed God upon their deathbeds; they counted it a blessed time, and blessed the means, the Word, and the Instrument that God was pleased to work by, to incline their hearts to such a choice as this.

3. Yea, this choice of your, though it be suffering affliction, it is that you shall bless God for, to all eternity in the highest Heavens; it is such a great mercy, as this little, poor, span-long life of ours, is

not sufficient to give God glory for it, therefore there is an eternity reserved to praise God for it; when you shall see what good comes of your choice, then you shall bless God indeed. Certainly, God takes it well at your hands now. Jer. 2:2 I remember the kindeness of your youth, and the love of your espousals, when you wentest after me in the wilderness. God takes it kindely, that men will choose him and his ways in affliction: if there were always prosperity in the ways of God, it were nothing, but when it is with affliction, it is so much the more an argument of your love to God, and your sincerity, and therefore he takes it so kindely. Bless God for it; and bless him the rather, because he has begun with you betimes: If the Lord has given you a heart when you are yong to make this choice, what a great mercy is this? what abundance of sin does such a one prevent? If one that is yong, goes on in the ways of Religion, though he suffers much in the family in which he lives, his brethren scorn at him, and his Parents hate him; yet he has cause to rejoice, and bless himself in the goodness of the Lord.

4. Again, you hast further cause to bless God, because he has given you such encouragements since you hast made your choice: you madest your choice many years ago; I ask you, Hast you not had encouragement in your choice? Hast any cause to repent you? O no! blessed be God, I have found more good then I looked for.

5. And know, within a while, the end of your choice will be attained, and then it shall appear before men and Angels, you madest a good choice, and all the world shall bless you for your choice. Blessed be that man or woman that ever they were born, to make such a choice: and you shall be honored of all those that do despise you now, and they shall wish they had made your choice. It is reported of a yong man who loved his pleasures, standing by St.

Ambrose, and seeing his excellent death, he turned to other yong men by him, and said, O that I might live with you, and dye with him! You hast little cause to envy them that will choose vanities for their portion, let them have them: though you hast lost something of your bravery, of your carnal delight for this choice, be content, it is made up infinitely here, and shall be made up more hereafter.

And seeing God has thus enclined your heart to himself, be for ever established in your choice: seeing God has shown to you his ways, say, as Pilate in another case, That I have written, I have written; so, That I have chosen, I have chosen. If any temptation come to tempt you from your choice, as flesh and blood would be ready to mutter, and think, I might have lived as brave a life as such a one, & might have had as much pleasure as such a one; I have lost so many friends, and so much means, and brought myself into a great many straights; indeed, they spoke much of Gods Ordinances, and I was taken with it, and I ventured, and I have brought myself into troubles: and upon the mutterings of flesh and blood, you are beginning to bethink yourselves again, and examine things again, and think whether you did wisely or no: O take heed of that first degree of Apostacy, namely, that suspition of your choice.

Many in their yong time are very zealous in the ways of Religion, while all is well with them, and now they meet with other things then they looked for, and they begin to think they were too forward, and wish they were not so far engaged as they are: they begin to repent, as chapmen who have out-bid themselves: Many go on in a profession, and suffer much, because they are engaged in that way, and they know not how to get off; if they could get off, they would: take heed of repentings of your choice, lest God lead

you out with the workers of iniquity, do not listen to the reasonings of flesh and blood. Cassianus reports of a yong man, that had given himself up to a Christian life, and his Parents misliked that way, and they wrote Letters to him, to persuade him from it; and when he knew they were Letters come from them, he would not open them, but threw them into the fire: and so flesh and blood will come and say, Do thus and thus, you may do well enough at last; throw away these letters, these suggestions of flesh and blood, and do not answer them, but be resolved in your own heart, I know in whom I have believed, I know whom I have chosen, I did not choose rashly, but I felt the power of God upon my heart, before I made my choice, and I had grounds and arguments of my choice; and what, shall I by such an argument as this be persuaded to the contrary? Therefore go on, and be established in your choice, and the Lord confirm you in it, and give my soul part with you in that choice you have made: let flesh, and the world, and temptations say what they will, peace will be in the end.

You have found some good already, that might make you say with David, Surely it is good for me to draw near to God: and though I do meet with some troubles and temptations that do cry down this way, yet let my soul say, It is good for me to draw near to God: it is good for me that I left such andsuch things; it is good for me that I have these Ordinances, though it be with the loss of some outward comforts, and my estate be abated, and my trading less: say as David, in the 73. Psalm, Truly God is good to Israel; however it be, yet God is good to Israel, though many things seem to the contrary: and therefore, conclude with your own heart, Though I should never see good day in the world, yet that comfort I have received in the ways of God, it is enough to make me prize them for

ever: if now I should dye, and be annihilated, if God should deprive me of the joys of Heaven, and turn me into nothing, yet that good that I have had already in Gods ways, should be enough to countervail all the troubles that I have met withal in the world, or ever shall meet withal: though God should withdraw himself in all the course of my life, and I should be in darkness, and have nothing but trouble, yet I have had enough in God already, to countervail all.

Has God thus spoken peace to your soul? remember that text in Psalm 85:8 Return not again to folly: the Lord has spoken peace already to your soul in afflictions, and therefore, God forbid that you should return to folly, but continue in your way, and go on constantly in your way to the end, and the Lord bless you in your way. And this is for the encouragement of the hearts of Gods people, that have with Moses made this choice, Rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Chapter 13: The evil of an ill choice, discovered

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IN the third place, hence those are justly rebuked, who have made an ill choice: this was a blessed choice of Moses, and whoever makes this choice, are blessed of the Lord; but how few have we of Moses his mind? it is a woful choice that many make. Most people are offended at the afflictions of Gods people, their hearts are set upon pleasure and delight, and pleasure they must have; pleasure to the flesh is that they choose, and that they follow after; but as for the afflicted ways of godliness, they cannot relish them, their carnal sensual hearts do turn aside from them, they give themselves up to the pleasures of the flesh, and satisfy themselves in the enjoyment of their hearts desires, and God does give them up likewise to their own lusts, to let them have their choice; so that they shall spend their time in mirth and jollity, in eating and drinking, and gaming, and in this they bless themselves, as those who have wisely provided for themselves, to make their lives so full of comfort, and soul-content as they imagine: these are set upon carnal, frothy, sensual things; as if the chief good and happiness of man consisted in them, and therefore they give themselves liberty in them, to the utmost.

That in which a mans happiness consists, he may desire infinitely, and he cannot but do it, it is as natural for him to do it, as for the fire to burn, or the stone to descend; and because men put happiness in the pleasures of the flesh, therefore their hearts are set infinitely upon them; that is, to set, as they give themselves liberty, without any bounds, and desire that if it were possible, no limits might be set either by God or man. If they have means, they account the chief good of what they have, is, in that they may have larger opportunities then others, to satisfy the flesh in the sensual pleasures of it: and hence is the infinite excess of meats, and drinks, and carnal delights, in those whose means afford them opportunities thereunto. Luther speaking of this excess, has this expression, If Adam should now rise again, and see this madness of all sorts of men, I believe he would be so amazed at it, that he would stand as a stone.

A. Gellius tells of Caligula, that he made one supper that cost three hundred thousand Crowns. I have read also of Vitellius the Emperor, that at one supper he was served with Two thousand sorts of fishes, and Seven thousand several fowls. In such profuse expences, for the satisfying of the flesh, how many do glory, as if it were the highest happiness attainable upon the earth? And the baser sort of people, seeing the great ones set upon such a kinde of life, in satisfying the flesh, they think there is no other happiness to be had; therefore all their care, thoughts, endeavors are, how they may live jocundly, and give satisfaction to their lusts. Clemens Alexandrinus tells of a fish that has the heart in the belly, differing from other living Creatures, which the Philosophers call the Sea-Ass: This is like sensual men whose hearts are only set upon the things of the belly; so as it may be said of many in regard of satisfy-

ing the flesh, as Aurelianus said of one Bonoses, He was born, not that he might live, but that he might drink; So do these seem to be born, not that they might live, but that they might eat and drink, and pamper the flesh; the whole world is too strait to some for the pampering their bellies.

Oh, how beneath is this to the true excellency of a rational and immortal soul! What pity is it, that an immortal reasonable soul should be of no other use, then to keep the body alive to taste the sweet of the flesh of beasts, and of the fruit of the earth? How many draw all their substance thorow their throats, and their belly? their houses, lands, yea, and devour their posterity like Cannibals; when men in company spend their estates, their wives and children wanting bread at home, what do they, but even drink the very blood of their wives and children? It was the prophaneness of Esau, for which God has branded him, That he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; yet that was in the time of extreme hunger; these men sell God and Heaven and all for drink, not to satisfy thirst, but their lust.

But O you vain man, know you art utterly mistaken in your choice, if you continuest in this way of your, that you hast chosen to satisfy your flesh in, you art undone for ever, you will ere long cry out of this your choice most bitterly, and curse yourself for it most fearfully: It is a seduced heart that has deceived you, and you feedest upon ashes, and you can not say, Is there not a lye in my right hand? Esay 44:20 It is true, not only of Idolators, but of all other ways of evil; you feedest upon ashes, they are but ashes you feedest upon, and delightest in, and it is a seduced heart has turned you aside from the ways of God, that makes you offended at them; it is the God of this world that has blinded your eyes, so that

you shouldest not see the glorious excellencies, and beautiful pleasures, and sweet delights, that are in the ways of God, but that you shouldest please yourself in those ways that tend to death: What has the whole course of your life been, but playing with the Devils bait, under which is a hook that will snatch you into the sorrows of eternal death? Howsoever those that live in jollity and delight in the flesh, may bless themselves, yet Gods people whose eyes God has opened, would not be in their condition one quarter of an hour for a thousand worlds. There are divers sorts that come under this use of reprehension, for that ill and woful choice they have made.

First, such as choose to satisfy themselves in such pleasures as are in themselves sinful, such who take pleasure in filthiness and ungodliness: these are the dregs of men, these are the basest of all, that can take delight in the very act of sin it self: All that is said concerning the dreadful evils of sin, and that venome and curse that there is in sin, is so far from making sin to be bitter to them, as they account more pleasure to be had in many sinful ways, then there is to be had in the enjoyment of all the glory that there is in God and Jesus Christ, in Heaven and Eternity: O cursed heart, and cursed choice is this, that when God has revealed in his Word so much concerning the evil of sin, that might make any heart in the world tremble at it, that you should not only not apprehend the evil of it, or not taste any bitterness that is in it, but should count it delightful, yea, should esteem so much pleasure to be had in the act of sin it self, more then there is to be had in God, in Christ, or in the Promises, or in Heaven, or Eternity.

Surely a cursed seduced heart has deceived you, these are infinitely out of the way. What is there in sin that is your pleasure, that you choosest as the chief contentment of your soul? Is it possi-

ble that the chief contentment of a creature should be in sinning against an infinite God? That your chief contentment should be in departing from God? in striking at God? So you doest in the way of sin: That your chief contentment should be in incensing the wrath of an infinite Deity against your soul? That your chief contentment should be in putting yourself under the everlasting curse, that bindes you over to eternal death? That your chief contentment should be in that, which being committed, if ever it comes to be pardoned, must cost more then Heaven and Earth is worth? You goest out in the morning, and goest into your company, and countest yourself happy that you hast money to spend, and so takest your pleasure: This day you hast done that, which if ever it be pardoned, it must cost more then Heaven and Earth is worth. There must be a price paid, more worth then a thousand worlds, to purchase the pardon of it.

can you choose that for your chief contentment, which was such a dreadful but then to Jesus Christ; that made the soul of Christ to be heavy to the very death, that squeazed out clods of blood from him? What is the chief pleasure and delight of your soul in that, which a true enlightened gracious heart would rather suffer all the torments in the world then do it? If so be it were put to him, either such a sin must be committed, or else all the tortures that can be devised by all the world must be inflicted upon him; A gracious heart had rather choose all the tortures that can be inflicted, then do that which you makest the great pleasure of your soul: What an infinite difference is between your base heart, and a gracious heart? Your wretched heart does choose this deliberately, as the great pleasure of your life, which a gracious heart would rather suffer all the torments of the world, then be brought to do it.

To delight in sins against conscience, is the most desperate folly in the world: No man rejoyces in any error or fault in other things, but is rather ashamed; only in the errors, in the rule of life and obedience men owe to God, they rejoice in.

Secondly, those come under this reprehension, who though they do not choose things for their chief pleasures that are sin, yet do choose to themselves pleasures that come in by sin; and though this be not so ill as the other, yet ill enough; that is, those that shall strain their consciences to get something in the world, to raise their estates, and when they have got estates, and money, and things well about them, then they can be merry, then their tables are furnished, and they can eat and drink, and this they delight in: O poor deluded heart! what is this that can give you so much content? You hast cause to look upon your table, and every morsel that you eatest, as having death in it; and every draught you drink, as having the curse of God in it: Little cause you hast, if you knewest all, to rejoice in these pleasures that come in by sin, certainly there can be no good that comes in by sin as sin: I know God may turn sin to the good of some, but that which sin brings in of it self, it is impossible good should come of it; that which you takest pleasure in, that which you art merry and jocund in, delighting yourself withal, is, it may be, the calamity and misery of others; and how hard is that heart, that can make that his mirth and joy, that is the sorrow and distress of his brother? Chrysostom in a Sermon against luxury and excess, cryes out against those who riot in those things that they have got by making others miserable, and says, It is the most grievous thing that can be.

Thirdly, those who do neither of these, they choose not to themselves the pleasures that are sin, nor the pleasures that come in by sin, but such pleasures, in the enjoyment of which they do sin, though the pleasures be in themselves lawful, they choose to let out their hearts unto them, and spend the strength of their spirits on them; they think because there is no hurt in them in themselves, therefore they may give liberty to themselves; there is a great deal of mistake in this: we may sin exceedingly in things that are lawful; when men shall spend so much time (as many that are professors do) in giving themselves content in some sports and delights to the flesh, as they cut God short of his time; that time that should be spent in examining their hearts, humbling their souls, seeking the face of God, is spent in some slight, vain, idle sport.

Many are guilty of this, especially those that have means, and their callings do not require such a necessity of continual attendance: How is that time spent in which you have liberty from your callings? Certainly, no good account can be given of that time, much might be gained to your souls in it, and much converse and communion you might have with God; and what ill choice do you make, when as many poor Christians would bless God, if they could have a little liberty from their callings? On the one side there is this liberty for you to enjoy communion with God, and furnish your souls with heavenly excellencies: On the other side, there is a little vain delight and carnal content, and ease to the flesh, and you rather choose this. It may be, though God has helped you in the main, you chose right, yet be convinced this day of the evil of this particular choice, in giving such inordinate contentment to yourselves, in giving that ease to your bodies, liberties to the sluggishness of your spirits, and reform. You have not honored God as you

ought, and therefore your lives are not so beautiful: In the general you continue in the ways of Religion, but there is not that convincing lustre and beauty in your lives; you do not draw others to that love of godliness, because your hearts become so vain, and so slight, in choosing inordinate liberties to yourselves, in spending your times and strength in the pleasures of the flesh, and therefore when you come to spiritual employment, you have no strength, but your hearts are dead. I appeal to your consciences, when you have given yourselves leave to have content to the flesh, when you come to communion with God, what dead flat hearts have you? Let me speak to such this day from the Lord, this liberty you take to yourselves in the pleasures of the flesh, has been the root of the Apostacy of many; as 2 Pet. 2:18 those who fell off were allured through the lusts of the flesh; even though they are said to be clean escaped from them who live in error, yet through wantonness they were drawn aside. Wanton professors seldom prove lasting professors, at least in any power of godliness.

Take this one note about this, That man or woman that shall not esteem the hardest work of godliness at a higher rate, then the most delightful contentment to the flesh, has not chosen right, and may suspect that yet he is to choose in the way of eternal life. It is true, that the hardest duty of godliness, may be burthensom to the flesh for a while, yet there is no gracious heart, but esteems of this duty at an infinite higher rate, then the pleasures of the flesh, though never so lawful; it looks upon the pleasures of the flesh as mean low things, though lawful, but looks upon the duties of godliness as precious things, though hard, and those are the things that are most suitable to a gracious frame of spirit.

Again, fourthly, those come under this reprehension of making an ill choice, who have had some stirrings of the Spirit of God, some workings of their consciences, that their way has not been good, and right, and these have been but for some time, afterward they have given themselves, and do give themselves too too much liberty in satisfying the flesh. These are like the Israelites, of whom we read, Exod. 24:11 according to the note that some have upon this place, They saw God, and did eat and drink; That is, say they, although they had seen God, yet they turned again to temporal pleasures, to eating and drinking, in a sensual way, as if it had reference to that sensual eating and drinking, and rising up to play; upon the dedication of their Calf they sate up, which was presently after.

Thus many, although they have seen the Lord, and this sight of God has wakened conscience, their hearts have been much stirred for a while, yet they have after faln to eating and drinking, to sensual pleasures, all their good beginnings has come to nothing. These when they have been in company, and come away, they have had many sad thoughts, and next day, or in the night many sad sighs and groans have come from their spirits, because their spirits are enlightened, and make them fear all will not be well in the end; and yet these continue still in giving themselves pleasure, and delights to the flesh inordinately; if company call, they cannot refuse: when they are stirred in their consciences, they will take a book and read, or pray; yet they are presently weary, and cannot bear such a kinde of life, they think they shall grow melancholy, and they must again go to their former ways.

Many have the pleasures of the flesh, and their consciences strugling together; and many times the pleasures of the flesh, and conscience struggle a great while, before there be a victory on either side: sometimes conscience gets the victory, and there is a gracious work upon the soul, especially if God set on conscience, by some great affliction or sickness: sometimes conscience is overcome, though conscience does propound a better way, and they see, and are convinced of it, yet at length lust overcomes, and conscience yields, and they become meer sots, hardened in the way of the lusts of their hearts; and this is a most dreadful thing, when ever this befals any.

Again, there are others that have had some taste of the ways of God, have begun to make a choice, and have tryed the ways of Religion, and continued a while in them, and yet come to be weary and tired: yea, it may be some upon their sick-beds, and deathbeds, have cryed out of the folly of their former choice; and yet, when God has delivered them again, they have gone on in the same excess of riot, and giving liberty to the satisfying of the flesh, in the same way, if not in a further degree then ever formerly; what a dreadful thing is this! To all those that are thus deluded, in making this evil choice, let me speak a word or two.

First, would you be willing at the day of judgement, to be accused and found guilty before the Lord of this; that you hast esteemed more pleasure to be had, either in sin, or in any lawful content, then in all the pleasures that are to be had in God, so as it should be said before men and Angels, Lo! this is the man that made not God his portion; Lo! here stands the man, that for many years together did account more good to be had in the pleasures of the flesh, then in all the good that was to be enjoyed in all the ar-

tributes of God, and all the merits of Jesus Christ, in all the promises of life, in all the ways of grace? What doest you think will be your condition, when as you shall be brought as guilty before men and Angels, that all shall look upon you as a cursed fool in Israel? God and his Angels look now upon you as a fool in Israel; when you shall be brought to have all the world look upon you as guilty of such a cursed folly as this, how bitter will it be to you? would you be willing to be in such a condition as this?

Again, would you be willing at the great day to be found guilty of hating the ways of God? I I hope I do not so, (will some say) though I give pleasure to my flesh. Yes, that man or woman that chooses the way of giving content to the flesh, rather then the strict ways of godliness, such a one hates Gods ways, and so hates God himself in hating Gods ways: as, mark that place in Prov. 1. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; How was it proved they hated knowledge? They hated that truth of God, and that which should bring them into the ways of God, and guide them in it; How does that appear? They did not choose the fear of the Lord; if you doest not choose the ways of God, you hatest the ways of God, and so by consequent art a hater of God himself.

Thirdly, would you willingly have God reject all your services, and account them as abominable to him? Thus he threatens against those who choose their own ways, Esay 66:3 He that kills an Ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a dogs neck; he that offers an oblation, as if he offered swines blood; he that burns incense, as if he blessed an idol; and the reason of all is given, They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. There are not such four expres-

sions of Gods rejecting a mans services that he tenders up unto him, in all the Book of God, and this is given as the reason of all, because they have chosen their own ways.

Again, would you not be loath, that in the time of greatest anguish of spirit, and affliction of body, when you shall be crying to God for mercy, that God should take pleasure in your misery, and be so far from relieving of you, as to mock at your destruction? now you can laugh, and be merry, and jocund; but what if it does prove, that this way of mirth and delight to the flesh, shall procure unto you Gods laughing, and Gods mocking at you in your anguish, and greatest distress that ever your soul shall be in? Certainly, if you walkest in the way you art in, this will be your portion: mark that place in Prov. 1:24 what God says, I have called, and you refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear comes, &c.

Be it known unto you, that in whatever sin you blessest yourself, the more you blessest yourself in it, the more cursed shall it be unto you. What comfort will the pleasures of the flesh be to you, when as Christ shall come and say, Was I content to part with the pleasures of Heaven, the bosome of my Father to redeem poor man? and was it not the pleasure of a little meat and drink you could be content to part with for me? Could I be content to part with my blood, and could not you be content to part with your lusts? Was not all my sufferings worthy of enduring those little things you were called to suffer in your life? What, was not all that glory of mine that I revealed in my word, and works, sufficient to show me to be worthy, that you should have given such a testi-

mony of your respect, and honor to me, as to be willing to part with such empty, poor, slight things, and to suffer such poor little things? When God shall bring the Saints before you that did make a better choice, and you shall see them to be in a most glorious blessed condition, and you yourself cast off for ever; how will this confound you another day? Consider of this, you that have made an ill choice, now while it is time; consider of the evil, of the folly, of the danger, of the cursedness of that choice that you have made, in that you have chosen rather to give content to your flesh, then the ways of godliness. Therefore for the following of this in a word of exhortation.

Chapter 14: The drawing mens hearts to a happy choice

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THe Lord then persuade your heart to change your choice; change it, or else you art lost, better you hadst never been born, then that you should not change your choice; O that now you hadst wisdom for eternity! whatever your ways have been, now at last in this your day, learn to know the evil of them, to renounce them, to embrace the ways of godliness, and let it be sufficient, that you have spent so much time in the ways of sin, and giving content to your flesh. O that this may be the day of your new choice, that you may bless God for this day, that God did this day dart in some truths, to turn the streams of your soul another way, to make another, choice! that there might be before you goest out of the presence of God, a secret frame of spirit, surrendring your soul unto God, being convinced of your evil choice, and say, O Lord, how have I lived? What has my course been? the Lord knows my course has been to give content to my flesh, and to live bravely in my life; now God begins to make me afraid, lest I have been in a dangerous false way; the Lord have mercy upon me, what have I done? Is it not time to look about me? I have all this time miscarried in the choice of my soul for my everlasting estate, I have chosen the ways of death all this while.

O that the fear of God might fall upon your hearts this day! and then the promise of God is, Psalm 25:12 Who is the man that fears the Lord, him will he teach in the way that he shall choose. The fear of God will put you into a teachable frame, and the Lord delights to teach such; and surely it is an unspeakable blessing of God, to be taught in the way of our choice. How happy were it, if the Lord would put a reasoning frame into your hearts, that you might begin to ponder, and weigh things, and if spiritual arguments cannot prevail, yet let us see whether they you reasonable Creatures or no; Esay 46:8 Remember, and show yourselves men, bring to mind, O ye transgressors! Come, let us reason together; Is there not infinite reason for Gods ways more then those ways you have walked in? Is not God infinitely worthy of honor and praise from you, other manner of honor and praise then he has had from you, your own consciences being judges? Has not God given you immortal souls? and are they not capable of better things then these things that you have chosen for your chiefest good? Has not God made you for a higher end, then to eat, and drink, and play? What, did the blessed Trinity consult to make a glorious creature, Come, let us make man, according to our own image: and when this great work is done, is he made for no other end then to eat and drink, and commit wickedness? What, is not man to live by rule? indeed no creatures but Angels and men, have a rule to walk by, no creature is capable of knowing a rule but they.

What if so be that now you were to dye, what would comfort you? if God should put an end to your days, and call you to an account for your ways, what account could you give to the great and dreadful God, of your ways and life? would your ways be peace? It may be you thinkest you mayest have your pleasure, and that

which is spoken out of the word by the Ministers, you can avoid, and there are no such things as you hearest; but what if those things that we deliver, concerning the evil of sin, and the danger of that way of sin, should prove true? then wo unto you, if all your comfort depends upon this, you hopest these things that we preach are not true; and is not this all the support of your comfort, which if it fail, you art lost for ever? Certainly, if that glory of God, and that eternal estate we preach so much of be true, it is worth the venturing of the loss of greater pleasures and delights, then any you hast in your seeking after them: make but a supposition, What if it should be so, is it not worth the venturing? You will do so in other things, the very supposition of a great gain, or possibility of great evil, will make you venture much: God does not call you to venture much, they are poor things that you are persuaded to leave, and be not too confident in your way, all that is written in the word may be true, and if it be but possible, yet be so wise as upon a supposition to venture.

O that you would make tryal of the ways of God! If once your hearts were in them, whereby you would be satisfied, as to want none of these pleasures, it would make the moderation of them more pleasant then the excess: You would finde more pleasure in the very act of self-denial, then in all the pleasure of your lives; and if there be so much pleasure in the denying false pleasure, what then is there in the enjoying true? Surely God has pleasure enough for you, if you had a heart to trust him with your pleasure; you shall only lose your sin, not your pleasure. Bernard has a notable expression in a declamation of his De bonis deserendis; If you be willing, says he, to sacrifice your Isaac, which signifies laughter, that is your pleasure, your Isaac, your pleasure shall not dye; it is

the Ram, that is, your stoutness of spirit, yourself-willedness that shall dye; but Isaac shall live, you shall have pleasure still. Do not harbor ill thoughts of God, to think that God is an enemy to your pleasure, and delight, he does not delight to grieve the spirits of men; if you would trust him with your pleasure, you should have pleasure, it may be in this world, but howsoever in the conclusion you shall have pleasure enough, my soul for your. You must trust God with your souls, and eternal conditions, and will you not trust him with your pleasures? Do you think Christ came to dye, and shed his precious blood to bring men into worser conditions then before? O no, certainly Christ did not come to take away any pleasure from his people, but to bring them the pleasures of Heaven, and of earth too, so far as they are needful. Is it not more like you should have pleasure when you art reconciled to God, then when you art an enemy?

We read of Cajus the Emperor, (Agrippa having suffered Imprisonment for wishing him to be Emperor) that afterward when he came to be Emperor, the first thing he did was to prefer Agrippa, and gave him a Chain of Gold, as heavy as the Chain of Iron that was upon him in Prison: And so if any do suffer for God, do you think that God will let him lose by him? Suppose you have a Servant about your business, and he suffers much trouble and opposition, will you not recompence him for that which he suffers for your sake? Do you think that God will let his people sink in their sufferings for him? God forbid we should have any such thoughts of him.

Do not judge of the ways of God by outward appearance, but judge according to the true value and worth of things: Shall we in other things judge according to the value and worth of things, and

only in the ways of God, judge by outward appearance, and not according to the worth? Do but come near to the ways of godliness, you will finde them other things then you imagine: As Peter Martyr had a speech in his Sermon, that was the means of that Marquess Galeacius his conversion: If so be, says he, one should see a company of Musitians, that areplaying and dancing according to their art, a great way off, he would think that they were mad men; but if he come nearer and nearer, and hear the melodious sound of the musique, and observe their art in all they do, he will be of another mind: And so men of the world look upon Gods people afar off, and think them mad men to take such courses; but if they would come nearer, and observe their ways, and see the equity and reason, and observe the excellency and beauty that is in them, they would be of other mindes.

You that have hard thoughts of Gods way, you have looked upon them as things a great way off; come nearer, pry into them a little further, make tryal of them a little, that you may have experience of them, you will think otherwise of them; if it were possible for you to enter upon Gods ways with the same base hearts that you have, Gods ways would indeed be tedious, but if you enter into the ways of God, your hearts will be changed, and you will be other men; and when your hearts are changed, those things that were grievous to you, will be delightful to you. St. Augustine in his Confessions has this notable expression: How sweet was it to me of a sudden, to be without those sweet vanities? And those things which I was afraid to lose, with joy I let go, for you who art the true and only sweetness, didst cast out those from me, and instead of

them didst enter in yourself, who art more delightful then all pleasure, more clear then all light, but it was not thus with me heretofore when I sate in darkness.

Now if you have any conviction at all, tell me, Are you willing to enter into the ways of God? Do you think them worthy of regard, if it were not for trouble and affliction? Then so it stands, if you were not to suffer affliction, you would embrace them; and what an ignoble spirit is this, unbeseeming a Christian, whose spirit should have true Nobility and Magnanimity, and you come off thus basely, If you should never suffer, if have no trouble! Truly God is much beholden to you (as we may speak with holy reverence;) you would have God choose you, notwithstanding all your sins that are grievous to him: Why will not you choose God and his ways, notwithstanding the afflictions and sufferings that are grievous to you? Do you think the sufferings you are like to meet withal in Gods ways, are more grievous to you, then your sins are to him? Yet notwithstanding your sins, he chooses you; Why notwithstanding the sufferings you may meet with, should not you choose him? Suppose Christ had stood upon these terms, and said, It is true, I see poor wretched sinful man ready to perish, and must lie under the wrath of an infinite God, and it pities me to see his misery, and I could be content to redeem him, but I must suffer so much, be in the form of a servant, and be despised, and persecuted, and suffer a cursed death, and therefore let him rather perish: If Christ had stood at this, what had become of you? Yet you stand at this. Gods ways are good, my ways are evil; I could be content to embrace Gods ways; but I must suffer: If Christ did not make a stand at this, when he saw your misery, but was content to redeem you, and brake

through all sufferings; Why should not you be content to embrace him in his ways through all sufferings? Why should not your hearts be convinced by that which has so much reason in it?

It is reported of one Marinus a Soldier, when it fell to him to be preferred in some place, he was like to lose it because he was a Christian, and he began to stagger, and to have thoughts rather to leave off Religion, then to lose his place: Then came one Theodistus, and brings him into the Temple, and laid by him the Sword and the Testament, the Gospel, and bade him take his choice: Here is the Sword, which is an emblem of your place, and here is the Gospel, choose the one, you must have but one: Then his heart gave in, and so left the Sword, and chose the Gospel. The wisdom of God this day has stood, and still stands before you, pleading with you, crying to you to come in and embrace her, to make a happy choice for your soul; folly likewise has her pleadings, and persuasions to draw you to the lusts of the flesh, both make their offers unto you; as they say of Hercules when he was yong, he saw vertue and vice in the likeness of two Virgins wooing him, vice like a painted Harlot, and vertue like a sober chaste Virgin, both presenting themselves with wooing offers unto him.

It is very observable that we finde, Prov. 9. concerning wisdom and the foolish woman, both pleading to draw the hearts of men to them, and they begin in the same manner, they both make offers to draw the heart, ver. 4. Who so is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she says to him; and verse 16. the foolish woman uses the same words to draw after her: and as wisdom is upon the high places of the City, ver. 3. so is folly, ver. 15. yet wisdom is above the foolish woman, for the Text says of wisdom, she is upon the highest places, and of the foolish woman,

it is only said, she is in the high places: And observe further, Wisdom calls to eat her bread, and drink her wine, ver. 5. and the foolish woman makes her offer, her delights are sweet, she says; but they are but sweet waters, and that stoln too; and her bread, she says, is pleasant; but it is secret, such as she is even ashamed of her self: In the choice that wisdom presents, and that which folly presents, you have life and death set before you; as Moses therefore said to the people, so I to you, I have set before you this day life and death: Now what answer will you give to God? Will you go on in the ways of the pleasure of the flesh? Are your hearts so bold and venturous, that you dare venture to go on in these ways? Wo unto you for the cursed hardness of your hearts. Were it indeed that you never heard the ways of God opened to you, it were another matter, but in that you have, and yet you go on in your choice after this Sermon, God may say, Be it unto you as you hast chosen; God may set to his seal, you hast chosen vanities, and a lye, and base pleasures; and vanities, and a lye, and base pleasures to your flesh you shall have.

Therefore that you mayest be delivered from this seal this night, O consider what a mercy of God it is that you hast yet time to make your choice. How many has God cast off? And now it is too late to choose; God has determined the business; O that yet there should be time! O that this would move your hearts! We are fain thus to labor, and strive with mens spirits to take them off from vain pleasures, to urge the strength of all arguments we can, with all our might; were it that mens hearts were not very sensual, and hardened in their sensuality, it would not be needful thus to strive, the very propounding some one argument, might be sufficient to prevail. It was a speech of Gregory Nyssen, who lived al-

most thirteen hundred years ago; He that does but hear of Hell, is without any further labor or study taken off from sinful pleasures: Mens hearts are grown harder since.

But what if I should come in now? I who have given so much pleasure to the flesh, would God accept of me, and regard me?

Be it known unto you, you that hast given yourself liberty in injoying the pleasures of the flesh to the utmost, you that hast been most wretched, if you hast a heart to come in this day, and turn your choice, God is yet ready to embrace you; we have commission to offer grace and mercy to you upon your recalling yourself, yea, we have a promise, you shall have abundance of mercy, if you have a heart to come in. Prov. 1. 22, 23. How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. If any of you have gone so far when we have spoken against the pleasures of the flesh, and for the ways of godliness, you have scorned the word of the Lord; if you have been scorners, and contemners, yet turn and make your choice better. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit toyou; When God pours forth his Spirit, he pours forth his grace, and mercy and goodness; you see the offer of God, if you have hearts yet to make choice of his ways.

And consider, the longer you have stayed in the satisfying yourselves in the pleasures of the flesh, the more unfit will you be to suffer hard things for God. O give in your answer, and say, The Lord forbid I should go on in my former ways; I see other things I have to regard, peace with God, pardon of sin that I have to look after, let God reveal to me what his good will and pleasure is, and though I should never enjoy good day in the flesh, yet I give myself

up to that way of God. O that there might come this voice up to Heaven this night, that your souls may be blessed for ever in this days choice! And if God do begin to stir your hearts, now take the opportunity, choose the things that please him, and take hold of the Covenant; if you be convinced of the good ways of God, now close with them, cleave to them, let your hearts fasten, take such fast hold of the Covenant, as you may never let it go. Observe how these two are joined together, Isaiah 56:4 Choose the things that please me, and take hold of my Covenant; Take hold now, for it is your life.

Chapter 15: The true pleasantness of all the ways of godliness

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NOw that you may be further convinced that in the choice of the ways of godliness, you shall not lose, but change pleasures; you shall finde pleasures sweet and satisfying, of a higher nature in them then ever before your souls were acquainted with; consider what Solomon says of the ways of wisdom; Solomon, who had experience of all other pleasures whatever, yet of them he says, Proverbs 3:17 Her ways are ways of pleasantness.

That the yoke of Christ was an easie yoke, and the ways of godliness had ease in them, we have spoken largely: As they have ease, so they have pleasantness, all the ways of godliness are pleasant, to that at this time. Ordinarily we cannot expect any dependence in these Proverbs, but yet in this you have, there is a dependence of these words upon the 13. ver. and so from thence there is a connextion of the several Proverbs.

In the 13. ver. you have the commendation of wisdom, and the blessed estate of that man set out, that findes wisdom: Wisdom is commended by many arguments, and amongst the rest, not to spend time about the other, this is one, because all her ways are

ways of pleasantness; and therefore happy is the man that findes it out. All her ways, that is, the ways of wisdom, the ways of godliness, they are ways of pleasantness, not only shall be, but they are so, they are ways in themselves pleasant, and lead to pleasantness: They are ways not only pleasant, but ways of pleasantness in the abstract. Therefore the point that is to be the subject of this exercise, is, as you have it plain in the words:

That the ways of godliness are delightful ways, full of pleasure, yea, they are pleasantness it self.

There is nothing that mans heart is set more upon then pleasure; and nothing hinders a man from the ways of godliness, more then fear he shall not finde pleasure in them: Therefore it is an argument of great concernment for us, throughly to be convinced that there is pleasantness in the ways of godliness, they are ways of pleasure; and I hope I speak unto such, whose hearts close with the point as soon as it is named, who can say, Yes, and we finde it so. The ways of wisdom are either the ways of Gods Ordinances, or the ways of exercise of grace, or ways of obedience; all these are the ways of pleasantness. How amiable are your Tabernacles, O Lord! they shall be satisfied with the fatness of your house, the beauty of holiness; And the like is said of the Ordinances of God: The exercises of the graces of the Spirit, they are the ways of wisdom, and are full of delight and pleasure: Cant. 7:13 The Mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved: In the Church of God the exercise of the graces of Gods Spirit among them is pleasant. The duties of obedience are pleasant: O how I love your Law! Your Law is my delight: and a hundred such expressions in Scripture.

The Scripture sets out the pleasantness of Gods ways, by all manner of pleasure that men finde in the world, the pleasure of the eye, of the taste, of the smell, of the ear. The way of the righteous is as a light that shines more and more, to a perfect day: Now it is a good and pleasant thing for an eye to behold the light; no such beauty as in the ways of godliness. The savour of oyntments and spices, in Scripture sets out the fragrancy of Gods Spirit. The melody of the ear, that is also for the setting out of the joy of Gods people; Blessed are they that hear the joyful sound. The taste, O come and taste how sweet the Lord is. And the delight that Gods people have with the Lord in his ways, is set out by the marriage delight, that is the greatest natural delight amongst the children of men.

But in which does the pleasantness of the ways of wisdom appear? what kinde of pleasantness is it?

I shall answer some quaeres about this, and make some application of it, and so proceed. Then a Master is like to prevail with his Scholars, and make them good Scholars, when he can make them love their Books: and it is the duty of Ministers, not only to convince people, that they ought to walk in the ways of godliness, but to make them love them; that we may make you in love with the ways of godliness, we shall show what pleasantness is in them: Surely they must needs be ways of pleasantness,

First, because they are the ways of wisdom: if they were but only rational ways, such ways as were suitable to the principles of right reason, there were abundance of delight in them: certainly, there are rational delights, as well as sensual delights; he is not worthy of the name of a man, that does not think there are rational delights, as well as sensual: Many of the Heathens that knew what

rational delights were, those things suitable to the rules of right Reason, scorned sensual delights, as inferior to them; give me that man that has but the rules of right Reason, and I dare undertake to convince him, that all the ways of godliness are suitable to those principles, though some be above them: But being ways of wisdom there is more pleasure, because they are not only suitable to the rules of right Reason, but are able to elevate Reason: Wisdom does make the face of a man to shine, and puts a lustre upon a man, and puts a glory upon any thing; the beauty and glory that wisdom has, is put upon the ways of godliness, therefore pleasant.

Secondly, they are pleasantness, because in them the soul of a man is in the true and right temper and frame of it: Now the delight of nature, it is the right temper and frame, suitable to the principles of nature in every thing; And therefore, that Text that you all know, where it is said, A good Conscicience is a continual feast; the word is in the Original, a good heart, a merry heart, and some translate it, a heart that is in a right temper, that is, in such a frame and temper, that is the true right temper of the heart, that affords a continual feast to any. That place in James 5. If any man be merry, let him sing; the word is, if any ones mind be right, if his mind be in the right temper, then let him sing: For there is no true mirth, no true joy, but that which arises from the true temper of the spirit. Sense has no delight, but when the sensitive part is in the right temper; and so it is in the soul: Now the soul in the ways of godliness is in the right temper, these put the soul into the right frame, and so comes to be pleasant.

Thirdly, they are pleasantness, because they are the highest actions of the highest faculties, elevated by the highest principles, about the highest objects, and therefore must needs afford a great

deal of pleasure. This is a special consideration of the pleasantness of the ways of godliness, and will let much of the excellency of them into your hearts. What is the highest pleasure of sense, but the highest exercise of the sensitive faculty about such an object as is suitable to sense? as there is a great deal of pleasure in meat and drink: Whence comes this? It comes from that exercise of the Salinal humor in the tongue and frame of the mouth, meeting with another humor in meat and drink, suitable to it, that is all the pleasure in the taste, which is the special pleasure that is sought for in the world.

Now I beseech you consider, if there be pleasure in joining two such mean things together, the exercise of the humor in the spittle, meeting with a humor in meat and drink suitable to it; what pleasure must needs be in the exercising, and acting of a creature, that is of the highest nature that ever God made creature; and these creatures raised with the highest principles for the kinde that any creature is capable of, and exercised about the highest objects that it is possible for a creature to be exercised about for the kinde, God, and Christ, and Eternity? if we see pleasure in the other that is so low, and not in this, certainly we must pull out our eyes, and willingly besot our own hearts, if we yield not that the pleasure herein is abundantly more, and more glorious. So the pleasure of the eye, what is it but the visive spirit that is in the eye? meeting with color abroad, it has pleasure therein: If the visive spirit in the eye, which is a poor mean thing that brute beasts have as well as ourselves, meeting with such a poor thing as the color is, becomes such delight; what delight must be in exercising the highest faculties, about the highest objects? And so the smell is nothing but that humor in the nostrils, meeting with another humor that is without:

And so of the ear, and of the touch; we might instance, there the delight comes from nothing but the exercise of the faculty about mean things; but if godliness exercises such glorious faculties, so elevated about such glorious objects, there must needs be a great deal of pleasantness.

Fourthly, the ways of wisdom must needs be ways of pleasantness, because they are the life of God himself, the soul in the ways of wisdom does live the very life of God: The Scripture speaks of the Life of Grace, it is the life of God: Now all pleasure and comfort, is according to the life that a creature lives; comfort is nothing else but the feeding of such a kinde of life: Sensitive comforts is the feeding of that life, rational comforts the feeding of that life; and the life of God being a higher life then any other, then sense or reason, that must have its comforts too, and there must be delight and pleasure for the filling up of this; now the work of Grace in the hearts of Gods people, & in their lives, it is the life of God, and therefore there must needs be a great deal of comfort in the exercise of such a life.

Fifthly, much pleasantness there is in the ways of godliness, because in them the people of God do communicate unto God their souls, in all that they have or do, by a letting out of the soul into God that is the fountain of all good: Now there is an infinite delight in this. All the delight that there is in God, or in the creature, is in communication. In God himself: because God would have delight in himself, therefore he would have that that he might communicate himself to; and because he would have infinite delight, according to his infinite nature, therefore he would have that, that he might infinitely communicate himself unto; and therefore the Son

of God, the second Person of the Trinity, is the infinite delight of his Father, because the Father does infinitely communicate himself unto him.

And now because God would have further delight, though there be nothing that he can infinitely communicate himself unto but his Son, yet that he may have such delight as his creature may understand, he makes a world; and the special end why God made the world, is, that he might have creatures to communicate himself unto, in his wisdom, and goodness and glory; and therefore those creatures that are most capable of Gods communicating himself unto, are called Gods delight; God rejoyces in the habitable parts of the earth, because there are creatures that he can communicate himself unto, and especially his pleasure is among his people, because there are creatures that are capable of communicating of himself: Thus you see that the delight of Gods is communicating himself.

And so the delight of the creature is in communicating themselves; and therefore of all natural delights, that of marriage is the most, because there is the greatest communication of one creature to another: Now when as Gods delight is in communication, and our delight is in natural communication, then much more when we come to communicate ourselves spiritually to God. There is a delight in the life of friendship, because one friend communicates himself to another, but in marriage greater, because that communication is greater; and according to the degrees of communication, the degrees of delight are; then the delight in the ways of God must be the greatest, because there is the greatest, and highest, and most glorious communication of a creature, it communicates it self, and lets out it self fully into the infinite Ocean of all good: If

there were nothing but a letting out of it self into an ordinary good, it were delight, but to let out it self into an infinite Ocean of all delight, this is pleasure, and this is a mystery; this is a ground why no hypocrite has the delight of the ways of godliness, because he does not communicate himself fully unto God; but when the heart comes off fully to communicate it self to God, there is infinite delight in them: The ways of godliness surely are ways of pleasure, if this be in them, as it is.

Sixthly, the ways of godliness are ways of pleasure, because in them the soul has the presence of God, and walks with God, walks up and down in the light of his face: There is a blessed shine of Gods countenance, and of his love upon the soul, and influences of his graces unto the soul in those ways; as the soul has delight in the communication of its self unto God, so they are ways of pleasantness, because in them there is a communication of God unto the soul: That place in Psalm 89:19 has a notable expression of the sweetness of the ways of godliness, and the delight that Gods people have in those ways: Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance. God is in them, and lets out himself unto them; now the quintessence of all good put together, is in every beam of Gods face, and therefore when God shall let out himself, and be thus the portion of a soul, it must needs be a great deal of delight.

Seventhly, ways of godliness are the ways of pleasure, because the principles of them all is love: whatever comes from love, has much delight and pleasure, and the principle of every way of God is love: God would have nothing from us but out of love, and that may carry us unto love of God himself, and that love by which the heart is carried unto God, is the chariot of love: There is a sweet

expression for this that we have in Cant. 3. 9, 10. the estate of the Church is set out by Solomons making himself a Chariot of the wood of Lebanon: He made the Pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love. A strange expression, that the midst of Chariot should be paved with love: the chariot whereby Christ does carry his people up and down in the world, and bring them to himself, is such a Chariot, as the midst thereof is paved with love. At the 7. ver. he speaks of the bed of Solomon, and here of his Chariot; Divines interpret these two places, his bed to set out the rest and glory that the Saints shall have with Christ eternally; and the Chariot of Solomon, that is, those ways in which Christ carries his people up and down in the world to himself, and the midst thereof is love; there must needs then be delight in those ways.

Eighthly, the ways of God are full of pleasantness, because they are such as are delightful to God: Now they must be pleasant, when they are such as God takes delight in, they are such as the Church knows Christ takes much delight in. What admirable expressions has that Book of the Canticles, of Gods delight in the graces of his people, and in the ways of godliness? Now there is no man loves a friend, but accounts every good thing that his friend loves, to be a double good: Now that which God himself accounts pleasantness, and is his delight, must needs be the delight and pleasure of a gracious heart, because there is so much nearness between God and a gracious heart.

Ninthly, Yet further, there is abundance of pleasantness in the ways of God, in regard of the many encouraging delights that God has provided for his people while they do live here, and walk with him in these ways, to make their lives to be sweet unto them; God

provides his Paradise here for them, to encourage them, they walk in the garden of God; God has his Eden, his garden, The Covenant of Grace, and the glorious things prepared, are as the Eden and Paradise of God, in which the souls of his people walk, in which they have delightful hills and dales. In the Scripture there are the high mysteries of godliness, and the plain and easie truths of Religion, as valleys and hills to delight them in their way. They have the sweet springs and rivers of Ordinances, that are appointed as sweet streams to refresh them; and the blessed promises, delightful trees to behold, The tree of life, Christ himself, and a feast of fat things in the Ordinances, wine upon the lees, making melody in their hearts, they go no further for that, and therefore sure their ways are ways of pleasantness, there being so many encouraging delightful things that God has provided for them in their way.

Tenthly, Further, ways of pleasantness they are, because that Religion does enable them to draw out more delight and pleasure from the creature it self, then any other possibly can do; there is no principle that can enable to draw out delights from the creature, as godliness does enable a man to do; for take any other carnal natural man, he can draw out nothing from the creature but that which is carnal and natural; but Gods people have a principle to draw out more, and we are to know this, that every creature has a natural delight in it, and there is somewhat more in it to a gracious heart, then a natural delight; as it was with Manna, when Manna fell, there was a dew that fell together with it; and so with our meat, and drink, and clothes, and estate, and delights in the world; it is true, they are Manna, and we feed upon them as the carnal Israelites fed upon Manna, but we do not see the dew; a carnal

heart is not acquainted with the dew that fals with the Manna, but those that are godly and religious, and walk in these ways of wisdom, they have a principle to discern and relish the dew that falls with this Manna, a secret blessing of God that their souls are enabled to close with in the enjoyment of the creature; in meat, and drink, and clothes, and recreations, they finde a secret influence of GOD together with them.

Take a flower, if a flie come to it, it cannot get out that good which a Bee can do: If we take a flower, we can get out the smell, but there is a honey dew, and if we had that principle a Bee has, we might get out more then the smell: So carnal people have many sweet flowers, which are pleasant to the smell, but there is a honey dew that only the godly can get out: So that he has not only the use of all lawful pleasure to the full that any other has, but he can go and take them as his own, as those that are purchased by the blood of Christ, as those his Father allows him: If he see the glory of the creature, and delights in it, he looks upon it as Gods own delight that he gives him, and looks upon all creatures as his Fathers; he sees no ground, but he says it is his Fathers ground; and he sees springs and rivers, and delights in the creatures as they are his Fathers.

A wicked man that takes delight in the creature, he travels and walks up and down, and sees other creatures; but it is as if a man were walking in the Orchard and Garden of his deadly enemy: Suppose a man have a deadly enemy, and he has a pleasant garden, that has many fair walks and trees in his garden, and he walks in it as others do; But where am I now? I am walking here, and compassed in the garden that is mine enemies, and what if he meet me here? it may cost me my life: And so it is with all carnal men in

the world; but the people of God enjoy the outward delights of the world, and see the sweet walks, and delightful pleasures that are here, and it is their Fathers garden, the garden of him that is their God, that they have an interest in, so that they have more delight in the creatures then any else.

Yea not only so, godliness does not only enable to draw more delight from the creatures then others, but raises all natural pleasures on high, and makes them spiritual, it puts a spiritual excellency upon that which is natural, it does not rest in having content to the eye, or ear, or taste in any natural delight, but spiritualizeth all; there is that vertue in godliness to spiritualize all natural things, to raise the excellency of them.

Yea not only so, but in the last place there is that vertue in godliness, to turn all evil into good, if it meet with any thing that has bitterness; godliness is like that wood, that made the bitter waters sweet, it has that excellency to turn evil, and make it not only profitable, but delightful. So that all these being put together concerning the commendation of the ways of wisdom, we must either put out our eyes, or acknowledge we do not know what the ways of wisdom mean, if we do not subscribe to this truth, that her ways are ways of pleasantness: Ways of pleasantness they are, and this pleasantness that is in her ways has abundance of excellencies in it. Very many I thought to have spoken of, and enlarged, take only the very mention of them, (because I must not be too long) and then we will answer to some quaeres, and apply all, and so conclude. For the excellent properties of this pleasantness, it is that which is the sweetest soul-satisfying pleasantness, the very rule it self is sweet, sweeter then honey; oh how sweet is the souls acting by it! it has the very quintessence of all other delights extracted in

it, it is the most solid, such as has not vanity and froth in it, as other delights have; it is such a delight as ennobles the soul, it spiritualizeth the heart, it is immixt, not dangerous as others are; it is abiding, not vanishing, it is continually virid and fresh; though there is a fulness in it, yet it grows not to satiety by use, but grows more and more sweet, for it raises and enlargeth the faculty; it is Heavenly, it is divine, it is independent in regard of the creature, there needs no sharking out to the creature for the upholding it, all other delights depend on this; there is no pleasure had but in the ways of godliness: Una guttula malae conscientiae totum marae mundani gaudii absorbet: One drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole Sea of worldly joy, says Luther; but one drop of this delight is enough to sweeten all sorrows; one drop of gall will imbitter much sweet, but one drop of sweet cannot sweeten much gall; but here it is otherwise, one drop of this sweet sweetens all bitterness of afflictions, but all the bitter of afflictions cannot imbitter one drop of this delight. Yea this pleasure is the rule of all pleasure, and the end of all pleasure, whatever pleasure is not regulated by this, and subordinate to this, is evil.

But how are the ways of wisdom the ways of pleasantness? It appears otherwise, for the ways of godliness do abridge men of abundance of pleasure and delight in many things in the world; What is so great an enemy to the pleasures of men and women as Religion? It causes them to be cut short of abundance of delightful things that others rejoice in.

To that I answer, first, Suppose it were so: you heard in the commendation, that the pleasantness of the ways of godliness was exceeding great, that it has that excellency in it, to make up whatever pleasure it wants: Though it should cut you short of abun-

dance of pleasure, if it shall put a principle that shall enable you to stand in no need of that pleasure it cuts you short of, what have you lost? As suppose a man that is weak, and has little blood or spirits in him, and is chill, and cold, and puts on many clothes to keep himself warm; if these clothes should be al taken away, save only his inward garment, if there could be put into him spirits, and blood and marrow, and that which should make him not to be sensible of the want of his clothes, it is a great deal better; What man that is weak and sickly, and is fain to have abundance of clothes to keep him warm, would not be willing to part with his clothes, if he might have spirits and blood put into him, not to feel the want of those clothes? So, why is it that your hearts are set upon the delight of the creature? because you want a principle within to satisfy your souls withal, and therefore you are fain to seek the cloathing of the creature, and to keep yourselves warm with the cloathing of the creature; but if Religion take away those things, and give you a principle not to feel the want of them, but have them made up another way and better, you have no cause to complain of the want of pleasantness.

Secondly, I answer, that godliness abridges us of no lawful pleasure; if it abridges of any, it is delightfulness to want those delights that godliness abridges us of: What, hast you delight in that which is sinful? if it be not sinful, Religion does not abridge you of it, only such delights in which you dishonorest God, and provokest him against you.

But secondly, How are the ways of God ways of pleasantness, when they require abundance of humiliation, trouble for sin; and is not that bitter and grievous?

To that I answer, First, there is more sweetness in that which you callest bitterness, then in all the delightfulness of the world besides: those waters Christ does turn into wine. And to convince you that these are not bitter waters, but that the tears of repentance and humiliation, are sweet refreshing waters of life; consider from what fountain they come.

First, the work of humiliation if it be right, the principle of it is the melting work of the Gospel in the soul, the sweetness of the goodness, and mercy of God in Jesus Christ melting the heart, and causing it to dissolve, and fall down under the hand of God; certainly that which comes from such a sweet principle, cannot have much bitterness in it.

Secondly, the soul in the work of humiliation, melting before the Lord, eases it self in that melting of abundance of sin; and much sweetness there must needs be in those tears that ease the soul of, and deliver the soul from much sin.

Thirdly, in the work of humiliation there is much delight, because the soul has much delight in looking back to that sorrow it has had; and if godliness makes mourning to be delightful, what does it make rejoicing to be?

But if it be said in the third place, But there are many hardthings that Gods people do meet withal in the ways of godliness, and the ways of godliness put them upon such things as cause them to meet with sore temptations and trials here in the world; how then can the ways of godliness be so pleasant?

To that I answer, Here is a mighty commendation to the pleasantness of the ways of Religion, notwithstanding the hardest, and sorest things a godly heart meets with; there is that delight in the

ways of godliness, as upholds the heart under all, and carries the heart sweetly on. What commendation was it to the grace in the hearts of the Martyrs, that did uphold their hearts, and carry their hearts sweetly in the enduring of such hard things?

Secondly, these being hard to flesh and blood, hinder not the pleasure of a gracious heart; it is the highest improvement of all our estates that can be, the highest testimony of giving your respect to God, whereby the soul enjoys most of God all times: The Spirit of God and glory resteth upon the soul while it is enduring such things. And how opposite is your heart, and what difference between Christs heart and your? Christ bids you leap for joy, when you meet with such things, and you think they take away all joy.

But we see it in experience contrary; when people come into the ways of godliness, they do not finde that delight and joy you speak of, their spirits are heavy, and lumpish, and sad.

For answer to that, It may be it is but seriousness, and you thinkest it is sadness.

Secondly, it may be they are not in their element, and therefore they do not express chearfulness: If the fish be upon the earth, it cannot take delight; the bird does not sing when it is upon the ground, but when it is got up to the air: Those that you say are melancholly and lumpish, put them to religious and gracious exercises, and get up their hearts to God, and they will be merry.

Thirdly, it may be it is your company makes them so, because they see so much dishonor to God in your company, let them be among their own company, and they know how to be joyful.

Fourthly, it is not because of Religion, but because they are no more religious, because they finde so much want of godliness in their hearts.

Fifthly, it is not because they have so much cause of sorrow as you, but they come to see more then you; not because their hearts are not so pleasant as yours, but because God has discovered the danger of their condition more to them, and the things that concern their souls and eternal estates, such things as if you didst but see, would sink your heart into dismal, bottomless sorrow and desperation. You thinkest much to see them so sad as they are, If you didst but see that they see, you would sink down into the gulf of desperation among the damned spirits.

It is a mighty argument, they have some mighty work of God to uphold them, and that grace comes from a mighty principle, that they have some chearfulness, notwithstanding they see such things, as if one that were meerly natural should see them, he would sink down into hell, and yet they can hope in God; and sometimes, notwithstanding all unbelief, do rejoice in God. Alas, your pleasantness and delight is such, as every little toy is enough to damp; if you beest crossed in the least thing in the creature, you art damped: But what if God should show you all his terrors, the infinite evil of sin, and the infinite danger you art in, in regard of your eternal estate, that would damp you indeed; and therefore acknowledge that that joy that the godly have, considering what they see, is exceeding strong, that upholds them as it does.

Sixthly, their joy is a secret inward thing, which strangers shall not intermeddle withal, you hast no skill in it. What was it for Nebuchadnezzar, to say, No Nobleman had such pleasure as he,

when he was among the beasts; you hast no principle to judge of it, and therefore art no meet Judge.

For Application.

Hence we see one special and great reason, why Gods people are taken off so much from carnal pleasure as they are; they have met with better; and the sweet of the world is not so much to them, because they have met with that which is abundantly more sweet. It is the sweet savor of Christs precious oyntment, that draws the hearts of the Saints after him, that makes them cry out, Draw us, and we will run after you, Cant. 1. 3, 4. But the savor of base pleasures draws vile hearts after them:

—Trahit sua quemque voluptas.

The light of the Sun darkens the light of the candle, and puts out the light of the fire; The light that Gods servants do meet with in the ways of God, do darken all, and take away the lustre of all carnal delight; and this is the reason that Satan does not go that way to work, to tempt a gracious heart with sensual pleasures, because he is so far above them, and therefore he is fain to tempt them with spiritual pride, and lusts of a higher nature: It were a wonderful dishonour for any that profess godliness, to have their hearts taken with any pleasures of the flesh, but only in order to better pleasures that are to be enjoyed in the ways of godliness, in the ways of wisdom.

In the second place; What infinite cause have we to bless the Name of God that gives us such pleasant ways unto glory? Though his ways were never so full of torment, we had cause to bless God; but for to pave our way to Heaven with such delights, and to afford unto us such soul-satisfying contents, here while we live in this our

poor pilgrimage, this is praise-worthy: If we were to ascend to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, we were to praise God; but this is the Chariot of Solomon, the midst whereof is paved with love, as you heard; How are we to bless God for this?

Thirdly, if it be so, here is an aggravation of the wickedness of those that shall take delight in sinful pleasures: God sees it is impossible for any of his creatures, but they must seek for pleasures some way, and that God might take our hearts to himself, he has provided ways in which we may have pleasure, and an infinite aggravation it will be to your wickedness, to seek for pleasure in the ways of sin, in dishonoring God, when you mayest have pleasure in honoring of God: Consider this, and let your soul upbraid it self for abominable wickedness and ingratitude: There are ways of delight in which God may be honored, and my soul satisfied; there are other ways that have delight, but such ways as God will be dishonored in them, and my soul endangered. Now when as God does give me a cup full of all delicacy to satisfy my thirst with, for me to take a cup of poyson to satisfy my thirst with, this is folly, and this is abominable wickedness of mens hearts. God sets his cup of salvation, and tenders it in his ways to satisfy your souls withal, and the Devil comes with his cup of poyson, and do but speak of delight, and when you are athirst, you rather take the cup of poyson, then the cup of Salvation: the more delight there is in Gods ways, the more abominable is your wickedness to forsake them.

Fourthly, hence the great scandal of the ways of godliness, that the world stumbles at, is taken away, they call them dumpish ways: The Saints of God never knew the mind of God if this be so. The world deals with the ways of God in this case, as they did with the Christians in the Primitive times; they used to put Christians into

Bears and Dogs skins, or ugly creatures, and then bait them; and so the men of the world put Religion into ugly conceits, and then speak against them: and truly that they speak against, is only their own conceits, and not any thing in themselves; they are lovely and excellent, and glorious, only they appear to be sad and evil, by the conceits you hast put upon them.

In the fifth place, by that which has been said, let all be drawn to the love of the ways of godliness. I have often hinted upon such an argument as this, and therefore will pass lightly over it. Fear not pleasure, trust God with it, you shall finde enough. would you never be sad? live well, says Bernard: Tell me, would you embrace the ways of Religion, if you were sure of pleasure? I call Heaven and Earth to record this day, that which I have spoken of the ways of wisdom are truths of God, they are not notions, not conceits, but certain realities. God has engaged himself to make this good, and abundantly more; Oh come and taste how sweet the Lord is, do not stand aloof off; they may seem to be unpleasant ways a great way off, but when you come near, you will see delight. Therefore all you that have been acquainted with the ways of wisdom, manifest this, that God has brought you into blessed paths, that these things are true: Religion does mightily suffer by the Professors of it, when those that look on, see no such things manifested: It is our duty to rejoice in the Lord, and to walk in the ways of wisdom, as it may appear they are ways of pleasantness, to carry ous selves delightfully in these delightful ways. Delightfulness in the ways of godliness puts a beauty upon them; It is an excellent similitude that Chrysostom has to express this, As, says he, a beautiful face at all times is pleasing to the eye, but then especially when there is joy manifested in the countenance: joy in the face puts a new beauty,

and makes that which before was beautiful, to be exceeding beautiful, it puts a lustre upon beauty; so, though the ways of Religion be in themselves beautiful, yet when there is spiritual joy added, they appear then beautiful with a double beauty. We have a sweet promise, Isa. 65:18 Oh that we could see it fulfilled! I will create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; a joy even in the abstract, not only joyful, but a joy, and God will create this, it must be Gods work; and though to the eye of flesh and blood there be no matter of joy, yet God will create her people a joy. You know what charges the Prophet lays upon this; what a comely thing it is, and see that in any case you rejoice. Only take heed you do not mistake in pleasantness; many that are godly may be pleasant in their way upon that ground, because Christians must be pleasant, but do not mistake natural pleasantness for spiritual pleasantness.

How shall we know the difference between natural pleasantness in a Christian, and spiritual pleasantness.

There may be a great many of temporal pleasures that God gives forth to Christians in its place; but you must rise higher then that, and put another manner of lustre upon the ways of Religion then natural pleasantness.

First, if it be a spiritual pleasantness, it will be serious, such as becomes Christian gravity; Yea, not only seriousness and gravity is to be mixed with pleasantness; but if it be spiritual pleasantness,

Secondly, it is such as can stand with fear, and the work of repentance and humiliation; these do not hinder a spiritual pleasantness, though it hinders that which is natural: You know the Scripture that says, Rejoyce with trembling; and Blessed is the man that fears the Lord, and greatly delights in his

Commandments: That is a spiritual pleasantness, which has a gracious mixture of seriousness and other graces of Gods Spirit with it.

Thirdly, Again, if it be a gracious pleasantness, it is a delight in all the ways of wisdom; many can delight in some ways of wisdom, the stony ground received some truths with joy, but others they cannot close with; but when the pleasantness is spiritual, there is rejoicing in all.

Fourthly, Again, if the pleasantness be spiritual, it is our strength, it carries on the soul in the ways of God more fully, it is oyl that causes the wheels of your soul to go on more freely in the ways of Religion. I appeal to you, Does your pleasantness carry you on more sweetly in the ways of Religion? You hast been merry in company, but does this carry you on more fully in the ways of God? If you have had pleasure in natural things, and when you come to spiritual things, your hearts are dead, certainly you went beyond your bounds.

Fifthly, Again, if it be spiritual pleasantness, it will bear up the heart in the want of all outward pleasantness, and though all outward content be taken away. Habbak. 3. 17, 18. Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines, the labor of the Olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. When all is dark abroad in the world, the soul does rejoice in God alone: A soul that has but natural pleasantness of spirit, is all amort and down when any affliction befals him. You that have the most delightful spirits, when you have friends, and all that you like, you are jocund and merry, but when affliction comes, how

quickly are your spirits down? and how are you vext and troubled? whereas if there were this spring of pleasantness in the heatt, it would bear up the heart joyful in affliction; though servants and friends should cross, this delightfulness of spirit within would carry the heart on chearfully: But those that are delightful when they are well pleased, yet every little thing that crosses them, makes them dumpish. This is another argument, it is not spiritual pleasantness their hearts are filled with, it is not from the delight they have found in the ways of God that makes them so merry. This by way of Caution.

But if we be sure that our pleasantness is spiritual, let us expatiate ourselves to the utmost: It is a work of grace to moderate all carnal pleasures, and to keep them down; but it is the special work of grace to expatiate the soul to the utmost in all spiritual pleasure: Therefore if God has given you this spring of delight and pleasure, expatiate it to the glory and praise of God. Blessed is the man that greatly delights in the ways of Gods Commandments: And if God takes pleasure in you, how much more should you take pleasure in him! God gives out his pleasure to be joined to our pleasantness, and if we should not carry on the ways of Religion pleasantly, it will be a dishonor to God, and a disgrace to ourselves, and we cannot expect that acceptance from God of what we do, as otherwise we might; for as God loves a chearful Giver, so a chearful Server.

How shall we carry on the work of God pleasantly?

First, be sure to keep the heart right within, be sure to keep all at peace within your soul; you know according to the temper within, so there is the relishing of things without; He that has peace within, can easily go through the duties that are required without with joy.

Further, exercise faith in the work and office of the holy Ghost, that office that the holy Ghost is designed unto by the Father and the Son, to be the Comforter of his people, to bring joy and comfort to them; look upon the holy Ghost, as designed by the Father and the Son to bring joy and delight to the souls of his people. What an infinite difference there is between the comforts of a carnal heart, and the comforts of the godly? The one come from a little meat and drink, and the other come from the exercise of faith about the office of the holy Ghost that is designed to this work.

Thirdly, in all that you doest, be sure to be upright: Though you beest able to do but a little in any way of God, if you beest upright, God accepts of it, and and you will finde comfort: You sayest your duties are mean; it may be so, but if you beest upright, you mayest have comfort, it becomes the upright to be joyful; whereas the most glorious performances, if they be not in uprightness, are but abominable.

Again, sweeten all your duties by spiritual meditation; a Christian that treasures up spiritual meditation, and every duty that he performs brings it in by meditation, and has a great many meditations to rowl his duty up and down; in this is delight: To go to duty, and to have a barren heart to act, there is no delight; but to go to a duty, and to exercise spiritual meditation, this is sweet.

Again, labor to principle your heart aright in the ways of godliness, to understand what they are; if you understoodest what they are, they would be delightful; and the reason why many do not go on delightfully is, because they do not understand what is in the ways of God to cause delight.

You will say, What is there in the ways of God, to cause delight?

First, every work of godliness, and that ability that grace has to exercise, is a beam of that infinite, choice, eternal, electing love of God upon your soul; if you lookest upon it so, it will be wonderfully delightful.

Secondly, look upon every duty of godliness, as having more of the glory of God in it, then the whole frame of heaven and earth besides: Take all Gods works in the Creation, in Providence, in the Heavens, the Sun, Moon and Stars, in the Earth, and the Seas, there is not so much of the glory of God in them all, as in one gracious action that a Christian performs; and if you looked at it thus, it could not but have pleasure in it.

Thirdly, look at that action of grace, as that in which God attains his end in creating heaven and earth, more then in other things besides; as there is more of God in it, so God attains more in it; the end of God in his counsels is more attained by any gracious act, then by any thing else that can be done, save of the same nature: How delightful should we be in the ways of godliness, if we looked thus at them?

Fourthly, look upon every gracious act, as the seed of glory and eternal life: Every work of grace in the heart and life of Gods people, is a seed of glory and eternal life. And these four considerations being put upon every gracious act, do confirm that which was said in the opening of the point, they must needs be full of pleasantness: Be not satisfied in doing any thing in the ways of God, till you do it pleasantly; I hear the ways of God are pleasant, I have gone on being haled by conscience, but little have I understood of

the pleasantness of them, there is more to be looked after then I have attained to: By this you shall come to be mightily strengthened, and it wil be a marvellous help to make you continue in the ways of godliness: And as I said in handling that argument of the easiness of the ways of godliness, those that are continually thinking of the hardness of Gods ways, will fall off; but by having them pleasant, it will carry you on against temptations, and the current of all arguments.

The last Use of all, is, If the ways of wisdom be ways of pleasantness, what is the end of wisdom? If the neather springs be so sweet, what will the upper be? If the lower Jerusalem be paved with gold, surely that upper Jerusalem is paved with pearls. It is an excellent speech of Bernard, Good art you, O Lord, to the soul that seeks you; what art you then to the soul that findes you? How sweet and pleasant are the ways of wisdom then? How sweet and delightful is the end of wisdom? If grace be pleasant, how pleasant is glory? therefore the Saints dye so pleasantly, because there is a meeting of grace and glory: Grace is delightful, glory more delightful; but when these both meet together, what delight will there then be? It is a speech of Jerome, speaking of carnal delights; None can go from delight to delight; but it is not so spiritually, the more delight we have here, the more we shall have hereafter: and therefore let this be all our prayer, Lord give us evermore this pleasure, satisfy our souls with this pleasure; if the drops be sweet, the rivers of pleasure and joy that are at Christs right hand, how sweet are they?

Chapter 16: A spiritual eye can see an excellency in God's people, though under great affliction

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THe fourth Doctrinal Conclusion that was raised from the words, was, That a spiritual eye can see an excellency in Gods people, though under never so great affliction.

Moses chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. Who were this people? A despised people, an afflicted people; Yet Moses could see an excellency in them while they were making their brick, while they were whipped by their task-masters, and contemptible in the eyes of all the Egyptians; yet by the eye of faith Moses could look upon them as the most excellent of the earth, as the most glorious people that lived in the world, and desires rather to join with them, though in the greatest afflictions, then to abide in Pharaoh's Court, in the enjoyment of all worldly delights; let the world cast what dirt they will upon them, and darken their glory what they can, yet they are precious and honorable in the Saints eyes, The excellent of the earth, and the glory of the world. Job scraping his sores upon the dunghil, and Jeremy sinking into the mire in the dungeon, are more beautiful and glorious, then the

great men of the earth, when they are crowned upon their Thrones; Though you have lien amongst the pots, says the Psalmist, yet you are as the wings of a Dove covered with silver, and whose feathers are covered with yellow gold.

We read of the Christians that lived in the time between the Prophets and Christ, in the latter end of this Chapter, that were as mean as almost the rage of men, and poverty, and disgrace could make them, wandring up and down in Sheep-skins, and Goat-skins, and in the dens and caves of the earth; and yet, says the Text, they were such as the world were not worthy of: Chrysostom carries it thus, Take all the men of the world, they are not worth one of the people of God, though never so mean in regard of outwards: But I rather take it thus, The world was not worthy of such a priviledge, to have them live amongst them, they are fitter to be set as Stars in Heaven, and to be continually before the Throne of God.

Many times under mean outsides, there are precious things within; in earthen vessels, rich treasures. The Tabernacle of God, covered meanly outwardly, and yet precious within. It is said of Christ himself, that he had no form and comeliness at all outwardly,Isa. 53. No beauty to a carnal eye: And yet in Cant. 5. where the Church is put upon the description of Christ, she says, He is altogether lovely; altogether desires, so it is in the Original: See what a different esteem is of Christ in the thoughts of the world, and the thoughts of a gracious heart: And as of Christ, so of Christians, Christ is precious to them that do believe; To you he is precious (says the Apostle) but to others a rock of offense; so to a godly gracious heart, the godly are precious, though contemned of

those that are ungodly. The arguments that a gracious heart goes upon, or reasons why a spiritual eye should see so much excellency in Gods people, under their outward means, are,

First, because they judge as God judges; it is of the Spirit of God that they have received, and therefore they must needs judge of things as God judges. A childe esteems of things usually as his father does; if there be any of you manifest a slight esteem of any among whom you live, before your children, your children will have the like esteem of them; if you manifest a high esteem of any, your children will do the like: Hence it is, if those that are prophane, do despise and scorn at Gods people before their children, their children will quickly learn to despise them: Now because Gods people have Gods Spirit, and God is their Father, they judge as their Father does. Righteous men and Kings, in Scripture phrase, are made all one; those who are Righteous, God looks upon as Kings, and such as are Kings, are not respected of God, if they be not Righteous: Compare those two Scriptures, Mat. 13:17 and Luke 10:24 in the one it is thus, Many Prophets and Righteous men, have desired to see those things which ye see: But in the other it is, Many Prophets and Kings, have desired to see those things which ye see.

God does not judge of men in regard of outwards; what are outwards before the Lord? What is it to have gold, and fine clothes before God? Those things that are braveries in the world, and take up the eyes of men to admire at them, what are these to God? God does not esteem of men at all for these things, neither does he disesteem them for the want of them; the want of clothes, and of money, and of the things of the world, what is this to God? Does God look at any man the worse for want of these things? God is no

respecter of persons; if he looks at any with high esteem, he looks at the poor, and humble, and contrite: God delights to look down into the world upon those that are poor; he reserves a poor people that shall trust in his name, Zeph. 3:12 The Lord passes by the great things of the world, he brings down the mighty, and regards the low estate of his handmaid, the low estate of his people: It is a poor and contrite spirit, that he that dwelleth on high looketh at; the prayer of the destitute he regards, Psalm 102:17 The word in the Original is, A poor shrub, that which is in the Wilderness, and the beasts tread upon, that no man regards, that seems to be altogether worthless. It may be, one comes with brave words, and has mighty expressions, God throws them as dirt in his face: There comes another, and can hardly groan out his meaning, and yet there being grace, God regards him. If a proud scornful spirit, should hear a poor gracious heart groan out his complaints to God, he would think it non-sence; but God, knowing the meaning of his Spirit, and seeing his grace, he has respect to him.

A broken and contrite heart you can not despise; God can despise Princes, and Emperors of the earth, when they sit upon their Thrones, but a broken and a contrite heart he cannot despise; let him be never so despicable in the eyes of the world, God cannot despise him, no more then he can deny himself, and cease to be God. It is Gods judgement of men, that the righteous is more excellent then bis neighbor, Prov. 12:26 Let his neighbor be the most excellent, in regard of parts, riches, honors, and other excellencies, and the godly man despised, and every way contemptible in regard of outwards, yet he is more excellent then his neighbor.

It is observed, that the Eagle and the Lyon, those brave creatures, were not offered in sacrifice to God, but the poor Lamb, and Dove; God regards the Lamb and the Dove, before the Eagle and the Lyon, to note that your great and brave spirits of the world, that are as Eagles, high, and lofty, and as the Lyon, God regards not those; but your poor Lambs, and Doves, your poor meek spirits, that are contemptible in the eyes of the world, those are precious to God.

Not many mighty, great and noble; but God has chosen the base things of the world, the foolish, contemptible things of the world, to confound the wise, and the great things of the world.

It is very observable, when John sent to Christ, to know whether he were the Messiah or no, whether they should look for another, he did not send him a direct answer, but, says he, Go tell him, Theblinde see, the lame go, the dead are raised, and the poor receive the Gospel: Mark how Christ puts the poors receiving of the Gospel amongst the rest; the other were arguments of Gods power and glory, but what argument of Christs glory was this, that the poor, a contemptible people, received the Gospel? Yes, God does as much glory in the poors receiving the Gospel, as in raising up the dead: Some would think that this should be an offense to John, that the poor receives the Gospel; one would rather think he were the Messiah, if the rich had received the Gospel; No, says he, the poor receive the Gospel; he knew that John had a gracious heart, and would esteem of things as he did, and would not be offended.

Secondly, Gods people, by a spiritual eye, are very highly esteemed, because such an eye looks at spiritual excellencies: God has made a gracious heart acquainted with true spiritual excellen-

cies, and such a one beholding the beauty and the glory that there is in spiritual excellencies, all the outward glittering glory that there is in the world is darkned: It is true, men and women, so long as they know no better things, judge only according to these outward mean things. Children that know no better things then a gay coat, count it the greatest preferment that can be, to be put into such a coat; and so a man that knows no better things then the things of the world, he counts it the greatest excellency to have them: But when a childe comes to have reason, and sees higher things, he does not prize such things; so a soul that comes to see the things of Heaven, God, and Christ, and Grace, and sees into the realities of them, and not as imaginary, he will never admire at any thing below, but only at grace; and where there is grace, nothing can darken the light of it, it is so glorious as the light of the Sun; a little smoak cannot darken the light of the Sun, when it shines bright; a little smoak will darken the light of the candle, but cannot darken the light of the Sun: And so a little affliction will darken these outward things, to those that esteem them at a high rate; but spiritual excellencies are of such a nature, that afflictions cannot darken them.

But what spiritual excellencies are those that a spiritual eye sees in Gods people, that make them to be so precious in its esteem, notwithstanding all their outward meanness?

First, the Image of God. Secondly, the relation they have to God. Thirdly, their spiritual priviledges. Fourthly, the preciousness of that which comes from them. Fifthly, the great use that they are of here in the world. Sixthly, their ends.

First, for the work of grace, they have the image of God upon them: Now the image of a thing, is not the representing of a thing in some under excellency, or in some mean thing that concerns that which it is made to resemble; but it is a resemblance of it in that which is the chief excellency. As if I would draw the picture of a man, I would not draw it for to resemble flesh meerly, that a beast has as well as man, but as near as can be, the very countenance, and life of man; I will not draw the back parts of a man, but his face, and countenance to life; so the image of God is not that which has some little likeness to God, but that which has a likeness to God in the highest excellency, in his holiness and righteousness, which is (to speak according as we are able to conceive) the highest excellency of God; so that a gracious heart has that which makes him like unto that which is the top of Gods excellency, that which is the image of GOD himself, and therefore it has these four titles, The Image of God, The Divine Nature, The Life of God, and the Glory of God. The Image of God, Gen. 1:26 That of the Divine Nature, you have in the 2 Pet. 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you may be partakers of the Divine Nature. And the Life of God, Eph. 4:18 Being alienated from the life of God, that is, from his grace. And the Glory of God, Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God. The work of grace in mens souls, has that excellency in it, that there is more of God to be seen in it, then in all the works that ever God did make from the beginning of the world, not only if you take one single work (only excepting the hypostatical Union of the humane nature of Christ) but take all the creatures that God has made in heaven and earth, they have not so much of the glory of God to be seen in them, as there is to be seen in the

work of grace; so that take the poorest, meanest Christian, that has the work of grace, though parts be never so weak, and outwardly he be never so contemptible, there is more to be seen in this poor man or woman, then in the whole frame of Heaven and earth, then in the Sun, Moon and Stars, then in all the creatures of the world besides, except Angels; and therefore surely outward meanness can never take down the esteem that a gracious heart has of Gods people; Yea, it is the greatest excellency that ever God did bestow upon, or will bestow upon any for the kinde, if it were grown up to the greatest degree, still excepting that hypostatical Union of the Humane nature of Christ with the Divine, and therefore must needs gain a precious esteem.

It is a principle of eternal happiness, it is that which will grow up to an eternal glory: Take all moral and natural excellencies, let them grow up to the highest height they can, they can never grow up to glory; but this is that eternal seed, if it be let to grow up, it wil grow up to the height of glory: Now if Grace be thus, if it be that principle whereby a creature is raised to such a high condition, no marvel though those that have a spiritual eye, and can see into the things of God, and judge spiritually of things, must needs esteem those very precious and honorable, that have the work of grace upon them. Moral excellencies have been highly esteemed by Heathens; as the Fabii and Fabritii, that were taken from their dinner and supper of Turnips, to rule and govern great armies, because they saw such great excellencies under their mean outsides: If so be the knowledge of moral excellencies can raise the esteem of men in the world, much more then the true and glorious excellencies of grace.

Secondly, in regard of the relation they have to God: Gods people have a near relation to God; the nearer relation one has to great ones, the more high he is in the esteem of men; now Gods people though never so mean, have a wonderful near relation to God; for,

First, they are the chosen of God, they are those which the Lord in his eternal counsels, has set apart for himself; the counsels of God from all eternity have wrought for their good; and this is manifested unto a gracious heart, The Lord has set apart a godly man for himself, says the Psalmist in Psalm 4. They are those that are the consecrated ones of God; consecrated and devoted things, though they were never so mean, were exceedingly esteemed of; if it were but leather, or wood, or never so mean a thing that was in the tabernable, and consecrated to God, it was highly esteemed: Those that are superstitious, if there be any thing they think is a holy relique, though never so mean, what a high esteem they have of it?

It is reported of Apries, a King of Egypt, who was of a base birth, for which some despised him; therefore of a great Bason of gold, in which he and his guests were wont to wash their feet, he made an Image, and set it up in an eminent place in the City, and observing the superstitious devotions of the people thereunto, Now, says he, though the King be of mean birth, he is not to be respected the less: It is true, the Saints of God for their outwards are mean, but their consecration puts glory upon them. I have read of the people of the East-Indies, in the Isle Zeylon, who having an Apes tooth got from them, which was a consecrated thing by them, they offered an incredible mass of treasure to recover it; and if so be a consecrated thing, though so base in it self, be so highly es-

teemed for the consecration sake, how much more an immortal soul, that has so many graces, as pearls set glittering in it, being consecrated unto God?

Secondly, they are those that are entred into Covenant with God, and therefore in nearer relation (then others) to God; therefore they are called The portion of God, The treasure of God, The peculiar ones of God; they are those that God satisfies himself in; what higher then such expressions as these? They are those that God has set his heart upon, the beloved ones of God: They are the children of the high God; The spouse of the son, that are married to the son; In some respect nearer then the Angels themselves, for they are not in a mystical Union so married to Christ, as Gods people are; and Gods people having such relations to God, as in these & many other respects might be named, they are worthy of honorable esteem.

Thirdly, for priviledges; they are those that are freed from the evil of sin, the evil of punishment. They are those that have whatever is in God to be theirs, working for their good: All the Attributes of God, and the ways of God in his Providence: If there be any thing in God to make a man happy, it is theirs. And all the good that is spoken of in the Word, all the glorious promises are theirs: And all that is in the world is theirs, the world continues for their sakes; says the Apostle, All is yours, for you are Christs, and Christ is Gods, 1 Cor. 3. ult. It is a great argument to show Gods greatness, that all the creatures in the world are his, and for him; what an argument then is it, to show the greatness of a Christian, that Heaven, and Earth, and Christ, and God, and all are his, and for him? They have free access to the Throne of grace, and welcom too: They have that priviledge, to come and put their hands into

Gods treasure, and take what they will, God gives them the key, giving them the spirit of prayer, he gives them the key of his spiritual treasure: They are the heirs of Heaven and eternal life; yea, and the heirs of the world too, for being the children of God, they inherit their Fathers riches; now Rom. 4:13 Abraham is said to be the heir of the world.

Fourthly, consider the precious things that come from them: as there are more excellencies in themselves, then in all creatures in heaven and earth, except Angels; so in every gracious action that comes from them, there is the greatest excellency the world has. Luther has many high and excellent expressions of the worth of the acts of grace, whereby he shows, though he was a mighty advancer of Faith, so he was no enemy to good works: No man, says he, can commend good works magnificently enough; for one work of a Christian, is more prcious then heaven and earth, and therefore all the world in this life, cannot sufficiently reward one good work. And in another place, If I might have my desire, I would rather choose the meanest work of a Country Christian, or poor Maid, then all the Victories and Triumphs of Alexander the Great, and of Julius Caesar. And again, Whatever the Saints do, though never so small and mean, it is great and glorious, because they do all in faith, and by the word. And yet further, Let our works be small, servile, womanish, yet let this title be added, The Word of the Lord, andthey are all glorious, such as shall remain eternally. Surely they are precious, from whom such precious things do come; it is a precious fountain, that sends forth such precious streams: These the Saints of God send forth plentifully, the excellency of them a spiritual eye sees, and therefore must needs see those to be the excellent of the earth, from whence these come.

Fifthly, the great use that they are of in the world; What use is a poor man or woman of, that lives in a poor smoak-hole, that no man regards? Yes, many ways; these are the only useful people in the world, they are they from whom God has all his glory in the world, God attains his end of making the world by them; were it not for a company of poor contemptible people, what glory should God have in the world? Now for men to be the only people from whom God has his glory in the world, is to be of great use: They are they that are the salt of the earth, and the light of the world; though by some that be applied only to those Disciples and Ministers, surely it is to be applied to any Disciples of Christ: They are they that hold forth the light of the glory of God; the world would be as a dungeon of dismal darkness, were it not for them: They are they that can prevail with God for mighty things, as Jacob, he prevailed with God as a Prince: They are they that are employed about high and honorable things; none have such glorious employments as Gods people.

Turkish History tells us, that the very Camels that are used to go to Mahomets Tomb, are ever after of high esteem amongst them, so as they never after use them in any mean servile way as they did before: Though things be never so mean, yet by the use they become honorable; no use so honorable as that of the Saints, where this is seen with a discerning eye, they are exceeding honorable. They are the great blessing of the world: Isa. 19:24 there is a promise that Israel should be a blessing in the midst of the Land. Gods people, wherever they are, are a blessing to that Country, a blessing to the world, howsoever despised of the world; put all these together, and surely they are precious.

Lastly, a spiritual eye looks upon Gods people as precious, notwithstanding all outward meanness, because it looks upon them as in their ends, though they are now incomparably above all that is in the world besides, yet their glorious end raises their worth exceeding high, and a spiritual eye looks much at the end and issue of things, and therefore looking upon the Saints in regard of the issue of all, they cannot but have a high esteem of them. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entred into the heart of man, to conceive the excellent things that God has prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. 2:9 And now a spiritual eye can see these things, which a natural eye cannot, as if they were present, the glorious things that are to come, and the glorious condition that such a one shall be in, a spiritual eye cannot but fasten upon such a one, and bless him, as the blessed of the Lord.

We do use to look upon great heirs, that are appointed for great things, and shall have great possessions, with honorable respect, though now they be meanly clothed, in russet cloth, or eating course bread, and playing with beggars children; so Gods servants, howsoever they are in the esteem of the world, yet those that know what they are to inherit, what they shall receive hereafter, cannot but look upon them as honorable: A spiritual eye sees that that body that is now clothed so meanly, within a few years shall shine more bright then the Sun in the firmament, and that soul that is weak in parts and gifts, it sees it as a vessel that shall be filled to the brim with all the glory of God, and the Image of God to be made perfect, and to have perfect knowledge of God, and of the blessed Trinity, and the mystery of the Gospel, and all the great works of God: A spiritual eye can see within a little while, when Christ shall come in his glory, he will own them before men and

Angels, and tell men and Angels, These are those, for whom the eternal councels of my Father did work, and I was content to shed my blood for them; and all that was intended in the great work of Redemption, was for these: A spiritual eye can see, that within a while they shall be taken up with our Savior, to judge the whole world, to judge the Angels, with Crowns upon their heads, and palms in their hands, triumphing, ascending up with Christ to see the Father, and to enjoy him everlastingly. And if these things be seen, as real and certain, they cannot but raise esteem; there is so much in Gods people here, as not only does convince a gracious heart, but sometimes will convince one that has but natural principles of their excellency.

Some men and women, that do sometime rail at Gods people, if we could see into their bosoms, do sometimes bless them, and wish that their condition were such as theirs shall be: As Balaam wished he might dye the death of the Righteous; and John the Baptist, though he was mean for outwards, yet Herod reverenced him, because he saw some glimmerings of the excellency that was in him: And that is observable that we have of Joash King of Israel, 2 Kings 13:14 he was a wicked man, yet when he comes to Elisha, and sees the Prophet was to dye, says he, O my Father, my Father, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof! this is the speech of one that was ungodly, he had a reverend esteem of Elisha, and it seems he walked so, as he gained mighty esteem from wicked men; as in 2 King. 3:12 three Kings came down to the Prophet to speak with him, they do not send for him; True it is, one of them was a good man, but the other two were wicked; it was indeed in the time of their affliction, yet it was a mighty honor the Prophet had from them. It is reported of the Emperor Severus, when Origen came to

him, he came very meanly cloathed, only one garment; Severus sent him a Chariot, and change of garments, to come in pomp to him, he refused to come in pomp; and yet when he saw the piety and gravity of the man, he was mightily convinced, and it gained much respect from him: The godly will gain respect from wicked men, much more from a gracious heart, that can judge as God judges, and see the ends of things.

Chapter 17: What we are to learn from that high esteem a gracious heart hath of the Saints in their sorest afflictions

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HEnce we see what a difference is between the men of the world, and Gods people: The men of the world are such, as in all their outward pomp and bravery, are base and wretched, and Gods people in all their baseness and meanness, are precious and honorable: The wicked men are so vile, as all the glory that the world has cannot make them blessed; and Gods people are so blessed, as that all the evil of the world cannot make them any way miserable: If a man had his hearts desire in all things that are here below, he may remain as a base cursed creature; but let him be gracious, and godly, and let him have all the misery that can be put upon him in the world, he is one that God, and the Angels, and Saints look upon, as the glory of the earth.

That is very observable we have of Antiochus Epiphanes in Dan. 11:21 In his estate shall stand up a vile person, and yet he was the great King of Assyria. And Josephus reports, the Samaritans wrote to him, because he tormented the Jews, to excuse them-

selves that they were no Jews; and they writ, Antiochus the mighty God; and his name Epiphanes in English, does signifie one that is illustrious and famous above others: Though he was the great King of Assyria, and by flattery was called the Mighty God, and by his name called Illustrious & famous above others, yet by the holy Ghost he is called a Vile person. But David speaking of Gods people, whom he should do good unto, says, They are the excellent of the earth, in whom is my delight, Psalm 16. the word signifies, the magnificent of the earth: The one is called The vile of the earth, in the Psalm before, and the other called The magnificent, in this Psalm.

God has made a separation between the wicked and the godly, and therefore Moses says in Exod. 33. ver. 16. You hast separated between us and other people; the word that is translated separated, is, you hast wonderfully separated between us and other people; so God has wonderfully separated between us and the world; that the one should be so cursed, that all the good of the world cannot make them blessed; and the other so blessed, as all the evil of the world cannot make them miserable. When Agrippa was so admired, that the people cryed, The voyce of God, and not of man, God gives an Angel authority to smite him, and he was eaten up with worms: John though he was mean in the world, the Holy Ghost calls him the greatest that was born of a woman.

Secondly, this rebukes those that can see no excellency in those that are godly, more then in others: and if they be afflicted, they look upon them, as the prey of the malice of wicked men, and a poor contemptible people, and pass them by, and see nothing in them to be worthy of any respect. As it was said of Herod, when Christ came to him, he thought to have seen miracles wrought by

him; and because he appeared as a mean man, Herod slighted him; and so men that judge according to the flesh, if men be great in the world, or have such a one to be their friend, they like that well, but if he be ragged, and mean, they pass him by, as not respecting of him. As Hospinian tells us of the dogs, that kept the Temple of Vulcan, If any came to the Temple with brave cloaths, they would let them alone, but if they came in ragged cloaths, they would tear them all in pieces: So men of the world, if they see men in good cloaths, and prosper outwardly, they are somebody; but for this godliness, and preciseness, they have no skill in it, and therefore despise it, and look contemptibly upon it. So it was with the Samaritans, as long as the people of the Jews were prosperous outwardly, they would challenge acquaintance, and affinity with them, but if they were in affliction, then they would fall off: but St. Paul did not so, for (says he) Henceforth know I no man after the flesh.

It is a great sign of a carnal heart, and opposite to the principle of grace, to look upon things according to outward excellency, and not to see a beauty in Gods people for want of outward excellency. Some things that are foolish, are only weakness of reason: some things are opposite to the principles of reason, and where we see such, we account those naturals: so some things are infirmities, and argue weakness of grace; but other things are quite contrary to the principles of grace, and amongst those I know none more evident then this, For people to judge of things according to outward excellency, and not to see the excellency of Gods people through outward meanes: this is an argument that the Gospel is hid from you, and so you art a lost creature: if the beauty of the Gospel be

hid, it is hid to those that are lost: It is true likewise of such as profess the Gospel, if the beauty of them be hid, it is hid to those that are lost.

Thirdly, if so that there is such an excellency in Gods people, though under great afflictions it should teach us all to manifest our respect to Gods people that are mean: It is a most vile thing, to have the faith of Christ in respect of persons: says Tertullian, We do not judge of faith by persons, but of persons byfaith: So do not look at men, to judge of them according to outwards, but look to the inwards of the soul, how they are cloathed within. What a shameful thing is it for those that are Christians, that know spiritual excellencies, to look upon those that are gay, and brave outwardly? What do those that are gay and brave attire themselves for, but to have the eyes of men drawn after them? Let childrens eyes be drawn after them; but if they have rotten spirits, let them be so looked upon, notwithstanding they be in gay cloaths: but for those that are gracious, Jesus Christ looks upon them as his glory; 2 Cor. 8:23 The messengers of the Church, the glory of Christ; and therefore we should glory in them much more.

The Apostle S. James speaks very bitterly to those that he wrote unto, for having respect unto persons, says he, Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? as if he should say, Do not your consciences condemn you? Can this stand with grace? to have the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ in respect of persons; Are you become judges of evil thoughts? those evil thoughts of yours, in respecting those that are in brave apparel; Are you judges of those evil thoughts? that is, to judge according to them: Some render it thus; and are not judges of evil thoughts? And so the negative, that is joined to partial, is to be ap-

plyed also, to become judges of evil thoughts: Have you such evil thoughts as these, and do you not judge them to be evil? Noting there is so much evil in them, as it is to be wondered, that any should have such evil thoughts, and yet not judge them to be naught.

But how should we manifest our respect to those that are outwardly mean, that are gracious?

First, own them, and be not ashamed of them, before your bravest kindred, for they are precious to God and Christ, and if you be ashamed of them, you are ashamed of Christ himself, and it is just Christ should be ashamed of you another day: Are they the glory of God, the treasure of God, and the portion of God, and the peculiar ones of God, and shall you be ashamed of them? O no, but those whom God honors, let us honor; What rule can we have better for our honoring of men, then that honor that our God puts upon them? It is given as a special reason, why the King of Babylon sent Ambassadors, and a present to Hezekiah, after he had been sick, to testify his respect to him, and to honor him, because he had heard, how that miracle of the Suns going back was for him, as a sign of his recovery; The Sun was the God whom the Babylonians worshipped; now because their God had honored Hezekiah so much, the King of Babylon would honor him likewise. Abulensis in 2 Kings 20. God has wrought great things for his Saints, whereby he has put much honor upon them, he has owned them before all the world, let us own them with honorable respect of them.

2. Again, bless God that you may have any communion with them, to have the breathing of Gods Spirit in them; reioyce in their communion, and fellowship, and delight more in mourning with

them in their afflictions, then in all the jollities of the world, then to be feasting, then to enjoy all their delightful braveries.

3. Again, the more they are contemned in the world, and they suffer in the world, the more do you respect them, and own them; So long as Gods people suffer nothing, but have outward prosperity as well as others, some will make of them; but if they see them in contempt, then they leave them, and look at them afar off: as it is with a mans Ministery, when a mans Ministery is approved of by some that are rich, and the assembly be filled with such, they count such a Ministery a credit to their Church; but if it be spiritual, so as it may be but few of them understand it, and so discountenanced by such as those are, then his Ministery is not regarded: and as in the esteem of the Ministery, so in the esteem of the saints; when they are esteemed in the world, they will esteem of them, but when the esteem of the world is taken away, their esteem is taken away.

As it is with the Deer that is hunted, when the Huntsman goes into the Park, he stirs up all, and all run together, but if one be shot, and they see the blood run down, they will all push him out of their company: so while Gods people go on, and are in credit, and esteem with the world, others that are slight professors of Religion will esteem them, and they shall be welcom into their company, till they be shot, and they see disgrace put upon them, then they look upon them with a lowry countenance. If a man be travelling, and there be a Sun-dial by the high-way, if the Sun shine, he will go out of his way to take notice of it, but if the Sun do not shine, he may go a hundred times by and never regard it; and so when the Sun shines upon Gods people, they are much made of, but if a cloudy day do come, and take away the Sunshine, they are not esteemed, and many people instead of helping them in their affliction, will

adde to their affliction, and say, You needed not to have been so forward, and to have appeared so much; It was your want of wisdom brought you into this trouble, and the like.

If you had a gracious heart, if you saw one of Gods Servants go on in the way of God, and suffer in that way, though he had failed in some particulars, you would pass them by, and not be ready to take advantage, to speak against him for them: If a man do plead for the King, every circumstance is not taken up, and aggravated against him; and so for those that are for God, every circumstance should not be aggravated against them: It is better for one to be forward in Gods cause, though he should fail in some circumstances, then to be lukewarm. If a man be going earnestly, and do fall forward, there is not so much danger in that, as to fall backward: so a man that is forward in that which is good, though he may carry some things indiscreerly, and suffer somewhat that way, yet his fall is but forward, and there is not so much danger in that, as in a time-server, and apostate that falls backward, he may break his neck. And therefore we should not aggravate the afflictions of the Saints, if they be right in the main, we should countenance them, and appear for them, though we venture something, as Moses here, he might have saved himself, and yet he had such a high esteem of Gods people, as he would venture all for them: but of this in the next Point.

Thirdly, If God does move the hearts of any, preciously to esteem of his people, though afflicted outwardly, hearken to a word of encouragement, Certainly you art blessed of God: It is a note of a wonderful strong eye-sight that you hast, that you can see Spiritual excellency, through outward meanness: there is more skill in being able to see the preciousness of a thing, then to see the

glory and lustre of it; that which is not true pearl, may have as much lustre as the true, but the skill of the Lapidary is to know, that is not precious, but the other, although it be fullied with dirt. It is a note of sincerity of grace, that you lovest grace for grace: It is a note of the power of grace, that you can pass by that which is a stumbling to so many. Certainly God will know your soul in adversity, and will look through all your infirmities upon you, that can look with an honorable esteem upon his people through all afflictions: And in that time when you suspectest the work of grace in you, this may be one argument to uphold you, though you can not discern the work of grace in your own heart, yet you can prize it in another; it is an argument it is in your soul, though now you can not see it; though people want other notes, yet this many have.

Fourthly, You that are the Servants of God, and God has so ordered it, as you are mean in the world, mean in your parts and estates, and mean in regard of your friends, be not discouraged, do not think, I am a poor contemptible man or woman, no body looks at me, or regards me; God has a high esteem of you, the Angels have a high esteem of you, the Saints have a high esteem of you, and therefore be not discouraged. As you have it in Isaiah 56. 3, 4. Let not the Eunuch say, I am a dry tree, for if he will take hold of my name, and keep my Sabbath, I will give him an everlasting name, better then of sons and daughters: Many, because they are outwardly mean, do go on discouraged, and say of themselves, We are dry trees: If you didst but see the thoughts of Gods people, and see the thoughts of wicked men, as if you could but unfold the consciences of wicked men, they do reverence you, and wish they were in your condition, if they were to dye; though you have not that respect from the godly which they seem to show to others, that they

have more use of, and are more serviceable to them to do their business, and so there is a show of more outward familiarity, yet do not think but that you are more highly esteemed then they are.

But suppose no man should regard you, it is enough that God does regard you; It is a notable speech of Salvian, Such as are truly blessed in their own consciences, cannot be miserable by the false judgements of other men: But I say, though that were enough, yet you have more, you have God, and his Angels, and Saints, and the consciences of wicked men, though we should not regard the esteem of the men of the world, but go on in our way, only be careful that they may not speak ill of our Religion; but the esteem of the Saints is not slightly to be esteemed, for it is a blessing of God, and therefore St. Paul was earnest with the Romans to pray to God for him, that his service might be accepted of by the Saints.

On the other side, for one to be in such a condition, as those that are godly, wise, and humble, shall call their estates into question, and be suspitious of them, such need look to themselves: many that are truly godly, may be very guilty of censuring, and so do much wrong, both to those that are godly, and to Religion; but take those that are wise, and humble, and I say, if such should be jealous of me, I should have great cause to be suspitious of myself; for such have the Spirit of God, and do know the things of God, A spiritual man judges all things, and therefore we should make good use of their opinions of us; If they be afraid of us, we should fear ourselves, as Isaiah says, There is no peace to the wicked, says my God; that God that my soul has interest in, says, there is no peace to the wicked; So when those that have interest in God, shall say to a man, there is no peace to you, it should make his heart quake. Gods people ought so to walk, as to gain respect from the

consciences of men; Do you so walk as to gain any such honorable respect? Is there not cause of suspition? In the name of Jesus Christ I beseech you, let it be your care so to walk, with such heavenly humble spirits, as to hold forth the beauty of godliness unto others, and to force respect from them. As it is said of God, Holy and reverend is his name; How does Gods name come to be reverend, but by being holy? so it may be said of Gods people, Holy and reverendare their names; if they be holy, their names are reverend, they will gain reverence from those that are godly, and will force it from the basest wretches: and therefore you that would have honor, and a name, here is a way; you would be the finest in all the company, and you think to get a name that way, you seek to get riches, and so to get a name; this is not the way, this does not cover the filth of sin, this covering is narrower then that you can wrap yourself in, Isa. 22:26 but if you would get a name indeed, be godly, and gracious, and holy, and then you shall have the testimony of the consciences of men, and that is more then all their words, for there may be flattery in their words.

Many Ministers think if they should be poor and mean, every one would contemn their Ministery, and therefore they think the way to have their Ministery respected, is to get great livings; this certainly is a false way: A poor godly man that walks in his Ministery faithfully, and conscionably, will gain more respect, then others by all their great preferments. As it was the speech of Boniface, that was a Martyr; one askt him, whether it was lawful to give the Wine in the Sacrament in a wooden cup; Time was, says he, when there were wooden Chalices, and golden Priests; but now there are golden Chalices, and wooden Priests: This was the way of Papistry, for to have outward bravery, and thought to gain mens

devotion that way; but when there were wooden Chalices, when things were carryed meanly, that did not take away the dignity of the Ministery, but by the holiness of their lives, they were esteemed of the more, and the Ordinances were not accounted the worse by the outward simplicity of them, but the better. Let us that are acquainted with any thing of the mind of God, know that there are better things to gain respect to Religion, and to ourselves by, then all the outward things; be not afraid therefore of sufferings, be godly, and let sufferings be never so much, and your name will be precious. Those who wandred up and down in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, Heb. 11. yet obtained a good report by faith.

Lastly, if a gracious eye can see so much excellency in the Saints, in outward meanness, how much more shall they see when they come to their glory, when all the treasures of Heaven shall come to be opened, and all the good of Heaven let out to them, when they shall be wholly free from sin, when the robes shall be brought out, and the glorious garments, and they shal walk with Christ in white? If they be so glorious when they are on the dunghil, what shall they be when they are in their Kingdom, when the Bride shall come trimmed, when there shall be a suitableness to that Bridegroom Jesus Christ; and God, and all the Angels shall come to solemnize the marriage? There shall be a time here, when wicked men shall take hold upon the skirt of a Iew, and say, I will go with you, for I have heard God is with you: How much more afterwards will the great ones and mighty ones of the earth be ready to catch hold upon the Saints, and say, O that we might go with you, though it were but to attend upon you? This is the day of visitation, 1 Pet. 2:12 in which they shall glorifie God.

There are three days of visitation, and in all those days of visitation men shall glorifie God in the behalf of Gods people.

First, When the time shall come that God shall visit their souls, and work any good upon their souls.

Secondly, the time of affliction, when they are upon their sick-beds: though in prosperity they contemn you, and speak evil of you, yet in the day that God shall visit them, and lay his hand upon them, then they shall say, This is the only people that live upon the earth, and send for such a one.

Thirdly, they shall glorifie God in the Day of Judgement, when they shall see the glory of these, and they shall say, These are those we despised, and called Hypocrites, now we see they are no Hypocrites: as those foolish Virgins that wanted oyl, when the Bridegroom came, then they asked oyl of the wise Virgins; it may be before they would not acknowledge it was oyl, it was water with them before, but now it is oyl: so now they shall see they were godly, and not hypocrites, and they were not notions that they heard of, but realities. And thus much of the excellency that a gracious heart does see in those that are godly, though never so mean and afflicted outwardly. The fifth Point is,

Chapter 18: A gracious heart will appear for the people of God, whatsoever sufferings may follow upon it

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A Gracious heart will appear outwardly withGods people, and be on their side, whatever sufferings may follow upon it. Many things useful for the opening and enlarging this point, fall into the former, and therefore I shall be the briefer in it. The Point is of great use in these times, in which God calls for so much appearing in his cause, for his people; but generally men seek a safe way to themselves as they think, to keep their Religion within, and not to venture themselves, by appearing what they are; and if any shall be so forward, to appear outwardly what they are inwardly, these are deserted. St. Pauls complaint, 2 Tim. 1:15 and chap. 4:16 may justly be the complaint of many of Gods Servants in our times; You knowest that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me, of whom are Phygellus, and Hermogenes: At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men for sook me. This is no new thing in the world, every age affords many examples in

this kinde, and ours excels; but certainly, it is the duty of all who would approve themselves to God, to be willing to appear with, and for the Saints in their troubles.

First, the Saints are dear to God, therefore God will certainly take it well at the hands of such as shall join with them in their affliction, and appear for them: if any should see your childe in affliction, and danger, and hazard himself in joining with your childe, in his affliction, and danger, you would take it well at his hands.

Secondly, they hold out the honor of God in the world, in their sufferings, they are Gods witnesses; Isaiah 44:8 They stand for God; in appearing therefore for them, and their cause, ye appear for God himself: the cause is yours as well as theirs, if God be yours.

Thirdly, they need encouragement, especially in the time of their affliction; the best have flesh and blood, and if they be deserted in their cause, much advantage is given to temptation; Wo to him that is alone: If any should fail, if any should miscarry through your deserting, or not coming in and joining with them, it will prove a sore and a fearful evil against you. If any of Gods servants in affliction shall go to God, and make their means to him, and in the grief of their souls tell him, how you have left them, how they are alone in so great a cause, whereas such and such might have afforded much help and encouragement; surely this will witness fearfully against you, and it will go ill with you; Certainly you bring much guilt upon your souls, in deserting the Saints in the time of their affliction: Hence Paul prayed, that God would not lay to the charge of those in Asia thatleft him in his first answer.

Fourthly, not appearing, is a betraying the truth: It is a speech of Zuinglius, in his third Epistle; We may as well with Dioclesian, worship at the Altar of Jupiter or Venus, as hide our faith under Antichrist: He that is not with me, is against me, says Christ.

Fifthly, Christ appears most for his people in their afflictions, when they are at the lowest; Isaiah 63:9 In their affliction he was afflicted, the Angel of his presence was then with them, his love and his pity was towards them, he bare them, and carried them: Psalm 69:9 The Zeal of your house has eaten me up, the reproaches of them that reproached you, are faln upon me. You know the place is spoken of Christ, and these words were spoken when the Church was in a very ill case, as appears in the Psalm.

Sixthly, times of affliction are the especial times to manifest our true love to the Saints, which are near to us in many bonds. It is an ill part of a wife or friend, to forsake husband or friend when in affliction. Josephus reports of Herodias, wife to Herod the Tetrarch, who when the Emperor had deprived her husband of his Tetrarchy, and banished him, annexing his Tetrarchy to Agrippa his kingdom, understanding that Herodias was Agrippa's sister, the Emperor gave her her husbands substance, supposing that she would not accompany her husband; but she answered the Emperor, There is a cause that hinders me from partaking the benefit of your bounty, the affection I bear to my husband, whom if I should forsake in this his misery, it would very ill beseem me, in that I have been a partner with him in his felicity: the Emperor displeased with her answer, banished her likewise with her husband: a brother, a friend, a wife, is for the time of adversity.

Especially hence it is recorded of Davids brethren, and fathers house, 1 Sam. 22:1 When David was persecuted, and came to the Cave of Adullam, when they heard it, they went down thither to him; they ventured the displeasure, the rage of Saul, the forfeiting all their estates, to go down to David their brother, both his father and mother was there, though very old now, as appears ver. 3. Basils forwardness in appearing for his friend in danger, mightily affected Chrysostom: he tells of him, that he hazarded himself much, to deliver his friend in danger, and being blamed by some for venturing so much, he gave this answer, I have not learned to love otherwise, I knownot how to manifest my love but thus.

Seventhly, when Gods people suffer most in Gods cause, it is then most honorable to be called forth to appear for it, to assist in it. Amongst the Persians, the left hand is accounted the most honorable. Xenophon reports of Cyrus, that those whom he honored most, he placed at his left hand, upon this ground, because that hand was weakest, and most subject to danger; the most honorable of the kingdom were set to defend, where there was most weakness and most danger: If the people of God be brought low, if they be brought under by affliction, if the cause of God in them seem to be in danger, then to come in and appear, to stand by them, and for them, this is honorable.

Eighthly, this appearing for the Saints, and joining with them in their affliction, shall be highly rewarded of God. When David was in his affliction, persecuted by Saul, Abiathar fled to him with the Ephod, and abode with him; Although self-respects might move him, Saul having slain his father, and fourscore and four priests of the Lord, and if he had not escaped, he had gone to it too; yet because he was with David in his affliction, mark how

Solomon respects him for it, 1 Kings 2:26 You art worthyof death, but I will not put you to death, but go to Anathoth, to your own fields, because you barest the Ark of the Lord God before my father David, and because you hast been afflicted in all in which my father was afflicted.

Josephus reports of Agrippa, that being bound with chains, and sent to prison by Tiberius, for wishing Caius in the Empire; one Thaumastus one of Caius his Servants carrying a pitcher of water, met him, and Agrippa being very thirsty, desired him to give him drink, which he willingly did; upon which Agrippa said, This service you hast done in giving me drink, shall do you good another day: afterwards when Caius was Emperor, and Agrippa was made King; he first begged Thaumastus his liberty of the Emperor, and made him a free man, then he made him his chief Officer over all his affairs, and after his decease, he took order he should continue in the same office with his son. This Agrippa was a wicked man, who thus rewarded him that relieved him in his affliction: it was the same Agrippa whom the Angel smote, and was eaten up of worms, because he gave not glory unto God: How much more then will Christ reward those, who shall give him in his members, cups of water in their affliction, yea, who shall so join with them, as to hazard themselves for them? surely they shall not go without their reward, when Christ comes in his glory, he will own them.

But how must we appear? what does this point require of us?

First, when Gods servants, and their cause, are accused, and condemned, you must not be silent, you must not let it pass, as being afraid to be accounted one belonging to them. Luther in an Epistle to Staupitius, a German Divine, says, That when Jesus Christ is condemned and blasphemed, it is no time to fear, but to

cry out; yea he professes, that he had rather be accounted any thing, then to be accused of wicked silence in Gods cause; Let me be reputedproud, covetous, an adulterer, a murtherer, an enemy to the Pope, guilty of all kinde of vices, so I be not found guilty of wicked silence, when the Lord Christ suffers. In Eusebius his History, l. 5. c. 3. we finde a Letter that the Christians of Vienna, and Lyons in France, sent to their brethren in Asia and Phrygia, in which they tell of a notable example of a brave Noble man, Vetius Epagathus, appearing in the cause of the Christians, not being able to bear their unjust dealings against them, when he heard those vile accusations against them, and condemnations of them, he desired that he might be heard to plead for the brethren, but those at the Tribunal being utterly against it, because he was a Noble man, the President would not admit of his petition, but only asked him if he were a Christian, he professed aloud, that he was, and so was taken amongst the number of Martyrs, and called the Advocate of Christians.

Secondly, appear for them, by visiting them in their troubles; that is a special duty that Christ looks for , and will examine at the great Day, whether it has been performed, be not shy of this, lest you should be suspected to be one of them. Chrysostom in an Oration upon the praise of two Martyrs, says of Christians, that they would not be kept from visiting the Confessors in Prison, although it was forbidden with many threatnings, terrors, and it was great danger to them.

Thirdly, we must be ready and willing to entertain such as suffer.

Fourthly, we must use all the interest we have in any friends, improve all opportunities for the relief of such as suffer.

Theodoret tells a famous story of one Terentius, a Captain in the Emperor Valens his Army, who returning from Armenia with a great Victory, the Emperor bade him ask what reward he would; he only asked as a recompence of all his Service, that there might be granted a Church to the Orthodox in Antioch, that they might freely meet in publique: this he knew could not but be exceeding displeasing to Valens the Emperor, because he was an Arrian, and so it proved, for the Emperor tore his Petition, and bade him ask something else; but Terentius gathered up the torn pieces of the Paper, and said, This I ask as a reward of my Service, and I will ask nothing else. How few wil now improve such interest in great ones, such opportunities for the relieving the persecuted Servants of God?

Fifthly, we must improve all our gifts, parts, abilities for them, in pleading for them: Thus in the Primitive times, God stirred up many of great learning, of excellent parts, to plead for the persecuted Christians, who did much service this way: as Justin Martyr, in his Apologies; and Tertullian, and one Aristides an Athenian Phylosopher, a man admirably learned and eloquent, because the Emperor then was much delighted in learning, he made use of his eloquence and learning, for Christ and his Saints, making eloquent Orations before the Emperor for them: and another Quadratus Atheniensis, when Adrian came to Athens, he presented a Book to him, pleading for Christian Religion; God blessed the endeavors of these much, for the mollifying the Emperors heart towards the Christians.

Sixthly, we must be willing to suffer with them; we must be willing to lay down our lives for the brethren, much more suffer with the brethren: we must be willing to have fellowship with

them, not only in their priviledges, but in their sufferings, Rev. 1:9 I John who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ: many are willing to be brethren, and companions in the kingdom, but not in tribulation, and in the patience of Jesus Christ; Heb. 10:33 it was the commendations of those Christians mentioned there, that they were companions of those that were ill used for the cause of Christ.

Therefore for application, let us know our duty, and show ourselves more ready and forward to join with, and show ourselves to the servants of God in their persecuted estate; in the times of their prosperity there is not so much need we should manifest ourselves to be for them; this is the time in which we are called, especially to manifest our love to them, our siding with them; The greater their affliction is, the more we must appear for them: When the people of God were in a comfortable estate in Egypt, as they were in Josephs time, Joseph did not leave the Court to join with them, but when they were in an afflicted estate, as in Moses his time, Moses left all to join with them; here you have a tryal upon what side you will be, now you have an opportunity to witness for God.

Those words, Hosea 11:12 Judah rules with God, the old Latine has it, Testis descendit cum Deo, He descends a witness with God, and so the words will bear, if the pricks be altered, which may be, being according to the opinion of many put in, in latter times; Ribera maintains this reading, and has two good notes upon it:

First, Others leave the true worship of God, but Iudah continues, and so witnesses to his truth.

Secondly, He descends, he is content to be in a lower condition; though he be fewer, and not so flourishing as Israel, yet if he may be Gods witness, he is content. Thus should we be willing to descend to witness for the truth, to leave the flourishing people of the world, and to join with the lowest and meanest.

Ordinarily men deal with the suffering servants of God, as Demas dealt with St. Paul, they forsake him, embracing this present world; but if you finde any inclination of heart that way, conceive as if Christ were now speaking to you, Will you also forsake me? Take heed of flattering yourselves, of putting off this duty with any vain pleas, or pretences, or excuses; God sees what lies at the bottom. We read Iudg. 5. divers of the Tribes are blamed, for not coming in to help to join with Barak and Deborah; and in their rebuke, their excuses are mentioned, as some were to follow their business at sea, they could not come: and especially Asher, he was to stand in his own breaches to defend himself, ver. 17. Reuben must follow his business, and look to his sheep, he could not come, ver. 16. yet these are rebuked, but Zebulon and Nepthali are commended for a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death, they are honored for this. The people of God were now in a low condition, in great affliction, and no excuse could serve turn, for their not joining with their brethren; whatever necessities, inabilities we may pretend, that keep us from appearing in the behalf of, and joining with Gods people in their afflicted estate, it will not bear us out before the Lord; In times of storm, all should come in and help. The two Tribes and the half on the other side Iordan, must not think to abide peaceably in their possessions, while their brethren were warring for theirs, but they must join with them in their battels, until they were in their possessions likewise.

It is a sore and great evil, not to join with Gods servants in their troubles; but how great an evil then is it, to adde affliction to their affliction, to join with their enemies against them, especially when they are weak in their suffering condition? Gods wrath against Amalek was, because he came out against Israel in the wilderness, and not only so, but smote the hindmost of them, even all that were feeble behinde them, when they were faint and weary, Deut. 25:18 Now you shall finde that the wrath of God was never so dreadful against any, as against the Amalekites: for,

First, observe what expressions of indignation the Lord has against them.

First, This wickedness of Amalek, and his destruction, must be wrote for a memorial in a book, and rehearsed in the ears of Ioshua.

Secondly, God will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven.

Thirdly, The Lord swears that he will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation; all these Exod. 17. 14, 16.

Fourthly, Gods anger for many years after continued against Amalek. Numb. 24:20 His latter end shall be, that he perish for ever: and Deut. 25:19 Moses gives a charge, that after Israel was possessed of his inheritance, that he must blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven, You shall not forget it. And further, although at the first, when Amalek came against Israel, there was a great slaughter of them, yet more then four hundred years after, 1 Sam. 15:2 God says, He remembred what Amalek did to Israel, and gave a charge to Saul to go and smite them, and utterly to destroy all they had, not to spare, but to slay Man and

Woman, Infant, Suckling, Ox, Sheep, Camel, and Ass; and it is observable, whereas in all other places that were not of Canaan, though they did smite the male, yet they were to spare the women, the little ones, and the cattel, and all that was in the City, as Deut. 20:14 but not so in Amalek, yet Amalek was not of Canaan; God had a more special quarrel against Amalek, then against any of the other Countries: Yea, whereas in Canaan, although men and women were destroyed, as in Ai, Iosh. 8. Yet the cattel, and the spoyl of the City they took to themselves, ver. 27. but they might not do so in Amalek, the destroying the Cattel, and all there was in it, was for the greater horror, to show what an abominable, and an accursed thing Amalek was.

Yet further, although in Jericho they destroyed men, women, and cattel, and so it was more accursed then Ai, for there the cattel were saved; yet in Jericho the gold, silver, brass, iron, were consecrated unto God, Iosh. 7:19 but so it must not be in Amalek, for that must be more accursed then Iericho. And God was so strongly set upon revenge of this people, that because Saul spared Agag, and the fat of the cattel, though in pity, though under pretense of Sacrifice, the Lord therefore rejected him, and accounted his sin as rebellion and witchcraft, so as he would not have Samuel so much as mourn for him, 1 Sam. 16:1 And when Agag was brought before Samuel, because he was the King of the Amalekites, Samuel, though he were a loving sweet natured man, yet he took a sword, and himself hewed him in pieces before the Lord, being filled with Gods indignation against Amalek, 1 Sam. 15:33 And Psalm 83:7 Ammon and Amalek is joined together; God pronounces of the Ammonite, that to the tenth generation none of them should enter

into the Congregation of the Lord for ever; Why? Because they met not Gods people in the way, with bread and water, when they came up out of Egypt, Deut. 23:4 but hired Balaam to curse them.

God expects that his people in their afflicted estate should be relieved, and not cursed; the curse of the Lord will pursue those, who deny help to them in this condition, especially such as seek to adde to their affliction. What was the reason that Shimei must not go to his grave in peace? It was because of his rayling against David, when he was in his affliction; The Jews gave Christ gall and vinegar when he was upon the Cross, this was a great aggravation of their sin: take heed that you give not the servants of God gall and vinegar when they are upon, or under the cross; God expects you should bring oyl to their wounds, not pour brine in; many think they may safely trample upon such as are down; when the hedge is broken, when a gap begins to be made, every one treads it down lower and lower: but know, when the day of the recompences of Sion shall come, all the wrong done to Gods Servants, who were not able to resist the malice of men, shall be recompenced to the full, especially such wrong as was done them in their affliction; God takes it ill that any should once look upon his people in the day of their affliction, except it be to pity them, and to relieve them.

I am very sore displeased with the Heathen, says the Lord, Zach. 1:15 Therefore? They helped forward the affliction; and mark it, it was that affliction that was upon Gods people, out of Gods displeasure for their sin: and does God take that so ill, that that affliction should be helped forward? how ill then will he take it, how sorely will he be displeased, when the affliction that his people suffer for his name, is helped forward? Let us take heed of any hand

in such an evil as this; but let us know that it is our honor, and will be great advantage to us, to appear for to be helpful, and comfortable unto the Servants of God in their sufferings; to be Obadiahs, Ebedmelechs, to the Prophets of the Lord. Obadiah pleads this with the Prophet, 1 Kings 18:13 Was it not told my Lord what I did? when he was afraid of danger, that thereby he might be delivered: And God bade Jeremiah, chap. 39. 16, 17. Go to Ebedmelech, and tell him, Behold, I will bring evil upon this City, but I will deliver you in that day, you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you art afraid.

We read likewise, 1 Sam. 15:6 of a merciful work of Gods providence towards the posterity of such, who had been kinde to his servants in the times of their trouble, namely the Kenites; when Amalek was to be destroyed, Saul sent to the Kenites to depart from among the Amalekites, lest they be destroyed with them: Why? For ye showed kindeness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt: Who were these Kenites? How long since was his kindeness showed? What was this kindeness? For the first, The Kenites were the posterity of Jethro, Moses his Father in Law; this you may see, Judges 1:16 For the second, This kindeness was four hundred and twenty years before this time at the least, for so long it was from the Children of Israels being then in the wilderness, and this time of Sauls reign. For the third, It is thought of some to be the kinde visit of Iethro, visiting his son in law, and Israel in the wilderness; and besides, directing him in a way of government of the people, that he might not wear away himself, which was a great blessing to Israel at that time. And further, whereas Moses desired him to go with him to direct him in the way of the wilderness, where they should go; it is like he did it in part,

but though he did not stay with him, but returned to his Country, yet it is probable that some of his children staid, and went along with Israel, and were helpful to them in their way: for Iudges 1:16 The children of theKenite, are said to go up out of the city of palmtrees with the children of Iudah, now this is by Jericho, the first City the Israelites took in Cannan, as appears Deut. 34:3 therefore its like that they accompanied Israel along in the wilderness, and so showed kindeness unto them, which the Lord here remembers. Ye who are willing to show kindeness to Gods people in their affliction, know there is mercy laid up in store for you, and your posterity: that childe not yet born may many years hence have the blessing of this your love.

Let no vain objections therefore, no carnal reasonings hinder you in this great and honorable service of Christ, for appearing for, for defending of, rejoicing in the persecuted, despised, afflicted Saints of God, be not ashamed of them, look not shy upon them, deal not ruggedly with them, let your hearts and houses be open to them, let their spirits be comforted, their bowels be refreshed, their names vindicated, their cause maintained, their persons honored, their sorrows eased, their burthens lightened, by what you have, or can do, by yourselves or others: If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, if any hope, any desire that Jesus Chirst should know your souls in the day of your adversity, fulfil this truth now opened before you, applyed unto you, this duty urged upon you. It may be some of you have been Moses's, such as have been drawn out of the water, out of great afflictions, be you now Moses's to others, seek to draw them out if it may be, howsoever to relieve and help them, while they are in the waters; and the bless-

ing not of Moses, but of Jesus Christ, the mighty Savior, the great stander up for, and comforter of his people, in times of straights, be upon you.

Chapter 19: Enjoyment of communion with God's people, is worth the enduring much affliction

WE are now come to the sixth doctrinal Point that we have here in this part of Moses choice, That the enioyment of communion with Gods people, is worth the enduring of a great deal of affliction. Moses chooses to suffer affliction with the people of God; he saw they were Gods people, and that it was a good thing to be with them, and therefore rather then he would not be with them, he was content to lose all the honors of Pharaohs Court, and put himself under the sorest affliction that he could meet withal, nothing should hinder him from joining with them.

In the worst times of the Church, in which the hardest things were to be suffered in joining with Gods people, yet even then would those who had gracious hearts choose to be with them upon the hardest terms, rather then to be from them with all outward ease, and carnal delight. It was a very ill time when there was a separation between the ten Tribes, and the rest, when the ten Tribes left the Temple, left the Ordinances of God, and followed after Jeroboam; this was a very hard time, and the rather because

Jeroboam set watchers, to observe who would go from him unto Judah to join with Gods people there, for there remained the true Church. And this is the meaning of that place, Hos. 5:1 Hear ye this O Priests, and hearken ye house of Israel, and give ye ear O house of the king, for judgement is towards you, because you have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor: Now these two places, were places that were between Samaria, the ten Tribes, and Jerusalem; whoever should go from them to Ierusalem, to join with Gods people there in the true worship of God, those that were set at Mizpah and Tabor, would spy them, and so they were ready to be taken: This was the hard condition of Gods people then, and they did mightily scorn at those that would go to Jerusalem to worship, and to join with them in that way of worship.

And therefore Amaziah said to Amos, (Chap. 7. ver. 12.) O you Seer, go, flee you away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesie there: as if Amaziah should say, Judah is a fitter place for you then this, you are so precise, and strict, you had need be gone to Judah, we are Idolaters here, and no true Church but in Judah, such as you are, had better be gone to Judah: And so it is usual for those that are carnal and prophane, to scorn at those that are godly. Yet though things were so hard in these times, that there were watches and spies set to watch over them, and they did contemn those that did look towards Judah, yet those that were godly would not be discouraged, but would go, and join with Gods people notwithstanding all this: and therefore you have it in 2 Chron. 11:16 what was the way of Gods servants in that time, when it was such a difficult thing to join with Gods people: All such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel: there were a company of them that would stay in Samaria, that might have good wishes,

that times were better, and things were better, but would not suffer any thing, to go and join with Gods people, where they might have the Ordinances in a pure manner; but all such as set their hearts to seek the Lord, and resolved whatever came of it, they would have God in the purity of his Ordinances, they went up to Jerusalem: And

So it was in the Primitive times, they were very hard times for Gods people, and the people of God, and Christians were discovered by their meetings together; if so be all of them would have separated one from another, and kept their Religion to themselves, they might not have been discovered, but though it were with hazard of their lives, they would join together, and meet together; and therefore when any was converted, it is said, they were added to the Church. And S. Paul, Heb. 10:25 lays a charge upon them, though it were at such a time as they hazarded their lives, Not to forsake the assembly of the Saints, as the manner of some is. And Mr. Calvin in a Sermon upon that Text, Seek ye my face, interpreting it thus, The face of God is Gods Ordinances; as a man is known by his face, so God makes himself known in his Ordinances; and so he urges that place, Seek my face, that all Christians in conscience are bound to go where Gods Ordinances may be enjoyed, if possibly they can: And he says further, It is better they should scrape the ground with their nails, then to be any where else, where they should not ioyn with Gods people in the ways of his Ordinances. Certainly, it is a great blessing to be with them, though upon never such hard terms in regard of afflictions.

That is observable that we read of Jacob blessing his sons, Gen. 49:28 it is said, He blessed every one of them; How was that? for you shall finde he rather seemed to curse three of them, Reuben,

Simeon, and Levi; he speaks only of evil to them; but because they were not rejected, from being amongst Gods people, although they were to be under great and sore afflictions, yet they are said to be blessed.

Well, but why should we suffer much affliction for the joining with Gods people? What is there in them, or amongst them, that makes joining with them to be so desireable?

First, that point we handled before, might be enough to show the reason of this: they are the excellent of the earth, Isaiah 43:4 I do not now speak of them particularly, though every Saint is honorable, but especially they are honorable in a way of Church communion: Now we know it is a credit, and priviledge to have society with those that are honorable; Gods people are so, they are the glory of the world: as for others, God speaks of them as dirt and dross, Psalm 119. 118, 119. but now Gods people are called the glory of God himself, Isaiah 4:5 now it is good being with such as those are. Peter, when he saw but two of Gods servants together with Christ, Moses and Elias, says, It is good being here, let us make three Tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elias; he never thought of himself, it is good being here, though he should lye in the field, and in the rain: and so says a gracious heart, It is good being here with Gods people, for they are precious, whatever hardship we suffer amongst them.

Secondly, there is no such comfortable communion in the world, as with Gods people. It is comfortable,

First, in the very beholding of the shining of the graces of Gods Spirit in them; says Heathen Seneca, The very look of a good man delights me: What is the glory of God himself, but to see his own

glory shining in the world, in the works of creation, and providence? If God delights so much to see the resplendency of that glory that shines in his works, surely it must be a great delight to those that have any work of grace, to see grace shining in others.

Besides, there is a blessed fragrancy of graces in Gods people: as the eye is satisfied in beholding the beauty of them, so the heart is satisfied in the sweetness of them; Cant. 6:2 My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices; the Catholike Church is as the garden, and every particular Church, if it be as it should be, is as a bed of spices, that gives forth a very fragrant smell. It is reported of Alexander, his body was of such an exact constitution, that it gave a sweet scent where it went: and so a Church is of so good a constitution, that it gives forth a wonderful sweet fragrant smell to those that have their right senses.

Again, no such comfort as in communion with Gods people, in regard of the nearness of their union one with another, their hearts join, and are one if they be truly spiritual: other societies are but as the iron and the clay in the toes of Nebuchadnezzars Image, they may cleave together, but they will not incorporate one into another: The more spiritual any thing is, the more it does unite with that which is spiritual; spiritual things are more unitive then such things as are bodily; as if you have a heap of stones, they do not join so close together, but now a thousand beams of the Sun will unite together in one point, because they are spiritual things in comparison: and this is the reason why there is such a full union between God, and a spiritual heart, because God is so spiritual, and the more spiritual the heart is, the more union; and so Christians having grace, and grace being spiritual, the more grace, the more spiritual, and the more spiritual, the more union: and the

reason why in Church-fellowship there is so little union, is because they are so carnal, and therefore the Apostle says, the contentions that were in the Church of Corinth, were because they were carnal. If you were more spiritual, there would not be such division between you.

As it is in wicked communion, those who are more spiritually wicked, (for there is a kinde of spiritual wickedness) they do more unite together, those that are more fleshly wicked, do not so closely unite, as your drunkards, and prophane fellows, though they call good fellows, yet upon every cross word, they are ready to fall out: but others that are wicked in a malicious way against the godly, and wicked in a way of policy, to work to undermine the way of godliness, such as those join together a great deal more strongly, then those that join together in an outward fleshly way; Now because Gods people are spiritual in a gracious way, therefore they have such near union, and union causes abundance of comfort. We read Exodus 26. of two sorts of Curtains for the Tabernacle, the one, verse 1. of fine twined linen, blew, purple and scarlet, and the tatches were of gold to couple them; the other were of goats hair, ver. 7. and the tatches to couple them were of brass, ver. 11. Which may set forth the several sorts of people in the Church; some are of a finer make then others, more spiritual, and the bonds of their union are golden, others are more course, and the bonds of their union are not so glorious; but this is a truth for ever, the more spiritual, the more union, the more pure the souls of men are, and of the more excellent temper, the more close, sweet, excellent in their union.

Again, no such comfort as with Gods people, because of the suitableness of that disposition that is in their spirits, one with another, having but one spirit, and but one divine nature, led by the same principles, and rules, and have the same ends, and affections, hopes, and desires, and joys: and where there is such a suitableness, surely there must needs be a great deal of comfort, for all comforts come from a suitableness between the heart and the object; if the thing be never so good, if there be not a suitableness between the heart and it, there is no comfort; but no such suitableness as between Gods people, and therefore no such comfort.

Fifthly, no such joy as is to be had in communion with them, because of their entireness of love, entireness of love is a lovely sight. Dionisius seeing two entire friends together, wished himself the third. Cant. 6:9 My Dove is but one, and it follows, thedaughters saw her, and blessed her; an oneness of heart is a blessed thing, no such entireness, such oneness any where as amongst the Saints: their love is spiritual, and not upon base grounds, as the love of others is, there is not that base aiming at self as in others: a carnal heart cannot love another, but in some base respect to himself; but now it is not self that is the the ground of the love between those that are truly gracious and godly, but God that is between them, and with them, the ground of their love is more spiritual, and therefore it is a kinde of divine love, and not so drossie as others.

Sixthly, no communion so comfortable in regard of their faithfulness, they dare trust one another. They call themselves brethren, and they will dye for another, says Tertullian: the men of the world cry out, Of all men I would not trust those that are so precise: Indeed, if you do take all refuse that make profession, you

may say so, but a gracious heart can savor who is godly, and will not trust every one that talks of Religion, but such as are truly godly, they dare trust them, and venture their lives with them: no communion in which we can ease ourselves of our burthens, as where there are a company of true gracious humble Saints in communion one with another. So that put these together, and you see the second reason why it is worth the enduring so much affliction to have communion with the people of God.

Thirdly, it is worth the enduring a great deal of affliction, to have communion with them; because it is in their communion, in which the solemn worship of God is set up; now it is worth the enduring of a great deal, to be where that is. In Judah is God known, and his name is great in Israel: he has honor by others, but his name is great in Israel, in his Church; What a comfortable thing is it, and blessed, and worth the enduring of much, to have multitudes of Gods people join with one heart, in setting out the praises of God, sitting at his Table, sitting before him, lifting up the name of the great God, making his praise glorious: When the Saints are gathered together for this end, in this work, Christ is there present with them, praising God, he joins with them in this work, Heb. 2:12 In the midst of the Church will I praise you; this is spoken of Christ, it is quoted out of Psalm 22:22 which is prophetical of Christ: who would not be in such acts of worship, to join with such as Christ joins with? If God be our God, and dear to our souls, his worship is dear to us; and if there be any people in the world, among whom God is truly worshipped, it is a great affliction not to be with them.

It is the observation of one Interpreter upon that place in Isa. 6. where the Cherubims cryed, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, the earth is full of your glory: the Prophet cryes out, Wo unto me, I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, unfit to join with those that are praising of God: howsoever the meaning of that place be, yet thus we may make use of it, to be a great affliction, and cause there is to cry out, Wo to ourselves, when we hear of Gods people crying out, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts; if we be not amongst them, though it be in the wilderness, yet if Gods worship be set up, the people of God have a feast: When the Israelites were to go from Egypt, into the wilderness, Moses says, they must go thither to keep a feast unto the Lord; What was that feast in the wilderness, but the setting up the worship of God?

Fourthly, no communion, no society in which there is so much profit and benefit, as to be amongst these. As Abigail said to David, The Lord shall binde up the soul of my Lord in the bundle of life: to be amongst Gods people, is to be bound up in the bundle of life; much good we enjoy in them, and the more communion we have, the more interest we have in all their gifts, and graces, and prayers: and therefore we read of Daniel, when he had a great work to do, how he makes use of that interest he had in the prayers of the godly, Daniel 2. 17, 18. It is a great blessing to have an interest in the prayers of the Saints, and so in all their gifts, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, &c. all are yours, and you are Christs: as if he should say, there need no such envying one at another, to say, I am of Paul, and another of Apollos, and another of Cephas, for all are yours; all the gifts, and graces of all the worthies of the Lord, are all yours, they are all for your good, and you have interest in them all: in communion with the Saints, there is

watching over one another, and quickning one another, and admonishings, and wholesome counsels, and stirring up the graces of God that are in one another: Have you not felt yourselves, when you have come away from a spiritual communion, to come away with hearts raised, and spirits inflamed for God, and so strengthened, that your resolutions have been up, to do or suffer any thing for the Lord; as in Mal. 3:16 Those that feared the Lord, spoke often to one another, quickned the hearts of one another; and so in Acts 18:5 And when Silus, and Timotheus, was come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Iews, that Jesus was Christ: Certainly in their converse together, S. Paul found his spirit wrought upon, and refreshed, so that the Text says, when Timotheus was come, Paul was pressed in spirit.

Fifthly, it is good being with Gods servants, though it be in suffering affliction, because God takes so much delight in them; if God takes delight in being with them, certainly there is great cause we should take delight in them: there are admirable expressions of Gods taking delight in them, Zeph. 3:17 The Lord your God in the midst of you is mighty; he will save you, he will rejoice over you with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over you with singing: One word is heaped upon another, to set out the abundance of delight that God takes in his people: Hence the Church has that name given her, Hephzibah, because God delighteth in her, Isaiah 62:4 And in Deut. 33:3 it is said, He loved his people, there is a general love: All his Saints are in his hand, and they sate down at his feet, that is more particular: and in Cant. 4:9 You hast ravished my heart, my sister, my Spouse, &c. One would think by the reading of the words, they were rather the speech of the Spouse to Christ; but it is the speech of Christ to his Spouse: And so again in Cantic. 5:2

Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: these are the expressions of the delight that God has in his people; The Lord loves the gates of Zion, more then all theling places of Jacob, that is, God delights in the publike communion of his people, more then in all their private dwellings: If we be of Gods mind, and have Gods Spirit, our hearts must be where God is, Gods bowels yern towards them, I am afflicted with you in all your afflictions, and how shall I give you up?

There is a notable expression in Hosea 9:10 where God sets out much of his delight in his Church, I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; as a traveller, wearied, parched in the wilderness, if he findes bunches of grapes, O how sweet and refreshing are they to him! so, says God, was Israel to me: and further, I saw your fathers, as the first ripe in the fig-tree at her first time: Fruit when it comes at the first, and is dainty, how is it prized? some will give an incredible price for some kinde of timely fruit, when it is rare at the first; Thus God sets out his delight, never Longer did delight more in some timely rare fruit, then God does in his Saints. God takes delight (you see) in his people, above all others, and therefore it is good to be with them.

Sixthly, Consider the glorious titles that in Scripture are put upon the Saints in a way of Church communion: as,

1. They are Gods portion, Deut. 32:9 The Lordsportion is his people.

2. His pleasant portion, Jer. 12:10 They have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

3. His inheritance, Isaiah 19:25 other people are the work of Gods hands, but Israel is his inheritance.

4. The dearly beloved of his soul, Jer. 12:7 Hegave the dearly beloved of his soul into the hands of their enemies.

5. His treasure, his peculiar treasure, Exod. 19:5 Ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people, for all the earth is mine: that is called peculium, which the son and heir of the house has of his own, besides the right of his fathers inheritance, which he may dispose of as he thinks good: so though the earth be the Lord Christs by inheritance, by right of creation, yet he has a special interest in his Church, above all other. God has treasure in the works of nature, and it is called his good treasure, Deut. 28:12 The Lord shall open to you his good treasure; but this is his peculiar treasure.

6. His glory, Isaiah 46:13 I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.

7. The house of Gods glory, Isa. 60:7

8. A crown of glory, Isa. 62:3

9. The throne of God, Exod. 17:16 The words may be read thus, because the hand upon the throne of the Lord, and so by many they are translated, and then the sense is, because Amaleks hand was upon the Church, the throne, therefore God threatens war against them: vea,

10. The Throne of glory, Jer. 4:21

11. The Ornament of God, Ezek. 7:20

12. The beauty of his ornament, Ezek. 7:20

13. The beauty of his ornament set in majesty, Ezek. 7:20

14. A royal Diadem, Isaiah 62:3 Many other such expressions you may meet with in Scripture, but put these together, and you see it is desireable to be with the Saints in their communion.

Seventhly, There is a special presence of God amongst them; and to be there, where God is in his especial presence, it is worth the enduring of a great deal of affliction: God is there in a special manner, as in the last words of the prophesie of Ezekiel, the Church is called by that name, Iehova Shammah, the Lord is there. And the Lord filled his Tabernacle with his presence: the Tabernacle was a type of the Church, and did typifie his especial presence with his people in Church-communion.

And as God is there present, so observe the expressions of his especial presence; he is said to dwell there, Psalm 76:2 In Salem is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion: Now it is good keeping house with God. You are his house, says the Apostle; the Church of God is his house, and it is good to be in Gods house. But though it be his dwelling, Is it a dwelling that is lovely to him? Yes, for it is that his soul desires to be in; as if so be God counted it a kinde of honor (as we may speak with holy reverence) to have such a habitation; Psalm 132:14 Here will I dwell, for I have desired it: as if he should say, If I might have but a dwelling among my people, I desire no better habitation in the world. Now you that are fain to be put into mean holes for your dwellings, if you may be with Gods people, do not think it much, for God dwells there, and desires no better habitation: It is strange that God that has Heaven to be his habitation, should desire to dwell with his people, yet says he, I desire to dwell there, and I will dwell there.

If a man make a house to do some mean business in, he does not take much delight there, but in that house where the Kings Majesty is manifested, that is the greatest place in the Kingdom: now in Psalm 26:8 it is, Lord, I have loved the habitation of your house, where your honor dwelleth: as if this were the chief house that God had, that God delighteth in this above all other dwellings; his honor dwells here. But will God stay here? Yea, it is the place that he will dwell in for ever, Psalm 132. 13, 14. Surely our hearts may rest where God rests, and we should not be weary where God is not weary. And he does not only dwell here, but he has his delightful walks here: the walks of God are amongst his people, 2 Cor. 6:16 If a man have a house that he rejoyces in, he will have his garden as near his house as he can, that he may have some walks to delight in: and so the Church of God is such a house, as has not only room for God to rest in, and set his honor in, but he walks there, and walks in them, says the Apostle. Thus the Lord is pleased to condescend to our weakness, to express his especial presence with his Church, and therefore it is good to be with them; these are the expressions of it.

But in which does the presence of God with his people appear more then with other people?

In these two things especially.

First, because there God makes himself known, reveals himself there, and makes his beauty to appear. Psalm 27:4 One thing have I desired of the Lord,that I will 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: It is the glory of Heaven to see God in his beauty, and this is one of the greatest promises of God to his Church,. that they shall see the King in his majesty: We

may see some glimmering light of God in the Heavens; Sun, Moon, and Stars; but in the Church, there God shows his beauty, there we may see the face of God; and this is that which Moses did desire; Lord-show me your glory: It is much granted to us in the Church, in enjoying his Ordinances; and there is no way to see Gods face so clearly, as this way: Every childe of God that is in the Temple, shall speak of Gods glory, for they see God in his glory in a special manner.

Secondly, the especial presence of God with his people, is especially manifested, in that he communicates to his people; as namely,

First, the choice mercies of God are communicated to his people: If you would have any share in Gods choice mercies, his peculiar mercies, come amongst Gods people, join with them: as that place is observable in Psalm 134:3 The Lord that made Heaven and earth, bless you out of Sion: He does not say, the Lord that made Heaven and Earth, bless you out of Heaven and Earth; but the Lord that made Heaven and Earth, bless you out of Sion: as if he should say, The blessings that come out of Sion, are the choice blessings, and the peculiar mercies of God, even above any that come out of Heaven and Earth.

Secondly, God communicates his mercies more fully then any where else: Isa. 25:6 And in this mountain, that is, in the Church, I will make a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, &c. and Psalm 36:8 They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house, and you shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures: In a private way there may be some drops of pleasure from God, but there is not that full communication from God, as with his people in his Ordinances:

there is in the world, in the creature drops, in private communion there are ponds, but in a pulique Churchcommunion, there are rivers of pleasure, and that is the height of all.

Thirdly, God communicates his mercies more powerfully in the Church then any where else: Psalm 133:3 For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. God did not only speak, and said there should be a blessing, but spoke in a commanding way; There: Where is that? There in the Church, amongst his people, there God commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Lastly, God blesseth more universally with all kinde of blessing, and therefore he is more present there: and in that respect the Psalmist says, Psalm 87:7 All my springs are in you. This whole Psalm is to set out the excellent condition of the Church, and he concludes the Psalm with this, All my springs are in you: Now this expression is very emphatical; Spring is taken two or three ways in Scripture: The Law of God, the Doctrine of Gods Law is compared to a spring, and heavenly knowledge is compared to a spring; and then it is thus, All my springs: All the truths I have, all the knowledge I come to be made partaker of, are all in the Church. Again, All my springs; all the comforts of my heart, and that good and joy my spirit receives, and all the graces of the Spirit that I have, and all the quickning and strengthning I have, is communicated to me this way. And upon this ground, the Church is called the very perfection of all beauty, Psalm 50:2 Out of Zion the perfection of all beauty, God has shined: Out of Zion, there is his glory wonderfully apparent; The word that is translated, the perfection of beauty, is translated by some, the universality of beauty; all kinde of beauty, all kinde of excellency: as if the Psalmist should say, Put all excel-

lencies together that possibly you can imagine, to make a thing comely and lovely, they are all in the Church. Thus you see it is good being with Gods people, when as God is thus present with them, in a special manner.

Eighthly, it is good being with Gods people, because there is Gods special protection; others are but as the wilderness, the Church is as a garden enclosed, Cant. 4:12 A man regards his garden that he has enclosed, and bestowed cost about, more then a wilde field; the fields have hedges to keep out the beasts, but gardens have brick wals, or wood walls. Isa. 27:3 I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, lest any hurt it; I will keep it night and day: How full is this? his care over it is such, as he threatens those which shall but touch it, Jer. 12:14 to pluck them out of their land. Zach. 2:5 God promiseth he will be a wall of fire round about his people; alluding to the custom of travellers in the wilderness, who used to make fires round about them in the night for their safety, because then none of the wilde beasts durst come near them; such a defense is God to his people.

There is nothing in the Book of God, in which God is so full in his expression, as when he comes to this argument, to manifest his affection to his Church. Christ is the Shepherd, and when sheep are together, they are under the protection of the Shepherd, when the sheep are scattered, the Shepherds eye is not so over them; And therefore in Hosea 4:16 God threatens his people, he would feed them as a Lamb in a large place; as a Lamb getting from the fold, goes up and down bleating; so when Gods people are scattered, they are as a Lamb in a large place: and when God would threaten the sorest judgement against his people, Ezekiel 34. he says, He will scatter them, and they shall become to be meat to the

beasts of the field. And hence it is, that the condition of the Church is so stable a condition: and therefore in Isaiah 60:15 the Church is called an eternal excellency, because it is under the Lords protection, and is it not good being there, to be under the wing of God?

Ninthly, to be amongst Gods people is a blessed thing, because they have so many priviledges from God: every one desires to join with such societies as have great priviledges; now Gods people have such as are very great, Psalm 87:3 Glorious things are spoken of you, O City of God! What glorious things? They have glorious priviledges; What are they? To them are committed the Oracles of God, as the Apostle reasons for the Church of the Jews; So to every Church of God, is committed the Oracles and the Ordinances of God, and those Offices for the dispensation of the mysteries of God; which were the great gift, that Christ triumphingly ascending to Heaven gave, and surely that gift must needs be great. The benefit but of one Ordinance, the Ministery of the Word, dispensed rightly, is made an argument by God himself, for the comfort of his people, in all their adversities, Isaiah 30. 20, 21. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not your Teachers be removed any more into a corner, but your eyes shall see your Teachers. The word in the Ministery of it, in the the right way, is a great blessing: When Chrysostom was banished, many godly people were so grieved, that they professed it were more sufferable for the Sun to withdraw his beams, and so be darkned, then for the mouth of Chrysostom to be stopped. If this one Ordinance be so blessed, what a blessing then is the enjoyment of all, and that in a right way?

Every Church-fellowship is as the pillar, to hold forth the truth to the world, as a light set upon a hill, to hold forth the glory of God. And they have amongst them the broad seal of Heaven; To Gods people that are together in a Church-fellowship, the seals are committed; now this is a mighty priviledge. And besides, they have the power of Christ with them, 1 Cor. 5:4 the power of Christ is committed to them. And amongst other priviledges, this is one of great worth, that all the promises of God made to his Church in former ages, is the heritage of every present Church, Isaiah 54:17 These are great and high priviledges, and worth the enduring of a great deal of hardship, to be made partakers of the good of them.

Tenthly, it is a blessed thing to be with them, though with some hardship, because God is working more and more good for his people every day: Now he is about fulfilling the glorious promises that we have in the Prophets, to make an end of all the glory that he does intend in the world: Now if God be working great things for his people, as we hope he is, To set up Jerusalem, as the praise of the whole earth; Is it not good to be with them, that we may be partakers of the glory that God intends to them? Isa. 58:14 There is a promise that the Church shall ride upon the high places of the earth: There is a time a coming, that the society of Gods people in this world, shall be set above all societies in the world; and Isa. 2. that The mountain of the Lord shall be raised above all mountains: we cannot see how this has been fulfilled. Isaiah 60:19 The Sun shall be no more your light by day, neither for brightness shall the Moon give light unto you, but the Lord shall be unto you an everlasting light, and your God your glory. This prophesie is spoken of the estate of the Church of God; when was this fulfilled, that there should be so much glory in the Church, that there need not be any

Sun, or Moon, but God should be in stead of Sun and Moon, and all the glory of his people? and to be with Gods people, when God does such great things for them, is worth the enduring much hardship

In the former part of Isaiah 60. v. 7. God says, He will glorifie the house of his glory; and mark what follows, ver. 8. Who are those that fly as a cloud, and as the Doves to their windows? Seeing God will glorifie the house of his glory, his people should fly to it as a cloud; Those who are of heavenly, not of drossie sensual spirits, will do so, and as Doves to their windows; those who are of Dove-like spirits, loving society, and purity, they will do so. And it was the reason why some desired to live, because in a few years, they hoped to see some great things for his people. And so the 102 Psalm is a prophetical Psalm, into what a happy condition the Lord will bring his people; and in the latter part of the Psalm, the Psalmist brings in a gracious heart living in those times, bemoaning the condition of it, that it has a sickly body, and weak, and like to dye, before God would make good those promises made to the Church: as if he should say, Lord, you art bringing glorious things to pass for your Church, and you art gathering the Kingdoms to serve you, Lord, then take not me away in the midst of my days; O God let me live to see all fulfilled.

Eleventhly, It is good to be with Gods people, because they are those people we shal live withal in Heaven: If there were a company travelling together in a strange country, and knew when they came to their own country they should live together, in some great preferment in the Court, how would they delight in one another? So the godly should look upon one another; here we have commu-

nion one with another, and these are they we must join in communion withal hereafter, to praise God eternally in the highest Heavens.

Lastly, it is Heaven already to join with the people of God in communion: The Scripture calls the Church of God, and Church communion, Heaven. And therefore where there is a promise of God to restore his Church, and recover it from thraldom and misery, Isaiah 65:17 Behold, says God, I create new heavens, and new earth; and so in Rev. 12. where the vision of the restoring of the Church was shown to John, it was shown that way; there was a new heaven, and a new earth: so that the Church of God is heaven, it is not only a company we shall live withal in Heaven hereafter, but it is Heaven now; and therefore our Savior says, The least in the kingdom of Heaven, shall be greater then John; the least that lived after John in the Christian Church, could speak more of Christ then John could: The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man sowing his field with wheat, that is, the estate of the Church is a field sown with wheat, and after the adversary sows tares in it. The Church, says Chrysostom in one of his Sermons upon the Corinthians, is the place of Angels, the Palace of Heaven, yea Heaven it self. And if it be so, that communion with Gods people is Heaven already, surely it is worth enduring of much affliction to be with them.

Chapter 20: Perswasions to draw to the joyning with the people of God in the nearest communion

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HEnce then let me speak; first, unto those who yet are not partakers of that good that is to be had with Gods people, I mean in nearest communion: though we all have the name of God upon us, and have some kinde of communion with the people of God; yet, seeing there is much good to be had in communion with them further, it should be the desire of every one, to enjoy the nearest communion with them that can be; this is a mercy that you should labor to seek after: for a good there is here, which none know the sweetness and benefit of, but only those that do enjoy it, seek to have it, for great things are spoken concerning it. If there be any realities in the truths that have been opened to you, it cannot but make the communion and joining with Gods people very lovely; but certainly that which I have said, comes abundantly short of what is in it: for the most things that are used, for the showing the excellency of this communion, were from some expressions of God to his people under the Law, and we come short in the understanding of them; but if we could understand them

fully, they come short of the abundance of priviledges that Gods people have under the Gospel, and the reason is, not only because ceremonies were typical, but Gods dealing with his Church, their way in Church order, and government, was but a typical thing, to typifie the estate of Gods people under the Gospel.

Now we know there is a great deal more in the antitype, then in the type, the type is but a shadow of that which is typified; now if the excellency of the estate of the Church under the Law, was but a type of the estate of the Church under the Gospel, then all that is said of the excellency of that condition, is but as a shadow of that which is now, Heb. 10:1 The law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image; The estate of the Church now under the Gospel, is the image of that glory that is to be revealed, but the Law was but a shadow of that image: as a Limner, first draws a dark shadow of a picture in coal, and after makes the Image; look what differenne there is in the excellency of that rude draught by a coal, and the beauty of the Image; such there is between all the excellency of the estate of the Church under the Law, and that there is under the Gospel: and therefore, that which is to be expected now, is a great deal more, and should enflame the desires of all, to seek after such a priviledge.

Consider, that this good which is to be had in communion with Gods people, is a special fruit of the loving kindeness of God; and would you not all be made partakers of the loving kindeness of the Lord? Thriving in your Trades, and outward blessings, are a fruit of the common kindeness of the Lord, but communion with Gods people, is a fruit of his specialloving kindeness: Psalm 36. 7, 8. How excellent is your loving kindeness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of your wings. They

shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house, and you shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures. The satisfaction of the soul with the fatness of Gods house, is the fruit of Gods loving kindeness, yea, the fruit of Gods excellent loving kindeness, and his admirable excellent loving kindeness: It is worth the seeking after, to be satisfied with the fatness of Gods house: And you shall make them drink of the river of your pleasures: While you seek after the comforts of the creature, you seek to drink in puddles, but here are rivers of pleasures.

It is the inheritance of Gods elect ones; Isaiah 65:9 I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Iudah an inheritor of my mountains, mine elect shall inherit it. I do not say, whoever does enjoy communion with Gods people, is elected; but whoever does enjoy it, enjoys that which is the inheritance of Gods elect, such a fruit of Gods loving kindeness, as comes to the elect by inheritance, though some others do get into it, yet none should but only the elect ones; and therefore if you have any hope to be the elect of God, desire after this as part of your inheritance; A man would be loath to lose part of his inheritance. It is an inheritance promised to those who trust in God, and opposed to all the vanity of the world; Isa. 57:13 Vanity shall take them, but he that puts his trust in me, shall inherit my holy mountain.

Thirdly, it has been the only desire of gracious hearts heretofore; and if God has wrought any grace in you, sure your grace is suitable to the grace of others, as David, in Psalm 27:24 This 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: as if there were nothing were the object of Davids desires, but this one thing. And in Psalm 84. what abun-

dance of expressions have we to set out his desires this way? David was here in his banishment; we do not finde him complaining, O my Kingdom that I am like to lose! my brave Palaces, and my brave Chambers, Gardens and attendance that I am like to lose; but the house of God. And in Psalm 42. As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after you, O God! It was not after the enjoyment of God that he might have in his own soul privately, that his heart so panted after, but the appearing before the Lord in his house.

Fourthly, this is the especial work of wisdom: if God has let out any beam of wisdom into your souls, to show unto you any thing of the excellency of Christ, this will be immediately desired; as in that Parable of the wise Merchant, as soon as he had found the Pearl, he went and sold all to buy the field: the meaning is, when a soul comes to have any knowledge of Christ, that Christ is the only Pearl, then it desires to seek to enjoy him, where he is to be enjoyed; it is in the field, in the Church of God, in communion with it; and the wise Merchant would part with any thing, that he might have the field, that is, have communion with Gods people in his Ordinances, and so come to enjoy the Pearl.

Yea fifthly, the reason why God puts any light or truth into the soul, is to put forth the soul to this, to join with his people in this way of communion, Psalm 43:3 What was the reason why the Prophet would have the light and the truth of God? but to lead him to the holy hill, and to the Tabernacle.

Sixthly, by joining yourself with the Saints, and furthering this work of communion, you set up the honor of God much, God is much glorified by this, and will be more and more; Exod. 15:2 I will build him a Tabernacle, the Septuagint renders it, [⟨ in non-

Latin alphabet 〉], I will glorifie him: and it is very observable, that as soon as Moses was delivered from the Egyptians, he thinks of, and resolves, and promises, the building of Gods Tabernacle, which was a type of the Church. If God has delivered you out of any trouble, out of any sickness, in testimony of thankfulness to God for his mercy, set upon this work, to further the building of Gods Tabernacle; Seeing God has spared my life, this shall be one of the first things I will do, I will put in what I can, to the furthering of the building of Gods Tabernacle.

Seventhly, we finde in Scripture, that there is a fearful threatning against all those that shall neglect this, Zach. 14:17 And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth, unto Jerusalem, to worship the King the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain; that is, no blessing of God. You will say, how does this appear to be meant of Gods people now? It appears the holy Ghost did intend the estate of the Church in the time of the Gospel, and therefore it follows in the 20. ver. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord, and the pots in the Lords house shall be like the bowls before the Altar. Now these expressions are spiritually to be understood of the glorious condition of the Church of God in the time of the Gospel, and therefore God takes it ill at the hands of any that shall not come to join with his people.

And further, we have a fearful threat, Isaiah 65. 11, 12. against such as forsake, or forget Gods holy mountain, I will number you to the sword, and ye shall bow down to the slaughter: You may think to provide for yourselves, to live securely, and safely, at your ease, enjoying house, lands, friends, trades; you are loath to hazard yourselves so as others do, to bring yourselves into so much trou-

ble, but as ver. 13, 14. Thus says the Lord, My servants shall eat, and ye shall be hungry, my servants shall drink, and ye shall be thirsty, my servants shall rejoice, and ye shall be ashamed.

Eighthly, if any soul have any desire to come and join with Gods people in his Ordinances, there is a blessing given to that desire, Psalm 84:5 Blessed is the man whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the ways of them. If the ways of your Ordinances be but in your heart, you art blessed, and therefore be very desirous of this blessing, be not satisfied that God gives you outward blessings, and outward comforts in the world, unless you have this; if you know what communion with God in his people means, you cannot but desire to be with them, there is so much of God with them. If you have any spiritual life, you cannot but desire this, because spiritual life will desire to join with that which is like to its self.

If you know what the power of any Ordinance means, you cannot but desire this; There is a great mistake of people, they think if they can but live in a place where they may hear good Sermons, that is enough: know therefore except you have communion with the Saints this way, though you may hear many good Sermons, yet there is a great deal of difference between your hearing of them, and their hearing who are in communion with the people of God, you only come to be made partakers of a mans gifts, you cannot depend upon the gift of such a one as being in office by God, set over you, to watch over your souls: There is a great deal of difference between the dispensing of a gift by way of gift, and by way of office: there may be the same thing done in the exercise of gifts, and yet not to be so powerful, as when it is done by vertue of an office: the ordinary Officers are Pastors, and Teachers, for the build-

ing up of the Church; therefore if you be acquainted with the way of Christ in his Ordinances, for the building up of the body, and if you believe yourselves to be members of his body, you cannot but desire those Ordinances that he has appointed for the building of his body.

The Church is set up as a light, or an ensign upon the top of an hill, to draw others that are near unto it, to come under it: And therefore as we have it in Rev. 22:17 The Spirit, and the Bride say, Come; and let him that hears, say, Come; and let him that is a thirst, come; and whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. The Spirit of God covincing your consciences, says, Come; and the Bride, the Church says, Come; and let all that hear, say, Come; all that hear what has been said of communion with Gods people, say ye to all your friends, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord. We have a Prophesie, Isa. 2:3 that the people of God should encourage one another, and shall say, Let us go up into the house of God, for he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his pathes: O that that Prophesie might be fulfilled now, that you might have such a desire to the ways of God, as to encourage others to come and walk in them, that your hearts may be refreshed with the consolations of God in the way of his Ordinances. And Isaiah 62:12 it is prophesied of the Church, that she should be called, Sought out: O that it might be so, that we could see the hearts of men so set after it, that we might give it that name (Sought out.)

The blessing that the Elders of the City desired upon Ruth, cap. 4:11 when she was married to Boaz, was, The Lord make the woman that is come into your house, like Rachel, and like Leah, which two did buildthe house of Israel: Why like Rachel and Leah,

and not like Rebekah? did not she build the house of Israel likewise? Yes, but all her posterity was not of the Church of God, there came an Esau from her, as well a as Jacob; but all the children of Rachel and Leah were of the Church of God, they were Patriarchs, and this was a special blessing upon them; it is therefore to be accounted a special blessing to be in the Church, and to have all our posterity to be in it.

When you have heard these glorious things of the priviledges of Gods people, if you should neglect the seeking after, the being made partakers of such things, how will you free yourselves from the guilt of prophaneness, that you should prize outward accommodations, more then these spiritual things? Esau was branded for a prophane wretch, because he set no higher price upon his birthright, but set a mess of pottage before it: This is greater then the birth-right they had under the Law, and to prize any carnal thing before these heavenly priviledges, is to be a prophane Esau. I meet with one who interprets that place, 1 Chron. 4:23 These were potters, and those that dwelt amongst plants and hedges, there they dwelt with the King for his work; to be meant of some baser sort of the Jews, who when liberty was proclaimed for their return to Jerusalem, where they might enjoy God in his true worship, yet because they got their living by making pots for the King of Babylon, they thought themselves well as they were, and they rather choose to stay under the hedges of Babylon, then to go to Jerusalem; the holy Ghost brands them for base persons. God loves the gates of Sionmore then all the dwellings of Jacob; take heed you be not found guilty of loving your contentment and gainful dwellings, more then the gates of Sion.

Chapter 21: Objections against joyning with God's people, answered

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But you will say, we could be content and should desire to join with them, but they are so strict in admitting any into their society, that that hinders.

If any that were in communion should prove naught, you would quickly take advantage, and say, You spoke so much of communion with Gods people, see here is one of them, whose life is thus base and vile: When we know the world would take such advantage if any prove naught, yea, and you yourselves will be offended, and cry out of all, for the sin of one; can you blame us if we be careful in taking any into communion with us?

But there is much difficulty in the way.

Psalm 84:6 The way to Zion, it was through the valley of Baca: they might have said, We could have been content to go to Zion, and to worship God there, but we must go through that valley, of tears; but they were content to go through that valley, so that they might appear before God in Zion: Surely when God moves the hearts of men to join with his people, a little difficulty cannot hinder them: Isaiah 66:20 They shall bring your brethren as an offer-

ingto the Lord, upon horses, in Chariots, and Litters. A Litter is used especially for weak sickly people, that are not able to travel otherwise; although they be weakly, and sickly, unfit to travel, yet they whose hearts God moves, will rather come in Litters, then not at all. What difficulty will superstition put a man upon?

It is a note of Mr. Calvins upon that place, Seek ye my face; that superstitious people will go on pilgrimage to the image of such a Lady, or such a Saint, and they will go over Mountains, and through strange Countries, and though they be used hardly, and lose much of their Estate, they satisfy themselves in this, I have that I came for: What have they? The sight of a dumb Idol; if they will endure such hardship for the sight of a dumb Idol, how much hardship should we endure to see God in his Ordinances?

But it may be said thirdly, Whither shall we go to any people, but we shall finde sin there as well as in another place?

For that there is likewise an answer in the same Sermon of Mr. Calvins; It is true, sin and wickedness will be wherever we go, but the case is thus: Suppose there should be a general disease, and there should be one place where there were Physitians, and means of cure; shall any say, Why should I go thither, there is the disease? Go thither though, for there is the cure; so though there be sin every where, yet in the Church, and in communion with Gods people, there is the cure.

But may not a man go to heaven without it?

It is true, it is possible for a man to go to Heaven without it, yet if God does convince a man of an Ordinance, and he neglect it for outward accommodations, it is dangerous: A man may be saved

without Baptism, but where there is the wilful neglect of it, it is dangerous.

How did all that never heard of this way?

It is one thing where there is not that light, and another thing where God has revealed it. You desire Heaven at last, and do you not desire communion with Gods people? When you fail in any thing, you plead infirmity, but when you do neglect any opportunity of gaining strength, how can you plead infirmity?

But how shall we join with any? there is no place but there is brabling, falling out, heart-burning, so as there is no sweet communion.

This is a great stumbling, and I would we could deny it: but if you will take offense at this, you must be offended; It cannot be expected to the end of the world, but there will be dissention amongst the people of God: where there has not been care in laying a good foundation at the beginning, and where there is much liberty, and some are carnal, what else can be expected? A company of sheep, when they are worried by the dog, though they were scattered before, they will now run close together; but in a fair Sun-shine day, when there is no dog to scare them, they will one feed here, and another there, distant from one another: and so it is with Gods people, though it be a foul shame, and a great sin.

Again, there is no more dissention then in other places, for though in other places there seem to be more union, what is the reason?

First, because they are in the dark, and all colours will agree in the dark; but amongst Gods people there is light, and so things that differ are soon discerned.

Secondly, because they are chained together; as the Papists will say, there is no such union between others, as between us; What is the ground? They are held together by an Antichristian chain: Popery does subject the consciences of men to them: they must believe the infalibility of the Pope, and they have no liberty to search things by the Word; and they will not suffer them to be reasoning about the points of Religion; they are in darkness, and when they be chained up in darkness, no wonder though they be close together. This is just as if there should be a couple of men chained to a block, and as they are chained together, they see other men go at a distance from one another; and they that are chained should cry out, See what a distance is between you, we keep close together all the day long; Were this a plea for them? What is that that keeps them together? It is but their chain, and if their chain were off, they would be at as great a distance as others; and therefore though there be great evil in the dissentions of Gods people, yet it is not for such as these are to complain of the evil.

Thirdly, false Religions have more peace, because they will admit of mixture; but our God is ajealous God, he will admit us of no mixture, so of no partner.

But that this might not be an offense, so as to keep us from joining in Communion with the people of God, let us know if this might have been offense enough to keep men from joining with them, it would have kept men in all times from joining with the Churches since Christs time: You know what difference was between Paul and Barnabas, two Apostles. And so the Apostles do complain of the dissentions, and divisions in the Church of Corinth, in the Primitive times, and if that had been enough to keep out men from joining with them, then there had been no join-

ing with the Church of Corinth, and other Churches. Basil complains, I have lived now to the age of a man, and I see more union in Arts and Sciences, then in Divinity; for in the Church, I see such dissentions, as do dissipate it, and rend it asunder. And so between Chrysostom and Epiphanius, the one wished the other might never dye a Bishop, and the other wished that he might never go home alive. And between Jerome and Ruffinus; and Luther and Oecolampadius.

There is a most sad story we have of those that fled to Frankford from England in Queen Maries time, and when they came there, though they fled for Religion, and for their lives, yet there were such grievous breaches, as they sought the lives of one another, picking out some words against the Emperor, in a Sermon that Master Knox had preached in England long before, and now accusing him for them to the Magistrates of Frankford, upon which divers of them were fain to flee. This is through the malice of the Devil, in sowing tares, and therefore if you will be offended in this way of scandal, you must be offended

Yet we must all take heed of giving offense, for though offenses will come, yet wo to them by whom they come: Howsoever there fall out offenses, through the sinful distempers of mens hearts, let not the Ordinance of God be challenged as the cause of these offenses. Joyning in Church-fellowship is a special Ordinance of God, to maintain love and peace amongst his people, yet by the abuse of it many times, divisions and dissentions are stronger, and more bitter in the Church, then elsewhere; let not Gods Ordinance be accused as the cause of it, nor declined for this, but let the wickedness of mens hearts be accused, let us seek to have it purged.

Christ came into the world to dissolve the works of the Devil, and yet the Devil never more raged, then in Christs time, and a while after; We never read of men so possessed of the Devil before Christ came, as they were then; Shall we therefore accuse Christ for bringing the Devil into the world, for being the cause of mens being possessed of the Devil? Those who thus reason against the Ordinance of Christ, because of this evil that falls out by accident upon it, may as well, yea, and certainly would as readily reason against Christ, if they lived in his time, because of such possession of Devils, which never was so before he came, as it was then; but as the true reason why the Devil thus prevailed upon Christs coming, was the just judgement of God against men for contemning and rejecting Christ, who came amongst them: so it is here the judgement of God for the evil of mens hearts in abusing such a blessed Ordinance of love and peace.

So likewise, the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is a Sacrament appointed by God to maintain love and peace in the Church, it is an Ordinance for communion, it has the denomination from thence, it is called communion; Yet what has occasioned such dissentions in the Christian world, as the controversies about the Sacrament? Shall therefore this Ordinance be accused as the cause of dissention? O let us for ever learn this truth, that whatever evil falls out, Gods Ordinances be not blamed, but mans corruption, let that be condemned, and purged. Origen writing to Celsus, says, If you will take offense at the dissentions in Christian Religion, then you may take offense at dissentions in other things. Valens the Emperor objected the same against Christians, Nicephorus 11:45 brings in one Themistius, answering, that those of the Graecian superstition had as great dissentions amongst them.

There is dissention amongst Merchants, and other Trades, you do not say therefore, I will not binde my childe to that Trade, they dissent amongst themselves: If there be profit and accommodations in the Trade, men will not be hindred by this plea, but join with them notwithstanding; And so come you and join with the Saints, though there be some dissentions, though there may be some rigid, distemper'd, hot spirited men, that may cause some trouble, yet there is not so much union and love in all the world as with them; set but aside some, and there are a company, if you be gracious, your soul may take pleasure in, and bless God for; and therefore away with all such stumbling blocks, and reasonings against the Ordinances of God, come you thirsting after the Ordinances of God, and my soul for yours, if you do not finde that sweetness in communion with them, as never was found before.

There are many objections against this way, and many are a long time ensnared in them, but Isa. 57:13 where God promises the inheritance of his holy Mountain, ver. 14. he promises to make the way plain to it. And Exod. 15:13 God guides his people in his strength to his holy habitation; it must be the strength of God that must carry through all objections, all difficulties, over all stumbling blocks, to Gods habitation: Thus much to those that yet are not joined in that nearness of communion with Gods people which they may be.

Chapter 22: Instructions to those who are joyned in communion with God's people

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SEcondly, if it be such a blessed thing to enjoy communion with Gods people, then there are many things that are to be said to those that are joined in communion.

First, labor to approve to God and your own souls, that you are indeed Gods people particularly; you are his people in a way of outward profession, and to men you do approve yourselves, so far as we hope you are Gods people, but you must approve yourselves to God, and to your consciences: If you be conscious to yourselves of any secret filth, and yet dare come and deceive the people of God in joining with them, you bring yourselves in more danger then you are aware. We read Deut. 22. ver. 21. that if a damsel having defiled her self before marriage, and so deceiving a man, he marries with her, when this is discovered, she is to be stoned to death: Uncleanness in such as were single, was not by the Law to be punished with death, but she must dye, although her uncleanness was while she was single, because she deceived the man, in marrying to him in her defilement: So know your filth in not joining to Gods people is not so evil, and dangerous, as if you being

conscious to yourself, dare yet join with them; if you deceive the Church herein, God may justly avenge himself of you, it may cost you your life: Revel. 2:9 I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not.

It is by God accounted blasphemy for any to say they are Jews, and are not, to make profession of godliness, and not to be godly, is blasphemy; Surely then, it is not sufficient to be with Israel, but we must be of Israel, not to be a Jew outwardly, but a Jew inwardly, so as God may own you in the last day, when there shall be a narrow search, who are the true people of God, that then you may be found to be such indeed: it will be a dreadful thing for any of you, that now seem to be of Gods people, and that have lived amongst the sheep, if you should be found amongst the goats, standing at the left hand, when you shall see others of Gods people stand at the right hand, looking upon you, and say, Yonder is one who lived with us, and we could never discover him to be an hypocrite, though sometimes we had jealousies of him, there he stands, now he is discovered; therefore approve yourselves to be of the true Israel of God.

Quest. But who is a true Israelite?

Answ. Such a one as can approve to his own heart, an inward effectual call of God, calling him out of the world, as well as an outward call, by the Ordinances, such a one as has testimony to his own spirit, that he is separated, set apart for God, that he has an inward sanctification of the holy Ghost, such a one as in whose spirit there is no guile; this is a true Israelite indeed.

Secondly, if it be such a great blessing to be joined in union, and communion with the people of God, hence labor to bless God for this great blessing, that is such an amiable, desireable condition; it is your heaven upon earth, that mercy that should sweeten all other mercies, yea, that should sweeten your afflictions to you. Gods holy mountain, Isaiah 57:13 is promised as an inheritance opposed to vanity, and promised as the blessing upon trusting in the Lord, Vanity shall take them, but he that puts his trust in me, shall inherit my holy mountain. Let us not enjoy the world in all their vanity, but bless we ourselves in our God, let us rejoice in our inheritance, the mountain of the Lord. Though we beg our bread, says Luther, is it not made up with this, That we are fed with the bread of Angels, with eternal life, Christ, and the Sacraments, &c?

We have cause to bless God that we might be with Gods people, though in caves, and woods, and banished from all; we have much more cause to bless God when we can be with them thus publiquely, and peaceably, and can go from Gods house, to our own houses, and have communion there; this is the rest that the Land of Canaan did typifie, for which the name of God is to be mganified; God might so have left us, that we should have had communion only with the prophane ones, and drunkards; yea, we might have been cast out from God, to have had communion only with reprobates, and that now we may have communion with the godly, it is a wonderful mercy. Rev. 14. we read of Christ standing upon the Mount Zion, and having so many people standing up, to join with him in Churchfellowship; for that is the meaning of that place, there they were rejoicing at the mercy of the Lord, that they

were upon the Mount with the Lamb; though there might be time, when our Harps hanged upon the Willows, yet if we be called to the Lamb upon Mount Zion, Let us have our Harps in our hands.

Is there nothing in the delight that God has in his people, and the presence of God with his people, and the great priviledges they have, to raise our hearts to praise the Lord, and let it not be verbally, but really. As namely thus; Is it that we are Gods delight, let him be our delight; if we be his treasure, let him be our treasure; if we be his portion, let him be our portion, if he communicates choice mercies to us, let us give choice endeavors to him; if he gives us protection, let us protect his truths and name; if he honor us, let us give him his honor. And so I slip into a third particular, which is a third branch of this exhortation.

3. If there be so much excellency in communion with the people of God, you that are such, take heed you do not darken that excellency that God has put in communion with his people; there are three ways especially that darkens this excellency.

First, if we rest in any Church-priviledge we have, and make that to be our Religion, and the strength of our spirits be let out about these things we enjoy, more then others, so as we begin to decline in the savour and power of godliness; if others that knew us before, when we had not those priviledges and mercies, that we have now, shall say, What good is to be had there? I knew such, and me thinks they had more savour and relish in the ways of God then now, more sweetness and warmth to be had in their company then now there is; Take heed of this, of giving occasion to any to say so. It is a very evil and a dangerous thing to rest in Church-priviledges, to make all our Religion to consist in being in a Church-way, we may have this revealed to us, and yet little of

Heaven revealed. There were two vails of the Tabernacle, one covered the Holy of Holies, the other the place where the Priests entred; it may be we have had the first opened to us, but yet the second which leads to the Holy of Holies, may still be vailed.

Many whose hearts are very carnal, may be much for Church-Ordinances. We have in the 24. of Ezekiel, ver. 21, 22. seven several expressions of carnal hearts, prising Church-priviledges. First, they accounted them their strength. Secondly, the excellency of their strength. Thirdly, the desire of their eyes. Fourthly, that which their souls pitied. Fifthly, their glory. Sixthly, the joy of their glory. Seventhly, that whereupon they set their mindes. What a noise did they make about the Temple of the Lord? The Temple of the Lord, The Temple of the Lord, Ier. 7:4 and yet they were carnal: Take heed therefore you rest not in the Church-priviledges, by this you will deceive yourselves, and darken the excellency of this blessed communion.

Secondly, take heed of darkning this by any scandalous way, as those do who profess themselves to be the people of God, and yet by their wretched ways of sensualities, or any other ways, are a scandal unto Gods people, this is an evil, and a bitter thing. Christ walks amongst the golden candlesticks: Every Church should be a golden candlestick, holding forth light in the Doctrine of it, and golden in the holy conversation of it. We must take heed that there be not so much as a dusting of this golden candlestick of the Lord, by the least looseness, or earthliness of our lives. By scandals in the wicked lives of those that are of Gods people, there is a stain and blot cast upon Church communion; here the name of God is polluted; others that are prophane, pollute the creatures, and their own consciences, but Gods name is not so much polluted by them;

but Gods people do not only pollute their consciences, by their scandalous lives, but pollute Gods name, and it is worse to pollute Gods name, then to pollute your consciences: And therefore know, that joining to the Saints is an aggravation to every sin you commit afterward; and though it be true, that union with the people of God is a mitigation of every cross and affliction, yet it is an aggravation to every sin.

Yea, if men were born for no other end and purpose, but to do mischief, they could not do more then this, to join with the people of God, and then live scandalously. O brethren, let us pray to God, that we may never live to that day, to darken the great excellency of the fellowship of the Saints: It were better that God should take a thousand of us out of the world, then that we should live to darken the profession of Gods name, in union with his people; this does more mischief, then all the persecuters under Heaven can do.

The Church of God has never been in a better condition, then when their persecuters have raged most; the raging of persecuters have not darkned the excellency of the Church, but the scandalous lives of members of a Church have darkned the glory of the Church: though by persecution others may be afraid to make profession of the truth, yet all the persecution in the world cannot take off mens consciences, and cause them in their consciences to think such are not in the truth, because they are persecuted; but the scandalous lives of those that are Professors, do make men think in their consciences that this way is not right, and therefore make them think they do God good service in hating such men, persecuting such men, and there is more evil in this, to be an occasion to make men think this way is not good, then to make men afraid to venture upon this way. And therefore consider what a great deal of

mischief scandalous lives do, and if you finde your hearts inclining to any sensual way, that you are like to give scandal, take heed of it, for it is the greatest mischief that can be devised. Those who join with the Church of God, should walk so, as to be an ornament to it, not a stain, a blot, to cast filth upon it; Isa. 49:18 Behold these that gather themselves to you, you shall surely clothe you with them all, aswith an Ornament: Consider how far many of you are from being an ornament to the Church; are not your lives rather blemishes? This is a sore evil. Better it is to endure any misery, then to do that which shall make Gods people ashamed of us.

The third thing that darkens the excellency of communion with Gods people, is dissentions in judgement or affection, this makes it appear to be black in the eyes of the world. Sozomen reports of a Devilish policy of Julian, to raise a scandal against the Church: He sent for those Bishops that were banished in Constantius his time, on purpose that he might cause dissention in the Church by them. Take heed you have not a hand in darking this excellent condition, no not in this way. In the body, solutio continui, is more dangerous then the corruption of a humor: Let us labor so far as possibly we can, to make it excellent by peaceableness; this is that which is prophesied of for the Church, Isa. 33:20 Your eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation: And mark the blessing that follows upon this quietness; A Tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; but there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers, streams, &c. In Zech. 14. ver. 9. there is a Prophesie, that the Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and his name one: We now profess one God, but we do as it were call him by several names;

but that will be a blessed time, when as there shall be but one Lord, so his name shall be one; there shall be a blessed agreement in the profession of his name, oneness of heart is a blessing of the new Covenant.

I remember Eusebius reports in the life of Constantine, that he was so much troubled for dissentions in the house of God, as he could not sleep in the night, and they did more disquiet him, then all his wars; yea he says, they caused him to sob and sigh: and so they should be disquietings to our spirits, and we should study to make up breaches. S. Augustine, ep. 15. has this expression, speaking of the divisions of some of the Church, says he, I would fall down at their feet, and desire them with all the might I have they would not do thus and thus, that they would not cast reproaches upon one another. And observe the spirit of St. Paul, Phil. 2. 1, 2, 3. If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, &c. Doves cannot endure to be amongst Ravens, but where they see meekness and love, there those of Dove-like dispositions love to be; Isaiah 60:8 Who are they like Doves, that flie to their Windows? Brethren, if we would expect to grow up in the ways of godliness, it must be by love and union together, Colossians 2:2 Being knit together in love, unto all riches of full assurance. When hearts are knit together in love, then a Church thrives, and grows up to all riches of grace.

As it is in the body of a man, when the members of the body are out of joynt, they can neither receive strength from the body, nor be useful to the body. And therefore the Apostle would have us be careful, if any were out of joynt, to set him in joynt again, that is the propriety of the word. Gal. 6:1 If a man be overtaken in a fault,

ye which are spiritual, restoresuch a one; set such a one in joynt, that he may thrive, as members in joynt thrive. Christ is called the corner stone; now a corner stone is that which joins both sides together; now Christ loves to be in the place of joining, where there is a joining in mutual fellowship: Although there be variety in gifts, although the garment of the Kings daughter, the Church, be of divers colours, yet why may it not be like Christs garment without seam?

For the Lords sake let us take heed of divisions and quarrels, especially let us take heed that under the pretense of Religion, we do not maintain quarrels, for this is to bring down the holy Ghost, from appearing like a Dove, to appear in the form of a Vulture, or Raven; You know what S. Paul says of speaking with several tongues, will not he that comes in say you are mad? When wicked men hear of so many dissonant opinions, of so many dissentions among you, will they not think you mad? And because you all pretend Religion, will they not think that that kinde of Religion which you pretend is a mad thing? So far shall you be from making the way of Christ honorable in their eyes, which yet should be the thing you should more desire, seek after, rejoice in, then your lives. Religion has the name from binding, and certainly it is the best band of humane societies; there is great reason then that we seek to keep it in the band of unity. And that is the third thing I would say to those that are in Church-fellowship, not to darken the excellency that is in communion with the Saints.

The fourth exhortation is, that you would walk and live so, as by your walking you may draw others to be in love with this fellowship: as God has made it to be glorious, so that you would set out the glory of it to others, that all that go by you should say, Surely

they are the blessed of the Lord, certainly God is with them, and therefore we will likewise join with them; O what a blessed thing were it, if we could by our lives convince others, that we are the plants of the Lords own planting! The lives of men convince more strongly then their words: The tongue perswades, but the life commands, is the speech of an Ancient. We read in Rev. 14. Those that stood with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, enjoying communion there, they had his Fathers name written upon their foreheads, the glory of God shined in their foreheads; a convincing conversation is that which God calls for at your hands. Let the name of God be precious to you: Is it not a precious thing to live so, as to bring honor to God? to hold forth the honor of God, is all the glory we can bring to God; let us be known to be those we profess ourselves to be, separated from the world, by the holiness of our lives; as Tertullian says of the Christians in his time, they were known to be Christians from the amendment of their former lives. You are joined near to Christ, as a girdle about a mans loyns; take heed you be not as that girdle, Jer. 13. A rotten girdle, fit for nothing, so were the Church of the Jews at that time; but you should be as that girdle of Christ, Rev. 1. A golden girdle about his paps; By which the beauty and glorious condition of the Church in the Primitive times is described.

Let us walk so, as to manifest and hold forth the beauty and amiableness of godliness in the eyes of all, that they may see it whether they will or no, and to force esteem from the consciences of men. Cant. 6:4 it is said of the Church, She is terrible as an army with banners; A Church of God that walks close to the rule, is terrible to guilty consciences. Let us walk so, as when the Balaams of the world look upon us, they may see our comely order, so as to be

forced to say, O how goodly are your tents, O Jacob, and your Tabernacles, O Israel! as the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the Rivers side, as the trees of Lign-Aloes which the Lord has planted, and as Cedars beside the waters, Numbers 24:5 St. John Epist. 1. chap. 1:3 expresseth his desire for those whom he wrote to, that they might have fellowship with him, and the rest of the Saints; and he brings this as an argument, Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; this would be a mighty prevailing argument indeed, if we walked so before others, as to manifest that we in truth have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; then our fellowship would be desireable indeed.

Chapter 23: How should God's people so walk, as to draw others in love with their communion

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But how should Gods people so walk, as to bring others in love with their communion?

First, in the general, take heed of those sins especially, that those which you converse with are guilty of, that they be not able to spy the same sins in you, which their consciences accuse themselves of: take heed of the pollutions of the world. Cant. 6:10 Who is she that looketh forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an army with banners? The Church of God ought to be fair as the Moon, but the Moon has spots, and therefore it follows, Clear as the Sun, and then, she is terrible as an army with banners: Either she will draw the hearts of others to love her, or she will daunt their hearts. Yea, let them not see any defilement answerwable to their defilement: for wicked men, though they cannot spy evils in the godly, yet surely they think they are guilty of the sins which they live in, as well as themselves: as Nero, because he was unchast, thought all the world was unchast: and therefore the godly should labor to keep themselves

from such sins as the world is guilty of, that they may not spy such in them. A godly man should not only labor to be kept from outward defilement; that may be done by the strength of a natural conscience, without any sanctifying grace: and it should be a shame to one that has grace, if he should not do that; if he cannot do that, how can he purge himself from secret, and spiritual evils that are in the heart?

Secondly, if you would walk so as to draw others in love to communion with you, walk in singleness and uprightness of heart. Acts 2. 46, 47. They did eat their bread with gladness, and singleness of heart, praising God: mark what follows; having favor with all the people, and God added to the Church: Singleness of heart makes Church-communion lovely.

But what is that uprightness, and singleness of heart that we are to walk withal?

By that I mean this; namely, to be sure that there be an answerableness in our conversation unto all those principles of godliness that we profess: for take the most strict principles of Religion, and the men of the world cannot speak against them, and when it comes to, this is all they have to say, Ah! if it were in truth, and in sincerity, it were something, but they are hypocrites: they acknowledge the principles are right, but they think the principles are so strict, that it is impossible to walk up to them: Ah! say they, give me one that does walk up to his principles, and we will say something to you.

And therefore, you that are godly, consider of the many principles of godliness that you profess: as namely, that the least sin is a greater evil, then all the evils in the world; and labor that all your

whole life may hold out this principle, fearing the least sin, and the least occasion of sin. It is our principle, that we must make the Word the Rule of all our actions: Now let your conversations hold out this principle before others; And that the peace of conscience is of infinite more value, then all the delights of the world: Hold out this principle; That the glory of God is the thing to be aimed at in all things. Now the care of Gods people, if they would so walk, as to draw others in love of communion with them, is not to talk of these things, but to hold them forth in their lives, that men that converse with them, may read them in their lives; Gods people should so walk, that if there were no talking of such principles, yet they may be found in their conversations.

Thirdly, if you would so walk, as to draw others in love of communion with you, then walk so, that those that are without may see a constant evenness, and proportion in your ways, that one action may be proportionable to another; let them take us when they will, and where they will, we are always the same: though there be never so much forwardness in some of Gods ways, if there be not forwardness in others, there can be no conviction, and there is no beauty: As in nature, so in grace; The beauty of nature is proportion; the beauty of nature is not in the greatness of one member, or in color, but in the proportion: So the beauty of a Christians conversation, lies in the proportion of a Christians conversation; that there may be suitableness between one thing and another, that the men of the world may not see us halt: Many are hot in some one thing, and remiss in others: I condemn not forwardness in any way of God, but where a man is forward in one thing, and remiss in another, there is a disproportion in his ways, he goes long and short; as where one leg is shorter then another, there must needs be halt-

ing; this is a dishonor to Religion, this takes away the beauty of Religion, and such as these are, will never convince any of the excellency that is in communion with the Saints.

Fourthly, if you would walk so, as to draw others in love to communion with you, then labor for to be eminent in those things that the men of the world have skill in.

As first, the works of justice: The men of the world think men must be just in all their ways, and all their dealings; and though it be true there may be justice where there is only morality, yet there can be no Religion where there is not Justice, for Religion teaches Justice more then morality does; it is a shameful thing for men that make profession of Religion, not to be raised above moralities: now when the men of the world that have skill in this, shall see that godliness teaches men to be just, and that their's is a more accurate justice then that which is in the world, this convinces men; but when they shall see men talking so much of godliness, and Church-discipline, and yet when they come to deal with them, they are then so cunning, and will fetch over men as well as any, as griping as any, and men know not where to finde them, these are burdensome Members to a Church, that wrong Religion: your injustice in dealing with men, is a greater evil then the injustice of any moral man, in this regard, the injustice of a moral man does not make men shy of dealing with all moral men, but injustice in you makes men shy of dealing with any that make profession of Religion, and to say, none are so deceitful as they; and though that objection does come usually from malice, yet it cannot be denyed, but those that make profession, give too too much advantage for it.

Secondly, labor for an eminency in performing the duties of your relations, and your callings. As wives should fulfil their duties, and every one be faithful in the duty that God requires of their places, and if this be not in you, you may talk your hearts out of the excellency of communion with Gods people, they will not believe you: And therefore the Apostle, when he urges the Church of God so to walk as to convince others; mark how he instances in the duties of relation, 1 Pet. 2:12 Having your conversation honest amongst the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorifie God in the day of visitation: But what good works must we do, which they beholding shall glorifie God in the day of visitation? You shall finde he instances in the duties of relation, as between Magistrates and Subjects, Masters and Servants, Husbands and Wives.

And therefore, you servants that are under subjection, especially under carnal Governors, let them see, since you have joined with Gods people, that you are more faithful and obedient then ever before, and that they never had any servant in their lives, so subject, and obedient, and faithful as you are, that did not make that profession that you do. And so wives, carry such respect, and show such humility towards your husbands, though they be naught, that they may say, Since my wife made this profession of Religion, I finde it in her carriage; and so children. It is a wonderful shameful thing that any servant or childe, that is but civil, should go beyond a godly servant or childe in diligence, and obedience, and faithfulness; says Jerome, What a shameful thing is it, That faith should not enable to do that, which Infidels are able to do?

Thirdly, The men of the world have skill in peaceable dispositions, labor to be of a peaceable disposition: Blessed are the peacemakers; let them not see rigidness in your ways. The Jews observe upon Exod. 25:3 that there was no iron amongst the stuff of the Tabernacle: What do rigid iron dispositions in Gods Tabernacle, in Gods Church?

Fourthly, they have skill in affability, and courteousness; Religion does not teach men to be sowre, but as courteousness and affability is a moral vertue, so it is to be carried in a higher way in Christians then in others. Many men who have no grace, seem to carry themselves like Christians; what a shame then is it for Christians, who have grace, not to carry themselves like men?

Fifthly, the men of the world have skill in love, and therefore be eminent in that, that they may see your love towards one another, bearing one anothers burthens. As the curtains of the Tabernacle were joined together by loops, so should the members of the Church be joined one to another by love. In the Primitive times we finde the Heathens, and enemies of the Church, did acknowledge there were no people in the world did love one another so as Christians did. The Church of Philadelphia is blamed for nothing; Philadelphia signifies brotherly love; when brotherly love rules in Churches, they grow to a blameless conversation before God and man.

Sixthly, be bountiful, and liberal: The men of the world having skill in these things, and they seeing no eminency of these in you, they say, Let them make what profession they will in those things we have no skill in, we believe them not, they are a company of false hearted people.

Fifthly, if you would walk so, as to draw others in love to communion with you, labor to manifest the power of godliness, by doing such things as the men of the world cannot do; if the men of the world can see, that men that make profession of Religion are able to do that they cannot do, they see now there is some reality in Religion. You know how it was with Pharaoh and his Magicians; all the while Moses wrought such things that Pharaohs Magicians could do, Pharaoh was not convinced; but when Moses did such things, that the Magicians could not do, this convinced them: and so for you to do that the men of the world do, or can do, this does not convince them; says Christ, If I had not done such things as no man did, you had had no sin.

What is it to do those things which the men of the world cannot do?

First, the resisting of strong temptations; every slight temptation overcomes them, but when they shall see you stand out against powerful temptations, they see you have a power beyond theirs. When Nebuchadnezzar saw the three Children in the fiery furnace, and they were not touched by the fire, he was convinced; so when the men of the world shall see you in the midst of prevailing temptations, and you keep yourselves untouched, they will be convinced, and say, Surely there is a power with these that we have not.

Secondly, the overcoming of strong passions, this convinces them: When as those you live withal, shall know there was a time you were outragious, and forward at every thing that did displease you, and since God has wrought on your hearts, you can be meek, and patient, and those passions and temptations cannot overcome you now, that did before. When Christ commanded the winds and

seas, and they were still at his word, they wondred and said, Who is this, that the winds and seas obey him? And so, when you have storms and passions arise in you, and you by the word of God can make all quiet, men will wonder, and say, Who is this?

Thirdly, if you be able to deny yourselves in your wills and ends, this is a thing they cannot do; but now the godly, if there come any word of God to show their wills are not right, they do not only change the thing their will is upon, but their will is bowed to Gods word. And as it was with David, when he had Saul at an advantage, and might have had his own will upon Saul, and yet spared him, how did this convince Saul? Who having his Enemy, would have spared him? As if he had said, If I had had you at an advantage, at my own will, I must have had my ends; And so is there any thing that the men of the world can see you may have your ends in, you should rather deny yourselves in them.

Brethren, Gods people are to strive, and contend with the world above all people, and that for God; now then, that we may manifest unto the world, that when we do contend with them, that it is meerly-for God, when it comes to ourselves, and our own causes, we should be the most yieldable people in the world. There is a time when we must contend with the world, our consciences put us upon it, and the cause of God puts us upon it, and then they say we are stubborn proud spirits; now to take off this reproach, and to convince them, it is not self-will; therefore when it is only your own cause, yield to the utmost you can, and this will convince them, when you do not yield, that it is not for self, but for God, and conscience.

Fourthly, do good for evil, this is that which the men of the world cannot do. We must labor to do some singular thing for God; if you only do good for good, the Publicans can do so, but we must do good for evil. As it is reported of Bishop Cranmer, they used to say of him, If they would have Bishop Cranmer their friend, let them do him some ill turn: Do you not think how you may be even with them that have done you an ill turn, but rather go home, and all the way you are going, be musing, and studying how you may return some good to that man that has done you wrong, and so you shall not be even with him, but above him; by this you shall heap coals of fire upon his head: This beseems the people of God, that are the peculiar of God. It was a notable speech that Balaam had in Numbers 23:9 Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the Nations: They are a people peculiar amongst themselves; if they be such a people as are so peculiar, as they must not be reckoned amongst the Nations, then they must do such things, as cannot be reckoned amongst the ways and works of the Nations. If we should read all Authors of the Heathens, yet we may finde such things in Gods people, as we cannot finde in all the Authors.

Fifthly, be joyful in affliction, rejoicing in God and Christ, then when all outward delight fails in very convincing: If people speak so much of faith, and living by faith on the promises, and yet if they be crost in any thing in the world, their hearts are as low and sinking as the hearts of any; when men of the world see this, they say, Where is all their faith? But if they see when affliction comes, even such as would make their hearts sink, and the people of God carry them out chearfully, they will say, Surely there is some real principle in them that we cannot see. As Justin Martyr, when he

saw the Christians suffer such great things so chearfully, says he, Surely these men have more then the men of the world, they have other principles, and so he enquired what manner of people they were, and so came to embrace the truth.

It is not so much to be merry and joyful over their cups; the people of God cannot be merry and joyful in sensual delights, but put them into afflictions and hardships, and they can be chearful more then you, they are not so dumpish and sad as the men of the world think they are. Christ said, I have meat to eat of which you know not of: The light of the candle is fed with stinking tallow, but the light of the Sun has influence from Heaven to feed it, and so is not soon blown out: And so the joys of Gods people have other matter to feed them, and are not so soon puffed out as the joys of the world.

Sixthly, in the people of God there should be seriousness mixed with chearfulness, and the mixture of both these makes Religion beautiful; for if professors of Religion will be merry, they presently run into a lightness, and vanity of Spirit; and if they think to be serious, they presently grow dumpish and sullen; but if we could do so, be so chearful in our way, as to manifest seriousness, and so serious, as to manifest chearfulness, this will be a mighty convincement to the world.

Seventhly, the men of the world cannot be humble in the increase of gifts; but the more increase of gifts Gods people have, the more humble they should be. They shall see since the people of God did close one with another, they are encreased in gifts; a poor boy, or girl, or servant, that understood nothing before, now they can understand more, and with their understanding their hearts are more humble then before; this is a great convincement, That in

the exercise of your gifts, there may not appear much of yourselves, but much of God, is that you should much labor after in the exercise of your gifts; let them see that God has acquainted you with such divine mysteries, as should make them admire; Gods people should not only labor to have words that are flat, but to have such gifts, as that they should know the secrets of God, and of their own hearts, and of the hearts of others. You know when he in 1 Cor. 14. that was ignorant came into the Church, and saw gifts so exercised, as the secrets of his heart were opened, he said, Surely God is there. We should not exercise gifts so, as to show our parts in them, but exercise them in such an humble manner, as to convince the world of the excellency in communion with the Saints.

O brethren, labor to practice these things: O what a blessed thing were it that all of us might come to convert souls! Though women may not preach in the Church, they may preach abroad in their lives, and in their families, by their humble and godly conversations; 1 Cor. 7:16 What knowest you, O wife, whether you shall save your husband? Labor so to walk, as some soul may bless God for you, and bless God for your joining with his people: Heretofore I was a poor ignorant wretch, and minded nothing but to satisfy the flesh, and heard many Sermons, and they never wrought upon me, but now I see the holy conversation of such, this works upon me; No member of a Church should satisfy himself, until he have seen himself to work upon some by his conversation. The people that God intends to bring to join with his Church, are said to flye like Doves to their windows, Isaiah 60:8 Now Doves love white, clean, and lightsome places; therefore such should be our conver-

sations, so white, clean, and lightsome, as those in whom God begins any work of grace, to be of Dove-like dispositions, may come flying to us; and this is the fourth branch of the exhortation.

Fifthly, if there be so much good to be had in this communion, labor to walk so one with another, that when any come to join with you, they may finde that made good which they heard of: though they do suffer affliction to come and join with you, yet when they are come in, they may finde all made up, that they may say, Before I heard by the speech of others, there was such a comfortable life in communion with such, which made me venture much, and now I have found it made up to the full; yea, half of it was not told to me: O let us not give occasion to any to go and complain to God, and say, I heard there was much good to be had in communion with your people, and thereupon I was content to venture much to enjoy it, and now I finde no such thing, I finde nothing but jealousies, and wranglings, and pride, and as much earthliness as before: If you give any occasion to go to God, and to make his moan thus, it will go ill with you; but give occasion to others to bless God for you: therefore let there be a sweet union among you. It is a promise in Zeph. 3. They shall serve the Lord with one consent, with one shoulder, so the words are: So every one of you should set yourselves to serve the Lord, quickning one anothers spirits, careful for one anothers good.

And when you come together, bring your living ends together: When you lay brands together, you do not lay the dead ends together, they will never kindle, but you lay the living burning ends together, and so they kindle: And so when you come together, lay your living ends together, that when you go away, you may say, I

feel my heart warmed; you should never meet together, but that you might bless God for your meeting, and by this you shall show there is a power in this Ordinance of God.

It is observable, the great strength that there is in a civil Ordinance, one would think there should be more in a spiritual Ordinance: How comes it to pass, that two, that it may be a moneth or two before were meer strangers, and yet they coming to join in marriage, if it be a true joining, their hearts close more together, then to Father or Mother, to their children, that came out of their own bodies, or brother, or sisters that lay in the same womb, they cannot have their hearts so knit together, as these two have: From whence comes this? From the vertue of Gods Ordinance; if it were not an Ordinance of God, it could not produce such an effect: If marriage, which is an Ordinance of God in civil things, and so a civil Ordinance, have such power to unite the heart, how much more spiritual Ordinances, and communion, which is the highest Ordinance for uniting the heart? and therefore we should look for more then a natural power in it: For people to love one another, and to do good to one another, has a natural power to unite the heart; But do you look upon this communion as having the greatest power to unite the heart, by vertue of an Ordinance, that so all who have suffered never so much to join with you, may see all recompenced up to the full, and never have a repenting thought for that they have suffered and ventured.

Chapter 24: We should satisfie our selves in communion with the Saints, and improve it to the utmost advantage we can

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AGain, another branch of the exhortation is this; if there be so much good to be had in this communion, labor to satisfy yourselves in it, so as to take heed of breaking from it; the forsaking the assemblies of the Saints, is made by the Apostle an argument of Apostacy, Heb. 10:25 Not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is. Do not think to go and make up your comfort with going, and joining with the world. Certainly, when men that are members of a Church shall for form come and join with Gods people, but their consciences tell them, when they are in the world, their hearts are more content and satisfied; this is an argument of a carnal heart, that has dallied with God. It is a dishonor to godly men; as men that are raised to high priviledges, count it a dishonor to company with those that are mean. Those who were free of the City of Rome, were not to be free of any other place. It is enough that we are Citizens of the new Jerusalem, let us satisfy ourselves in this.

Godly men, though never so poor, are to look upon those who are carnal, as base and vile, especially to think to take satisfaction in eating, and drinking, and playing with them, when as there are such holy Ordinances, and high priviledges with Gods people, to satisfy yourselves in, and in those your hearts withdraw from them; Certainly, your hearts must needs be very carnal and sensual: Can God take it well at your hands, to go and shake hands with his enemies? Job 8:20 God will not take the wicked by the hand; so it is in some of your books; Why then will you? can you be in any place where you seest God dishonored, and be merry? Certainly, the sight of sin, wherever it is committed, should cause horror in the heart; thus it was with David, Psalm 119:53 Horror has taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake your Law: It should make men forbear to come into such company where they see sin committed.

It is reported of Mezentius the Hetrurian Tyrant, that he devised this torment, to chain a live man, and a dead man together, and so wherever he went, he should have the dead man to rot before him, and stink in his nostrils, till he was poysoned with it: Surely this was a great misery, a most grievous death: And Gods people should count it as great an evil to have filthy dead wretches, that are unsavoury in any thing that is good, to be joined with them: David prays in Psalm 26:9 Gather not my soul with sinners: Would you not have your souls gathered with sinners hereafter? for the present take heed of joining with them. It was the prayer once that I have heard of a good Gentlewoman, when she was to dye, being in much trouble of conscience, O Lord, let me not go to hell where the wicked are, for Lord you knowest, I never loved their company here: She prayed with David, Lord gather not my

soul with sinners: If you would have evidence that God will not gather your souls to sinners, but that he will gather them to the godly, labor to satisfy your souls with Gods people.

Seventhly, if there be so much good in this way, labor to improve it to the utmost: Therefore is there a price in the hand of a fool? This is a great price; if many had seen the days that we have seen, how would they have blessed God? what use would they have made of them? Seeing God therefore has given you this opportunity, improve it: if you have any advantage in your trading, you will improve it. Take heed of such things as may hinder that good you may have in communion with the Saints: What are they?

The first thing that I would forewarn Christians of, it is sullenness of spirit, that makes them love solitariness rather then communion; and this is amongst many that have true grace: and certainly it comes sometimes from abundance of pride, for if they come among others, they think they shall discover their weakness, and rather then they will discover their weakness, they will deprive themselves of all that good which they might have. Consider how unfaithfully you deal with God, God has given you a talent, and you are not to wrap it up in a napkin, but to use it for God. Again, it is a wrong to the Church, for your gifts are not your own, but the Church has an interest in them, and therefore you are to use them for their good. Again, you do much wrong to the Ordinance of God, when you do prefer the contenting of a pettish humor, before the Ordinance of God. God threatens it as a judgement, Hosea 4:16 To feed his people as a Lamb in a large place; that is, to scatter them from the fold, that they should go one and one, as a Lamb bleating alone in the wilde wilderness: take heed you do not bring it upon yourselves.

Again, there is a great deal of danger in this solitariness of spirit.

First, there will soon grow a wonderful driness, and barrenness of spirit: It is just with God to deprive men of gifts, that have not hearts to improve the gifts that God has given them.

Again, you will be ready to run into error, and strange conceits; for if you observe the workings of your hearts, you have strange opinions of things, and think you are sure of them, and when you come amongst others, though you could not see the weakness of your opinions, others can quickly see them, whereas if you will not come amongst them, but be stiff in your opinions, you may run into errors.

Again, you will be lyable to the temptations of Satan; immoderate solitariness, is joined with immoderate melancholy, which is the common shop of the Devil for to forge his temptations in, and it is a great evil to keep the Devils temptations close; and therefore come into communion with the Saints.

And secondly, when you do come into communion, take heed of pride; pride sometimes keeps away from communion, and pride is a great hinderance to the benefit of communion: As round things do not join but only in one point, but take flat things, and they join in every point; and so hearts swoln with pride cannot join with others, but only in such particulars as will serve their turns, but if we have plain hearts, we will close in all things. If a bladder be blown with wind, when you touch it or handle it, it goes away, but when it is pricked, it falls, and you may handle it: so hearts that are swoln with pride, will not close as low humble hearts will. A swoln member is fit for nothing, but all members must serve

that; As a gouty leg, all the members must tend that, but it is unfit to be serviceable to any: and so a proud heart, it expects every one should attend it, but when it comes to be serviceable to any, it is unfit.

Thirdly, take heed of envying at the gifts and graces of one another; the wicked men of the world do envy one another, because the good they look upon as their last end, is so strait, that if one have much room, the other is straitned; but the godly need not be straitned, their good is in God, and they have place enough to expatiate themselves, and satisfy themselves. If men were riding or sailing in a narrow passage, they would envy him that were sailing before them, that hinders; but in the Sea they do not envy them, because they have room enough to sail: So in Christians that place their happiness in God, where there is room enough, there should not be envy.

Fourthly, take heed of pettishness, and frowardness, or passions, these do darken communion: the meek spirit is fit for communion. Moses suffered much for communion with Gods people, and indeed he was fit to get good, and to do good by communion, he was the meekest man upon earth.

Fifthly, take heed of self-ends in communion: when men are so politick, as to wheel about their own ends, and not seem to aim at such things, this hinders the sweetness of communion, and though such may carry things a while, as not to be discerned, yet at last they will be discerned to have self-ends, and all will be shy of them. If you would have sweet communion indeed, labor for open hearts to one another, that you may trust one another.

Sixthly, labor so to improve your communion now, as every time you do enjoy it, it may make your hearts to spring, putting you in mind of that blessed communion you shall have with God, and his people; and think thus, If we finde so much joy, in enjoying communion with Gods people here, what will there be in that communion our souls shall have in Heaven, when we shall not only have communion with some few of Gods servants, but with all, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, and Patriarchs? As Cicero has a notable speech concerning the happiness of his death; O famous day, that I shall go to the counsels of those famous men, that I shall go from this rout of people, and go and converse with those famous men! But brethren, for us to think that we through Gods mercy, here have communion with Gods people, and shall hereafter enjoy communion with the Saints of God for ever, what is it worth the enduring? if it were but the enjoying of communion with Moses alone, it were worth all you have endured; and therefore comfort yourselves for the present in that you have, and let your hearts be raised in hope of better things hereafter, when you shall have them perfect. Now we rejoice that we are with Gods people, if they be conferring about any thing of God and Christ; but hereafter we shall see nothing but God in his Saints, we shall see the full glory of God shining in them; then the very bodies of the Saints shall shine more glorious then the Sun; How glorious shall their souls be then? There shall then be no more danger of fallings out, and frampold carriages, no more jealousies and suspitions, but we shall see the image of God perfectly in them; and we shall have perfect love to rejoice in the salvation of any as in your own salvation, and then we shall be with them in all holy exercises: It is good to be with Gods people, to trade with them, but better to

be with them to pray with them, to receive Sacraments with them; the better the exercise is, the better it is to be with them: Then what is it to enjoy communion with them, and to be always in holy exercises, always singing praises to the Lamb, and giving glory to him that sits on the Throne for evermore, blessing God for the great Mystery of the Gospel? And therefore improve your communion so here, as not only to put you in mind of your communion hereafter, but to prepare and fit your souls for it: And thus is this point finished; and now we are come to the seventh and last Doctrinal point, out of Moses his Choice, which is from the last words of the Verse, Then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

The Doctrinal Conclusion is this:

Chapter 25: Whatsoever is but for a season, cannot satisfie a gracious heart

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That whatever is but for a season, cannot satisfy a gracious heart: Or, Nothing but thatwhich is eternal, can satisfy a gracious heart.

Moses, if he would have been satisfied with any thing that abided but for a season, he might have had satisfaction enough; but his heart was set upon eternity, and therefore could have no satisfaction in things that were but for a season. St. Paul says in 2 Cor. 4:18 We look not at things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. We do not so much as look at things seen, for they are temporal, but there are other things that our hearts are upon, which are eternal; we look not at things that are seen, but at things not seen: The word notes these two things especially, not only that we believe things that are not seen, eternal things, but we look at them, we mind them; we do not much mind things that are temporal, but eternal things are minded of us.

Secondly, we do not make things that are seen, that are temporal, to be our scope and aim; that which satisfies the heart, is that which is looked at as the end, and aim, and scope of the spirit: so that if a man could look at things seen as his aim and scope, they would satisfy him, but nothing that is seen can be the scope and aim of a gracious heart, but eternal things are his scope and aim, and therefore they satisfy him.

That nothing which is but for a season, can satisfy a heart rightly principled, appears:

First, because there is no proportion between an immortal soul, and fading transitory things; indeed the sensitive soul that does depend upon the present temper of the body, that is satisfied only with present things, and the reason is, because it depends upon that which is present; but the rational soul being immortal, and not depending upon any such thing, whatever it be that continues not for ever, cannot satisfy it.

Secondly, a gracious heart knows the things of eternity after another manner then any other does, God has revealed eternal things to it, and upon the sight of those eternal things, it comes to know it is taken off from all temporal things; for all temporal things, be they never so glorious, yet in comparison of eternal, they are but as the point of a centre to an infinite circumference: Indeed while a man knows no better then temporal things, the heart is let out upon them, as the greatest good, but when it comes to know the things of eternity, the heart is greatned, and all temporal things are but small to that soul; when it comes to know what an eternal God is, and what an eternal crown is, and an eternal inheritance, when it knows that God does intend to communicate him-

self eternally to his creature, it cannot be satisfied, unless it knows it shall live to enjoy those things that God shall communicate eternally.

Thirdly, a gracious spirit has received an eternal principle within it, that does work the heart beyond things for a season, that works the heart all to eternity; for the work of Grace that is in the soul, it is begotten of the immortal seed of the Word, and it is an eternal principle, that is infused by God into it, and therefore it works beyond things that are for a season; every creature works according to the nature of its principles; as sensitive creatures according unto sensitive principles, and rational creatures according unto rational principles, but grace is beyond reason, and is of an everlasting nature, and therefore it works the heart beyond all that is but for a season.

Fourthly, a gracious heart cannot be satisfied with things that are but for a season, because God has loved such a heart with an eternal love, and there is the impression of the same love in the soul, that carries the soul to God in some measure with that love wherewith it is loved, that causes the soul to love God with an eternal love, and not to be satisfied with any work of love that it can work in time; and therefore grace must have eternity for to manifest the love again that it has to God, or else it has not a love proportionable in its measure to the love wherewith God has loved it, but that is in every gracious heart.

Fifthly, there is a kinde of image of Gods infiniteness in the souls of men, and according to this print of Gods infiniteness, the enjoyment of God is desired, where the heart is gracious: though it is true, our souls are not infinite creatures in themselves, yet having a print of Gods infiniteness upon them, they manifest this in

their infinite desires; and because they cannot enjoy an actual infinite good in themselves, therefore they desire an infinite good in duration at least; let there be never so much good, yea, as much as an infinite power can let out for present good, yet this does not satisfy the soul, unless it can have it infinitely for duration; for an enlightned soul knows that it is not capable to hold that good that an infinite God can, and has a purpose to communicate to his creature, if it should come all together, therefore it desires to enjoy communication of what good it is capable of to all eternity. To receive good from God is not sufficient, except it be received in an infinite way; now it cannot receive any thing infinite for the present, and therefore it must have it in an infinite way in regard of duration.

Sixthly, there is nothing that is but for a season, can satisfy a gracious heart, but it must be some eternal thing, because such a one has received light from God to understand the infinite consequence of eternity, to make any good to be infinite, or any evil to be infinite: When as one enjoys any good, and knows it shall continue infinitely, it makes that present good to have a kinde of infiniteness in it; and and so for evil, if there be any evil upon the heart, though the evil should be never so little, yet if it be an evil, and the soul knows it must continue infinitely, it puts a kinde of infiniteness to every moment; and that is the principal thing that makes the misery of the damned to be so miserable, and the happiness of the godly so happy; they are not only happy and miserable, because they shall be happy and miserable for ever, but because they know there is continance in happiness, and in misery; their knowledge of this is that which puts infinite weight upon every moment.

Suppose a beast should have happiness suitable to its nature for eternity, that would come infinitely short of the happiness of a rational creature, that knows in which happiness consists, and what eternity is; for the beast enjoys nothing but the present happiness, but a reasonable creature it has happiness for the present, and it can by the thoughts of the mind fetch in the infiniteness of the duration, and put it upon the present content it receives, and so have infinite satisfaction every moment: And so for misery; it were not so much if God by his power should hold a brute beast in the fire eternally, as if a man were in misery; because though it has pains, yet it has no thought of future pains, but what it now feels: But if a rational creature be in misery, by the thoughts of his mind, he can fetch all the pains that shall be in hundred thousands of years, and put them upon that instant, and this makes it to be miserable indeed, in a kinde of infiniteness, beyond that which any other creature is capable of.

You think to be tortured with fire is miserable, and to be so eternally is miserable; but there is something more, every instant you shall be in misery, there shall be a kinde of infiniteness, because you shall by your thoughts bring whatever is to come, and put it upon the present moment, and nothing can swallow up a mans spirit so much as this, if he understands eternity. Now then a gracious heart that knows this, that knows what the consequence of eternity is, cannot be satisfied, except it has made good provision for eternity; whatever it enjoys for the present, cannot satisfy the soul, unless it has made good provision for that which it understands, to be of such infinite consequence as it is. A soul that understands the consequence of eternity, sees it as an infinite Ocean, that it is lanching into, and must for ever swim in: Now if a man

were to go a voyage in the vast Ocean, that he must go thousands of miles, could he be content that he had made provision of such a Vessel, that he could make shift to get over some narrow water with? so it is here; yea, this similitude comes short of the expression of the folly of any that knows any thing concerning eternity, to think to satisfy themselves in any thing that is but for a season; for any thing that is but for a season, let it be for as long a season as you will, if it were for Methuselahs season, that is but as some small Brook, and what is this to the going of many thousand miles in the infinite vast Ocean? and therefore a gracious heart knowing the vastness of it, except it has made some provision for it, can never be quieted with what it can enjoy for a season.

Seventhly, a gracious heart cannot be satisfied in any thing that is but for a season, because there is nothing that is but for a season, but it can make the end of it as really present; If so be that the end of things that are but for a season were present, they could not satisfy: Now a gracious heart makes the end of all things that are but for a season to be really present: If grace enables a man to make the things of God, and eternal things to be present, much more will grace in the heart make the end of all worldly things to be really present: Now a gracious heart being wise, and considering, and looking upon these things that are but for a season, as if the end now were; hence it is that it has the same judgement of things that are but for a season now, as it shall have when the end of all shall be: Now when the end of all things we enjoy for a season is come, then every man will see the vanity of them, and cry out of them, and say they will not satisfy: Yea, we shall not only see the vanity of them, but in some respect see it a greater misery, then if we had never enjoyed them; now that thing which will not only

fail us, but when it shall fail us, it will be a greater vexation to us that we had them, then if we had never enjoyed it, certainly they which know this cannot be satisfied with it.

Eighthly, a gracious heart makes use of all the experiences that it has had of the vanity of the creature , of all things that are but for a season; when God in the way of his providence gives to one that is gracious, experience of things, he will treasure up his experience: vain light hearts, though God do give them experience of the vanity of the creature, and of things that are but for a season, they do not treasure up their experiences, but though they cry out of the vanity of the creature at some time, yet they run out again as greedily in their desires after it as before: but a gracious heart findes when God takes away the creature, in which it had placed a great deal of confidence, God has showed it how fading it was, and the setled condition of it is nothing but vanity: and so the experience of the vanity of former things, does take off his heart from any thing that it looks upon as abiding for a season.

Lastly, that which is but for a season, does want an especial ingredient in it, which is required for satisfaction : the special ingredient unto satisfaction, is security, that there may be soul-safe security. Augustine says, The soul cannot enjoy any thing freely with satisfaction, unless it can enjoy it with security: Now when the soul enjoys a thing for a season, it cannot be satisfied, because it must be solicitous to provide something when that is gone, which it has for the present. So that these arguments being put together, you may see evidently, Nothing that is for a season can give satisfaction to a gracious heart. Having laid these things in the explication of the point, all that we have to do is to apply it.

Hence we may see the excellency of a true gracious spirit: where there is grace in the soul, it puts a wonderful excellency upon the soul, as in many other respects, so this one does wonderfully declare the excellency of a gracious heart, that it is so raised, so enlarged, so greatned, that nothing that is for a season can satisfy it, but it looks for things beyond a season. Let all the world, the things that are in Heaven and Earth, present themselves to the soul to satisfy it, the soul will say, What are you, temporal or eternal? If the answer be given temporal, the soul rejects them, and puts them off as too mean things to be satisfaction for it; If you had brought eternity with you, says the soul, I could have embraced you, and closed with you, and have been satisfied in the enjoyment of you, but if the inscription of eternity be not in you, you are too mean for me, my happiness is not here, I must look higher, I am lost for ever if I do not look higher then these things. When Basil was offered money and preferment to tempt him, he answers, Give money that may last for ever, and glory that may eternally flourish.

Chapter 26: Perswasions to take off the heart from temporal things

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Secondly, hence let us all make use of this Argument, to take off our spirits from all earthly things that are here below; Let us look upon all things in the world as under this notion, that they are but for a season, and let us improve this argument to the utmost that possibly we can, for the working our hearts off from the things of this world. The beauty of all worldly things is but as a fair picture drawn upon the Ice, that melts away with it; The fashion of this world passes away. When Alexander saw himself wounded, and in danger of death, he then saw the vanity of those flatterers that would have persuaded him he was a God: So when we see those things upon which we set our hearts, as if our chief good, as if a Deity were in them, to be wounded, and ready to perish, let us learn to alter our thoughts of them, to take off our hearts from them.

Much may be done in the improving of this argument, of the fading vanishing nature of creaturecomforts: the Scripture makes much use of it, to take off the hearts of People from them; Why will you set your heart upon that which is not? Riches have wings and

will fly away. It charges them that have riches, that they trust not in uncertain riches: Man that is made in honor abides not; They sing to the Tabret and Harp, and make merry, and in a moment they go down to hell. This Moses argument, is the strong Scripture argument: there is nothing but uncertainty, mutability, vanity, upon every creature that is here below. The fashion of the world passes away, and the lustre of it; there is no enduring substance here: Those in the Hebrews were content to part with any thing that endured but for a season, so they might have an enduring substance: and so Abraham looked for a City that had foundations, Heb. 11:10 these cities have no foundations.

All earthly things are like the earth it self, it hangs upon nothing, Job 26:7 and therefore there can be no certainty in them, no continuance in the enjoyment of them: neither will the things of this world abide, they perish in the using of them, and that which perishes in the using, we must not set our hearts upon. Its the expression of Gregory Nyssen, The things of the world are as if a man were writing upon the water with his finger, as any thing is written, the impression vanishes, and nothing appears; not as one were writing upon the sand or dust, which although any little wind blows smooth, yet it stays a while till the wind rises: So the creature is not vain only, because it leaves us after a while, but the comfort of the creature leaves us in the using.

Seneca says, We live amongst things that are perishing. We hear much of the vanity of the creature, and we can speak much of it, but how is it improved? how if you perish eternally for setting your hearts upon these things? and notwithstanding all your talk, this dreadful noise shall be heard from you, We have lost eternity, for setting our hearts upon things that were for a season. It is a no-

table speech that Ambrose has; Why will you make that whichcannot be eternal for use, eternal for punishment? It is fading, in regard of the use, but it proves to be eternal in regard of the punishment.

Therefore when any temptation comes, to draw your hearts to any thing that gives content to the flesh for a season, O that you might improve this Argument to resist the temptation! What, shall I while away that time I have to improve for eternity to seek after you, and take content and pleasure in you? you are not only temporal yourselves, but you do hazard the loss of eternal things, and hazard the bringing of eternal evils. And therefore do not think it much that I press this argument, because it is ordinary: all that perish, perish because they set their hearts upon that which is for a season: and therefore though the knowledge of this in some general notion be ordinary, yet the truth is, to know it powerfully indeed, and effectually, it is a riddle to the world.

It is a notable place we have in Psalm 49. 3, 4. The whole scope of the Psalm, is to show the happy secure estate of the godly in all troubles, and the vanishing condition of all ungodly in prosperity; now mark how he calls to us in the beginning of this Psalm, to hearken to this argument: We might say, this is an argument we have heard a hundred times, and know what it is, Why should we hearken so? Though you think this is an ordinary Theam, yet this is the great wisdom, and understanding of a gracious heart to know; this is the dark saying that I will open, so says the Psalmist, My mouth shall speak of wisdom, and the meditation of my heartshall be of understanding, I will open my dark saying: So when you hear us speaking of this argument, you say, This is an ordinary argument; but the true knowledge of it is a dark hidden

thing to the men of the world, and it is the work of the Spirit of God, to make men know this truly: and when God works any saving work upon the soul, he begins in this way, to settle upon the soul this truth, That all the things that it has satisfied it self in, are fading; and what is a year or two, to enjoy all the contentments my heart can desire, if then I must be gone, and bid farewel to all? have not I an immortal soul? and when shall be the time that I shall provide for eternity? And therefore I beseech you look into this argument, and ponder it a little more.

There are three worms that are in every thing of the world, to eat out the strength of it, and make it fading.

First, the worm that is bred in the natural principles; the things that we set our hearts upon, are made of fading principles.

Secondly, there is the worm of the general curse that is come upon them by mans sin.

Thirdly, there is another worm, and that is the particular curse that we bring upon the creatures, by our own proper sins, as especially when we set our hearts upon any fading transitory things below: all things in the world are subject to vanity by the general curse, but the particular curse makes them more vain: and shall we think to satisfy ourselves in the things of the world, that have these three worms, feeding upon them continually, to eat out the strength of them?

What are your hearts upon? I urge it upon you as in the name of God, and answer in your secret thoughts, What are your hearts upon? either upon things that are for a season, or eternal? Things that are eternal, you look upon them as high notional things, that never took up your thoughts much: but to go into company, and

eat, and drink, and laugh, and get money; these are the things that are but for a season, and these your hearts close with, and bless themselves in. What are become of all those that have had as great dealings, and as many merry meetings as you, and have satisfied the flesh as much as you? they are gone, rotten in their graves, and their souls it may be crying under the wrath of an infinite God, and all their bravery and delight at an end; would you be in their condition? It is a good observation of Abulensis, to show to us the vanity of all worldly excellency, that those who have been the most glorious, in what man accounts glorious and excellent, have had inglorious ends, by which their glory has been stained; and thereby our hearts might be taken off from such things, and set upon those things which are so glorious as they will make us for ever glorious. He instances in Sampson for strength, and yet what a contemptible end had he? So Absolom for beauty; Achitophel for policy; Asael for swiftness; Alexander for great conquests, and yet after twelve years poysoned. He instances likewise in Kingdoms; the Chaldaean, Persian, Graecian, Roman, how soon were they gone? It is a notable speech Augustine has: Go, (says he) and mark and attend the Sepulchres of rich men, and when you see their rotten bones, consider who they once were, and know they do cry unto you; O you men, why do you seek so much to satisfy yourselves in these fading things, and heap upon yourselves vexation, to attain happiness for yourselves in these things? Consider our bones here, and be struck with astonishment, to abhor your luxury and covetousness; for, says he, they cry thus to you, You now are, and we were, and time will be, when you shall be what we are.

And then consider with yourselves, what a doleful condition that man is in, that has set his heart upon things that are for a season: When those are at an end, he may say, Now the thoughts of my heart, and all my hopes are at an end; now I must bid an eternal farewel to all my comforts, to husband, and wife, and neighbors, and friends, and companions; I shall never meet with you more, and never have mirth and jollity, and sporting, and gaming any more, but I must bid farewel to all, the Sun is set, and the season is at an end for all my comfort, and before me I see an infinite vast Ocean, and I must lanch into it; Lord, what provision have I for it? What a dreadful shreek will that soul give, that sees an infinite Ocean it must lanch into, and sees no provision that it has made for it? Indeed those that dye, and are besotted, and know nothing of this infinite Ocean that they must lanch into, they are never troubled; but those that dye, and their consciences are enlightned, they have given a most dreadful shreek, to see themselves lanching into an infinite Ocean of scalding Lead, and must swim naked in it for ever.

And therefore improve this argument, to take off your hearts from things below, and say, What good will it be to me that I have been merry, and would have my will? I came to hear the word, and that was working to pull my lust from me, but my heart was set upon my lust, and I would have it: When my lust shall be at an end, what good will it be to me, to remember I had my lust and pleasure, and delight? This will afford little comfort after it is gone: You may live a year or two, and be drunk many a time that while, and have pleasure in uncleanness, and besot yourselves; consider, many have had pleasures in the flesh, that now are gone, and within two or three years it may be said of you, Such a one was at

such a Sermon, and heard, That all things that endure but for a season would not satisfy, and now he is gone; and if you will satisfy yourselves in these things that are for a season, you may cry out in the anguish of your souls, and say, Such a day such an argument was treated upon, and I heard, Nothing that is but for a season will satisfy the heart, and how I should hazard my eternal happiness, if I set my heart upon them; And I heard, I had not only a little River to swim over, but an infinite Ocean to lanch into, and yet I have sought after these things that are but for a season, to satisfy my flesh in them; now my season is gone, and I am lanching into eternity, the Lord knows what shall become of me.

It was the sad expression of Lysimachus, who had lost his Kingdom for one draught of water, For whata short pleasure have I made myself a servant? So consider what a soul-sinking thought this will be to think hereafter; O God, for how short pleasure have I made myself a bond-slave to Hell for ever! One who was made according to the Image of God, who had means for eternal life, yet now am undone for ever! It is reported of Pope Sixtus the fifth, that he sold his soul to the Devil, to enjoy the glory and pleasure of the Popedom for seven years: What infinite folly possesseth the hearts of the children of men, who were made for eternity, to venture eternal miscarrying for a few years, yea, a few hearts contentment to the flesh! The Lord keep us from this desperate folly.

Therefore when we finde our hearts beginning to be let out upon any temporal good, make use of this argument, and let us muse with ourselves, This content and pleasure we have, but will it abide? I was made to abide for ever, I was made for that good that must abide for ever. What are a few years here? Those who abide longest in the enjoyment of health and prosperity, their time is but

as a bubble, they are gone, and the memory of them is perished. Pliny says, there was a miraculous example of one Xenophilus, who lived a hundred and five years without sickness: But what is this to eternity? lib. 7. cap. 5.

There is a notabe story of Theodorus a yong man, there being a time of great festivity and jollity in Egypt, and there was a great deal of feasting and musick, and delight in his fathers house: The yong man withdrew himself from all the company, and got alone, and fell a meditating thus, Here is delight and content to the flesh, I may have what I will desire, but how long will it last? And upon this meditation, thinking with himself▪ this will not hold long, he withdrew himself into a room private, and fell down upon the earth, and with many tears cryed out thus unto God in prayer; O Lord, (says he) my heart is open unto you, I indeed know not what to ask, but only this, Lord let me not dye eternally; O Lord, you knowest I love you, O let me live eternally to praise you! And when his mother came to him, and would have had him come to the rest of the company that were bidden, he made an excuse and would not, only upon this meditation, because he saw this would not hold.

O that God would fasten these thoughts upon you, when you are in the midst of your delights; But will this hold? Is not this one thing that is spoken of amongst the rest, that is but for a season? Think also upon this consideration; These things that are in the world, if they were a thousand times more then they are, yet being but for a season, this is enough to take off our hearts; but now when we consider they are but for a season, and but slight things, empty vanities besides, this should take off our hearts abundantly more; if they had a great deal in them, yet not being eternal, they

are not very desireable. How vain then is mans heart, in being set upon such vain things? Well may man be said to be lighter then vanity; no vanity is so vain, as the trusting in vanity; all the vanity in the creature amounts not to so much vanity as the trusting in vanity.

And yet again consider, that the emptiness that is in these things, would make the eternity of them to be miserable. You will say this is a riddle, how can it be made out? Certainly it is so, there is such an emptiness in the things of the world, that they are fain to borrow succession to make them comfortable, and it is the end of some, and the beginning of others that makes them comfortable, and not the continuance of any outward comfort; as now the laying in a soft down bed, is easie and comfortable, and delightful; but if one were condemned to this, to lie there forty years together, and never to come out, it would be a torment, but to lie eternally it would be more, so that eternity puts a misery upon the comfort: And so take any one comfort, and to be tyed to that, if there were not a ceasing of one, and the beginning of another, the comfort would be miserable; and the reason is, because the comfort is so empty: But the enjoying of God, the eternity of it makes it comfortable; we shall as much delight in the comforts we have enjoyed of God, after we have enjoyed them hundred thousands of years, as we did at first moment we entred upon them.

Yet further, let us turn the consideration of this so far, to take off our hearts from the things below, as not to be troubled much for any affliction and misery we have here, for they are but for a season; the being for a season, takes away the comfort of the creature, and the being for a season, takes away the bitterness of affliction: Is there any affliction upon you? think this is not eternally

though, this is not hell. This is the great complaint of a soul in the time of trouble, O how long shall it be? for ever? But so we cannot say of any afflictions here in this world, that they shall be for ever. In Dan. 11:25 speaking of the great affliction of the Church, this is brought to alleviate all, yet the end shall be at the time appointed; so long as a man can look to the end of an evil, it is not much, it is for a season; if he can but see banks, he is well.

Yea, and the evils that we do endure here, as they are but for a little season, so they are but in the due season, they are in this season, and that is that which should comfort us; because there is not so much danger in any thing we suffer here, while we suffer it in this season. Suppose any of you had your Ship leak, if it leaks when it comes into harbor, though it be an evil to you, and brings trouble, yet you comfort yourselves in this, It is not in the main Ocean though: If I had had this leak in the main sea, what had become of me? and so for troubles and sorrows, you may say, It is upon me, but blessed be God, it is upon me here; Indeed if it should prove to be upon me eternally hereafter, it were a great evil, but it is here. S. Augustine said, Here Lord cut me, dowhat you will with me, but spare me hereafter; It was the prayer of Fulgentius, Lord grant patience here, and pardon hereafter: though I have never so much affliction here, it is no great matter, so I shall have pardon hereafter.

Yea, the enduring of affliction in this season, shall be that which may deliver us from enduring evils eternally hereafter: God aims at it, and he has no other end, but only to deliver from eternal sorrows, We are chastened, that we might not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. 11. And that he does by causing a man or woman, when any afflictions are upon them, to think thus; Lord, is this evil and pain so grievous to me that lasts but for a while, what will eter-

nal evils be to me? Drexelius reports of a yong man that was given to his lust, and pleasure, and could not endure to be crossed, but of all things he could not bear it, To be kept from sleep, and to awake in the dark; and being sick, he was kept awake in the night, and could not sleep, and he began to have these thoughts, and think, What, is it so tedious for to be kept from sleep one night, and to lie a few hours here in the dark? O what is it to be in torments, and darkness everlastingly! I am here in my house upon a soft bed in the dark, kept from sleep but one night; O to lie in flames, and in darkness for ever and ever, how dreadful will that be? And this was the means of the conversion of that yong man, that was given to all manner of lusts before.

O that the Lord would settle this argument upon you, so as to work it every way to be useful; for your pleasures, they are but for a season, why should I set my heart upon them? And for sorrows, if those be grievous, if a fit of the Stone, or of the Strangury, or the Fever be so grievous, what will that be to be eternally scalding in the wrath of God? Thus you see the consideration, That things are but for a season, how useful it is for to take our hearts from them, and to uphold our hearts in any evils and troubles that we should endure.

Chapter 27: Exhortation to seek after eternal things

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THe last Use, is an Use of Exhortation, that seeing nothing that is for a season, can satisfy the heart, what remains but that we should seek after that which is beyond a season, for the satisfaction of our hearts? Look at the things that will satisfy an immortal soul, let it be of the largest extent that can be, these cannot upon this ground, because they are but for a season: Then let our hearts be after eternal things. I am this day to speak to divers hundreds of you here, that must every one of you live in eternity one way or other, yong and old, you must live in a time beyond this season: Now having to speak to you that must live eternally, this is that which I have to do, To get your hearts up, to seek after eternal things; and O that this might be done, if I should never preach more, and you should never hear more, yet if this should be obtained, that you should live eternally, that you should have your hearts got up to eternal things, you should be blessed, and I should think myself happy.

Philip King of Macedon, would have a man come and cry to him every morning, You are mortal; this is that which I should rather choose, that you might daily here a voyce, that You are im-

mortal; The better part of you must live eternally: Were it that eternity were presented to us in the reality of it, how mightily would it work to draw our hearts to eternal things? Certainly our thoughts are not upon eternity; the thoughts of eternity are mighty prevailing thoughts, they are over-awing thoughts, soul ballacing thoughts, that would ballast our hearts; they are infinite pertinent thoughts, that do infinitely concern us. You that have had a company of sleight thoughts, and have set the strength of your spirits in thinking of chaffy things; O this day here is an object presented to you, to help you against sleight thoughts: This one word Eternity, and the thoughts of this word, may be enough for you, to banish vain and chaffy thoughts away for ever; it concerns us to have the strength of our spirits busied about this.

There is a request that I have to every one of you, and I will put it as fair, and easie, and low as may be, because I would not have it denyed; that is, That every one that God by his providence has brought this day here into this Assembly, would resolve in their own thoughts, and covenant with God, to spend but one half quarter of an hour in meditating of eternity every day; there is no such great difficulty in it, to have such thoughts as these renewed every day: This body of mine, though frail and mortal, it must live for ever, and this soul of mine, it must live eternally; I have spent a great deal of time in seeking after contentment to my flesh for the present, but, O Lord, what have I done to provide for eternity? The renewing of this daily, and setling of this daily upon the heart, what might it do? It cannot be imagined what it might do: Precious are the thoughts of eternity, so precious, that there is many a soul, that would not for a thousand worlds, but have had those thoughts

to be setled upon them; so precious, as many souls are now in Heaven, magnifying and blessing of God, that they had such serious thoughts of eternity, before they left this world.

Certainly, until you come to have your thoughts setled in some measure upon this, you do not understand therefore you were born, nor unto what you were born; you never have done any thing to purpose about the great business that God has sent you into the world for, until you come to have serious working thoughts about eternity: you have had all this while a seduced heart, that has deceived you, and all your life has been a dream. If God should begin to dart thoughts into your hearts, and stick them upon your mind, about this argument, now you begin to live, and to awake, it were not possible that any lusts should stand before these thoughts: you complain often of weakness, and that you meet with temptations that are very strong, behold here a means to resist strong temptations, to strengthen you against the strongest temptations that you can possibly meet withal in the world, namely the serious thoughts of things that are beyond this season. It is reported of the customs that have been observed amongst the Rites and Ceremonies, in making of Bishops, they had this speech to them, Have eternity in your mindes: O that this speech were renewed upon us, in all our conditions and businesses, that so it may prevail with us, to seek after that which is eternal! And to that end, that what I speak this way, may not vanish, and come to nothing, (for it is a serious argument that we are about, & I am loth that it should come to nothing) consider these motives.

First, it is only the rational creature that knows any thing that is beyond this season: this is the excellency of a rational creature, that it has any notion about any thing that is eternal: Now that

God has made us of such a nature, and no creature else, but us, and Angels, surely there is something in it: Mens hearts do naturally desire eternity, and think this is good if it might last. That is very observable therefore that we have in Hos. 14:5 concerning Gods expression of himself to his people; where he would express himself so as to satisfy his people, he says, I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the Lilly, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. The dew and the Lilly are sweet things, but the dew though it be sweet is quickly gone, and the Lilly is sweet, but it is observed by the Naturalists, that the Lilly does not take much root in the earth, therefore mark what follows, and he shall cast forth his roots as Lebanon; you shall have the sweetness of the Lilly, but you shall have the roots of Lebanon; Lebanon was the place of Cedars, and the roots of Cedars are deep. They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine. It might be said the corn lasts but a year, therefore God adds, and grow as the vine; the Vine does not only bud, and send forth his branches and grapes one year, but the next year, and the next year it continues: therefore that God might present his mercies fully to the hearts of his people, he does present them in this satisfying way, that his mercies shall be abiding mercies. Why should we be as Children, to run after bubbles? Men seek after inheritances, and to have things made sure for perpetuity, so it should be with us.

Secondly, let us look upon things that are beyond this season, that are eternal, because that in these times of the Gospel, God has revealed eternity, and eternal things abundantly more clearly then ever they were revealed in the Law: in the time of the Law there was little made known concerning eternity, but the times of the

Gospel being renewed, now the treasures of eternity are opened; Immortality is brought to light by the Gospel, 2 Tim. 1:10 Now the glorious things of eternity are set before our eyes, and we the Ministers of God are commanded to present them to you, and you living under the Gospel, where you hear so much of eternity revealed, it would be dreadful if you should be deceived with things that are but for a season.

Thirdly, every one of you as you are born, are born with your backs upon Gods eternity, and your faces towards hells eternity, and therefore you had need look beyond things that are but for a season, and mind the things of your eternal good with all your might.

Fourthly, all your eternal good does depend upon the short uncertain moment of your lives; if the thrid be but cut, and you have not provided for your eternal good, you are lost and undone for ever, you do not know but upon every moment depends eternity.

Fifthly, know you may be far nearer to the Ocean of eternity, then you are aware, and therefore you had need have your thoughts fastened upon eternity; Who knows but that before the morning some that are here may understand what eternity means, and be lanching into the infinite Ocean of it: there is many a man that is in his jollity, strength, and health, that is called forth by God, suddenly to lanch into this Ocean; If God call you suddenly before you be ready, what will become of you? now you may be near it. You that are old are certainly near it, within a few years you must know what eternity means, you shall know a great deal of difference between things that are for a season, and beyond a season: and yong ones may, as we have daily examples; now you that are yong, consider those examples, and put the case, Suppose I had

been called to la[••]h into eternity, when such a one was called, had I been ready? what had become of me? O consider how near you may be unto it, and therefore look not upon things that are temporal, but let your hearts be after things that are eternal.

Again, consider how happy those souls would think themselves that are in their eternal estates, and are miscarried, if they had time to provide for eternity again. Many are gone, and snatched away from all things that are for a season, and are swimming in the infinite Ocean of eternal misery, and they look about them, and see vastness, no limits, no end, no land: If they could but come back again, and have their time again, how do you think would they carry themselves about things that are but for a season? do you think temptations would draw their hearts again? If company should come to draw them to drinking, and uncleanness, would they yield then? they would with indignation cast away those temptations, and say, God forbid I should be drawn with these things, that are but for a season, I know what eternity means. O now you have time, improve this argument, and labor to provide for eternity: now prayers and tears may do you good for eternity; within a while, if you could let streams of blood issue from you, it can do you no good, and if this argument prevail to get off your hearts beyond things that are for a season, there will arise these two questions: O that I did but know how it should go with me eternally! O how shall I get eternal things to be my portion!

Chapter 28: How we should know how it will be with us for eternity, and what we should do that it may be well with us eternally

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IF you say, How shall I know how it shall be with me for eternity? shall it be well, or not well with my soul when I am beyond things that are for a season? You may have some guess by those thoughts you have had upon things for eternity: you that have given liberty to yourselves, to satisfy yourselves in the things of the flesh, and your hearts have been fully satisfied in the things of the world, and this point is a strange point to you, you have cause to conclude with yourselves, that you are in a miserable condition for eternity; but if your consciences can testify that this point, the getting of your hearts from things that are but for a season, and setting them upon the things that are eternal, is that which the Lord has setled upon your hearts for many years, when you wake in the night, or in the morning, the same thoughts that are presented to me by the Word, the Lord has presented to me by his Spirit, the strength and chief of my thoughts have been busied

about this argument. It is a good sign, that God does intend good for that soul to eternity, whom he is pleased to possess with the thoughts of it so deeply for the present.

Again consider, could you not wish in your hearts, that you might live always? and that the content and delight in this world, in meat, and drink, and sports do satisfy you, and you think yourselves happy in the enjoyment of them; certainly God has not yet savingly made known the things of eternity to you. Those that God does prepare for his eternal mercies in Heaven, God does take off their hearts from all things in the world; that if it were put to your choice, though you might have a thousand worlds, you would not have them for your portion; no, there are more glorious, more excellent things for my soul to have, and therefore God forbid I should have my portion in these things, though they were to endure.

Augustine brings in Plotinus, acknowledging it the mercy of God to man, that his soul is in a mortalbody, that the body is not immortal, but that after a little time the bodies of men may be dissolved, and so their souls be there for ever where the soul of the world is; that is his expression.

3. A third Argument that it shall be well with you for eternity, is this, To know what seeds of eternity God has begun to plant in your hearts. This is a certain truth, There is no soul that God intends eternal life unto, but God begins eternal life in this world. You know what St. John says, He that hateshis brother, has not eternal life abiding in him. Eternal life is begun in this world in all that shall be saved; therefore think with yourselves, What seeds of eternity have I put into my soul? All common graces, and moral

vertues are not a seed that will grow up to eternal life, but saving grace will; though it be under the clods for the present, it will grow up eternity.

Fourthly, Examine the Scriptures, look into the book of God, and see whether the Scripture speaks well on your side, because that in this Book, in this Scripture, there God has revealed the eternal counsels of his will, and the great things about mans eternal estate: there is little in all the Book of the Creature, the Book of Creation, revealed of the counsels of Gods will, about bringing man to his eternal estate; but in this Book of the Scripture he has revealed his will concerning this; and therefore confider, does this speak well of your side? Thus by these arguments you may know how it shall be with you for eternity.

But what shall we do to get a portion in those things that shall be eternal?

First, labor to bring all things in subordination to eternity, do not make other things your scope, make them an underling, and take no further content in them, then that they may further your souls to eternity. Suppose you have an estate encreasing more then another, what will you do with it? how will you use it? in which do you count the good of it to consist? that by these things I have coming from God, I hope to make use of them, to fit me for eternal mercies, and to treasure up eternal mercies by a sanctified holy use of these things; but when temporal things come in, and your hearts rest upon them, without subordination to eternal things, this is infinitely dangerous.

Secondly, make conscience of the little time you have; O it is but a little time you have, let that be consecrated and devoted to God: it is eternal happiness that you look for hereafter, why should you not be willing to spend as much of this little time for it as can be?

Thirdly, labor to be exact in all that you do, for you are working for eternity. As Zeuxis the Painter, when he was askt, why he was so accurate in his Painting, says he, I Paint for eternity: Let us in our Christian profession be exact in our way, because we live for eternity; There is nothing that does make men so accurate in their way as this; and let the men of the world know, that this is the reason of the exactness of the ways of Gods people, because they know they live to eternity. Hypocrites, who in Religious duties aim only at some present, some temporal good, they are not exact, they rest in outsides; but the Saints who make eternity their aim, are exact in all things, especially those things that have a more immediate influence into eternity.

Fourthly, be sure all you do, you do upon divine and eternal grounds, take heed of being carnal, and earthly in your spiritual services; but in all duties in Gods worship, look to an eternal God, and let your principles, aims, grounds, and intentions be eternal. The Temple was called Bethgnolam, the house of Eternity; do all you do in the house of God, in his Ordinances, in order to eternity, that it may indeed be an house of eternity unto you.

Lastly, be sure you be constant, abide constantly to the end, do not only begin, and now and then in a good mood, have some thoughts of a good life, and providing for your souls, but abide, be constant. And if you take these ways, by this you shall come to choose Moses Choice. O that now in my winding up of all, by all

that has been said, some soul or other may have cause to bless God in being inclined to choose the same Choice: If you would choose Moses Choice, use Moses argument; and this is the special argument that moved Moses to make this Choice, he looked upon all these things as for a season, and he looked upon eternity: O that you being moved by Moses argument, you may this day be brought to choose Moses Choice, that you may sing Moses Song, Rev. 15. 3, 4. Who shall not fear you, O Lord, and glorifie your name? for you only art holy. O that that Choice by this argument were made, that so you might sing hereafter this part of Moses Song; O Lord, there was a time that I never saw you in your glory, and never minded you, but now Lord I see, worthy you art to be feared, and glorified for ever, for you art holy: The Lord give us hearts upon this argument, to make this Choice.

Moses' Choice

Heb. 11:26_Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches then the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

Chapter 29: The Review of Moses Choice

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WE have finished the Choice of Moses, the argument upon which Moses went in his Choice, and now we are come to this 26. verse, where we have the Review of Moses choice, looking back to see what he had chosen, to the consequent of it. He sees that while he joins himself with the people of God, and suffers affliction, he is like to meet with nothing but reproach and scorn for his labor; this he sees, & yet he repents not: his judgement still is not only for his choice, but he does esteem of ithighly, as accounting that reproach of Christ that he was to suffer, great riches; and the argument that here he has, is the greatness of the recompence of the reward, He had an eye unto the recompence of the reward.

[Esteeming the reproach of Christ:] Reproach is taken either materially, or formally; materially, so it may be taken for the affliction that he did endure with Gods people, that outward mean wretched condition that he was like to suffer with the people of God, this was the matter of the reproach. Or otherwise formally, the scorn, contempt, reviling, railing, and all the evil that should

be spoken of him when he had left the Court, and joined himself with Gods people; and this formal kinde of reproach is that which is especially meant.

[The reproach of Christ:] How could that reproach that Moses suffered, be the reproach of Christ? for Christ was not then born, it was a long time after before Christ came into the world.

Christ was present unto Moses by the eye of faith, though he were not yet come into the world, Christ is the same to day, yesterday, and for ever; he was the same to the Patriarchs and Prophets, that he is to us.

[Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches then the treasures of Egypt] Moses was not only content to suffer patiently the reproach of Christ, but he counted it his glory, his riches, greater riches then the Treasures of Egypt. Egypt was a rich country, and full of treasures; and therefore in Psalm 87. Egypt is called by the name of Rahab, and the reason is, because of the pride, and power, and insolency of Egypt; because Egypt was a fruitful rich place, therefore they had a great deal of strength, and power, and were lift up with pride; So Isa. 51:9 vide Hieronym. upon the place. The King of Egypt is called a Dragon in the waters: and the chief horses that Solomon had, in 2 Chron. 9. they came out of Egypt; and the Whore in the Proverbs, had her fine linen out of Egypt. Egypt was a very fruitful Country, Gen. 13:9 The fruitfulness of that place to which Lot turned aside, is described to be the garden of the Lord, like the Land of Egypt: it is called by many Horreum caeterarum regionum, the Granary of other Countreys: hence Abraham, when famine was in Canaan, went into Egypt; and after, Jacob in time of famine sent his sons into Egypt; it is said of it, that they sow almost every moneth. And being such a flourishing place, all kinde

of learning was there; and therefore in 1 King. 4:30 where the greatness of Solomons wisdom is set out, it is said, it excelled the wisdom of Egypt. In Egypt was treasures of riches, and treasures of strength, treasures of the riches of the earth, and treasures of merchandize, and treasures of learning, and yet Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ, greater riches then all the treasures of Egypt. Now the points that arise from these words, are these:

First, that the people of God have been, and usually are a people under reproach.

Secondly, the reproach of Gods people is the reproach of Christ.

Thirdly, a gracious heart is not only willing to bear reproach when God calls unto it, but in the cause of Christ, triumphs and rejoyces in that reproach it suffers.

Fourthly, the strong argument that moves Gods people thus to do, is the eye that they have unto the recompence of the reward. To begin with the first, and that is this:

Chapter 30: The condition of God's people is a reproached condition

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HAving now to handle this Doctrine, concerning the reproaches that are cast upon Gods people, before I speak a word concerning the point, I desire to put this caveat, That none upon hearing the estate of Gods people being reproached, shall think to wash away all just reprehension and accusation, and think to answer whatever they are accused of with this, That all Gods people have been reproached, and therefore think their condition to be but the same that usually Gods people have been.

First, if that were enough to answer any accusation upon this, then there should never be any reprehension and accusation, the Church of God should never proceed against any for any evil.

Secondly, such as think to put off just reprehensions and accusations thus, have their consciences reproach them more then others do or can reproach them.

Thirdly, it is not for all to make use of this that I am speaking of, but only such, whose constant and general way is gracious, and inoffensive; now if they meet with unjust accusations, and reproachful slanders, they may have the benefit of this, to think it is

the usual condition of Gods people to be reproached; but if any have been offensive, and evils break out, they cannot have the benefit of this point, for more evil may be in them then appears; and thus I lay this caveat to pull up evil weeds, before I sow good seed. And now to the Point.

The condition of Gods people is a reproached condition. They have been a people subject to all manner of evil speaking of them. This the Church of God complains of in Psalm 79:4 they were not only a reproach, but God himself gave them over to be a scorn and reproach. Isaac that was the son of the promise, we know how he was reproached and contemned by Ishmael: and it is observable, when the Apostle speaks of the reproach of Isaac, in Gal. 4:29 it is said, Ishmael persecuted Isaac; now that persecution was nothing but his mocking and reproaching of Isaac. We read of Job, a holy man, how lyable he was to reproach and contempt, Job 16. 9, 10. there you may read of the bitter reproaches he had from the abjects, such as he would not set with his dogs, that had not bread to eat, and were driven from men to live among bushes and nettles. In Psalm 35:15 David complains, the abjects of the people made a scorn of him; the basest wretches that are, can finde a taunt, and mock at Religion; reproachers are the most base spirits. In Nehemiahs time, those that sought to build the Temple were scorned; in Nehem. 2:19 it is said, Tobiah the servant, one that had been but a slave, a base wretch, he comes and laughs them to scorn. And so in great mens houses, if the Masters do scorn at the godly, the basest servants will do so too.

David has many bitter complaints of the reproach he suffered, I was a reproach among all my enemies,but especially among my neighbors. Now the reproaches of professors one against another,

are the bitterest, and most vile reproaches: and the reason of it is this, because usually reproach arises from some contestation about excellency: for a Prince that is a great deal above another, has not contestation with beggers, he does not reproach them, nor they him, for this distance is too great; but reproach is between equals, when one stands in the light of the other; or from inferiors, who have others by them who are above them, and their excellency stands in their light, and they cast dirt upon their excellency, that theirs may appear the brighter. Now those that have a contestation about Religion, have a contestation about the greatest excellency, and where their hearts are unsavory, their reproaches will be the bitterest reproaches. In Psalm 109:25 I became also a reproach unto them, when they looked upon me, they shaked their heads; and in other places the drunkards made songs of him. David was a man of such an admirable spirit, the sweet singer of Israel, and God had blest him with all things that might make him honorable, and had he not been religious, it were impossible that such a man as he should have endured such reproaches.

And we have the Church complaining in Lam. 3:30 He gives his cheek to him that smiteth him, he is filled full of reproach. So all the Prophets that were the most eminent were reproached, as Isaiah; in Isa. 28. Precept upon precept, line upon line, that was a scoff they put upon Isaiah; we have nothing but line upon line, and precept upon precept; the very sound of the words as they are in the Original, carries with them a taunting, reproachful expression, Zan la Zan, Kan la Kan, manda remanda, manda remanda; as scornful people by the tone of their voice, and ryming words, scorn

at such as they despise. And so Jeremy complains in the bitterness of his spirit, that the word of the Lord was made a reproach to him. And Ezekiel, see how he was scorned, Ezek. 33. 30, 31, &c.

And as they did the Prophets, so Christ, and the Apostles; when they were filled with the Spirit of God, they mocked them, and said, they were filled with new Wine; And Christ tells them, they shall revile them, and speak all manner of evil unto them. And so St. Paul, a man of most admirable parts, yet he says of himself, and of the other Apostles, 1 Cor. 4:13 Being defamed, we intreat; the word translated defamed, signifies blasphemed. We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things to this day. We are made the filth of the world, as if we were scraped out of the filth of the filth of the world; There is an emphasis in that word, the filth of the world; why the world lies in filth, is even nothing else but filth, as in 1 John 5:19 the whole world lieth in wickedness, as a carrion in the slime of it; to be accounted the filth of such a filth, is a most vile esteem of one indeed, that filthiness must needs be great. Mundus has the name à munditie of cleanness, but as lucus à lucendo, as mons à monendo, quia minimè lucet, minimè monet, so quia minimè mundusest. And further, the off-scouring of all things; to be the off-scouring of some things, is not so vile, but of all things, the most base, and contemptible things, how vile is that? The word signifies the dungcart that goes through the city, into which every one brings his filth, and casts in: every one had some filth to cast upon Paul and the rest of the Apostles.

And in the Primitive times, the people of God were then a people under great reproach: What strange things does Tertullian tell us they reproached them withal; as that in their meetings they

made Thyestes suppers, who invited his brother to a supper, and presented him with a dish of his own flesh; they charged them with uncleanness, because they met in the night, (for they durst not meet in the day) and said, they blew out the candles when they were together, and committed filthiness: they reproached them for ignorance, saying, they were all unlearned; and therefore the Heathens in Tertullians time used to paint the God of the Christians with an Asses head, and a book in his hand, to signifie, that though they pretended learning, yet they were an unlearned silly people, rude and ignorant. Bishop Jewel in his Sermon upon Luke 11. ver. 15. cites this out of Tertullian, and applyes it to his time: Does not our adversaries do the like, says he, at this day, against all those that profess the Gospel of Christ? O say they, who are they that favor this way? they are none but Shoomakers, Taylors, Weavers, and such as never were at the University. They are the Bishops own words. He cites likewise Tertullian a little after, saying, that The Christians were accounted the publike enemy ofState. And Josephus tells us of Apollinaris, speaking concerning the Jews and Christians, that they were more foolish then any Barbarian. And Paulus Fagius reports a story of an Egyptian, concerning the Christians, who said, They were a gathering together of a most filthy leacherous people; and for the keeping of the Sabbath, he says, they had a disease that was upon them, and they were fain to rest the seventh day, because of that disease. And so in St. Augustines time he has this expression, Any one that begins to be godly, presently he must prepare to suffer reproach from the tongues of adversaries: and this was their usual manner of reproach; What shall we have of you, an Elias? a Jeremy? And Nazianzen in one of his Orations, says, It is so ordinary to re-

proach, that I cannot think to go free myself. And so Athanasius, they called him Sathanasius, because he was a special Instrument against the Arrians. And Cyprian, they called him Coprian, one that gathers up dung, as if all the excellent things he had gathered in his works were but dung.

And if we look into the ways of Gods permissive providence in these latter times; what reproachful, and scornful blood has run in the veins of wicked men, and what horrid things has been invented upon the most famous persons of our latter times? As Luther, this report came to him, he being yet alive, That Luther upon his death-bed had recanted, and he desired the Sacrament, and after he was dead, there was a fearful Earthquake that shook the place where he lay, and they saw the Host he had taken, hanging in the Ayr, and when he was put into the Grave, they heard a great noise, but they saw nothing, but a filthy stink arose, and his body was taken away. And so of Calvin; though he had a sweet death, yet was it said by the Popish Party, that he was eaten up with worms, (as those said of David, An evil disease cleaves fast to him:) and then when he was to dye, he called upon the Devil, and blasphemed the name of God. And so Oecolompadius, that he slew himself; and others reported, that the Devil slew him. It were endless to name the reproaches that we finde of the servants of God that were most eminent. Yea, I remember Seneca has such an expression concerning Philosophy; says he, You are not yet happy, if the rout of people do not deride you; if you will be happy, prepare yourselves to contemn being contemned. And an other Philosopher says, If one does but begin to set himself to the study of Philosophy, he must expect to be scorned and derided. Now if this be the wickedness of mens hearts, as they cannot so much as endure moral Philosophy, much

more if a man begins to walk according to the rule of God. This is that which many fear, and they bring it to keep others from Gods ways, and say, If you embrace Religion, you will be derided at, and scorned: and by this many are kept from the good ways of the Lord; and therefore I being faln upon this argument, I shall labor to take away this stumbling block, that it may not hinder any. Thus you have seen the thing it self, that it is so, that Gods people are a people under reproach. Now the reasons for it:

First, because the men of the world look upon the servants of God, as having very poor low spirits; now those are men that are liable to contempt and reproach. Gods people are not for the braveries of the world, and the glory of the world; and when they see their hearts are taken off from that which they count the bravery of the world, they contemn them.

Secondly, they look upon their ways as irrational: There is no reason why men should be so afraid of the least sin, they are stricter then they need, and do more then they need: so that the more earnest Gods people are upon their way, the more wicked men will scorn them, because they see them earnest upon that which they see no reason for.

Again, they think the ways of Religion are but imaginary things, and notions, and there is no certainty in them, and think it strange men should suffer for things that are to come they know not when, and are they know not what: and therefore one gives that reason, why Cyprian was called Coprian, because he gathered such fables and tales, (meaning the Gospel) as they termed them, which they saw no reason for.

But especially it does proceed from the pride and malice of wicked men; from pride, and swelling, and envying one at another; a proud and envious man will seek to cast disgrace upon that excellency that himself wants, as Licinius who was joined with Galerius in the Empire, being ignorant himself, not being able so much as to write his own name, he was an enemy to learning, and as Eusebius reports of him, he called the liberal Arts, A publike poyson and pestilence. What was the reason that should cause Sanballat and Tobiah to make such a stir to reproach Nehemiah? Certainly the ground was this, Sanballat and Tobiah were in Samaria with a mixt people, and they had got a Temple, and endeavored to magnifie that; Now they thought that the Temple of Nebemiah would darken the glory of their Temple, and therefore they sought to cast disgrace upon them, to bring them into contempt. And the malice of mens hearts, when it cannot vent its self by open persecution, then it will vent its self by the persecution of the tongue; malice makes men very watchful, to observe any thing whereby it may gain matter of reproach, and malice will make men exceeding inventive to finde out strange ways of reproach, and exceeding bold in venturing upon reproaches.

For the first, that place is remarkable in Proverbs 16:27 An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is a burning fire; if things be not plain and fair enough, because he has an evil spirit, he will dig up evil, if he can dig up any old business to reproach them for.

Now the ways of invention, that malice has to reproach upon the ways of God, are many: As the straining of any word to the utmost, and putting glosses, and false interpretations upon words; and thus it is easie to make any man a transgressor for a word, yea,

for any word, as it was with those, Isa. 29:21 They make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate.

A second way is, by casting out doubtful speeches; they will not accuse one directly, because it will be a shame to them, if it be false, but they cast out doubtful speeches, they know some will turn them the worst way, and if they be examined, they can turn them another way, to save themselves.

Another invention, is some secret intimations that others may gather, and it cannot be said they spoke any thing, but by some gesture or the like, others may gather something.

Fourthly, to speak things as from others, and not from themselves, and in the speaking of them to say, I believe such things are not true, and yet they spread the report.

Another way is to speak evil, and yet so, as to manifest a great deal of grief and sorrow for such reports, and secretly desire that they may spread, and take where they come.

Sixthly, when they want apparent matter for reproach, they will pretend some love to get matter for reproach: so you may read in Ezra 4. 1, 2. when the adversaries of Judah could not reproach them apparently, they pretended love, and this and that, they sought the same God they did, and would sacrifice to him, and therefore would build with them. So Sanballat and Tobiah desired to meet lovingly with Nehemiah to take counsel together, but in this they intended his reproach.

Yea sometimes, to speak some truths with reproach, to make it to be believed the more. It is said, 1 John 2:21 that there is no lye of the truth, these men make the truth to be serviceable to a lye,

they raise the strength of a lye, even out of the truth. We might be abundant in showing the ways of invention that malice has, to cast dirt and shame upon those that it has an evil eye upon.

Eighthly, if there be any show of suspition of evil, to make it a certainty, and so to carry it in the report, as if it were surely so, this is a great wrong; for every man is in possession of his good name, until the contrary be made out, and in doubtful things the possessor has the advantage, but in this way of malice, this his priviledge is taken away?

Ninthly, if there be any thing conceived evil, that has any nearness or likeness to that which is done, malice will fasten that evil upon what is done, as if it were that; as appears notably in the example we have Ezra 4. of Rehum the Chancellor, and Shimshai the Scribe, and the rest of their companions, as the holy Ghost calls them, ver. 9. in their reproachful accusation of the people of God; whereas the Text speaks only of their building the Temple, yet they accuse them for building the rebellious City, that thereby they might free themselves from subjection to the King. Thus while Gods people seek to build the Temple, to set up the Ordinances of Christ, they are accused for disturbing the Commonwealth; because they cannot do as others do, because they cannot subject their consciences to men, therefore they are reproached and accused, as disturbers of the State, enemies to Government, &c.

Tenthly, Malice will teach men to draw consequences a great way off from the premises, that it may fasten reproach upon those they have an evil eye upon, although in truth there be no dependance of that which they affirm upon that which they draw it from: As in the former example, Ezra 4. ver. 16. Certifie the King, that if this City be built again, and the walls thereof set up, by this means

you shall have no portion on this side the River; It was a consequence that they could not conclude from what they affirmed of them. Thus it is with many in their reproaches and accusations of Religious men, if they be suffered to have their way in that which they pretend is for conscience, they will grow Rebels, they will not live under government: surely there is no dependance of rejecting government upon Religion, upon subjection to the truth in a conscientious way. And as it is inventive, so it is bold to venture strangely upon such things that men know they may be easily found in. It was the speech of the Jesuit Campian, Reproach valiantly, somewhat will stick, though it may be easily answered by those who know the matter, yet the noise will go further then the examination, and much will stick by it.

A fifth reason of the reproach of Gods people, is from the malice of the Devil, because the Devil knows there is no such way to darken Religion, and to damp the hearts of people from embracing it. And therefore it is observed of Julian, he would not go the way that other Emperors did, to oppose Religion by open persecution, but sought all means to cast reproaches and contempt upon Religion, and by that means many were drawn from Religion: and certainly, where we see that reproaches are cast upon such as are religious, this is the end, to suppress Religion, there the Devil has a great hand, and hopes to prevail much.

Again, God (sometimes) has a special hand in this. Why does God suffer this? sometime for the correction of his people; sometime for the good of his people.

First, for the correction of his people: there are seven or eight sins punished in Gods people by reproaches that are cast upon them.

First, that they have not been so tender of the name of God as they should have been, you have not been affected with the wrongs that have been done to the name of God, and therefore God suffers you to suffer in your names.

Secondly, the inordinate desire of a name, because we are so ready to desire a name abroad, and to have esteem in the world, and are more solicitous about credit with men, then credit in heaven, therefore God sometimes crosseth his people, and suffers filth and dirt to be cast upon them, to correct this sin.

Thirdly, it may be you have not done that good to others which you might have done, therefore God uses them as a scourge to you this way.

Fourthly, it may be it is because you have not been tender of the name of others, and therefore God suffers you to suffer in the same kinde. Says Chrysostom, When you hear any reproach you, you should think, have not I reproached others? Or, have not I heard the reproaches of others, and been delighted with them? or, not affected with them, to grieve as I ought?

Fifthly, God suffers this, because many times you have taken ill the reprehension of your sins by Gods Ministers, and have thought yourselves disgraced, and therefore God may justly punish this, by casting disgrace upon you, you shall be disgraced indeed by the tougues of wicked men.

Sixthly, because many times Gods people will put fair colours upon evil actions, hence God suffers their enemies to put foul colours upon good actions: we are ready to say, Good Lord, that ever we should suffer such things, when we labor to walk so strictly, and our consciences witness so well for us, that yet there

should be such aspersions! God punishes this; you have done evil with fair pretences, and therefore now though your actions be never so good, you shall have foul colours put upon them; your evil actions you made seem to be glorious, now your good actions shall appear as if they were foul.

Seventhly, because the people of God have not been careful to finde out the secret evil and filth of their hearts, therefore God will cast outward filth upon them, this is usual.

Eighthly, though we be conscious of a great deal of evil between God and our hearts, we many times are not ashamed of that, and therefore because God will have us ashamed of our filth, he suffers filth to be cast upon us outwardly.

Secondly, God intends good to his people, that they might know themselves; and though the world have not sufficient reason to accuse them as guilty, it may be a slander from another, and yet I know myself guilty; and though not guilty of that, yet by this I may be put to search some other evil that I am guilty of that is as great.

Again, they may make them watchful for time to come; though they be not guilty now, they may be guilty of that evil afterward. Now what a mercy of God is this to stop our way, though it be by filth? If a man be stopped from falling into a dangerous pit, though it be by a heap of dirt, he accounts it a mercy.

Thirdly, they recover them out of much evil: So that I may compare the reproaches of Gods people to the rags of Jeremy, when Jeremy stuck in the mire in the dungeon, he was pulled out by rags, and so these reproaches of wicked men are rags that may pull us out of evil.

Fourthly, God sanctifies these to his people, to make them more fruitful; they may be compared to the dung that husbandmen cast upon their ground, they scrape up filth and dung together to lay upon their ground, whereby it is more fruitful; so God suffers wicked men to gather up all the filth that can be, and cast upon his people, which is but as dung to make fat the soil, the hearts of Gods people, to make them to be more fruitful in their way; as indeed never do Gods people more thrive in the way of godliness, then when many enemies are set to watch them. And thus we have done with the Explication of the point.

Chapter 31: What use there is to be made of the reproaches the condition of God's people is liable to

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IF it be thus, that the estate of Gods people is an estate liable to reproaches, then you that have any inclination to the ways of God, examine whether you can take his way upon these terms: Can you be content to be made a by-word and reproach, and to have men cast all manner of filth upon you? He is like to hold out in the ways of godliness, that can be content to be made a by-word and reproach for godliness, it is an argument that the soul is re-signed up to God for ever: The reason that some give of that order of the Law, concerning the servant that would serve his Master for ever, that he must come to the door and have his ear bored, was that he might give an evident demonstration, that he was indeed willing to be his Masters for ever, if he would be content to endure such a reproach as that was esteemed to be amongst the Jews: Boring the ear was a note of ignominy; His ear was bored, says Cajetan, to that end, that if he feared not perpetual servitude, be

might at least be afraid of publike ignominy, and therefore he was brought to the door, that he might have many to look on him, and be witnesses of this his shame.

Secondly, it should teach the godly to be accurate in their way: you live amongst those that will observe you, and cast filth on your faces, take heed you give no just occasion; it is enough we shall suffer without any just cause, let us take heed they take no filth out of our own bosoms, and cast upon our faces, that will be grievous indeed, when our consciences shall join with their reproaches. God threatens, Hos. 7. ult. as a great affliction, that his people shall be derided by the Egyptians, this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt; to have the wicked deride us, and that for our sin, is a grievous misery; Make me not a scorn, says David, to fools: It is a great evil for a professor of Religion to make himself a scorn to the fools of the world; if they will reproach us, let it be for forwardness in Gods ways, and not for our sin; sin is only a just reproach, and therefore when Joshua circumcised the people, it is said, He took away their reproach, therefore the place was called Gilgal, because their reproach was rouled away; bodily uncircumcision was a reproach, much more is spiritual uncircumcision: Let us take heed we do not manifest any filth to them, being you live among those that will revile you, whose tongues in Scripture are compared to three things, a Rasor, a Sword, and an Arrow: A Rasor that will take off every little hair, so a reviling tongue will not only take advantage of every gross sin, but the least thing that another can hardly see. Secondly, it is compared to a Sword, a sword that wounds, so the tongues of revilers do a great deal of mischief: but a sword can do mischief only near hand, it cannot do mischief afar off; and therefore, Thirdly, it is compared to an Arrow, that can do

mischief a great way off, as far as one can see a man, and so revilers do not only mischief to a man in the Town where they live, but a great way off in other Towns: Now if mens tongues be Rasors, and Swords, and Arrows, the people of God had need take heed how they walk, and walk accurately, to give no just cause of reproach, that so the reproach may fall upon themselves.

The third Use of the point is this, Gods people are a people lyable to reproach: Let those who are such, from hence be exhorted, that they do not further this, I mean by reproaching one another; it is enough that the servants of God are lyable to reproach from the world, and from those that are without, let not this be furthered by those that are within, upon every pettish humor, or every discontent, presently to be casting filth one upon the face of another, this is a thing unbeseeming Religion. Hereby you come to deprive yourselves of that evidence of the truth of grace, from whence many of Gods servants receive so much comfort, love to Gods people: While they are in your way your hearts are towards them, but if they do cross you, your hearts are as perverse and froward, and appear as malicious as the hearts of any: So that the love you had to them, was because they were in your way, and not because they were the servants of God: Now if you have a heart, though you becrossed by them, to put it up without casting dirt upon their faces, your evidence will be strengthned, that you love them though they be opposite to you. Do not you tear the flesh of one another by reproaches? it is enough that the bryers and thorns of the wilderness do tear our flesh and our names; let there not be bryers and thorns amongst ourselves to tear our flesh. If children be casting mire and dirt upon the faces of one another, how unbeseeming is it? and if the father sees them, how provoked

is he to correct them both? And so if we upon some pettish mood, cast dirt upon one another, expect some severe judgement from God: If children be casting dirt upon one another, this is enough to make them leave, Your Father sees you: And so you that are brethren of a Church, and are casting filth upon one another, know your Father sees you: We should not cast reproaches upon an Enemy. It is a notable speech reported of one Memon, that was General of Darius Army, when he was fighting against Alexander, one of his Soldiers reproached Alexander; the General came to him and smote him, says he, I did not hire you to reproach Alexander, but to fight against him: If a Heathen cannot endure the reproaches of his enemy, how much less should God endure his children reproaching one another? It was a brave speech of Calvin, Though Luther call me a Devil, yet I will honor him as a servant of God: and so though those that are our brethren, do cast reproach upon us, we should honor the grace of God in them, and not cast reproach upon them again, for these reproaches are bitterness.

But the main Use of the point is an Use of Direction, how to carry ourselves under reproach; this is the estate of Gods people, it has been so, and does continue so, and is like to continue so; it should teach us, as to make account of them, so when they befal us, to behave ourselves Christianly under them. This is a lesson of Use, therefore in this lesson of bearing reproaches, take these things.

First, labor to bear your reproaches Christianly, not Stoically, insensibly; for certainly they are afflictions: A good name is a precious oyntment, and therefore reproaches, though never so wrongfully, are afflictions, and not to be born insensibly.

Secondly, not to bear them desperately, not to care what become of your Names, as many desperate wretches will do. Let men speak the worst of me, I care not, I must appeal to God: Though it is true, Innocency is a good bulwark, yet we are not only to care to approve ourselves to God, but we are to care to approve ourselves to men; and not only to have a good esteem in Heaven, but to have a good esteem in the world, To provide things honest before all men, especially amongst the people of God, and the Churches of God; for to have an evil name, is a great judgement of God, Isa. 65:15 Ye shall leave your name for a curse. For people to say, they care not what men say of them, it is a great evil, for by this it appears they are not affected with shame; and those that are not affected with shame before others, they are deprived of a special bridle that should keep them from evil, and a special means to further repentance. And besides, it is an argument there is no worth, no good in you who art so careless; those who have any true worth, will be careful to preserve it, but others are desperate: As a man that has a good garden, full of good flowers and herbs, will be careful to pull up every weed, but if the place be a dunghil, or overgrown, he neglects it: Therefore let us labor to behave ourselves Christianly, not carelesly, desperately under reproach.

Again, we must not carry ourselves passionately under reproach; though it is true, it is good to be sensible of the wrong done to our names, more then the wrong done to our estates, yet neither are the wrongs to our names nor to our estates to be born passionately. There are five evils follow upon this distemper of heart.

First, there is a great disturbance to the spirit, and that is a greater evil to have the heart disturbed, then to have a great deal of dirt cast upon us: To have a disturbance within the body, is worse then a violent motion without.

Secondly, we are made lyable to discover a great deal of evil in us, that though we are unjustly reproached, yet we may discover so much evil, as to be a just cause of reproach.

Thirdly, we do feed the humor of those that reproach, they have part of their end to see us so disturbed.

Fourthly, we show the baseness of our spirits, to be so soon put out of frame. Seneca speaking of the complaint of those that are under reproach, They are, says he, the complaint of squeamish spirits.

Fifthly, it is a means to make others to think we are guilty: There is no means whereby I would think one were guilty of what he is reproached, as that, namely, a mighty inordinate passion at hearing of those things. If you hear a couple disputing, commonly he that wants arguments for his case, will fall into giving ill language, and passion, and therefore those men that have power over their passion in reasoning, do what they can to bring those they reason withal into passion, for then they have them at their will: And so those that are brought into passion, when they are reproached, gives a great suspition of the weakness of their cause, and are thought to be guilty.

Fourthly, let us not carry ourselves revengefully under our reproaches, not to desire the reproachers might have an evil name in the same kinde: It is ordinary for people that are reproached to do thus, but many though they dare not say so, yet secretly they would

be willing that those that do reproach them, might have an evil name. But where have we those that do labor to clear the innocency of those that do reproach them? it would be the glory of Christians, to be so far from revenge to those that reproach them, as to clear their innocency, and to speak well of them as occasions serve, as the Apostle says, Webeing defamed, we intreat, and are not glad if they fall into any evil: Many people if any have spoken evil of them, and they fall into evil, how does it please them? Let us suffer never so much, God forbid we should think the evil of our reproach so great, as to be glad to have it wiped away with any sin against God: Such and such have sinned such and such sins, and by those sins my reproach is wiped away, and therefore I am glad: God forbid we should have the wiping away of our reproaches at so dear a rate. We read in Hosea 4. of the great charge that was laid upon the Priests, they eat up the sin of the people, because the Priests had some advantage by the sins that the people committed, for they brought Sacrifices for their sin, and the Priests had part, upon this they set their hearts, upon the sin of the people; this is an abominable thing, to be glad of the sin of another, because of any advantage that comes to us by it. True it is, God shall have a great deal of glory by clearing the innocency of his servants, but we must not desire that God may have his glory this way by the commission of any sin, nor rejoice in such a way of Gods glory.

But the special and most ordinary revenge in the bearing of reproaches, is reviling again, speaking evil for evil, if they call you one ill name, you will call them another, this is unbeseeming Christians: And consider what evil is in it.

First, this is that which is most opposite to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of Gods people; that place you know, 1 Pet. 2:23 Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; if you profess yourselves to be Christs, you must not revile again when you are reviled: And so the spirits of Gods servants, as St. Paul and the Martyrs, when they were reviled, they would not give ill language again.

Again, by reviling you come to harden those that reproach you in their sin; when they sin and see the same sin in you, they think they do not worse then you, so they come to be hardned in their sin, and you come to be guilty of their sin, you turn their sin to be yours, because you harden them in theirs.

Thirdly, you by this means stir up more corruption, and more sin; whereas those that know what sin means, and are tender of it, they should by all means labor to suppress it, and beat it down, as when a neighbors house is on fire, we will labor what we can to quench it, and not to put more fire to it; shall we have more care of our neighbors house, then of our neighbors soul? his heart is on fire, and his tongue is on fire, and will you bring more fire? this is abominable.

Fourthly, you come by this means to adde your sin to his sin: What, is not God dishonored enough by his reviling, but must you adde to Gods dishonor?

Again fithly, here you show your exceeding folly, that you do not apprehend a greater evil in the evil of sin, then in the evil of suffering: for if we did apprehend the evil of suffering to be less then the evil of sin, we would never labor to deliver ourselves from the evil of suffering by the evil of sin; let a man come and cast dirt

in your face, the worst that can be in this is an evil of suffering at first, till you make yourselves guilty, but how will you deliver yourselves by the evil of sin? what ignorance is this? Are you acquainted with the ways of God? Is this the way to clear yourselves, by defiling yourselves more? That filth that comes out of you, defiles you more then that which is cast upon you from without.

Again further, another evil that comes from this reviling, is this, you show a vile, base spirit, as if you had no other means to deliver you from an ill name, but an ill tongue; those that know any excellency that they have in themselves, will know that there are a great many other ways to deliver themselves from an ill name, rather then an evil tongue. But you are put to your shifts, you have evil cast upon you, and you have no way to deliver yourselves from this evil but by your reviling tongue. It is a sign there is no excellency in you, nothing but baseness in you. Seneca says of those that are disorderly affected with reproaches that are cast upon them, They show that there is no wisdom, nor no confidence of any excellency in themselves to oppose that evil.

Again, hereby you come to be injurious to yourselves, you deprive yourselves from any help of God to clear your names: If you had hearts to commit yourselves to God, he would provide for you; but when you seek to clear yourselves this way, you put yourselves from any care that God should have to provide for you. That we read of David, Psalm 38. 12, 13, 14, 15. is very observable, They which seek my hurt, says he, speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long, but I as a deaf man heard not; and again, verse 14. I was as a man that hears not; but mark verse 15. In you O Lord do I hope, you will hear: The less he heard, the more confidence he had in God that he would hear, and could the more

comfortably commit his cause to him; but if he had been too quick to hear himself, God would not readily have heard for him, and what had he got by that? Now by all this you cannot but be convinced in your thoughts, that it is a great evil to revile again, and you that have been guilty of this, let your hearts smite you, and know what cause you have to be humbled before the Lord.

But is it possible not to revile again? Who can but do so when they come and give such ill language, so injurious, so false?

Those that have the Spirit of Christ can do otherwise. Those that know the evil of sin to be a greater evil then the evil of suffering, can do this. And those that are wise, and will not mischief themselves, can do this. Can any by reproaches force you to take a knife and cut yourselves! If they force you to commit sin, they force you to worse. Certainly you think every man is in bondage; consider what miserable bondage men should be in, for to be in the power of their enemies, when they list to make them to mischief themselves, can there be any worse bondage? for an enemy to draw any body where he will, is not so much, but to make me to hurt myself, this is a great and a sore bondage indeed. Therefore there is no contending with reproaches this way by reproaching again, here the overcomer is the loser. When Demosthenes was reproached by one, I will not, says he, strive with you in this kinde of fight, in which he that is overcome is the better man.

Fiftly, take heed you be not hindred in your way, or break off your course when you are reproached: what though there be filth cast in the way, shall we decline our way? though the clouds do arise, and darken the light of the Sun, does the Sun cease in its course, and cease shining because it is darkned? no, it goes on its course and shines till it breaks forth: so you are going on, shining

in a good conversation, some come and cast reproach upon your way, and darkens your course; What, shall you cease? No, go on, and in time you will break through the clouds. Was there ever such a fool as to be jeered out of his inheritance? A man has an inheritance worth a thousand pounds a year, and a company shall go and scorn him, and contemn him, and reproach him, and he shall be rather willing to part with his inheritance then to be thus jeered; Was there ever any such a fool? Is not our way of Religion a greater inheritance to us, then an inheritance of a thousand pounds a year? If you should be moved to go out of your way upon reproaches, know that this will be infinite more reproach to you, then if all the men of the world did cast reproach upon you; this will reproach you to your conscience, and that before God and all the Angels and Saints, before all Gods people. And then besides, this will further reproach you before wicked men too, you will be the more scorned and vilified.

I remember a speech of a Heathen Philosopher, If any man begin to embrace Philosophy, he must be reproached; They will say, What, we shall have a Philosopher of you by and by, what pride and conceitedness is this? But do you still go on in your way, and those who reproached you before, will after admire you: But if you fall off, after you have begun (not being able to bear reproach) This, says he, deserves a double reproach: Your reproachers will reproach you much more, they will say, Here is a time-server, who will do any thing as the times serve for his turn. None so much contemned as Apostates. Those that opposed Nehemiah, and sought to hinder his work, did it to reproach him, if he had left his work for reproaching, they would have reproached him much more: How would this cut you to the heart, that those that did re-

proach you, if you go out of the way, should reproach you much more? Consider, does this beseem the spirit of a Christian? Had you ever any experimental knowledge of the evil of sin, or any good in the ways of God? Will this be an answer before God, when you come to give an account why you went out of your way? Lord, I suffered so much reproach, I could not bear it. And again, will it not be just with God, for to suffer you to fall into some vile scandalous sin to be reproached for, after another manner? because that you would not suffer reproach for his name, you should suffer reproach for your sin. These are the things we are to be warned of.

Chapter 32: How we are to bear Reproaches

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But how are we to bear reproaches? We are to bear our reproaches wisely, patiently, fruitfully, joyfully, and to return good for evil.

First, we are to bear them wisely: there is a great deal of wisdom required in bearing of reproaches and evils that men are accused of, the exercise of wisdom does appear much in the bearing of reproaches, though we should not be insensible, yet not to take too much notice of every reproach that is castp on us. It was the speech of a Philosopher, when one was reproaching of him, some told him they deride you; but says he, I am not derided, I will not take to myself that which is cast upon me: It is wisdom for people to go away, and take but little notice of any thing that is cast upon them, and therefore when upon every idle reproach, there come a company tatling, and say, Such a one says thus and thus; such should be sent away with an angry countenance, it is a dishonor to you to receive them, as if you would take notice of every word, and as if you had no other things to take up your thoughts. Dionysius having not very well used Plato at the Court, when he was gone, he feared lest he should write against him, therefore he sent after

him, to bid him not to write against him, says he, Tell Dionysius, I have not so much leisure as to think of him: so we should let those that reproach us to know, that we have not leisure to think of them; as S. Paul, when the Viper came upon his hand, he shaked it off, some would have swelled, and almost dyed at the very sight of such a thing but he did but shake it off: And so should we do by our reproaches; when reproaches are opposed they do grow, as hair the more it is cut the more it grows, when they are despised they will vanish away; there is a great deal of evil comes by making much ado about reproaches.

First, by this means they are kept up in the mouthes of people, and so the evil is worse, as a dunghil stirred stinks the worse.

Again, it may occasion those that reproach us, to raise up things that were dead a great while ago, and adde that to our reproach.

Again, it may occasion abundance of new matter, though false, to make our reproaches greater. If a man should undertake to answer every reproachful speech, there would be no end; for the Devils breast, says Luther, is very fruitful with lyes:

Again, our making much stir, does but stir them the more that do reproach us, and by making ado and stir, it comes to be more divulged.

Lastly, when we do stir, if we do not clear every little minute to the utmost, it will be a means to make us suspected of all, and therefore do not take much notice of reproaches. It is a notable example that we finde of one Pericles as he was sitting before others in a meeting, a foul-mouthed fellow railed upon him all the day long; at night when it was dark, and the meeting broke up, the fel-

low followed him and railed at him even to his door, and he took no notice of him what he said, but when he came at home, this is all he said, It is dark, I pray let my man light you home.

But men will take me for guilty if I let it pass quietly.

Not so, we know many times Christ himself took no notice of a great deal of evil that was said against him, so that the Rulers wondred, How is it that they lay these things to your charge, and you answer nothing? Again, rather the other will show us guilty; it was a speech of Ambrose concerning those that cannot suffer reproach, while they clear themselves guilty, they approve themselves to be more guilty of that evil which is said against them.

Obj. But we shall hearten them more in accusing of us.

Answ. No, it will rather be a means to hearten them by keeping a stir, for then they have something to feed upon.

Obj. How shall we stop their mouthes?

Ans. First, walk innocently, innocency wil clear all, and overcome in time; hence David says, that you mayest be clear when you judgest. St. Paul quoting this, Rom. 3:4 he has it, That you mayest overcome when you judgest; he puts overcome for clear, because those who are clear will overcome. But more then this in the second place, you must labor to be eminent in that which is quite contrary to that which you are reproached for: Perhaps he reproaches you for one that is a dissembler, labor for the greatest eminency of plainness of heart and sincerity: If it be for covetousness, labor to be eminent in liberality, & doing good wisely, not where they would have you, but in a gracious way, ordering your affairs by discretion: If it be for pride, clear yourselves not by yielding to their

humor, but labor for an eminency of humility another way, that those that can judge right may see there is humility in you: thus labor to entertain reproaches with wisdom.

Secondly, labor to bear reproaches patiently. And therein first I shall labor to take away those pleas whereby men are hindred in their patience. Secondly, I will show what powerful arguments there are for bearing reproaches. Thirdly, give some means how to bear them patiently.

First, to take away the pleas and objections that people have against patience. Some will say, if it were not wrongfully, I could bear it, it would never grieve me.

One would wonder that ever there should come such a foolish speech out of the mouth of a reasonable creature; if there be any thing that should uphold your hearts, it should be your innocency, therefore let not such a speech be heard out of a man or womans mouth, much less out of a Christians mouth; if your guilt would increase the burden of the reproach, as most certainly it would, then it would be harder to bear it being guilty, then now it is being innocent.

But this is that which sinks my heart, it is a reproach that takes away my Name, even from those that are godly, and they come by these reproaches to have hard thoughts of me; and this is the greatest affliction, for an outward affliction, under Heaven.

It is true, Zedekiah feared more to be mocked of the Jews then of the Chaldeans; it is certainly a sorer affliction to be reproached by the professors of Religion, then by any others; but yet God is pleased to exercise his people many times with this affliction also; and it may be God sees this to be the most seasonable and suitable

to exercise you withal, because he would wholly take off your hearts from other things, and satisfy your souls with himself alone; and blessed is that man that can make this use of it, to get his heart the more close and fully to God. It is the blessing of God upon you, that your heart is above the reproaches of other men; if God will exercise you with an affliction that you are sensible of, it is fit you should yield yourself unto him in it: Would you have God exercise you in such afflictions as are only easie to be born, of which you should not be sensible? it is the bitterness of them that causes them to work, if they were not bitter, as to make you sensible, it is not like they would be profitable.

Thirdly, some cannot tell how to bear their reproaches, because it is not only a disgrace to their name, but it hinders their service in Gods Church, by this means they come to have ill esteem, and are not like to do so much good in the Church of God, which I confess is a great matter.

Let no man lay so much upon his service he shall do, but let God have his work his own way, and God expects this humility from us, that he may have his work done his own way, and if God pleaseth he may make use of us to do so much work for him, as if our names were never so clear: The Prophets were scorned and reproached, and did they never do service? and St. Paul, never any man in the world that ever did God more service, and yet no man that ever was so much reproached as he; he was whipped up and down as if he had been a rogue, and he was fain to go about in tatters, not having wherewithal to cover his nakedness, and had not bread to put in his body, and was called a seditious fellow, and

counted the filth of all things; and yet this St. Paul was used as the most worthy instrument of Gods service that ever was since the world began, next Christ himself.

Secondly, the arguments that may move us to bear reproaches patiently.

First, a Christian is called to do and suffer great things for God, and strong and glorious is the grace of God that is in a man where it is true; now if Christianity shall not enable to bear reproaches, what will it enable you to do? Does not the Scripture speak of the excellency, and the glory, and the power of the grace of God? What excellency, and power, and glory is in it, if it cannot do this? Now Christians that are called to do and suffer such great things, should be above the reproaches of the world. Seneca would not have them called miseries, but trouble some things, concerning which we cannot say a wise man overcomes them, but he is so far above them, as he is scarce sensible of them; if it be not out of stupidity or discontentedness, but out of true magnanimity of spirit, that one is not sensible of such things, this beseems a Christian well. Now if a Christian having received the grace of God, should not think much of any misery that he is capable of in this world, then surely he should not have his heart sink when there is but a troublesome thing befaln him. It was the speech of Xenophon, when one came and reproached him, says he, You have learned how to reproach, and I have learned how to bear reproach. And Aristippus the Philosopher said, You are fit to cast reproaches, and I am fit to hear reproaches.

Secondly, what are you? or what is your names that you should think much to bear reproach? when as others that are your betters, that are not so vile, not so guilty as you, not so lyable to reproach

as you; when as others of Gods servants, that have been most eminent in grace and parts, have been under exceeding reproach; yea, others whose names have been far more worth then yours, there have been more use of their names, and credits, and honors, then of yours, and yet God has so ordered it in his providence, that reproaches and aspersions have been cast upon them, and do you think so much to be reproached? What do we think of our flesh better then others, that we should not endure trouble in it? and what do we think of our names, that we cannot endure reproaches in them.

Yea, not only others that are better then you, but God and Christ is reproached: How is the name of God slighted? the basest wretch that will tremble before his Master, thinks himself good enough to blaspheme the name of God: How is the majesty, sovereignty, and authority of God contemned in the world? How are the dreadful threatnings of God, and the revelation of Gods wrath scorned in the world? When as we hear out of the word such dreadful manifestations of Gods wrath against sin, which calls for trembling hearts, yet how are they slighted in the world? thus God is reproached, and Christ: No man is able to bear so muchcontempt as Christ beares daily, says Luther: Not to speak of the reproaches that Christ endures in his people, but the reproaches that he endured in his person, in his preaching; how was he contemned in Luke 16:14 when he preached against covetousness, the Pharisees scorned at him; the word signifies, They blew their noses at him: you know how he was called a Devil, a Samaritan, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; What worse can be imagined then was cast upon Christ? they spit on his face, that blessed face of his, that the waves of the Sea were afraid of, and that the

Sun withdrew its light from, as not being fit to behold it, and yet they put thorns upon his head, and bowed to him in reproach; yea, in his misery how was he reproached, when he was upon the Cross, they nodded their heads at him, and said, He that could save others, let him come down and save himself.

Again, consider the great mercy of God in concealing the secret sins of your thoughts: there are none, let them be never so innocent in the world, yet there is so much filth and baseness within the heart, that if God should but turn the inside outward, and discover all to the world, certainly it would make them ashamed of the society of men, make them ashamed to come into the Congregation; what confusion, and what matter of reproach would there be then? Now, seeing God in his goodness favors his people so far, as he keeps in much secret evil that he could discover before the world: if he should withdraw himself a little from you, he could let you fall into such sins, as your secret sins should be discovered; but God favors your names, so as that he has kept in that secret evil that you have had secret inclinations unto; now the consideration of Gods goodness in tendring you so far, may very well quiet your hearts when you begin to be troubled for every reproach that is cast upon you: Now I see my adversaries are fain to watch and search, and pry for occasion of reproach, God might have given them matter enough, and therefore its mercy they have such little matter as they have. It is a great work of nature to keep the filth of the body when it is in a man from being unsavory unto others; so the filth of the soul, though it be unsavory to God, yet it is Gods mercy that keeps it from that unsavoriness that it might be to men.

Fifthly, consider how much reproach the name of God has endured for your sakes; and is it so great a matter for your names to be reproached for his sake? It is a notable speech Chrysostom has, That for us and for our life our Lord should be blasphemed, is worse then if we perished; Has not the name of God been reproached for your sakes? not only in the time of your ignorance, but since; have there not been occasion given by you, to cause others to reproach the name of the blessed God? and if God comes to you in your names, do you take it so ill?

Again, consider who those are that do reproach you, and for what it is. It is the speech of an Ancient, That a reproacher is beneath a man, but the reproached that bear it well, are equal to the Angels. The Hebrew word that signifies scorners, has many other significations which set out the vileness, the dangerous evil there is in a scornful spirit; the Seventy, besides that of scorning, have five other words to show the signification of it, as first, [⟨ in non-Latin alphabet ⟩], in the first Psalm, in the chair of scorners, they translate it by a word that signifies the plague, in the chair of plagues, because scorners are a plague to the place where they live, and do infect many; a second word that they use to express it by, is [⟨ in non-Latin alphabet ⟩], Prov. 20:1 which signifies incorrigible, that which cannot be tamed, because scorners are such; Wine is a scorner, res indomita, an unruly thing that cannot be tamed, because it makes men to be so, and so are scorners, there is little hope of such: Thirdly, sometimes they translate it [⟨ in non-Latin alphabet ⟩], Prov. 9:12 as such as are given up to all kinde of vice, and so are scorners: And fourthly, by a word that signifies proud, [⟨ in non-Latin alphabet ⟩], Prov. 3:34 for such likewise are scorners: Fifthly, by a word that signifies to deal unjustly, [⟨ in

non-Latin alphabet 〉], Psalm 119:51 because scorners are injurious. Thus you see what kinde of men those who scorn and reproach the ways and professors of Religion are.

But besides, they are especially such as have been brought up superstitiously or prophanely; such as have been bred in superstitious Popish families, are many times bitter scorners and reproachers of those who are most forward in the ways of godliness. We read 2 Kings 2:23 when Elisha went to Bethel, there came forth little children out of the city and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up you bald head, go up you bald head; that is observable, they came out of Bethel, which was that idolatrous city in Israel, where the Calf of Jeroboam was set up, that place was full of scorners at the Prophets of the Lord; you may know the temper of the place, by the disposition of the little children, they usually heard their parents and those who were elder scorn at the Prophets of the Lord, they were brought up in that way, and because it was at Bethel, the curse of God was the rather upon their children to destroy them, although they were but children, yet two and forty of them were presently destroyed. Hosea 7:5 we read of those who were elder, the great ones in that City, even Jeroboam himself, and his Courtiers, what scorners they were, In the day of our King, the Princes have made him sick with bottles of wine, he stretched out his hand with the scorners. The Princes, Nobles, Officers, great ones of the Countrey, jeered and scorned at those, who would not yield to that way of worship that Jeroboam had set up, namely of the Calves; O they must be so precise, as no worship will serve their turn, but going up to Jerusalem to worship there; such as

ventured the loss of their estates, their offices, their liberties, they accounted them fools, and reproached them as a company of simple silly people.

And as superstition is a cause of this, so prophaneness and sensuallity causes it likewise; that is observable in the forenamed place of Hosea, when he was made sick with wine, then he streched out his hand with scorners; when wicked men pamper themselves with good cheer, and their hearts are hot with wine, then they scorn at Religion, and reproach such as are more strict and forward then others, blessing themselves in the brave life they live, contemning the ways of godliness, and the professors of them, as such who want those brave delights they enjoy, and in regard of that they scorn at, and reproach the ways of God and his people at those times. Psalm 35:16 with hypocritical mockers, in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth; the most cruel scornful reproaches against the Saints are at feasts. That place is observable, Deut. 32. 33, 34. Their wine is the poyson of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps, because of the bitterness of their spirits, against those who are godly, when they are at their cups: but mark what follows, Is not this laid up in store, and sealed up among my treasures? to me belongeth vengeance, and recompence, their foot shall slide in due time. God will remember this, it is laid up in store with him, it is surely sealed up, and shall certainly be brought forth one day.

And yet further, Who are your reproachers? They are those that are weak, or ignorant, or such as are malicious. Weak and ignorant, for any one that has wisdom, to be troubled at the reproaches of those that are weak, it is a wonderful disgrace: Will any man care that is a workman, to have an unskilful man re-

proach his work? It is a notable speech of Seneca, Some are possest with such great folly and madness, to think they may be reproached by a woman. And for the malicious, alas! they reproach themselves a great deal more then they reproach you, they do but discover their own filth in it, and therefore are compared to swine; swine will leave other things, and continually be rooting in dung; and so those that love to be reproaching, leave the good that is in any, and will always be rooting in their filth, here they show their swinish dispositions. One compares a reproacher to the stone that struck down Nebuchadnezzars Image, whose head was of gold, and the breast and upper parts of silver, and the feet of clay, the stone came and struck the feet, the clay, and so struck it down: so reproachers do not look at the gold and silver, the parts and graces of Gods people, but if there be any clay, any infirmities or sins, they strike at them, and so fell them down. The godly had need fence their feet of clay and infirmities, that they do not lie open to malicious men. Erasmus tells of one who collected all the lame and defective verses in Homers Works, but passed over all that were excellent: So these, if they can spy any thing defective and evil, they observe it, and gather all they can together, but will take no notice of that which is good and praise-worthy; like the Kite who flies over the fair meadows and flowers, and lights only upon the carrion, or like flyes that love only to be upon the sore galled places of the horses back.

And what is it you are reproached for? it is either good or evil; if it be good, you have no cause to be troubled, if it be evil, it is threefold, the evil of sin, or natural infirmities, or outward meanness. If it be the evil of sin, then either you are guilty or not guilty; if you be guilty, it is not reproach, but right judgement of your con-

dition, and if there be such a great evil for others to speak of it, what a great evil is it for you to be guilty of it? and therefore you should turn all the trouble that you have for the notice which is taken of it, upon your guiltiness in it: and many times although the thing be true they say of you, yet it is so poor and mean a thing, that you may comfort yourself in this, that surely they cannot perceive worse in you, for if they could, they would make use of that. Latimer in his last Sermon before K. Edward, says, He was glad when any objected indiscretion against him in his Sermons, for says he, by that I knew the matter was good, else they would soon have condemned that. And if you be not guilty, innocency is bulwark enough. Says Seneca, He is to be ashamed that does unjustly, and shall you be ashamed that are innocent?

Yes, others think I am guilty.

But if you go on in an innocent way, whoever do think so, do disgrace themselves: for suppose one should say the Sun were dark, and another should believe it, who is disgraced? the Sun, or the man that either said it or believed it? so if an aspersion be cast upon those that are godly, and they walk in a shining conversation before others, it will be such a reproach to any that raises the reproach, as it will keep others from believing of it. But if the evil be some natural infirmity, weakness of parts, or the like, then you mayest comfort yourself in this, that there is no dishonor in natural infirmity, it is only sin that brings shame, there is a relation between sin and shame, but between nothing else and shame; it is a sign also they want other things, when they reproach you for natural infirmities.

Seventhly, consider what honor God has put upon you, and what he intends to put upon you: if you be godly, he has put honor enough upon you, and that may be enough to uphold the heart under all the reproaches and stains that men and Devils can cast upon you. Has not the Lord been pleased to bring you into the honorable estate of sonship? and has put his glory upon your souls, and has honored you by that near relation you have to Christ? he has honored you by the glorious priviledges of the Gospel, he has honored you by giving himself and Christ to you; he has honored you in the hearts of his Saints, men of precious spirits, who know much of Gods mind, who are able to judge in which true excellency consists, their hearts are with you, they bless God for you, the esteem of one godly man is more to be regarded then thousands of others, your name is precious amongst the Saints, and that is enough. When Doeg reproached David with devouring words in Sauls Court, yet David blessed himself in this, Psalm 52:8 But I am a green Olive-tree in the house of God; Doeg flourishes in the Court, and my name may be blasted there, but In the house of God, there my name is precious; I am there as a green olive-tree, and that is more to me then flourishing in Sauls Court. Now shall the reproach of an evil tongue take away the comfort of a godly heart that has so great honors? We count it a great evil, and exceeding was the basenes of the spirit of Haman, when he was so honored by the King and his Nobles, yet that he should be vexed, because Mordecai would not bow to him, that all his honor should do him no good: so is it not the baseness of the spirits of Gods Servants, (truly it is to be called by no other name) when as God has raised them to such glory, when as God has made them Members of, and Coheirs with his Son, and they are invited to the

Banquet of the Lord, to the great Supper of the Lamb, and the Lord has provided for them all the glory of Heaven, and there are such glorious things spoken of them in the word, yet for all this if they come into wicked company, and have but an evil tongue speak against them, they are so discouraged and cast down, as if all the honor that God had put upon them were nothing: What an evil thing is this? And how do you derogate from the goodness of God, to walk thus unbeseeming Christians?

If you had never so much filth upon you for the present, being there is so much honor to come, what need you to care? If a man be going to be crowned, and to be glorified, and those that do not know him, as he goes contemn him, what cares he? He knows that within a few days he shall be honored by those that do reproach him. As David said to Michal, 2 Samuel 6:22 when she told him of being vile in the eyes of the handmaids, Of the maid-servants which you hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honor: so even of those men of the world, which now you say do so reproach you, even of them hereafter shall you be had in honor: If we believe there are such things to come, that we shall sit with Christ, and judge the Angels, and judge the reproachers, why should we be troubled?

There is a famous passage I have met with in Chrysostom, to this purpose; he brings in Christ comforting his Disciples against reproaches, speaking thus unto them: What, is the wrong grievous unto you, that now they call you seducers and conjurers? it will not be long before they shall openly call you the Saviors and blessings of the whole world; that time that shall declare all things that are now hid, shall rebuke them for their lying words against you, and-shall kindle the splendor of your vertue; so they shall be found

lyars, evil speakers, false accusers of others, but you shall be more clear and illustrious then the Sun, and you shall have all men witnesses of your glory.

8. Again, consider what abundance of reproach and contempt justly many do suffer for their sins and wickedness that indeed they are guilty of, sin carries many men through infinite shameful things: as take one that is given to a base lust, and so as he may enjoy his lust, he cares not what shame he endures, though he be counted the shame of their friends, and the scum of the place where he lives. Who are so basely looked upon as base drunkards? they are looked upon as more vile then the filth and dung of the earth, and yet they go on and bless themselves in the pleasure they have in their lusts, notwithstanding the reproach. If one should be content to go on in his lusts, and please himself therein, notwithstanding all the reproach he endures, what cause have we to go on in the ways of God, and keep close to him, though all the world reproach us?

9. Again, consider the goodness of God in delivering of you from everlasting reproach. In Dan. 12:2 Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. We might have been amongst the company of those that shall have all their wickedness opened at the last day of Judgement before God himself, and might have had the Lord himself mocking at us.

10. And yet futther, consider that the greatest evil of reproach it is from him that receives it, it is according as we take it. It is a speech of Chrysostom; As it is with meat, so it is with reproaches, it is not the goodness and sweetness of the meat in its self that makes it to be good and sweet to me, but according as my stomack

and body is affected: And so in all reproaches, it is not as it comes from him that casts it, that makes it evil, but it is as he that receives it makes it: cast dirt upon dirt, and it will stick, cast dirt upon on a piece of polished brass or iron, and it will fall off; the greatest part of the evil of reproaches, comes from the affection of the receiver; then it is in our power to make reproaches to be as nothing, if we can but take pains to get our hearts so affected, as that the reproach may not stick: It is not in the power of any man in the world to stain us, if we by some evil do not make the stain to stick upon ourselves.

Again, if you consider that God has the care of your names, that may be a great argument to help you to bear reproach: God has taken the charge of the names of his people, as truly as of their souls, and if God has the charge of your names, why are you troubled at any thing that befals you in regard of your name? If you be in Gods way, you are to commit yourselves to God, he has charge of you; when Gods Servants are meek and quiet, and do not hear reproaches against themselves, yet God hears them, it is no great matter then though they hear them not themselves. It is an excellent place we have for this, Psalm 38. 12, 13, 15. They speak mischievous things, says David, but I as a deaf man heard not; but mark verse 15. In you O Lord do I hope, you will hear, O Lord my God; What need David hear, God will hear: the less we hear in this case, the more will God hear, Job 5:21 You shall be hid from the scourge of the tongue: Now there is a twofold hiding from the scourge of the tongue, either by delivering us wholly from it, or otherwise delivering us from the evil of it: As a man may be said to be hid and delivered from a thing that can do him no hurt, and so in this sense at least you shall be delivered from the scourge of the

tongue; it may be that God will wholly free us from the scourge of the tongue, or it may be it is fit you should be scourged, yet you art hid from it so as it shall do you no hurt, no not to your name in the conclusion. And so in Psalm 37. 5, 6. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass, and he shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgement as the noon day. This was the argument that upheld David when Shimei curst him; Well, says he, it may be God bid him; my name is in his hand, and he may do with my name what he please. Upon this Ambrose has this speech, O the height of the wisdom, prudence, patience of David! what a worthy plot had he to deliver himself from the evil of reproach.

Again, it is a greater mercy that God keeps you from the evil of the hands of wicked men, if God beat out the teeth of wicked men, that they only can bark and not bite, that their tongues and not their hands can only reach you. The complaint of Job might have been your, ch. 16:11 God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked; this would have been grievous indeed. Although they send a flood of reproaches after you, as Rev. 12:15 the Dragon cast out of his mouth a flood after the Church, yet you art far from their reach as she was, therefore be patient under reproaches. It is through the wantonness of our hearts that we are so sensible of the evil of reproaches, because we are not accustomed to suffer greater evils; those who are in danger of greater evils, have no leisure to think on these things, says Seneca, but mindes weakned with too much idleness, and wanton and effeminate through want of sufferings.

Yet further, consider what a great deal of good there is in bearing reproaches patiently.

First, there is a great deal of honor in it: There is more honor in bearing reproaches patiently, then there is disgrace in having them cast wrongfully upon you; now what do you lose then? Suppose there be hot water, and I put so much cold to it, it loses its warmth, but if I put more warm then cold to it, then the water has lost nothing of its warmness: So suppose you be reproached, and God brings more honor then the reproach did scandal, then you have lost nothing; Every fool can cast reproach, but it is the part of a wise man to bear it well.

Again, if we can bear reproaches patiently, what a quiet will it be to our hearts? otherwise we should never be quiet, for we live amongst those that will cast reproaches, and unless we can get power this way, we shall never have comfortable lives, and we should think it much, that the comfort and quiet of our lives should lie at the mercy of others.

Thirdly, the bearing of reproaches patiently is a mighty help to the progress of godliness in us: As those that have overcome the evil of shame in a way of sin, grow mightily hardned in their sins; so those that have got that strength, to go on in the ways of God, so as not much to regard any reproach that is cast upon them in that way, they will mightily grow in those ways.

Lastly, consider there is much danger in being honored by men, and in many regards, the honors of men are as much, if not more to be feared then their contempts and dishonors. Luther writing to a friend of his, says, He would not have the glory and fame of Erasmus; my greatest fear is the praises of men, but my joy is in their reproaches and evil speeches.

Chapter 33: What we should do, that we may be able to bear reproach

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But you will say, these arguments may move us to do it, and convince us we should do it, but how shall we do it?

First, be sure to keep conscience clear, that that do not upbraid you, be careful of what you do, and then you need not be much careful of what men say; if conscience do not reproach you, reproach without will not much move you; consciences testimony for you, is more then ten thousand slanders against you: As the storms and winds without do not move the earth, but vapors within that causes earthquakes: As Ambrose says of David, he was not much troubled with Shimei's railing, because his conscience did abound with good works. If you can say with Job, Chap. 27:6 My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live, you art safe enough from the evil of reproach.

Secondly, if you be failing in any thing, begin with yourselves before any begin with you, accuse yourselves before God first, so some interpret that place in Psalm 119. I am wiser then my enemies; though my enemies are witty, and do plot, and their malice

do help them with invention, yet I am wiser, I can finde out the ways of my own heart, and my own evils, better then all my enemies.

Thirdly, Christians should exercise themselves in great things, in the things of God, and Christ, and eternity, and labor to greaten their spirits in a holy manner, and be above reproach. It was a speech of Seneca, Men that know their greatness, are not troubled with reproaches, he will think himself above reproach; And therefore, if our spirits be truly greatned (not with pride, but with the exercising of our spirits in things that are above the world) reproaches would be nothing in our eyes. It is a notable expression that St. John has against the evil tongue of Diotrephes, Ep. 3. ver. 10. He prates against us with malicious words, in the Original it is, he trifles, although his words were malicious, and Diotrephes a great man, yet all was but trifles, so high was St. Johns spirit above them. Aquinas gives two figns of a weak spirited man; one, that he delights in light and foolish words; a second, that he cannot endure contempt; such a man, says he, although he should work miracles, yet he is beneath the perfection of vertue, his spirit has no true greatness in it.

The sinking of the heart under reproaches, or to be put out of the way by them, argues too vile a pusillanimity, such a poor low spirit as is not consistent with the true magnanimity of a Christian. Gulielmus Parisiensis in his Treatise De virtutibus, has notable Expressions to this purpose, Little things, says he, yea meer nothings cast down poor weak spirited men. The words of vain men are small things, whoever fears such words so as to do evil, or to leave off good, are the weakest of men; these are like unto Soldiers who are cast down and overcome, not with some violent strong tem-

pest, but with some small weak puff of winde, these are the more ridiculous and not to be reckoned amongst Warriers; nay, they are not to be reckoned amongst men, who fall off for fear of words, which yet have not been spoken, as if a man should fall for fear of the wind which yet blows not, such are those who dare not do good, or leave evil, for fear of reproaches.

Fourthly, another means is to make your moan to God, and lay your case before him, as Hezekiah, when Rabshekah came and reviled God, and the people of God, he went and spread the letter before God, and made his moan before God; If we can do so, there will be that satisfaction to our souls that is unspeakable, and that will be a great argument of our innocency; Many will say, Oh they are innocent, and God knows their hearts, but can you go and make your moan before God when you are reproached, and acquaint God with the cause, and receive refreshment that way, as Job 16:20 My friends scorn me, but mine eyes pour out tears to God: And David, Psalm 109. 1, 2. Hold not your peace, O God of my praise, for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitfal are opened against me, they have spoken against me with a lying tongue; they have compassed me about with words of hatred, they are mine adversaries, but I prayer; for so the words are in the Original, not I give myself, but only thus, but I prayer; as if he should say, as for my part, all that I do to help myself withal, is to pray to God, and make my moan: Others have their evil tongues to help them, and run to this witness and that witness, to seek to help themselves, but I prayer, Psalm 57. 2, 3. I cry unto God most high, he shall send from heaven and save me from reproach of him that would swallow me up, Selah; God shall send forth his mercy and truth: A carnal heart has no way to deliver it self, but by re-

proaches again, by running up and down from one witness to another, but a gracious heart has other ways to help it self, it cryes to God most high, and looks for help from Heaven; God sends forth his mercy and truth to help, and there is help indeed.

Fifthly, another help is this, if you can but get your hearts quietly and kindely to lament the condition of your reproachers, this will be a marvellous means tosweeten the heart, and to help to bear reproaches. It was the answer of Socrates to one who wondred at his patience towards one who reviled him, If we should meet one, says he, whose body were more unsound then ours, should we be angry with him, and not rather pity him? why then should we not do the like to him whose soul is more diseased then ours?

The folly of our reproachers should cause us to pity them, to be patient towards them, and pass by the wrong they do unto us; this was one of the arguments that Abigail brought to David, to quiet his spirit that was so stirred against Nabal, because of that reproach he cast upon him; Nabal, says she, is his name, and folly is with him, it is his folly, rather pity him, it is too low a thing for such a spirit as Davids is to be stirred with it. Instead of being troubled with the reproaches that are upon you, your spirits should be most troubled for their sin: Now there is infinite cause we have to be troubled for their sin more then for any evil that befals us. An evil tongue devours, and is an abomination, and in Prov. 8:13 God says, The froward mouth he hates: Now if you have any love you should think thus, This poor man what has he done? he has brought himself under the hatred of God; now this should mightily affect the hearts of the godly. As he is an abomination to God, so he is an abomination to men, Prov. 24:9 The scorner is an abomi-

nation to men; scornful spirits love to cast shame and ignominy upon others. And in Prov. 18:7 A fools mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul; we should think, he has but ensnared his own soul, and so fall a lamenting of his wretched condition. And so in Isa. 33:10 Your breath as fire shall devour you: If the breath of any man devours him, the breath of revilers, and reproachers, and slanderers does. The Heathens called a reproacher A three tongued man, because he hurts three at once, he hurts him that he reproaches, and him that heard the reproach, and himself worst of all; do but get power over your hearts to bewail this sin, and your reproach will not be so troublesom. Trilinguis Gallesius a writer upon Exod. 22. ver. 28. observes the exceeding patience of those three Emperors, Theodosius, Honorius, Arcadius, towards those who spoke evil of them, they would have them subject to no punishment, for they said, If it comes from lightness of spirit, it is to be contemned, if from madness, it is worthy of pity, if from injury, it is to be pardoned, wrongs are to be forgiven.

Again, labor to possess your souls with the reality of the sweet of, and the honor there is in the ways of God, so no reproach will be grievous to you: As it is said of the covetous man, when some told him, Such and such hiss at you, but says he, I care not, I rejoice in what I have at home, that I have so muchmoney in my chest: So it should be with a gracious heart, he should say, I have sweet enough in my own heart, what need I trouble myself with what others think or say?

Seventhly, labor to satisfy your souls in the glory of God and Christ: Though my name be cast out as filth, yet the name of God and Christ is blessed and glorious, and so shall be for ever, let Devils and wicked men do what they can against it; It was a good

speech of Luther, writing to his friend Spalatinus, bemoaning his condition to him, because of the scorn and contempt he suffered, yet comforting himself in this, that Christ lived and reigned, Luther is accounted even a Devil, but Christ lives and reigns, he addes his Amen to it.

Thirdly, it is not enough to bear reproaches patiently, but we must bear them fruitfully: a christian should think he has not done that which belongs to a christian, unless he has got some good by them; a christian should not think it enough to free himself from the scorn of the tongue, but he must improve it for good by it.

First, consider what ends God aims at by it, and labor to work them upon yourselves, that you may attain to those ends.

Secondly, labor to draw what good instructions you can from the reproaches of others: As namely thus, when I hear men reproach and revile, O what a deal of evil is there secretly in the heart of man, that is not discovered till it have occasion? I did not think that such and such could ever have been reproachers, if they had not been provoked. Again, do I see another so vigilant over me to finde me out to reproach me; how vigilant should I be over myself to finde out what is in me to humble me? Again, is there so much evil to be under the stroke of mans tongue, what a great evil is it to be under the stroke of Gods justice?

Lastly, to be fruitful, that is, set upon what duty God calls for at the present; surely this is one great general duty, that the less credit I see I have in the world, let me labor to have the more credit in Heaven; I see there is a breach of my name here, let me seek to make up my name in Heaven.

4. And then they must be born joyfully, but we shall speak of that afterwards in the third point, that a gracious heart is not only willing to bear reproach when God calls unto it, but in the cause of CHRIST to triumph and rejoice in his reproaches.

5. Lastly, we should return good for evil; then you come to the top of Christianity. This is a sign of great progress in Religion: If I be weak, says Ambrose, perhaps I may pardon one charging me falsly; but if I have profited, although not altogether perfect, though he flows in upon me with reproaches, I hold my peace and answer nothing; but if I be perfect, I then bless him that reviles me, according to that of St. Paul, Being reviled, we bless. If you can do thus, if you can heartily pray for your reproachers, and desire good to them, and be willing to take notice of any good in them, to clear up their innocency where there is iust cause, if you can be ready to offer any offices of love, and respect, and kindeness to them, and so heap coals of fire upon them; this is a great sign of grace, you have made a good progress indeed in Gods way: Mat. 5. 44, 45. Bless them, says Christ, that curse you, pray for them that despitely use you, that ye may be the children of your Father, &c. Why, were they not children before? Yes, but this declares it, now God owns them for his children: If we behave ourselves thus, we shall have the comfort of this, that our reproaches come to us as to Gods people, whereas others cannot have the comfort of this, you cannot have any comfort from this argument, unless you behave yourselves under reproaches after this manner: Now what a great evilis this to cut a man off from that comfort which has been spoken of in this argument? and if you do behave yourselves christianly under reproaches, God is more and more engaged to stand for your names, and you are more prepared for glory. As he is not

fit to govern, that is not fit to serve, but he that is fit to serve, is so much the fitter to govern; so those that can bear disgrace are fit to be honored, and the greater glory will be afterwards; As the Sun that shines through the clouds shines the brightest, so when honor shall come through dishonor, it shall be the greatest honor. And then you shall come to know that honor is sanctified to you, and that it is in love, and you shall be more able to rejoice in the honor that God shall bring to your names then you would have done, and so your reproachers shall be servants to you.

There is only one place of Scripture that I shall adde, and so I have done with this point: Job 17. compare the 6. verse with the 8. and 9. verses; ver. 6. He has made me also a by-word of the people: Job was a godly man, and yet he was made a by-word: What then? at the 8. verse, Upright men shall be astonied at this: How? Two ways, either they shall be astonished at the horrible wickedness of men that shall contemn so godly a man as Job was, and say, Lord, what boldness is in the hearts of the wicked, that shall presume to dare to contemn such a servant of your? or the upright shall be astonished, they shall admire at the wonderful way of God towards his people, that the Lord shall suffer wicked men so far to go on in wickedness, as to reproach his people: Theinnocent, the godly man shall see those that are hypocrites, for not only gross prophane ones are reproachers often times, but hypocrites: The innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite, he shall not be damped, but stir up his thoughts against the hypocrite: The righteous also shall hold on his way, shall not decline; and not only so, but he that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger: And so I pass to the next point.

Chapter 34: The reproaches of God's people are the reproaches of Christ

IF you take the reproaches either materially or formally; materially, that is when all the sufferings of Gods people for which they are meanly esteemed and looked upon as contemptible, all their sufferings are the sufferings of Christ: Formally, and that is the very scorn that is cast upon them, is the scorn of Christ. I intend to handle this point in both these, materially and formally: So that the thing we have to handle, is, That all the sufferings, and contempt, and disesteem of Gods people, are the sufferings, and contempt, and disesteem of Christ. So that Gods people may turn the speech of Christ concerning his Father, The reproaches of them that have reproached you, have fallen upon me: But we may say, Lord and blessed Savior, the reproaches of them that have reproached us, are fallen upon you; and mark therefore in Heb. 13:13 the reproaches of Christs people are called the reproach of Christ, Let us go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach: And the sufferings of Gods servants are called the sufferings of Christ. Colloss. 1:24 and fill up that which is behinde of the afflictions of CHIST, they are the afflictions of Christ, and every one

must make account to fill them up; not the satisfactory sufferings of Christ, but the sufferings of Christ in his mystical body, in his members: And so every member is to fill up a share in his sufferings. And so Isa. 63:9 In all their afflictions he was afflicted: The sufferings and troubles of Gods people are the sufferings and troubles of Christ, he is sensible of them; and therefore in Acts 9:4 Christ cryes out, Saul, Saul, why persecutest you me? Further, compare two places together in one, Psalm 79. ver. 4, 12. at the 4. verse, says the Text, We are become a reproach to our neighbors; a scorn and derision to those that are round about us: And at the twelfth verse it is, Render unto our neighbors sevenfold into their bosom, their reproach wherewith they have reproached you, O Lord: He goes on in the same argument, and first he calls them the reproach of the Church, and then the reproach of God.

But is it said here the reproach of Christ? It may be asked, Why not the reproach of God the Father, or the reproach of the Holy Ghost?

The reproaches of Gods people are the reproaches of Christ in a special manner; because Christ is the head of the Church, and it is from the fulness of Christ, that they have that grace conveyed which is reproached; and the union they have with God, and with the Spirit, is by Christ; and therefore it is the reproach of Christ here named, according to the several workings of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost: so the three persons are reproached by mans sin: There is a reproach unto God as God, and unto Christ as Christ, and unto the Spirit as the Spirit.

There is a reproach unto God as he is Creator, the preserver of the world, and governor of all things: When the work of God, the first Person of the Trinity, is reproached, then he is reproached,

Prov. 14:31 He that oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his maker: It is a work of the Father to order things so, as to make one poor, and one rich: And you take an advantage to mock at the poor upon this difference which God has made in the world, when as you should honor the work of God in making any difference between you and others: but in stead of honoring of it, you cast an aspersion upon his work, and despise others, because God has put them in a low condition; you reproach your Creator in this. And when the work of Redemption is despised, when that is opposed, and when the profession of the Gospel has dishonor put upon it, then Christ is reproached: Heb. 6:6 the Apostle says, Those that fall off after they have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, they put the Son of God to an open shame. And when enlightning, and drawing, and the quickening and comforting work of the Spirit is reproached and vilified, then the Spirit is reproached, Heb. 10:29 They do despite to the Spirit of grace: So that you see both Father, Son and Holy Ghost, all three are reproached by mans sin; not that the sin of man is able to cast the least stain upon the glory of the blessed God, or make God to be less glorious, no more then a little dust cast up into the air can darken the brightness of the Sun shining in its strength; but it keeps the glory of God from shining upon others, and upon himself, so as he and others shall not see it, and admire it, and adore it as they ought.

If you ask why the reproaches of Gods people are called the reproaches of Christ?

I answer, First, as Chrysostome, because they do suffer the same things that Christ suffers; you shall finde the reproaches of Gods people, and the reproaches of Christ are just alike one an-

other. In Psalm 42. 6, 7, 8. there are three things upon which Christ seems to be reproached, and they are the three special things upon which Christians are reproached: As first the outward means of Christ in the world, I am a worm and no man, so the outward, mean and low condition of Gods people subjects them to reproach. Secondly, Christ bore the world in hand that he trusted in God, and depended upon God, and no outward help; and therefore they said, Let us see whether he will deliver him, being he trusted in him; so the men of the world scorn at Gods people, because they speak so much of God, and trusting in God. Thirdly, they reproached him, because he said, God delighted in him; so because the Saints of God do profess their relations to God, and do expect an especial love of God, therefore the world reproaches them.

Secondly, it is the reproach of Christ, in regard of the near relation, and close union that is between Christ and his people: As the reproach of the Wife is the reproach of the Husband, and the reproach of the Husband is the reproach of the Wife, because of their union, and therefore in 1 Cor. 11. the Apostle calls the woman, the glory of the man: Either in regard that the man may glory in her if she be godly and good, or else because the woman does honor the man, the Wife is to honor her Husband, and to give glory to him; as the people of God are called The glory of God, partly because God does glory in them, and partly because they do give glory to God: so the woman should be such a one as the man may glory in her, and such a one as may give glory to her husband: Now the Church is the glory of Christ, as the wife is the glory of the man; and therefore it is said in 2 Cor. 8:23 speaking of Titus and others

which were messengers of the Church, he says, they are the glory of Christ, then certainly their reproaches must be the reproaches of Christ.

Nay, there is a nearer union then this, for this is only by covenant, but there is a union between the head and the members, that is a nearer union; the Church is not only flesh of Christs flesh, and bone of Christs bone, but it is the flesh of Christ, and the bone of Christ, it is the very fulness of the body of Christ, Eph. 1:23 it is a high expression: Yea, and besides this, the Church is called Christ, mystical Christ: 1 Cor. 12:12 For as the body is one, and has many members, & all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ; that is, The Church having many members, ought to be joined in union as the body; yea, there is yet anearer union between Christ and his people, the in-being is mutual, Christ is in them, and they are in Christ, John 14:20 You in me, and in you: The arm is in the body, but the body is not in the arm; the branch is in the vine, but the vine is not in the branch; but here as the Saints are in Christ, so Christ is in them: and in regard of this near union between them, their reproaches may well be esteemed the reproaches of Christ.

Thirdly, because they are reproached for the sake of Christ: if a dog be abused for the sake of his master, it is the abuse of his master: much more when Gods own people are abused for the sake of Christ; and therefore we finde that this has been the plea of Gods people, for your sake have we been killed all the day long; it was for Christs sake rather then any evil in themselves. And therefore though they be reproached for their sins, it may come to be the reproach of Christ, namely thus, When as men shall take advantage the rather against them, because they are professors of Religion;

and were it not for this reason, they might justly reproach them; yet when as they put in this reason, They could bear well enough with the sin, were it not they were professors of Religion, then the reproaches that they justly might suffer for their sins, do come to be the reproaches of Christ. And further, when in these they will take advantage to reproach the shows of Religion, which in others they cannot bear well enough; as when one that is a Professor expresses devotion in lifting up his eyes, or his hands to Heaven, they will reproach him for making shows of Religion, and presently they are Hypocrites: and yet there are others can make mighty shows, and they are commended.

Again, they are the reproaches of Christ, because they are reproached in the work of Christ: As when David sent messengers to the children of Ammon, to congratulate their King, and they cut off their garments half way, and cut off half of their beards, David presently counted it his reproach; and so when Gods people are in Gods work, and reproached, surely it Christs reproach. So Nehemiah was in Gods work, and he suffered a great deal of reproach; and mark how God is more provoked then Nehemiah, Nehem. 4. compare the third verse with the fifth.

Lastly, it is the Spirit of Christ that is in them that is reproached: As if so be that the skill or influence that comes from a skilful Attificer, that is put into one that has learned, that does as it were but act his spirit, if he shall see him reproached for that work which is done by vertue of that influence which he had of his spirit in him, then he counts himself reproached: so all the gracious works of Gods people are by the influence of the spirit of Christ; and therefore when they are reproached, Christ is reproached: we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God, says

the Apōstle: this is the reason of all opposition, because of the difference of spirits; now the spirit of God and the Spirit of the world are opposite. But to come to the application of the point.

First, if the reproaches of Gods people be the reproaches of Christ, then certainly Christ is wonderfully reproached in the world; none so reproached as Christ is, because he is not only reproached himself, but all the reproaches that fall upon all his people in the world, not only since Moses time, but from the beginning of the world, they are all the reproaches of Christ, none suffers so much as he: consider we then with ourselves, how we can love this Christ, a reproached Christ? Is Christ notwithstanding all his reproaches dear and precious to us? howsoever he be to the world, yet can your souls say with the Church, He is altogether lovely, as the Apostle Peter says, 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8. He is a rock, and a stone of offense to those that do not believe, but to you precious; and so Christ, though he be a reproached Christ, yet to you he is precious; to a godly and gracious heart how precious is Jesus Christ? There is a notable place concerning the reproaches of Christ, and yet of the high esteem that Gods people have of him, notwithstanding he is reproached, Isa. 52. 14, 15. His visage was so marred more then any mans, and his form more then the sons of men: what then, is there none therefore that shall prize him? yes; at the fifteenth verse, So shall he sprinkle many Nations: the Kings shall shut their mouthes at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider; that is, there shall yet come a time when as the Lord shall sprinkle many nations by the work of his Spirit, and draw many Kings, so as they shall shut their mouthes; whereas they contemned him, and despised him, now they shall shut their mouthes in a way of admira-

tion, that that had not been told them which they see: as St. Paul, he knew Christ only after the flesh, but when he came to know him after another manner, he thought otherwise of him: So when God does sprinkle any with his Spirit, that they know Christ, though his visage he marred more then any mans, and he is reproached more then any man, yet they shall prize him, and delight in him, and the more he is reproached, the more they shall delight in him: It is a notable speech of Bernard, By so much the more Christ is vile for me, by so much the more he is dearer to me.

Chapter 35: Sixteen several Consolatións arising to the Saints from this consideration, That their sufferings are Christ's sufferings

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SEcondly, the consideration of this point is of admirable use for the consolation of all the people of God, in all their sufferings and reproaches. If reproaches and sufferings be the reproaches of Christ, Christ is engaged in them more then you; there may be many branches of comfort to Gods people from hence, That Christ is so engaged in all their sufferings, as they are accounted Christs own: it is a great matter, when any one suffers any thing, if they know this, that any great man is engaged in their sufferings: if a subject should have a King so engaged in any thing he undertakes, that he can say, Whatever I suffer in this, is the suffering of the King, this is a great comfort to him; so here there are several branches of comfort that may be drawn from this, Our sufferings are the sufferings of Christ.

First, it is a great deal of comfort, that God does take notice of our reproaches: This was the comfort of the Psalmist, in Psalm 69:19 You hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dis-

honor, my adversaries are all before you▪ If a man suffer reproach, and disgrace, and trouble for his friends, while he is abroad from them; O says he, Did but my friends know what I suffer, and suffer for them, it would comfort me: If it be comfort to be known, much more when they shall be accounted their own; Christ is acquainted with all the sufferings of every member: and therefore do not say, I am a poor creature, who takes notice of my sufferings? Heaven takes notice of your sufferings, Christ takes notice of them better then yourselves.

Secondly, if they be the sufferings of Christ, they are no other but such as are predetermined for you from the beginning of the world; for certainly the sufferings of Christ are determined: It may be said of these sufferings, as truly as of those he suffered in his own person, Act. 2:23 They are by the determinate counsel & foreknowledge of God: & therefore it is not in the liberty of man to reproach you as he pleases, but all is by the fore-determinate counsel of God.

Thirdly, certainly you do not want compassion in your sufferings neither; for one to suffer much, and to be reproached, and no body to have compassion, is grievous; but surely you have compassion enough, Christ must needs take compassion on you: and it is not a forced compassion, but a natural compassion: was there ever any that was not sensible of the sufferings of his own flesh, unless it be dead? Indeed if you be a dead member of a Church, it may be Christ does not compassionate your sufferings, but if you be a living member, Christ does compassionate your sufferings, and pity you in every lye and slander that is told of you: many times when we hear of the servants of God (and especially those we know to be godly) to have such strange reports of them, our hearts begin to

break, and to yern towards them. If one member have compassion of another, much more the head; the head is more sensible of the evils done to the body, then the other members are.

Fourthly, all these reproaches and sufferings do not argue your rejection, they may stand with the infinite love of God: many of Gods people are ready to draw sad conclusions from their reproaches, surely▪ God would not suffer this if he loved them: they may stand with the same love wherewith the Father loved the Son, for they are the reproaches of the Son.

Fifthly, they must needs be sanctified to you: those that are the sufferings of Christ, are fanctified sufferings; certainly Christ will not suffer them to go away unsanctified; Christ is so holy, that if they come near to him, he will make them holy: and therefore your bodies and souls having union with Christ, they come to be sanctified: so all your conditions and sufferings come to be sanctified by union with Christ: he is the blessed one of God, and therefore all your sufferings must be blessed from him.

Sixthly, if they be the reproaches of Christ, then you are not left to bear the burden of them alone, you have but the lighter end of the staff: if a burden be never so heavy at one end, and a strong man is under that, and the other be light, though a weak man be under that, he does not care: so the weight and burden of reproaches lie upon the shoulders of Christ: and therefore when you think it is hard for one reproach thus to follow upon another, and for one evil to follow another, it will break my heart; ah, if you did bear it alone, but Christ bears the weight of our reproaches.

Seventhly, if they be the reproaches of Christ, then for that part you do bear, although it be but little, you may expect his strength in, you are not left to bear that little by your own strength; Christ gives out his own strength, to bear his own reproaches; if the burden be his you bear, you shall have strength from him to bear it.

Again, this is an eighth stream of comfort, if they be the reproaches of Christ, they are the reproaches of all the members of Christ, who sympathize with you, and help to bear the burden with you.

Ninthly, it may be comfort that your names shall be vindicated, your names are as dear to Christ as his own, and it does as much concern Christ to vindicate your names as to vindicate his own.

Again, if our reproaches be Christs reproaches, and Christ is content to own our reproaches; surely, he will not leave us to take our sins upon ourselves: if his love be such as he will take the burden of our sufferings upon himself; surely his love is such as not to see us sink under the burden of our sins: No, our sins are upon him as well as our sufferings; not that he takes them upon him to be guilty, but only by imputation: the Text says, He was made sin; what abundance of consolation is this, that Christ is willing both to take off our sins and sufferings? there are nothing but these two that should trouble us in the world, our sins and sufferings, and Christ takes them off both.

11. And yet further, if Christ will own our reproaches,proaches, then he will own our services: there is no great difficulty of believing the one, if we believe the other: we may comfortably go to Christ and say, Blessed Savior, will you own upon yourself, the dirt cast upon our faces, and will not own the work of your own Spirit?

though we may stain the work of Gods grace by our sin, yet Christ that is so indulgent to take reproaches, will surely own our services; he will own our active obedience, as well as our passive obedience.

Again, then we may be assured there will come good of them, and that we shall be carried through them; consider three or four things here for our help in this, to assure us of a blessing in these our sufferings. First, were it that we only did know that God had a love to us, and were merciful to us, that were enough to assure us. But, secondly, God may have love and not binde himself by promise; but as he has love, so he has engaged himself by promise to help his people in sufferings, and that is more. But, thirdly, we have the experience of Gods dealings with his people, that he never left them in suffering. And fourthly, we may rise higher, it is Gods own case, we have further assurance by this: If a man love me, I hope it will be well with me; if he promise me, that is more; if others have had experience, I am more assured: but if it be his own cause, I am sure enough. If a man go to sea, and he knows the Mariner has skill, and he loves me, and the Mariner promises he will have care, and others have had experience of his care, this is much: but when I consider, my life is the Mariners life, if I perish, he perishes; this assures me, that as far as the Mariner can do it, it shall be well with me. Luther writing to Melancton troubled with fears; If we fall, says he, Christfalls.

Again, here we have a notable ground to go to God in prayer in all sufferings, because we can go with this argument, Lord it is your own Name: that was the plea of Moses, Lord, if you destroyest your people, what will become of your Name? our names are nothing, what though ten thousand such as we are come to nought, and

rot? but if God put his name to ours, and twist them together, there is abundance of safety, then our names are a strong argument.

Yea, suppose we be in such a condition as we cannot pray, yet here is comfort in this, our sufferings are the sufferings of Christ; and the sufferings of Christ do present themselves as a mighty prayer to God: The sufferings of Christ, have a mighty cry in the ears of the Father, and they will be heard.

And yet further, if so be our sufferings be the sufferings of Christ, then surely Christs sufferings are our sufferings; if Christ have an interest in our sufferings, then we have an interest in his sufferings: for how come our sufferings to be Christs, but by vertue of our relation to him; and therefore his sufferings must be ours, by the relation of Christ to us.

Lastly, there will be an end of sufferings, they cannot last always, for they are the sufferings of Christ ; and it cannot stand with infinite justice, that Christ which has undertaken for us, should be eternally under suffering; & if he shal not suffer always, we shal not always suffer; for so long as we suffer, he must suffer: the time therefore is a coming, in which Gods people shall be too high for to be reproached, they shall be in such a condition, as it shall be impossible for any to reproach them: for reproach comes from some kinde of apprehension of the reproacher, to be in some measure above the reproached: no man can reproach another for a thing that he fully knows, and certainly believes that he is above him in that thing: and therefore the people of the world do reproach the people of God, because they apprehend themselves to be above Gods people in wisdom, or the like; but time will come, that the dignity of Gods people shall be raised to such a heighth,

that though wicked men do hate them, they shall not be able to reproach them, they cannot possibly have a conceit to be above Gods people in any thing.

And these are the consolations that arise from this point, that our sufferings and reproaches are Christs: and these considerations being put together, why should we distract ourselves, and take immoderate care what shall become of us; if we be unbelieving, Christ will count it a dishonor to him, and say, Is it not my case? we need not take any shifting courses to help ourselves; a man that has an enemy surprize him, if he have no weapon in his hand, it may be he will take up stones and dirt, but if he have his weapon, he uses that, and scorns to take up stones and dirt: when people are reproached, that have no interest in Christ, reproaches come upon them and take them unarmed, and they take up any thing near hand, and reproach and revile again: but those that have interest in Christ, have this weapon; they know all their reproaches are the reproaches of Christ, and we shall not need to depend upon any outward comfort for to comfort us; much less have we need to help ourselves by reviling again. The comfort of a Christian, is this, That his reproaches are the reproaches of Christ; this is enough to quiet his heart: you need not comfort yourselves in your parts, or estates; this is enough alone: do but answer all your distractions and troublesome workings of your hearts with this, and this will quiet them.

Quest. But how shall I know that my reproaches are the reproaches of Christ?

Answ. First, if you be reproached for the sake of Christ; though you be not a member of Christ, yet if your adversaries reproach you, because they take you for a member of Christ, there is some

comfort in this. Secondly, if you can under all reproaches bring your hearts in subjection unto Christ, and quiet your hearts under reproaches in obedience unto him. Thirdly, if you finde the rule by which you are guided and acted in that condition to be the rule of Christ. Fourthly, if you finde the chiefest comfort that you gather in to help you, to be the comfort of Christ. Fifthly, if you finde the end you do aim at in your bearing them, is the honor of Christ; and that you do desire rather that Christ may be in the conclusion honored, then yourselves cleared. Sixthly, take this as a special note, if you make those reproaches that Christ suffers in his cause, his truth, his people, yours; then he makes yours his: how does your hearts stand affected to the reproaches Christ suffers in others? Zeph. 3. 17, 18. God promises much mercy, to such to whom the reproachof the solemn assemblies were a burden. That heart that is burthened with the reproaches of Gods ways, shall finde ease in the comforts of Gods Spirit. If these things be in you, certainly these come from the Spirit of Christ; and if from the Spirit of Christ, then you are Christs; and if you be Christs, then your reproaches are Christs.

A third Use is this: Seeing Christ suffers for us, and all our reproaches are the reproaches of Christ, Let us take heed that he do not suffer by us. Now Christ may come to suffer by us two ways: First, if so be that we cause the name of Christ to be spoken evil of. Secondly, when we come to be actors ourselves in speaking evil of Christ, or of his people.

First, if we cause Christ or his people to be spoken evil of by any sinful, way of ours, this is the reproach of Christ (but not in that sense I spoke of before.) Christ does not only suffer in you, but he suffers by you. This is the charge that the Apostles lays upon the

Romans, For your sake is the name of God blasphemed: we had need look to ourselves in this. Mark what charge the Apostle lays upon women, 1 Tim. 5. 13, 14. that they should take heed of tatling, and carrying themselves unchristianly; and that they give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. That was the reason why Nehemiah was so careful in his business, in Neh. 5:9 Because of the reproach of the Heathen. And so I say to you that are Gods people, Is it not enough that Christ has suffered for you and in you, but must he suffer by you? O that the fear of God might be upon you, because of the reproach of your adversaries: Is Christ dear to you? did Christ ever do any thing for you? Is it not better a thousand times that you were crost, and your lives were taken away, and you laid rotting in the grave, if your names could wash away any stain that is upon the name of Christ? know there are many that Christ have fuffered reproach by, and you cannot clear yourselves of it, and know what an evil and bitter thing it is, that after all the goodness and mercy of Christ to you, and the near relation that he has taken you into; will you abuse all this mercy, and this near relation? if Christ had never taken you for his own, had you been never so vile, Christ had not suffered reproach by you; but now in regard of your near relation to him, he suffers reproach by you; and is this the use you make of your near relation?

When therefore you finde your hearts begin to stir, and corruption boil; consider the name of Christ lies prostrate before you, and will you trample upon the name of Jesus Christ: if one were set upon going to a place to do mischief, and his Father and Mother should throw themselves in the path, that if he goes on he must tread upon them, and they should say, You shall tread upon the bowels out of which you came, upon the loyns that begat you; this

would be a great stop: and so you that are Professors of the Gospel, if you have a temptation to a lust, the name of Christ calls Stay, and says, If you go you shall trample upon me, and my blood, and bring reproach upon me; will not this stop you? Never think that gain that you get by the reproach of Christ. It is true indeed, if we be going on in our duty, and do that we should, though men say the name of Christ shall be reproached, we are to go on, and do our duty, and let Christ vindicate his name if he will: but if it be any thing that concern out selves, and the satisfaction of our own wills and desires, whereby Christ may be reproached, this is a mighty argument to keep us from it: the word has scarce a stronger argument to keep us from an evil way, then this, The name of Christ shal suffer by it: for the people of God to suffer reproach by you, is an evil thing: for a man to have but his kindred ashamed of him, what an evil thing is it; but that it may be said of one that is a Professor of Religion, that he is not only a reproach to the Church of God, but a reproach to Jesus Christ, if you have any ingenuity in you, this might strike to your hearts.

It is reported of Alexander, having a Soldier of his name, and his Soldier being a coward, he came to him, and said, Either leave off the name of Alexander, or be a Soldier: and so we have the name of Christians, but when we are vile in our lives, Christ says, Either leave off your profession, your name, or be a Christian indeed: do not come in amongst the number of Professors, to let profession suffer by you. And so Alexander Severus the Emperor, seeing a company of Christians fighting together, he commanded them to leave off the name of Christians; for says he, You profess yourselves to be Christians, and yet you are thus contending: this is not the spirit of him whom you do profess. It is a lamentable

thing that we should profess such a glorious name as we do, and that we should handle the matter so as that it should suffer so much by us. It is said of the high Priest, Numb. 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, or for his brother, orfor his sister, because he had the holy oyl upon him, the consecration of his God was upon him: So I may say unto you, You have the holy oyl of the profession of the name of Christ upon you; and therefore take heed what you do, says St. Paul, It were better for me to dye, then to lose my glorying: were it then not better for us to dye, then to have the glory of Christ suffer by us. Know, though the name of Christ be not dear to you, he will defend his name when you shall rot and perish for ever; and though it be defiled by you for the present, he can clear it otherwise: but wo to them that be the causes of reproaches that come thus upon Christ.

But as we must take heed that Christ be not reproached by us in this regard, much more that he be not reproached by ourselves, so as to speak evil of the ways of God: as we may hear it of those that have been forward in profession of Religion, if profession of Religion do not come to serve their turns, they are ready to speak evil of that way, and all the professors of it. Take heed what you do in reproaching of a member of Christ, the name of Christ is upon him; take heed you do not reproach him that the name Christ is upon; the people of God do bear the name of Christ upon their foreheads; take heed you do not spit upon their faces, for it may be you may spit upon the name of Christ: as many unskilful hunters will shoot at wilde beasts, and shooting at random may kill a man; and so many shoot at Christians, but they hit Christ, they reproach Christ.

Chapter 36: The dreadful evil there is in reproaching the Saints

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Fourthly, the consideration of this calls for a trembling heart unto all those that have been guilty in any degree of casting reproaches upon the people of God. In this Use we have three branches: First, those that have done it themselves: Secondly, those that rejoice in the reproaches that others cast upon Gods people: Thirdly, those that are the divulgers and spreaders of the reproaches of Gods people. In Zeph. 2. The Holy Ghost there rebuking Moab for reproaching his people in the eighth and tenth verses, at the eleventh verse it is said, The Lord will be terrible to them: there are some of you, that howsoever God have shown you better things now, yet heretofore you have been guilty, and it may be some of you are guilty of this still; and if you be guilty, the Lord will be terrible to you. God has contempt and dishonor for you, as you have cast contempt and dishonor upon Christ: suitable to your sin shall be your punishment. That is observable that we have in Psalm 59. verse 6. their sin is, They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the City: thus is their sin, and it is their sin of reproach and scorn, as appears in the following

words, verse 7. They belch out with their mouth: and observe ver. 14. their judgement is expressed in the same words, And at the evening let them return, and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the City. Did your reproaches reach no further then the Saints themselves, yet in regard of that excellency there is in them, it is an abominable wickedness. Mark with what indignation the Spirit of God speaks against such as are guilty herein, Isa. 57. 3, 4. Draw near hither ye sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer, and the whore, against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom do ye make a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? are ye not children of transgression, a seed of falshood? What, you who are so vile and filthy yourselves, will you presume to reproach the Saints of God, such as are so precious in the eyes of God, and so near to Christ? Know, you have not to deal with them only, but with Christ in them. You think you have to do only with a company of poor weak creatures that are not able to right themselves; but know, you have to do with Christ himself. Mark that expression we have in Isa. 37:23 it is spoken concerning Rabshekah, Whom hast you reproached? it is not against Hezekiah, it is against the holy One of Israel: Those that have done thus, have lifted up their mouthes against heaven it self: They set their mouthes against the heavens: You hast reproached him that is the brightness of the glory of the Father; The character, The engraven image of the Father; he that is the glory of heaven, that has all the treasures of all good in him; You hast cast reproach upon him that must be your Judge; At whose mercy you lyest for your present and eternal estate; Him that is God blessed for ever, that is the infinite delight of the Father. You mistake, you have shot at Christ all this while: As we read of Oedepus, he killed his father Laius King of Thebes,

taking him for his enemy; your mistake is worse you strike at, you reproach Christ, while you think it is but a poor man, yea your enemy.

O that ever you should be born to do so much mischief as to cast dirt upon the face of Christ; surely you kick against the pricks: It is an argument that you are not a son of the promise, that you are a successor of Ishmael: You hast cause to fear that God will laugh at your destruction, and mock when your fear comes: You hast cause to fear that you art reserved for everlasting shame and contempt, unless God does humble you for this dreadful guilt that is upon you. When you take advantage upon the meanness of Gods people for to reproach them, you are the men and women that are found guilty in heaven for to reproach Christ.

But you will say, There are none so vile as to reproach Christ, nor the people of Christ for their godliness, it is for their hypocrisie.

Let no man deceive himself thus; for there never was any Devil or man that did reproach godliness under the name of godliness, but they would put some other name upon it, under which it might appear vile and contemptible; and in this the men of the world do as the persecutors did in the Primitive times with the Christians, they put the bodies of Christians into the skins of wilde beasts, and then they would set dogs upon them, and other wilde beasts, to tear them: So men do to this day; they put the profession of godliness into the shapes of their own conceits, and their own slanders, and their own apprehensions, to make it ugly, and they fall a reproaching and tearing, and run upon them like a company of wilde beasts: And that which you sayest is hypocrisie, is but the skin of the wilde beast, your own unshapen conceits, to make yourself and

their adversaries run upon them, that you may the more freely venture; because the wilde beasts would not venture upon the body of a man so freely, but when they saw the body of a man in the shape of such a beast as they hated, they ran upon it freely: And so you dealest with Gods Saints in putting an unshapen form upon them, to let out your heart more freely upon them. But what if that which you callest hypocrisie, God account godliness? yea know, that this your aspersion upon godliness, to say it is hypocrisie, and upon the people of God, to say they are hypocrites, is the reproach of Gods people, and there is a great deal of evil in it more then you art aware of. In Mark 3. from verse 22. and so on, when Christ cast out devils, they said, He casts them out by Beelzebub the Prince of devils: well says Christ, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme, but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: So that it seems these Pharisees had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, in that they said, He had an unclean spirit, because they attributed that to an unclean spirit, which was done by the Spirit of Christ; only they did this against knowledge, and in malice: I do not say that all reproachers do sin against the Holy Ghost; but if it be against knowledge, and in malice, consider how near it comes: as their attributing that to an unclean spirit which came from the spirit of God was it; so does not your attributing that to hypocrisie which comes from the Spirit of God in sincerity come near it. But lastly, if it be for hypocrisie that you reproach, and not for godliness, then it is for an evil; if it be for an evil that you doest reproach them, then the better you art, and the better mood you art in, the more you will reproach them. But we see the

contrary evident: Wicked men they reproach the godly for hypocrisie, as they say, but they do it when they are in the height of their lusts; but if they be in a good mood, when they are on their sick beds or death beds, and in their best condition, they reproach them least; therefore sure it was the good they reproached, and not the evil. But thus much concerning the first branch.

The second is this, it calls for a trembling heart from those that shall rejoice at the reproaches of Gods people: Perhaps you art one that will not reproach yourself, yet you mayest rejoice at the reproaches of Gods people: There is a great deal of evil in this: Surely you hast no love to them, for love does not rejoice in iniquity, 1 Corinth. 13:6 When the Devil does sow the seed, you dost come with the harrows to cover the seed, when you dost rejoice in their reproaches. Proverbs 18:8 The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly: It may be translated, The words of a tale-bearer are as the words of them tbat are wounded: That is, The tale-bearers that come and tell you things, they come with expressions of a great deal of brokenness of heart, as if their spirits were grieved at that they hear, and they speak as if they spoke in the defense of them, and then they are as wounds; not the wounds of them they speak of, but the wounds of the wounded: And if any come in this way to cast reproaches upon Gods people, they are taken down into the belly, and they go glib down: This is a slight of the Devil to make them pass without the least questioning; for those that reproach, seem to speak out of wounded troubled hearts.

But we do not rejoice in this, that we hear any evil of Gods people, but we rejoice that they are discovered, and this is the work of God.

1. If so be your conscience be convinced, that through the concealing of such and such things, there was a great deal of mischief done before, and there is a great deal of good like to come to the publike cause, and the name of God in the discovery, then you may rejoice.

Secondly, I appeal to conscience: Suppose the discovery do a great deal of hurt, Gods name does suffer by it, is there a proportionable measure of grief in your heart, for the suffering of Gods name, unto the joy that is in you for the discovery?

But thirdly, suppose it were one that were near to you; suppose it were your Father or Brother, the Wife of your bosom, the dearest friend you had that were discovered, would your hearts rejoice then? if you rejoice because God has glory by the discovery, then would you rejoice, if the dearest friend you had were discovered?

Fourthly, yea, suppose you did suffer much by this discovery, that it were much to your prejudice, you should lose something that your hearts are much set upon, would you rejoice then?

Fifthly, if so be that it were for the discovery that you rejoice; then you would not rejoice, that they are discovered to such as will not honor Gods name: You are glad that any know of it, that Gods enemies know of it, that will not make a good use of it, but will be hardened in their sin, and dishonor Gods name: Take heed you do not deceive yourselves, to rejoice so in the discovery of the people of God; there is a great deal of evil in it, more then you think of. Joseph he feared Mary, but he feared the name of God might suffer, and therefore he would not make her a publike example.

The third branch is to those that are divulgers of the reproaches of Gods people. Consider what you do, they are the reproaches of Christ; take heed you do not divulge the reproaches of Gods people. Suppose they prove false, do you think that after Gods people have suffered so much, this will be enough to answer God and Christ, for all the dirt that has been cast upon his face, I heard so; that the names of Gods people may suffer much, when they are under false reproaches. As it is with a stick; a stick when it is in the water, it looks as if it were broken, pull it out of the water, and it is straight: So it is with the names of Gods people; when their names are under reports that go abroad in the world, they look as broken; but when their names are pulled out from the reports of the world, they appear whole: And therefore take heed of divulging the reproaches of those that are godly; You may in this do the Devils work, and carry the Devils pack. The Apostle in 1 Timothy 3:11 speaking of women, says, That they must be grave, not slanderers; The word in the Original is, that they must not be Devils: So that to carry slanders and evil reports up and down, is the work of the devil. Again, will you spread the reproaches of Gods people, when as it is the great work of God to cover the sins of his people? And further, consider, doest you stand in need of so much covering of your own sins, and will you have a hand in spreading abroad the sins of others? How just will it be with God to let you fall into some gross sin, and spread abroad your shame, seeing his name and the names of his people are not dear in your eyes?

Chapter 37: Seeing Christ makes our sufferings his, we should make his sufferings ours

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Fifthly, if Christ will take our sufferings and our reproaches, and make them his; then we are to take Christs sufferings, and Christ reproaches, and make them ours. It was the burning love of Christ, and his zeal to his people, that made him take the reproaches of his people to himself; and so our burning love to him, and zeal for him, should make us take his reproaches upon ourselves. Christ is many ways reproached in the world, not only in his person, when he lived upon the earth, and in his people; and so we are not only to take the reproaches of Christ upon us in these regards, but in any particular, whatever reproach falls upon Christ any way, let us account of it as our own: When the Doctrine of the Gospel is reproached, then he is reproached; when the ways and light that God has discovered to his people is reproached, he is reproached; when the Ordinances are slighted, when as the blood of Christ is counted a common thing, and every base lust is preferred before it; when as the blessed authority of Christ is villified and slighted, either when it is slighted openly or secretly, if the authority of Christ be cast off, then he is reproached, Numb. 15. 6, 30.

When you put a reed into the hand of Christ, and bow to him, and say, Hail King of the Jews: when you shall profess obedience and subjection unto Christ, and in stead of a Scepter, put a reed into his hand, then he is reproached. Again, when Gods people walk unworthy of Christ, then Christ is reproached. And when Christ is reproached in any of these, let us take them to heart, as throughly, as if we were reproached; yea, take them more to heart, because the reproaches of Christ are far worse then our reproaches: Those that are first upon Christ, and then upon us, are worser then those that are first upon us, and then upon Christ: To spit upon the face of a man, is more reproach to the body, then to spit upon some other member of the body is a reproach to the face; and so the reproach of Christ that is the face of the Church, is more then the reproach of any other member: And therefore confider, whether your hearts be more broken when Christ is reproached, then when you yourselves are reproached, this is a good sign of grace. And if you demand what should be the behavior of a gracious heart, when he is in any company that he hears Christ reproached in;

I answer, First, your spirit should rise in indignation against such desperate evils and wickedness as this, that any should dare to be so bold as to reproach the holy One of God, such a blessed one as Christ is, that is so infinitely dear to your soul, and has done so much for your soul; though in our own causes we may be quiet and give way, yet when it comes to the cause of Christ, it is good for the heart to rise. It is the speech of Oeclampadius to his fellow Minister, Let our Zeal be hot and burning, not when scorns and reproaches are cast upon us, but when the truth is endangered, and the name of God is blasphemed. Ye have heard that of King Croesus his son, who though he were dumb all his life, yet when

one would have struck at his Father, the affection to his Father broke the bars of his speech, and he said, Take heed of killing the King: And so though we be dumb in things that concern ourselves, yet when Christ comes to be reproached, let our hearts swell in us and break out.

Again, look upon them with trembling hearts, that ever the patience of God should suffer such wickedness as this: As they did admire at Mordecai, when he would not bow to Haman, they held their peace, and wondered what would become of that matter.

Yea, we should, if it were possible, labor to wipe off all the reproach of Christ, and take it upon ourselves that we might rather be spit upon and contemned then Christ. It was a brave speech of Ambrose, he wished it would please God to turn all the adversaries from the Church upon himself, and let them satisfy their thirst with his blood: This is a true christian heart. And therefore if it be for our sakes, and we have any thing in the business by which Christ is reproached, we should be willing rather to sacrifice ourselves, then that Christ should be reproached: And as Jonah, when he knew that the tempest rose for his sake, says he, Cast me into the sea: And so Nazianzen, when contention rose about him, says he, Cast me into the sea, let me lose my place, rather then the name of Christ should suffer for me.

Again, the behaving of a Christian should be this, it should take his heart from his own name, so long as Christ is reproached: What though I have esteem? Christ is not esteemed, he is contemned. I have these comforts, and I through Gods mercy want nothing, and my friends cleave to me, and prize me; but Christ is not cleaved to, he is not prized: and what are all my comforts to me? they are Ichabods, the glory of all is departed from me.

And further, we should be willing to interest ourselves in the cause of Christ: when we hear any of Gods people reproached, we should not say, What have we to do with them, let them clear themselves? but be willing to interest ourselves in it, and take it upon ourselves, as if our own name were to be cleared.

And lastly, we should labor to wipe away the reproach of Christ, in laboring to express the convincing power of that grace which is contrary to their carriage for which Christ is reproached: Such a one is scandalous, and Christs name suffers in that, let me labor to make up the breach in being so much the more faithful, and walking in the contrary grace: Such a one is proud, let me be more humble; such a one is covetous, let me be more liberal, that there may be somewhat to answer: As it is said of the wise son, when his father is reproached, he carries himself so as his father has wherewithal to answer from his good carriage, Prov. 27:11 So let Christ have wherewithal to answer his reproaches from your godly convincing conversation. Suppose others have cast an aspersion upon the ways of godliness, because such are false and covetous, yet walk you in the contrary, that Gods people may answer, Though such and such be so, what say you to such an one? is not the breach made up in those? And so much for that Use.

Sixthly, we must not only labor to wipe away the reproach of Christ: But if Christ have suffered so much in us and for us, let us labor to honor Christ as much as we can in the world, and set up the name of Christ, as much as others pull it down. How are we to set up the name of Christ?

First, in holding forth the beauty and glory of the Spirit of Christ in our lives, that though Christ be reproached in others, he may be glorified in us: Others may be forced to say in their con-

sciences, Blessed be God that ever I saw such men: I never saw the graces of Christ shine more brightly in any, then in them. And then set up Christ, in speaking all the good we can of Christ, in bringing others in love with him: As they in the Canticles said, What is your beloved more then another beloved? says she, My beloved is the chiefest among ten thousands. Again, let us set up the Ordinances of Christ, therein appears the honor of Christ, and let the beauty of his holiness appear in his Ordinances, that men may say, Blessed are the people that are in such a case. Fourthly, let Christ have the honor of our names, and of all our comforts: Surely if he have the shame of our reproaches, he should have the honor of our honors: If he have the pain of our sufferings, surely he must have the praise of our comforts: Christ has a share in our sorrows, shall he not have a share in our comforts? when we are reproached he is reproached; when we are honored, let him be honored too. What a sad thing will it be, that when you go out of the world, it should be said, Christ has had more dishonor by you, then he has had honor?

Seventhly, If Christ suffers in all our sufferings, hence we learn not to rush into sufferings, before we be called to them, nor to withdraw from sufferings, when we are called to them. Christ suffers in all our sufferings, then it is not in our liberty to rush into sufferings when we please, though it should be in the cause of Christ. Indeed if we suffered alone, we might venture, but because Christ is interessed in it, we must stay till we know whether Christ be willing to suffer; though our time be come, yet it may be Christ will say, My time is not yet come; because it is in a good cause you think you may suffer in it, but consider, is Christs time come? In Proverbs 10:10 it is said, He that winketh with the eye causes sorrow, but a prating fool shall fall. when a man is loth to stand for

those truths of God that shall bring him into suffering, he winks: He that winketh with the eye, causes sorrow, he will bring sorrow to his heart. But others will say, We will not wink with the eye, it is the cause of God, and we will stand for it, but a prating fool shall fall. A true man may ride in the rode, and fear no danger, yet he will not willingly ride into dangerous places, and so a man is not to ride into danger. As now if you be partners with another, you cannot give what you will, because it is not your own, but it is your partners too. If a man have a cottage of his own alone in a field, he may set it on fire, but if he set his own house on fire in the town, it may cost him his life, because others are interessed in the damage as well as himself. Again, if Christ do call, we must go freely, because they are the sufferings of Christ, It is reported of Peter in Ecclesiastical Story, that he was coming out of Rome for fear of suffering; and as he was coming out of the gates, he met Christ, and he asked Christ therefore he came; says he, I come to be crucified, then he thought Christ came to be crucified in him, and therefore he went back and resolved to suffer, and so he was crucified. And so though we be shy of suffering, yet if we know Christ calls to it, we must yield, as being willing to suffer in us.

But when are we called?

There is an ordinary call, and an extraordinary call. The extraordinary call is by the Spirit: And that is first, when there are none that will stand for the cause of God in an ordinary way. Secondly, those that God calls extraordinarily, are such as have extraordinary graces: They act not their own natural boldness, but are carried beyond it by a mighty work of Gods Spirit: And therefore you mayest suspect yourself, that you art not called extraordinarily, but after much humiliation, and much abilities to deny yourself.

But for an ordinary call▪ First, then we are called when if we do not suffer, Gods cause will suffer. Secondly, when God does take away the means and helps of delivering us from suffering. Thirdly, the more helps are taken from us, the more we finde the consolation of Gods Spirit come into us.

But when helps are taken away, and the Spirit of God does absent it self, shall we fear then that we are not called?

Some think, surely they must not suffer, then they shall betray Gods cause: If they do, because they do not finde God present with them: If God do give you a fair way to escape when his presence is gone, you may take it; but if he shut you up that you cannot escape, you may comfortably go on; though now he be gone, he will return again; as it was with Mr. Glover, who wanted the presence of God even till he came to the Stake, and then he clapt his hands and cryed, He is come, he is come.

The last Use of the point is this, If Christ suffer in his people, and if all the evil you cast upon Gods people is Christs, then all the good you do to them is Christs: If when you speak evil of Gods people and reproach them, you reproach Christ; then when you speak well of Gods people, you speak well of Christ: If when you persecute Gods people, you persecute Christ; then when you relieve Gods people, you relief Christ; Christ will own the good that is done to his people, as well as the evil: And therefore as the argument once was, Relieve all strangers, for some unawares have done good to Angels; So now, do all the good you can to Gods people, for unawares you may do much good to Christ. And thus I have finished the second point from this Verse, That the reproaches of Gods people are the reproaches of Christ. Now we are to proceed to the third.

Chapter 38: A gracious heart hath a high esteem of reproaches in the cause of Christ

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That a gracious heart has a high esteem of the reproaches of Christ, he highly esteems of every disesteem he suffers for Christ: And not only bears reproaches and sufferings patiently, but triumphingly; he is not only contented with them, but counts himself enriched by them. This is a great riddle and mystery to the world, that Sufferings, Troubles, Miseries and Reproaches should be rejoiced in, and esteemed highly of. We are to understand by reproaches is this point likewise, not only slanders, and mocks, and scorns, the sufferings of Gods people in their names formally, but materially their sufferings, they suffer for Christ, upon which they come to be contemned: So that whatever Gods people do suffer in the cause of God, and for Christ, they have high thoughts of it: If God should give unto them all the riches and honors of the world, they could not count themselves so enriched as they do by their sufferings. For men to be enriched by the glorious things of heaven, this is no wonder; but to be enriched by their sufferings and reproaches, this is the great wonder of the world, that only those that have the Spirit of God are acquainted

withal. Says St. Paul in Rom. 5:3 We glory in tribulations: There is a patient bearing of tribulation, and a rejoicing in tribulation, and glorying in tribulation; now they did not only bear them patiently, and rejoice in them, but they did esteem them their glory. It is a notable speech in Acts 5:41 It is said of the Apostles when they were called before the Councel, and were very ill handled, They departed from the Councel, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name; to be worthy of shame, is a strange kinde of phrase: But in the Original it is, They counted it honorto be dishonored. In Luke 6. 22, 23. you have another Text to show forth unto us this truth clearly, Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of mans sake: Here is an expression of the greatest dishonor that can be to Gods people: What should they do then? Rejoyce in that day, and leap for joy, for, behold your reward is great in heaven: As if Christ should say, I do not bid you bear it patiently, but joyfully, and more then an ordinary joy, leap for joy. And that is remarkable of St. Paul, in 2 Cor. 11. where he reckons up many things to vindicate his Apostleship, in which he was equal and above others; you shall finde they are his sufferings principally he endured for Christ, at verse 23. Are they the Ministers of Christ, I speak as a fool, I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft: now this is brought to show the dignity of his Apostleship; and therefore in the conclusion at verse 30. when he was put upon glorying, he shows what he most gloried in: If I must needs glory, I will glory in things that concern mine infirmities: by infirmities we are not to understand the infirmities

of sin, but his weakness, and evils that he endured for Christ. And so in chap. 12. ver. 10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions, in distresses for Christs sake.

And thus the people of God in former times have much gloryed in that they have suffered in the cause of Christ. It is the speech of Tertullian, Your cruelty is our glory. We read of tender mothers beholding their childrens suffering death for Christ as their Trophees and Triumphs, and delighting in their last breathings, as in most melodious musick. And it is reported of Balilas, when he was to dye, he required this favor, to have his chains to be buried with him as the ensigns of his honor. It was the manner of the Romans, when any had received any wounds for their country, they would show the scars and places of their wounds for their glory. Pliny tells us of one, because he got forty five wounds for his country, by that he got immortal honor amongst the Romans. Thus Saint Paul seems to argue, Let no man put me to business, I bear about me the marks of the Lord Jesus. And Ignatius professed, he had rather be a Martyr then a Monarch. And Prudentius tells us of the Martyrs in his time, and especially of Vincentius, that the great torments that were presented to them, were but sports and plays to them, they delighted themselves in those things they suffered for Christ, they trod upon burning coals as if they had trod upon roses. And so in the Primitive time they were wont to call Martyrdom by that name, The "crown of Martyrdom. I desire to know nothing, says St. Paul, but Christ and him crucified. And we know how superstitiously they did use the Cross of Christ in former times, and how high respect they would give unto a piece of wood that Christ was crucified upon; yea, if they had but that piece of wood in imagination: what a deal of business was there made by

Constantines mother about the Cross of Christ? Certainly it grew upon this, it was but the abuse of the high esteem that the people of God had of sufferings. The Emperor Baldwyn thought himself blest, if he had but a piece of the Cross of Christ; that he would carry about with him in his arms. It is reported of one King of England, that he bestowed as much upon a Cross, as the Revenues of his Kingdom came to in a year. And that esteem which they had of a piece of wood, the Martyrs in the Primitive times had of the Cross of Christ; namely, of the sufferings they endured for Christ.

Quest. But you will say, in which does it appear, and how comes it to pass, that Gods people do so esteem of their sufferings for Christ?

Ans. There are great riches in them: First, the riches of evidence: Secondly, the riches of preferment: Thirdly, the riches of employment: Fourthly, riches of improvement: Fifthly, riches of experience: Sixthly, riches of promises: Seventhly, riches of comforts: Eighthly, riches of glory.

First, they are great riches, because they have rich evidences from them, and that in these four or five particulars.

First, by the sufferings they suffer for Christ, they have an evidence to themselves, that the way they are in is the right way: They have reproached the footsteps of your anointed: there was a time when they walked in the ways of sin in their footsteps, and then they were never reproached; but now they have changed their way, and walk in the footsteps of the anointed, now they are reproached. If a man being going in a way, the end of which is of great consequence, and if he should miscarry in his way, he were undone: If one should tell him some marks of the way; as you go

you shall meet with such a dirty lane, and such a craggy mountain; though he would be glad they were not, yet when he comes at them he is glad, because they are signs of the way he must go. Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life. Master Bradford made use of that place when he came to the Stake, and looked upon his sufferings as an evidence to him that he was in the right way.

Secondly, they are an evidence to him of that difference that God has made between others and him: there was a time, when as other men could close with me, and agree with me; now see what a difference there is, they nothing but contemn me and despiseme: I might have gone on and have been a scorner and a mocker as they are; O the difference that God has made between me and them! that God should call me from them, who was as vile as they; and suffer them to be reproachers of godliness, and make me a sufferer for godliness! Jerome writ to Augustine, that it was a great sign of glory to him, that all Hereticks did hate him.

Thirdly, it is an evidence of the sincerity, and the power of his grace, and his love that he bears to Christ: and this is great riches; for a gracious heart says, Lord try me, Lord prove me: he would fain have an opportunity to manifest the truth of his love to Christ: all the while I go on in a way of prosperity, and have the desire of my heart, in which appears my love to Christ? but now when I am called to suffering, and to part with much for Christ, here is an opportunity to show I love Christ for himself, that my love to him does not depend upon any thing that I gain by him in the world. The Apostle says, The tryal of your grace, he speaks of faith, is more precious then silver and gold: and not only your grace is more precious, but the tryal of grace is more precious then gold

and silver. A gracious heart does rejoice much in evidencing love to Christ; as any dear friend rejoyces much in any opportunity of manifesting his love to another friend, and the greater the opportunity is, the more does he rejoice. And likewise the power of grace is manifested: as David said to the King Achish, You shall know what your servant can do; and so a gracious heart thinks here is an opportunity to manifest the strength and power that is in grace.

Fourthly, they are an evidence that much good is done, that Satans kingdom is shaken; in sufferings we see the rage of the Devil, and he rages then most when he sends most opposition to his kingdom; therefore those against whom he rages most, may have hereby evidence that they were most instrumental against him: I rejoice, says Luther,That Satan does so rage and blaspheme, as often as I do but touch him: he took it as an argument that much good was done, otherwise the Devil would not have been so vexed, he would not have raged so much.

Fifthly, a gracious heart has an evidence to it self, that God will spare him when others shall suffer from his wrath. Certainly, the more any one is called to suffer in the cause of God, and when he findes his heart ready and willing to yield to God in suffering, the more evidence may he have to his soul, that when others shall be called to suffer from Gods wrath, he shall be spared: and this is the bottom of the prayer of the Psalmist, Psalm 89:50 Remember Lord, the reproach of your servants; how I do bear in my bosom the reproach of the mighty people. I read of one Escelus, being condemned to be stoned to death, and all the people were ready to cast stones at him; and his brother came, and run in, and showed that he had but one hand, and the other hand he had lost for the defense of his country, and then none would stone him: and so the

marks of the Lord Jesus, are notable marks to safeguard you in the time of trouble: when the Lord goes out in his wrath, he will set his mark upon those that he will save; and none more notable marks, then the reproaches and sufferings they bear for Christ. This was Jeremiahs plea before the Lord, chap. 15. ver. 5. O Lord you knowest, remember me and visit me; know that for your sake I have suffered rebuke.

Lastly, it is an evidence of salvation, Phil. 1:28 not that all that suffer shall be saved: but a gracious heart that suffers in a gracious Christian manner, has God sealing to him by his spirit in his sufferings, his salvation. Put these together, and we see one cause why we should count the reproaches of Christ great riches, yea, this is greater riches then the riches ofEgypt.

Secondly, the reproaches and sufferings which we endure for Christ, are riches of preferment. It was a speech of Ignatius, when he was to suffer, It is better for me to be a Martyr, then a Monarch. Epist. 12. ad Romanos, Euseb. l. 8. c. 7. To be preferred to honor, is counted great riches: now there is a preferment of Gods people here, these three or four ways: Basil upon that famous Martyr Baraam, says, he rejoiced in stripes as in honors, he exulted in the severest punishments, as if praeclara bravia acceperet.

First, the Saints look upon this as high preferment, because it is a testimony that God has a high esteem of them: God does not use to call those that are weak and mean to great sufferings, but his servants that are most eminent; God will dispose of the conditions of his people, suitable to their dispositions, therefore he will not call those to the strongest work that are weakest. A Captain does not call out his mean Soldiers to a notable enterprize, but he calls out his most able couragious Soldiers; and the more desper-

ate the enterprize is, the more honor the Soldier thinks it to be called out: so the greater work God calls one to, the more preferment is in it; and we have cause to admire that God should deal so with us his poor creatures, rather then others; as if we were fitter then' others: though we cannot say we are fitter, because we are conscious to ourselves of so much weakness; but God honors us as if it were so.

Secondly, by this we come to be honorable in the eyes of the Churches, and the Saints of God: nothing makes Gods people more honorable in the eyes of the Saints, then when they are called to suffer much for God. And so in the Primitive times, they esteemed much of the Martyrs, even too much. Chrysostom speaking of Babylas the Martyr, calls him a great man, a man to be admired, and says, if I may call him a man: and Tertullian writing to some of the Martyrs, says, I am not worthy to speak to you: he writes that it was a custom of some in those times to creep to the Chains of the Martyrs, in a way of honor to them. Basil speaking of the forty Martyrs, breaks out into this expression, O blessed tongues which put forth such a confession, as the ayr receiving it was even made holy by it. You must suppose the expression to be hyperbolical, yet so as shows how honorable the Martyrs were in their professions of Christ.

Thirdly, it is a greater dignity in some degree then God puts upon the Angels in Heaven; the Angels glorified God in a way of service, but the Angels and Saints in Heaven have not this way to glorifie God, they are not called to suffer in the cause of God▪

Thirdly, the reproaches we suffer for Christ, are riches of imployment: in this they are called to be imployed in the greatest work that God has to do in the world: there are no people in the

world imployed so to set out Gods praise, as they are that are called to suffer; this is the lowest subjection that can be to God, but the highest honor.

And they are called to be maintainers of the truth of God. Says Calvin upon this argument, What are we poor worms, full of vanities and lyes, that we should be called to be maintainers of the truth? The great cause of Gods truth, is maintained especially in Gods peoples suffering for the truth: Here is a glorious contending for the faith of God that is delivered to the Saints. Those who are in Prison, says Cyprian, Confess God with a glorious voyce.

Again, they are imployed in bringing credit to the Church of God; Gods people that suffer, are a great honor to the Church of God: whereas Apostates do disgrace the Church of God; those that stand out in the defense of the truth in suffering, make up that honor that the Church has lost: these are great employments. A gracious heart accounts it as great riches to bring honor to the Church, as to have honor himself: of which before. It is a notable expression that Cyprian has, to set out the honor the Church has by such who suffer for the truth; O blessed Church, which in our times is made glorious, by the glorious blood of the Martyrs; it was white by the works of the brethren, now it is purple by the blood of Martyrs; there are neither Lillies nor Roses wanting in her flowers; white garlands from their works, and purple from their sufferings.

Fourthly, they are riches of improvement: First, grace is improved; grace is never so improved, as it is at that time when a soul suffers for Christ; they most profit me, says Luther, who speak worst of me? as opposition of sin in the wicked improves their sin, so opposition of grace in the godly improves their grace: Lutherus pascitur convitiis, Luther made reproaches his food, he was nour-

ished by them: virtutem intelligo animosam & excelsam quam incitat quicquid infestat, Sen. Ep. 72. Secondly, here is improved whatever Gods people do enjoy, that they are willing to lose; no such improvement of a mans credit or estate, as the loss of it for Christ: if we would devise how we should improve and lay out all our talents for God, we cannot lay them out better; we shall quickly gain from five to ten here: If men know how to improve their stocks to the utmost, they count the knowledge of that way, more then if a man had given them many hundred pounds: we come to improve all that we have in a glorious manner, when God calls unto suffering. Thirdly, by suffering Gods people come to improve the malice and wickedness that is in the Devil and men; that is a great improvement, when I can turn the malice of the Devil and wicked men into my riches. It is a notable speech that one Vincentius had of his Persecutors, Never any man did serve me better then you serve me; and he told them what a great deal he did get by their malice in persecuting of him: if a man were able to turn dirt into riches, how would that enrich a man? but to have that which can turn the dirt of wicked men and the Devil into our riches, that must be a rich thing. Again, a childe of God never improves his time so wel, as when he is suffering for God, when he is a doing good, he is improving his time, but when he is suffering, he does as much in a little time, as he was doing a great while before; God does much reckon upon the time of his people in suffering.

Fifthly, sufferings and reproaches are riches of experiences. As first, when they are called to suffer for Christ, to be reproached for Christ, they have experience of Gods power in upholding them. Secondly, experience of the ways and many passages of the providence of God towards them in all their sufferings. Thirdly, they

come to have experience of the working of their own hearts. And lastly, they come to have experience what it is to be in a suffering condition: men have another apprehension of a suffering condition before they are called unto it, then when they are called to it; and therefore they are ready to say, I never knew what a prison meant, and what reproaches meant till now, I do not finde that in them that I was afraid of; and these experiences are great riches.

Sixthly, reproaches and sufferings bring in rich promises, and they bring in a great deal: O that Christians did but know their riches in regard of the precious promises, 2 Pet. 1:4 Every promise is a pearl to enrich Gods people withal, and where there is true grace, that soul does count it self more enriched by the promises, then by any trading. Now the promises that are so rich unto a gracious heart, they are of divers sorts; As first, the promise of Gods presence with them, and they count those promises to be rich things: as the promise of Gods gracious presence, and the promise of his glorious presence, and the promise of his abiding presence. For his graciouspromise, in Isa. 43:2 When you passest thorow the waters, I will be with you, and thorow the rivers, they shall not overflow you; when you walkest thorow the fire you shall not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon you. Again, his glorious presence and his abiding presence, for that you have one promise take in both together, 1 Pet. 4:14 If you be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you; there is the Spirit of God in all the Saints, but there is the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of glory on those that are reproached for Christ, that is, The glorious Spirit of God, the Spirit of God in a glorious manner. Secondly, the Spirit of God and of glory

rests upon you, it does not pass away, but rests upon you: now what a rich promise is here; and what is in all the world that may be named with this promise.

Secondly, promises of direction: says Christ, Takeno thought when you are called before rulers for my names sake, how or what you shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what you shall speak. Thirdly, there are promises of assistance; I will be-with you to the end of the world. Fourthly, there is a promise of acceptance; He that forsaketh houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my names sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and inherit eternal life. Fifthly, a promise of blessing; Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil falsly on you for my sake. Sixthly, a promise of a Kingdom; If we suffer with him, we shall likewise reignwith him, Luke 22. 28, 29. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and, I appointunto you a Kingdom, as my father has appointed unto me: the appointing of a Kingdom follows upon their continuing with Christ in temptation. Brethren, God promises much to those that shall be sensible of the reproaches of others, much more when you yourself sufferest in the cause of Christ. In Zeph. 3:18 I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn Assembly; time was, when the solemn Assemblies of Gods people, their gathering together to hear a Sermon was their reproach, and they were contemned by many: were you ever in any place where the Assemblies of Gods people were reproachful, and was this a burden to your souls, and grievous to you? mark the blessed promise, I will gather them together: but to be reproached ourselves, and to bear our reproaches in a Christian manner, great and rich promises are made unto it.

Seventhly, in reproaches and sufferings for Christ, there are rich consolations; never such consolation let out to a gracious heart, as when it is under reproaches and sorest persecutions: if ever Christ does turn water into wine, it is the tears of Gods people that are turned into wine of consolation. Basil in his Oration for Barlaam that famous Martyr, says, He delighted in the close Prison, as in a pleasant green meadow, and he took pleasure in the several inventions of tortures, as in several sweet flowers. And Vincentius the Martyr speaking of the great things he suffered for Christ, has this expression, I have always desired these dainties. Luther reports of that Martyr, St. Agatha, that as she went to Prisons and Tortures, she said, she went to Banquets and Nuptails. And Iames Bainham said when they kindled the fire at his feet, Me thinks you strew roses before me. And Mr. Saunders has a most full expression of his consolation, he felt a wonderful sweet refreshment flow from his heart unto all the members of his body, and from all the parts of his body to his heart again. And that Martyr Hawks, lifts up his hands above his head, and claps them together when he was in the fire, as if he had been in a triumph: this is a special fruit of the Spirit of God, and of glory, of which St. Peter speaks, 1 Pet. 4:14 If ye suffer reproaches, happy are ye, the Spirit of God and glory rests upon you, and one consolation, one beam of Gods face is worth all the riches of the world. The Sun enlightens the world, says Cyprian, but he that made the Sun is a greater light to you in prison; that darkness which is the horrible deadly darkness of the place of punishment to others, he irradiates to you with his bright and eternal light. Vobis idem qui Solem fecit

majus in carcere lumen fuit horribiles caeteris atque funest as paenalis loci tenebr as aeterna illa & candida luce radiante, Cyp. Ep. 16.

Eighthly, in reproaches and sufferings there are riches of glory both before the day of Judgement and after: riches of glory before; if so be that opinion of some be true (which I dare not altogether deny) of Christs coming to reign in the world here before the day of Judgement; though I will not affirm it as a truth, yet if there be not a truth in it, I confess I cannot make any thing of many places of Scripture, Rev. 20:5 But the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed & holy is he that has part in the first resurrection; on such the second death has no power,but they shall be Priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. I know this is ordinarily interpreted of the resurrection from sin to grace, and reigning with Christ a thousand years, that is, reigning with him in Heaven: but this cannot be the meaning of the Text; this thousand years must be before the day of Judgement, because Satan must be loosed after: now if this prove to be true, O the riches of glory, that those that suffer for Christ shall have! all those that have suffered for Christ, they especially shall be raised up to reign with Christ on the earth; and therefore you have it in ver. 4. And I saw thrones, and they sate upon them, and judgement was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands, and reigned with Christ a thousand years. Suppose it to be so, then the more any do suffer for withdrawing himself from Antichrist, the more glory they shall have

when Christ comes to reign upon the earth. Some are loth to receive the mark of the Beast upon their foreheads, openly to appear for Antichrist; yet they will have the mark of the Beast in their hands; but here is a promise to them that shall refuse both: and it is not meant only of those that suffer death in their lives; the death in our liberties, and death in our estates, and other kinde of deaths shall not go unrewarded; it is a point that was spoken of in the Primitive times, and afterward it was condemned upon this ground, because many grew to be sensual, and thought the Kingdom of Christ should be for a thousand years in pleasure to the flesh: but take the Kingdom of Christ to be spiritual in the glory of his Ordinances, as I am confident that Christ shall reign Personally, in his flesh I will not say, but Spiritually, farre more gloriously then he has done.

But then at the day of Judgement, O the glory of those that suffer for Christ, they shall have Crowns upon their heads, and Palms in their hands, and all their persecutors stand as base creatures before them! O the imbracings that there shall be then. If a father send his childe abroad about business, and the childe meet with much difficulty, and comes home in a rainy tempestuous day, how gladly his father receives him, and all are busie to tend on him, and to make a fire, and get him dry cloathes! So when the people of God meet with such hardship in the world, when they shal come and meet with Christ for whom they have suffered, how shall they be entertained? What riches of glory shall they enjoy in the highest heavens for ever hereafter? our sufferings are but the seeds of our glory; and the deeper the furrows are, the more plentiful will the Harvest be: and therefore Gordius the Martyr said, It is to my loss, if you bate me any thing in my sufferings. Are you reproached for

Christ? Blessed are you; for the Brand of reproach (says Basil) shall be turned into the glory of an Angel. A gracious heart counts it more riches to be conformable to Christ, then to have Crowns upon his head: As in Phil. 3:8 he counted all the things of the world dogs meat, for the fellowship of Christs sufferings; he did not count all the world dogs meat, for the glory he should have by Christ only; but for the fellowship he should have in the sufferings of Christ. Truly happy is that soul, and to be equalled with Angels, says Jerome, who is willing to suffer, if it were possible, as great things for Christ, as Christ has suffered for it. Vera est illa anima faelix, & Angelis aequanda quae pro nomine & opere Christi tanta quanta pro nobis ille sustinuit, voluit sustinere, Hyeronym. Epist. ad Oceanum. Such as have been followers of eminent men, they highly esteemed to be like their Masters, though in things that were some dishonor; As Plato was a man of a crooked back, and his Schollars counted it an ornament for to go crooked. And Aristotle had a lisping speech, and his Schollars thought it an honor to have a lisping speech. And Alexander had somewhat a wry neck, and a harsh speech, and his soldiers thought it an honor to be like him: how much more should the godly count their sufferings an honor, because they are comformable to Christ? For Application.

In the first place, hence we see the excellency of grace, what an excellent and glorious thing it is, wherever it is, that it does conduce so far to increase riches out of any thing: great must needs be the gain of godliness, when it gains from their sufferings and reproaches; grace is such a thing, as can turn dust into gold: The Philosophers stone is counted a rich thing, because it turns dust into gold, grace will do it, the dirt that the world casts upon Gods

people, is turned into gold: well may it be called the Divine nature; for as God brings light out of darkness, and comfort out of sorrow, and riches out of poverty, and glory out of shame, so does grace. How does grace conduce to the comfortable life of Gods people? as for the service that God employs them in, they count that honorable; and the sufferings that God calls them to, they count them comfortable; we need not therefore be so afraid of sufferings; indeed, if we have not a principle to change the nature of them, we may be afraid, but if God do put a principle into us, to turn our shame into glory, and sufferings into riches, we need not be afraid: If any did see Moses his Serpent, he would be afraid; but if he had Moses hand, he would not be afraid, because Moses hand had a divine vertue with it to turn the Serpent into a rod; and so if we look upon sufferings as a Serpent ready to devour us, we may be afraid, but when we consider the excellency of grace, that it has a divine power to turn the Serpent into a rod, you need not be afraid; labor to prize this jewel of grace, that can do such great things: It was the curse upon the wicked, that God would turn their glory into shame; It is the blessing of grace, that it will turn shame into glory.

Secondly, we see a reason of the meekness and quiet behavior of Gods people in sufferings: Though they are persecuted, they carry themselves meekly, and are ready to forgive, they are not discouraged, and sink in their sufferings, because they look upon sufferings with another eye then the men of the world do, they look upon their sufferings as their glory and riches: When a man has riches coming in, he is quiet; and though he were angry, passionate, and vexing before, yet when riches come in, that quiets his heart, and he is ready to do any office of love then; this is the reason why Gods people are ready to do any office of love to them that

do persecute them, because they look upon them as their glory. St. Paul was a man that had a high esteem of his sufferings, and therefore when he suffered much, and from those that were his friends, in Gal. 4:12 see his behavior, Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am, for I am as you are, ye have not injured me at all; As if he should say, How soever you have carried yourselves, yet be as I am, I am as you are, let our hearts close and join together; you have not injured me at all: Thus his spirit was carryed in this quiet and meek frame, because he had a right understanding of the nature of sufferings. And so we read of Stephen, when they were stoning him, says he, Lord forgive them: What was the ground of this? He saw the heavens opened, and Christ stand at the right hand of his Father, he saw a great deal of glory that was in his sufferings when he suffered thus for Christ; he could pray for his persecutors: What was the reason Christ endured all so quietly? he knew the good that was in his sufferings. Indeed, as for those that see no good in them, that finde nothing but trouble and vexation, no marvel though their hearts fret and revile again; but where a gracious heart findes sweetness and good in suffering, surely there need not be that fretting and vexation of spirit in them as in others. And why should we vex and fret, when we suffer any thing for God? it must be upon one of these two grounds; either because of the evil that we do endure, or the evil of those from whom we do endure. The evil that we do endure cannot cause fretting, because it is turned to such great riches. But you will say, The suffering it self I do not care for, but the base malicious hearts of those from whom I suffer, that troubles me. To that I answer, It is reported concerning Socrates, being once reproached, and yet behaving himself meekly and quietly, one came and asked him how he could be so meek and

quiet, when he was reproached by such a one as he was that did reproach him? Socrates answered, If as we go along we should meet with a man that had a diseased body, more diseased then our bodies, more weak then ours, should we fret at him because we see the disease of his body more grievous then ours: No, this should make us pity him; then says he, if as we go along, we see the spirit of one more diseased, and more distempered then ours, should this make us fret at him? it rather calls for pity and commiseration: so if that be the thing that makes you fret; namely, the malice of them from whom you suffer, it should rather turn your vexation into commiseration, and look upon his spirit as diseased, and sickly, and weak, and bless God that has given you a more strong and hail spirit.

Thirdly, if Gods people account sufferings and reproaches greater riches then the treasures of Egypt, then here we may see to what a heighth a gracious spirit is raised to, how high above the world; in that it looks upon the riches, and glory, and sweet contentment of the world, as under the meanest and basest thing that does attend godliness; namely, as things under reproaches, and under scorns and sufferings; Gods people do not only look at Christ, and grace, and heaven, as above the riches and glory of the world, that they are infinitely above them; but mark how a gracious heart is raised above the world, take the very dirt that is cast upon the ways of God, and he counts that very dirt to be higher then all the riches, and glory, and dignity of the world; surely then a gracious heart has a very low esteem of the world, and the riches and glory of it, howsoever other men that know no better things, esteem highly of them: A man that has rich Revenues, plentiful comings in, he blesses himself in this, and counts himself a great man here; but know, while you are blessing yourselves in these

things of the world, that do glitter in carnal eyes, a gracious heart is so far from looking at that which you do so highly esteem of as great matters, as he accounts the very baseness that attends the ways of godliness, as a higher preferment by far then all your glory, and rejoyces more in it, and blesses God more for it; yea, blesses himself more in the very basest and meanest things that attend godliness, then in all your riches; so that a godly mans feet are where a wicked mans head is.

The head of a worldly man, that is, the chief of his desires, and joys, and endeavors, it is in the riches of the world, and there a godly mans feet stand, and he counts them so low, as he counts the dirt of his feet better: Surely it is but a little room that riches have in the heart of a godly man, when as the very reproaches of Christ are more to him then all the riches of the world: The very filth that is cast upon him while he is in his way, he does count better. When we would express our most vile esteem of any thing, we use to say, We prize it no more then the dirt under our feet; then surely a godly man must have a vile esteem of the things of the world, for he does not so much prize it as the dirt that is cast upon him. And so the Psalmist in Psalm 119, 118. speaking of the vile esteem that God has of the wicked, says he, He treads them down under his feet, and puts them away as dross: Gods servants are compared in Mal. 3:17 to jewels that are scattered up and down in the dirt, for so the phrase does intimate, but the dirt that is upon his jewels, is highlier esteemed by Gods people, then all the jewels of the world: The scrapings and washings that come from the trenchers of men, is the sweetest food unto a Swine; so that which is the sweetest and most delightful things of the men of the world, it is meaner then the basest thing that does belong unto the sufferings of Gods peo-

ple. O the advantage that the Saints have above the men of the world! Were there any great matter in the things of the world, howsoever esteemed by men, it could not be that the very reproaches of Gods people could be counted better; but whatever esteem the men of the world have of them, it appears by this there is no great matter in them.

Riches in Scripture are compared to thorns, there are five or six things in which they are like thorns; First, thorns are the vilest plaints, so riches are to a gracious heart. Secondly, in regard of the suddennessof their passing away, if the fire do but touch them, they are quickly gone, so riches soon pass away, it is said, They have wings and fly away. Thirdly, in regard of their unfruitfulnes, thorns bear nothing fit for man, so riches are very unfruitful, they make men unfruitful. Fourthly, in regard that thorns are such hindrances to better things; and therefore the Scripture says, the seed of the word that was sown among thorns it was choaked, they will not let better things grow by them; so the riches of the world and cares about them, choak up all, and hinder other things that are good. Fifthly, they are compared to thorns, in regard of the prickly nature of them: So there are many snares in riches; says the Holy Ghost, They pierce themselves through with many sorrows: It is hard for a man to go through thorns, and not to pierce himself; he may be in the outside of them, and not pierce himself; so though a man be busie in the world, he may keep himself from pricking, but if he be over head and ears in the world, he will be pricked; as the sheep that is got into the thorns will lose part of her fleece, so Gods people will lose part of their good amongst the world. Lastly, many venomous creatures, as Snakes and Toads, and the like, are creeping and crawling in the thorns, so many venomous lusts are hidden

by riches, an outward glorious estate does hide many filthy lusts. These arguments may for ever teach us to look upon these things as very mean and low.

Fourthly, if sufferings and reproaches for Christ be greater riches then all the riches in the world, O how are they mistaken, how are they deluded that look upon these things as the greatest evils! that are so shy of sufferings and reproaches for Christ, as that they will lose the greatest riches, rather then they will be enriched by them, rather then they will endure them, when as they are so great a good: As first, is not peace of conscience a rich jewel, more then all the riches of the world; and yet how many are there that will lose the rich jewel of peace of conscience, rather then endure reproaches, rather then be enriched by reproaches? though they be convinced in their conscience, such ways are according to Gods mind, that they are bound to do them, such things ought to be done, and such things ought to be left undone; yet rather then they will endure reproaches, they are content to part with the riches of the peace of conscience.

Secondly, is not the truth of God a rich jewel, a precious jewel? O any one truth is rich, we should prize it above our lives! O that faith that was once deliveredto the Saints, how should we prize it! Buy the truth, sell it not: Buy it at any rate, sell it not upon any terms. The truth is that, that the blood, the lives of so many dear and precious Saints of God that were the glory of the world, have been laid out for the maintenance of, and well laid out too: For though God does esteem of the blood of his Saints, and precious in his eyes is the death of the Saints, yet God esteems highlier of his truth, that is worth the blood of all that have been spilt for the defense of it. The truth of God is the especial end for which the Son of

God came into the world, and took mans nature upon him, to testify to the truth. The truth is more worth then rubies and all precious stones, then gold and silver: Whatever you can desire, is not to be compared to it; and though there be so many riches in the truth of God, yet how many are there that will rather betray the truth of God, lose the truth of God, rather then suffer reproaches.

Thirdly, is it not a rich thing to enjoy communion with God? It was an expression of that truly noble Marquis Galeacius, that parted with all for Christ, when his friends that were very rich, offered him bags of gold and silver to return to them again, he put them all away with this expression of indignation, Cursed is that man that counts all the gold and silver in the world, worth the enjoyment of communion with Jesus Christ: This is riches, yet some had rather lose this then endure reproaches.

Fourthly, is not the blessing of God upon us, the protection of God over us, the love of God unto us, the care of God for us, and the brightness of the face of God shining upon us, and brightning all our ways, are not these riches? and yet behold how many are there that are so far from counting reproaches riches, as they will lose these riches, rather then bear reproaches.

Fifthly, is not the inheritance of the Saints, that kingdom of glory, that incorruptible undefiled crown that is reserved for them, riches? and yet how many are so far from esteeming reproaches riches, as they will venture the loss of that too, rather then they will endure reproaches.

Lastly, are not the Ordinances of God riches, that are the especial conduits and means of conveyance of the choice mercies of God unto his people; those mercies that have such an immediate

dependance upon eternity, are not these riches worth all the world? yet how many are so far from counting reproaches riches, as will rather lose all the riches of the Ordinance, then be reproached: Though their conscience tell them, You might enjoy abundance of blessing in the Ordinances, were it that you might have them in the power of them, and they have a good mind to them: Ah, but my friends will scorn me; and upon this ground, they forbear coming to the Ordinances: And thus they are so far from counting the reproaches they shall endure, riches, as they deprive themselves of all the riches in the Ordinances of God, rather then they will endure them: Like unto Asa, in 1 Kings 15:18 he took all the gold, and silver, and riches of the treasure of God, to send them unto Benhadad, that he might free him from the King of Israel: So men are willing to part with the gold and silver, and all the riches of Gods house, and of Gods Ordinances, so they may be freed from reproaches and sufferings, and from enduring trouble; was there ever delusion like this delusion, to lose such riches, rather then endure that which in it self is riches? were it that reproaches were as great evils as you can imagine, suppose you might go to live where you might enjoy the Ordinances, though it were in such a place as Job speaks of, in Job 22:10 A land of darkness, as darkness it self, and of the shadows of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness; yet that subjection that your souls do owe to God, does call for a willingness to yield to that, and to yield to reproaches and sufferings, though there were no good in them: but now, when there is so much good, such glorious things mingled together with reproaches, for you now to be so afraid of reproaches, as to be willing to lose so much riches rather then to endure them, how is your heart besotted? Suppose re-

proaches had such shame in them as you think they have, cannot God put honor upon them? man can put honor upon mean things: As the Garter that is counted an ornament of the highest Nobility, that Kings wear about their necks as an ensign of their princely order: A Garter fell from a Lady, and she blushed for shame, the King took it up, Well, says he, I will make this an honorable ornament ere long; and upon that came the Order of the Garter. If man can put an honor upon that which is mean, surely God can do it: And therefore Calvin speaking of sufferings and reproaches, says, They are the ensigns of heavenly nobility; and if God has put this honor upon them, shall you be so shy of them, as to lose so much, rather then to endure them?

First, if they were evil, you are to endure them, in regard of your subjection to God.

Secondly, if there were nothing lost by your drawing from them, and your unwillingness to endure them, it should be a great deal of evil; but first considering that there is good in them, and so much lost by your unwillingness to endure them, what folly is here? there is an art and skill in Christian Religion, that would show you other things then you see: You would never have such low esteem of reproaches, if you had the skill of Christianity: If a man did fling bags of pearls and gold at a dog, he would be afraid of them, and run away, but a man would not, but be ready to catch them; and so men of the world and base hearts, that are not acquainted with this skill of Christianity, they will run way at reproaches and sufferings, but a heart that knows what they are, does not run away.

But are you shy of sufferings, and run away? what a difference is there between the disposition of your hearts, and the disposition of the most worthy servants of God in all ages? you are afraid of them, as if they were evil like hell it self; Gods people earnestly desire them. I remember a speech of Jerome upon that, Blessed are you when men speak evil of you, and revile you; says he, Who would not be willing to suffer? who would not wish to be persecuted for righteousness sake? who would not desire to be reviled? O would all the rout of unbelievers did persecute and trouble me for the name of my Lord, and for righteousness sake; I would this foolish world would all rise up against me to reproach me.

Secondly, Gods people have been greedy of them. Origen was so earnest to suffer with his father, when he was a youth of sixteen years of age, that if his mother had not kept his clothes from him, he would have run to the place where his father suffered, to profess himself a Christian, and to have suffered with him. And so the story of the poor Woman in the book of Martyrs, that made haste to the place where many Christians were to be burned, and meeting with the Persecutor, says he, What need you make such haste to that place, there are many to be burned? Ah, says she, that I know, and I am afraid all willbe done before I come; I and my childe would fain suffer with them: And many blessed the day of their suffering. Alice Drivers expression was, That nevernecker-chief became her so well, as that chain did: and are you so shy of them? what difference is between you and their spirits. Again, what unthankfulness and dishonor is this to Christ, that has suffered so much for you. Christ has gloried in the sufferings he suffered for you, and why should you be afraid of sufferings for him? it was a notable speech of an Ancient, Acceptable is the reproach of

the Cross to him that is not unthankful to him that was crucified upon the Cross. And what confusion will it be upon you another day, when you shall see those that suffered are so glorified, that their sufferings are crowns of such immortal glory? O consider what you do; deprive not yourselves of such glorious riches.

Fifthly, let us labor to get this Christian magnanimity of spirit, namely, for to glory in all that we suffer for Christ: Heathens can be patient in sufferings, but Christians must go beyond them, and glory in their sufferings. You have been bold in suffering for sin, if you might have your mind and will: now if you may have your mind and will for Gods glory in suffering in a good way, why should you not suffer? Mark the expressions that we have of Job, Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of familiesterrifie me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door. O that one would hear me, behold my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book: let them say what they can against me, & write a book against me, Surely, I would take it upon my shoulder, and binde it as a crown to me: Thus it should be with the people of God, they should take their reproaches as an ensign of honor: This indeed is truly in a spiritual sense to tread upon the Asp and the Adder, that when the Asp, and Adder, and the old Serpent does spit out her venomous poyson, a gracious heart should tread upon them. There are three things that will put a spirit of suffering, and so a holy magnanimity into us: All the arguments in the world will not do it, unless we have a suffering spirit; and these three things will put a suffering spirit in us. First, if you had a full satisfaction of your own spirits in the cause of God you maintain, and the ways of God, you walk from your own experience you have in them; if you take upon you the profes-

sion of Religion by the reports of others, and be carried by the example of others, that will not do it; but if in your own experiences you finde that sweet and only satisfying content in the truths and ways of God, this will do it. It was a notable resolution of Luther, My purpose is not, says he, to maintain my life or name in respect what men say, or can say of me for my maners, but my purpose is to maintain the cause of God; let whoever will tear my life and name in this regard: Propositum est mihi neque vitam neque mores tueri, sed solam causam; lacerent mores meos quicunque velint. Luth. ad Nicolaū Hansman.

Secondly, if you get your hearts inflamed with love to Christ: Love delights in opportunities of expressing it self, and it has never such a full opportunity of expressing the strength and heat of it, as in suffering much for the Beloved.

Thirdly, if you have an eye of faith, and can behold God the Father, and Christ, and the blessed Angels looking upon you when you are in your sufferings; By the eye of faith look up to heaven, and see God looking upon you, and saying, Here is a servant of mine is called to suffer for me, now you shall see his behavior; and Christ and the Angels looking upon you to see your behavior, and this will do it; not only make you patient, but glory in them.

Sixthly, if there be so much glory, and such riches in suffering: Hence we have an Use of abundance of comfort and encouragement to them that are willing to endure reproaches for Christ. There are five or six branches of consolation to Gods people in this Use. First, are you willing to suffer reproaches, and to glory in them? I remember a notable speech of Gulielmus Parisiensis, O happy pallat that can taste such delicates! O it is a blessed thing that God has given you such a taste! Again, know, if you glory in

your sufferings for God, God will glory in doing for you: None shall glory in suffering for him, but he will count it his glory to be doing for them. Thirdly, if you glory in your sufferings for Christ, God will count it his glory to uphold you in his sufferings. Fourthly, do you glory in the low condition you are put into for Christ? certainly God will own your souls, and glory in you when you are in the lowest condition, when your souls shall be in adversity, God will know you then. Fifthly, can you glory in a suffering Christ, when Christ comes in glory, he will own you, when he shall be glorified, his glory shall be yours: Those that are ashamed of me, I will be ashamed of them (says Christ) before my Father and the Angels: But those that glory in Christ, Christ shall be their glory. Lastly, now you glory in Christs sufferings, you shall glory in his praises.

Seventhly, if so be that Gods people account themselves so enriched by sufferings and reproaches, let us take heed we do not despise any that do suffer for Christ, that we have not low esteem of them, because of their sufferings: God has high esteem of them when they suffer, and they themselves see cause to glory in their condition; and are you that are standers by ashamed of them? and do you disesteem of them for their sufferings? while the Saints of God flourish in the world, they are esteemed of by many carnal hearts; but let them suffer any thing and be disgraced, and they withdraw themselves from them, they are despised as a lamp in the snuff, but who do despise those that are ready to fall into trouble? those that are in ease: When a lamp is bright and shining, every one esteems it; but when it comes to be in the snuff, men despise it: and so in outward prosperity, many do esteem of them, but when they come into trouble, then they slight them: O let not those that are like to fall into trouble be despised by you: I pray

what service do you for God, that you should despise them? such a one as suffers in the cause of God, does more service for God, then you have done in all your lives, and God has more honor by him; and will you despise him, and look with an evil eye upon such a one? behold him, look upon him, see whether the presence of God be not more with him then ever; see whether the glory of God does not appear more upon him then ever? and will you despise him? It is said, God will not withdraw himself from the righteous, however others do withdraw themselves; (that is) let the righteous be inany condition, though in the poorest meanest condition, God withdraws not himself from him, and shall you withdraw your hearts from him? you should embrace them, and the more they suffer for God, the more you should delight in them, and be in their company the more, and not be shy of their company, and ashamed to own them.

In Rev. 1:9 you see how St. John does boast in his tribulation; he does not say, I John that am an Evangelist, who am an Apostle, who have revelations revealed unto me, but, I John, who am also your brotherand companion in tribulation: This he rejoyces in, that there is a company of Gods people that I may join with in tribulation for Christ. And so it is spoken of the honor of those Christians in Heb. 10:33 that they were companions of those that were reproached and persecuted: It is therefore well taken at Gods hand, when any of Gods people are in trouble, that others are willing to be their companions, and not to despise them, but to embrace them. And Constantine the Emperor, when he came to Pagnutius, that had lost his eye for Christ, he embraced him, and kissed that eye.

Eighthly, if Gods people do so glory in their sufferings: Hence there is discouragement to all wicked men to meddle with them; certainly they will get nothing by it. You think if they will not do thus and thus, you will make them do it: Alas, you are infinitely deceived; what will you do to make them do it? you will reproach them, and cast disgrace upon them, and take away their estates, and hunt them up and down: This is that which they glory in, and they count their riches; you enrich them by this: And therefore if there be any policy in you, leave off this way; for when are the people of God more setled in the way of godliness, and against the way of Antichrist, then when they are persecuted? Nazianzen in his Oration upon Basil, tells of a famous contestation that Basil had with Modestus, the Emperors Lieutenant: What, (says Modestus) what do we seem to be to you? Nothing, says Basil. What, do you not fear our power? Why should I fear? what will it do? what shall I suffer? What shall you suffer? (says he in indignation) then he reckons up a company of scaring things, Losses of goods, Banishment, Tortures, Death: then, says Basil, if you have any thing else, threaten it, for these things are nothing. How is that, says he? Basil answers, for loss of goods, I have nothing but a few torn cloathes, and a few books; for Banishment, I account the whole earth mine; for Death, that will be a benefit to me, you will send me sooner to God, to whom I live, and to whom I hasten; and a little after he says, Fire, Sword, Prison, Famine, are all a pleasure, they are delightful to me.

We read likewise of a notable speech of this Lieutenant to the Emperor Julian: While they suffer, they deride us (says he) and the torments are more fearful to them that stand by, then to the tormented. Gulielmus Parisiensis in his Tractate de moribus, brings

in the patience of the Saints triumphing over Persecutors, saying, The Emperors, and Kings, and Princes of the world are but Cooks to prepare dainties for me, in whose rage appears my glory; the magnificence and sublimity of those who are mine, and those that seem to dominier in the world, do serve in my kitchin to prepare food for me. And Tertullian speaking of the patience of Job, and the Devils coming to strike him, says, The Devil with his own hands did but make a crown for Job. And (says he) here is the glory, and magnanimity, and sublimity of patience, that it does glory in those things that the world think to get them off from the ways of godliness by. Hereticks, says Cyprian, do arm us, when they think by their threatnings to terrifie us. Do you think reproaches from you will take off their hearts from all the good they had experience of Gods ways? you know not their hearts.

In Jeremy 23:7 says God, They think to cause my people to forget my name by their dreams, which they tell every man to his neighbor, as their fathers have forgotten my name for Baal: because a company of base Hypocrites are taken from the ways of godliness, and from the profession of truth by scorns and reproaches, the men of the world think to get Gods people to forget his Name, but they are infinitely mistaken: although you prevail with hypocrites, do not think to prevail in like manner with gracious hearts. The answer of Basil to Modestus, that Nazianzen in his former Oration mentions, is very remarkable; When Modestus heard his bold answers, says he to him, Never any man answered me thus, thus boldly as you do: It may be, says Basil, you never had to deal with a Bishop before. So although perhaps others who make shows of Religion, yet not well grounded, will yield to you; yet if you meet with a true gracious heart, you shall finde another

manner of power there to resist whatever you can do. Do what you can, those who are truly godly, will be above you in whatever sufferings they endure from you. It was a notable speech I have read of one Cyrus Theodorus, to the former Modestus, concerning Basil: O Modestus, Basil is above you, you are but a poor Pismire to him, though you roar as a Lyon! Luther likewise reports of Vincentius, that he laughed at those that slew him; saying, that to Christians tortures and deaths were as sports, and he gloryed when he went upon hot burning coals, as if he trod upon Roses.

Ninthly, If we are to glory so much in the sufferings we endure for Christ, then certainly we are to glory in the sufferings that Christ has indured for us: if there be riches in our sufferings for Christ, what riches are in Christs suffering for us? I have shown in eight particulars the riches of sufferings for Christ; I might in as many particulars show the riches of Christs sufferings for us. First, riches of the infinite deep wisdom of God. Secondly, the riches of the infinite love of God to mankinde. Thirdly, the rich patern of humility. Fourthly, there is riches of honor that is put upon the Children of men, such a price is paid for them, and such great things are done by the Lord for them. Fifthly, there is a rich fountain of mercy, cleansing of all pollution, and the healing of all souls in Christ. Sixthly, there are the riches of the springs of all graces. Seventhly, there are the riches of the rich treasure of all consolations. Eighthly, a rich purchase; thus our sufferings for Christ are riches, and Christs sufferings for us are riches. Chrysostom speaking of Christs reproaches, has this expression, These things which we suffered, are most beautiful and glorious to me, in these I do principally glory; neither is my spirit less raised by the thousands that be raised from the dead, then by the dolours that suffered.

How rich is a Christian in regard of sufferings; as men use to look at their riches, and be thinking of their riches, so let us be viewing and looking at our riches, the riches of our sufferings; and Christ makes us to glory in our riches. It is an expression of Chrysostom upon the Sermon in Matthew 26. speaking of the sufferings of Christ, says he, They are gloriousthings, he glories more in them, then in raising thousands from the dead, Christ glories in them; And that is observable in the ninth of the Acts, where Christ appears to Saul, says he, Saul, Saul, why persecutest you me? says Paul, Who art you? I am Jesus of Nazareth; why does he say, Jesus of Nazareth? does any good come out of Nazareth? he does not say, I am the second person of the Trinity, the Son of God, the King of the Church; no, but I am Jesus of Nazareth, that was a reproach that was cast upon Christ, and Christ glories in that, surely we should glory in it then.

Lastly, if there be so many riches in suffering for Christ in reproaches, what riches are there in the Crown, in the reward of the reproaches, and sufferings? men do dig riches out of dark holes and mines in the Earth; here is a hole, though it be dark, yet it is a mine, where-out you may dig great riches, if you have wherewithall to dig, if you have a true Christian Spirit; you see out of this deep dark pit you may dig riches.

Chapter 39: There is glorious reward for the people of God

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But what was the ground that made Moses thus esteem reproaches? He had respect unto the recompence of reward: From whence the point of Doctrine is this, That

There is a glorious reward for the people of God, the respect unto which is a great encouragement to Godsservants, to go on in a way of suffering and hardship for him.

It was this that helped David in the midst of his sore temptation, that did arise from his affliction in the way of God, Psalm 37:24 You shall guide me mith your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory: as if he should say, Howsoever it be with the men of the world, who enjoy their prosperity according to their desires; and howsoever it be with me, that I am afflicted, and must endure hard things here, yet this is that which upholds me through all, You shall afterward receive me to glory. This is that which upheld the Spirit of Saint Paul, 2 Cor. 4:17 where he brings in a most notable and high expression of the glory that is to come, for the upholding his spirit in his suffering; For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This is that which Saint Paul propounded unto

Timothy, to uphold his heart in all his sufferings, 2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him. This is that which strengthned the Spirits of the Christians, that suffered in the times of the Maccabees, Heb. 10:34 As those clusters of Grapes that were brought from the land of Canaan, that showed to the people, what the fruitfulness of that land was, was an encouragement to them, to pass through all difficulties that they were like to meet withalin the possession of the land, to fight against the children of Anak; so that which God has revealed of Heaven, is like those clusters of grapes, those little things that we have made known to us (in comparison of the glory that is to come) are to that end revealed to encourage us in our way here. In the handling of this point, there are these five things we shall endeavor to do: First, to show that there is a reward for the righteous. Secondly, how far a Christian may have an eye unto this reward. Thirdly, show somewhat what this reward is. Fourthly, in which lies the power of the believing of this, to help us to endure any hardship. Lastly, make Application of all.

That there is a reward. Certainly, there is a more blessed condition for Gods people hereafter, they have not received that which is prepared for them, there are other manner of things to be revealed, then those that you see. Psalm 58:11 Verily there is a reward for the righteous; surely it is so: notwithstanding a carnal sensual heart does not see it, yet verily there is a reward; though the ways of Gods providence do seem outwardly to work otherwise, yet surely there is a reward: notwithstanding our unbelieving hearts are ready to question it, yet surely there is a reward, verily there is a reward for the righteous. There is a great deal of power in this one thing to raise up our hearts from the creature, from

grovelling here below, to make us at least to look upward to know our happiness is not here, to know that there are glorious things to be expected, and that appears:

First, God has infinite riches of glory, infinite treasures of happiness, there are infinite great things in God, and God takes infinite delight to communicate himself, and let out himself unto the creature: now if there be such infinite riches with God, such glorious treasures of happiness, and he delights to communicate himself, certainly there are great things to be communicated then; for therefore is it that God has such infinite riches in him, but that in due time he will make them known, and reveal them, and communicate them? it is but little that is revealed and communicated for the present; therefore there are other things to be revealed and communicated from God.

Secondly, God has made mankinde to be of such a nature, as to have a kinde of infinite capacity, whereby it is made capable of happiness, beyond that which any creature, besides Angels, is capable of: Properly no creature but the rational creature is capable of happiness at all, but besides it has a kinde of infinite capacity, whereby it is made capable of the highest happiness that belongs to the capacity of a Creature: and certainly God has not made this in vain, God does intend to fill this capacity.

You will say, An infinite capacity of happiness, how is that? Thus; for there are two things in the rational part of man, his understanding, and his will: now the capacity of this part, must be judged according to the objects that are suitable unto these two faculties in mans soul: For the understanding, it is not any particular thing that is the object of it, but truth in general: take truth in the utmost latitude of it, in the universality of it, that is the object

of mans understanding; and therefore the understanding is infinite, because it is not satisfied in this or that particular, but truth in the utmost extent. And for the object of the will, it is good in the general, it is not this or that particular good, but good in the universality of its nature; and therefore till it come to enjoy God, that does eminently contain all good in him, it can never come to have full satisfaction. And here observe the difference between the capacity of mans nature, and the capacity of other Creatures: as for other Creatures, their faculties can extend no further then some particular good, and they are limited within the narrow bounds of their own nature; and therefore if so be the eye have color, it goes no further; and if the ear have sound, it goes no further; and so taste, it goes no further then some particular good; but the intelligent soul, the rational soul goes beyond all particulars. Now God having made mans nature of such a capacity for good and happiness, certainly God intends great things for the children of men, other manner of things, then there are in this world; and if for any, surely for the righteous.

Thirdly, surely there is a reward, because it is the great design that God had in the making of the world, in all his works to lift up, and advance the glory of the riches of his mercy and grace: now if this be Gods great design, to advance the glory of his infinite mercy, then certainly there must needs be a glorious condition for some of the children of men, for that is not yet done; though there be something of Gods mercy manifested, that we have cause to admire at; yet certainly, God does not reveal that in the world, whereby he should attain to the great design, of lifting up of the glory of his great Name.

Fourthly, the chief of the deep infinite counsels of God, and the works of his wisdom, that have been from all eternity, have been, and are yet exercised about this especially; namely, to bring mankinde to his eternal estate, and to communicate unto the children of men, that glory that he has appointed for them, that it might be in the most glorious way that can be: now if God have set his infinite wisdom on work from all eternity about this; namely, what might be the most glorious way of communication of himself in the riches of his goodness unto mankinde, certainly, when this comes to pass, that God should communicate himself as much as he does intend, it must be infinitely glorious: certainly, there are great things, and glorious things to be communicated hereafter.

Fifthly, the power of God has been already exercised, in subserviency to other attributes of his, to make known his wisdom, and his bounty, and his general goodness; the power of God have been wonderfully manifested in the works of creation and providence: now certainly, the power of God is as well to be put forth in a way of subserviency unto his grace and mercy; now if there be such a time, as Gods infinite power is to be let out, and work unto that end, that it might be subservient unto the infiniteness of his mercy, then certainly there are glorious and great things to be revealed and made known.

Sixthly, certainly there are glorious and great things for mankinde, in that God has raised the nature of man unto such a heighth, as he has done in Christ; namely, to unite mans nature unto himself, unto the second person of the Trinity, and that with the nearest union that possibly can be; namely, an hypostatical union: certainly then God intends great things for the children of

men, for that nature, that is one person with the Divine nature. This is such a great work of God, as all other of the works of God are darkned in the honor of this great work.

Seventhly, the great purchase that Jesus Christ has made, in that he has been content to leave so much glory, certainly this was to purchase great glory; and in that he was content to be made a curse for mans-sin, and to shed his blood, and to give his life for man, surely this was not only to purchase outward comforts in the world, it was to purchase higher things; and therefore great must needs be the fruit of the purchase of the blood of Christ; and therefore great are the things that are to be revealed hereafter.

Eighthly, there are in Scripture many glorious promises which yet are not fulfilled, abundant rich andglorious promises, that have infinite treasures of good in them, there must be a time of fulfilling of them all, to the utmost extent of them: and therefore certainly there are great things to be revealed hereafter. Your word O Lord is setled for ever in Heaven, Psalm 119:89

Ninthly, the great things that God has done for his enemies, is a demonstration that there is a glorious condition for Gods people afterward, in that God has filled their bellies with his hid treasure: what treasures has God to fill the souls of his own people with, when as he does fill the bellies of the wicked, whom he does intend to cast out as accursed?

Tenthly, it appears there are great things for the people of God hereafter, because of the great hopes that are wrought in the hearts of Gods servants, by the power of the Holy Ghost. Now surely such hopes as are wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, they must attain unto glorious things: Rom. 15:13 Now the God of hope, fill

you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost: the hope of Gods people is that which is not only wrought by the Holy Ghost, but by the power of the Holy Ghost; and such an hope, as God is pleased to stile himself the God of this hope; and therefore certainly glorious things are to be revealed.

Another demonstration is this, the very natures and excellency of grace, is to take off our hearts from these present things in the world, and from all the good that is here in the creature, God does give grace for this end; now then I reason thus: if the chief excellency of grace be to take the hearts of the Saints from the things of the world, and to settle them upon higher and better things, then certainly there are glorious things to come.

The last demonstration is this, because there are such glorious first fruits of that which is to come, that Gods people do finde for the present; those blessed rays of heavenly consolations, and those beginnings of Heaven that they finde here: if there were a thousand worlds filled with that glory that this is filled with, they would not take it for one ray, one beam, that is made known unto them, as the first fruits of that glory they shall have hereafter: now put all these together, and we may conclude, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a glorious condition for Gods servants; happy are they that shall be made partakers of these things, certainly there are great things to come.

Before we go any further, me thinks the thoughts of these should raise our hearts: what do we here minding such poor empty things? are these the things that God has made us for? are not the thoughrs of God concerning the children of men, higher and more glorious then these outward things? surely there is something else,

that God has made mans immortal soul for, above any thing that it has seen in the world: men do live for the present, as if there were no other condition for them, no greater good, but only to cat and drink, and have money, and brave cloathes, and the like: O know there are better things for us to look after! but thus we pass from the first thing, that there are blessed things for the children of men hereafter.

Chapter 40: How far we may aym at the recompence of reward in what we do

IT is true, will some say, there are glorious things prepared for some of the children of men; but whether may we look after them? may we have a respect to the reward? Is not this a mercenary thing, and hypocrisie? we are not to serve God for reward, but for himself: and therefore how is this that Moses had a respect unto the recompence of reward, and how is this a thing that should help us on in our way?

First, this is granted, that we are bound to serve the Lord, and to walk with him, and obey him; if there were no reward to be expected hereafter, God is infinitely worthy of himself, of all our services, of all that we are able to do in this world; and whatever we have, the Lord has more interest in it, then we have in it ourselves; and therefore we owe all that we are, or have, unto him, and righteousness it self is sufficient to cause us to perform the works of it: In the keeping of your Commandments there is great reward, Psalm 19:11 Not only for keeping them, but in keeping them there

is great reward, and the excellency of our work would be sufficient reward for our work; though there were no reward that were to come hereafter, we are bound to do all we do.

But yet secondly, notwithstanding this, God is pleased to give leave unto us his poor creatures, to help and encourage ourselves in the expectation of that reward that is to come; yea, to make it our aim (though I will not say the highest aim) for so the word signifies in 2 Cor. 4:18 While we look not at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; the word signifies, While we make things thatare not seen our scope and aim, so that God gives us leave to have such respect unto them, as to make them our aim: and so the people of God have looked at the recompence of reward, as a great encouragement to them in their way, Psalm 119:112 I have enclined my heart to perform your statutes alway, even to the end: the same word that signifies end, signifies reward also, because reward is to come at the end of all our works, and therefore the same word is translated reward in Psalm 19:11 and so the word seems to carry more, then to the end: as if David should say, I have enclined my heart to perform your Statutes alway, looking unto the reward. In Heb. 12:3 it is said of Christ himself, That for the joy that was set before him, he endured the Cross, and despised the shame: Now if Christ made use of the joy that was set before him, and that was a help to him to endure the Cross, and despise the shame, much more may we make use of it, and it may be a help to us; so that we have leave to look at it.

Yea thirdly, we have not only leave to look at it, but it is our duty to seek to help ourselves in eying the reward; we sin against God if we do it not: and the reason is, because we are bound to make use of the word, in that way that God has revealed it to us:

now God has revealed the glorious things of the recompence of the reward in a way of encouragement; and therefore we sin against God if we do not encourage ourselves in it. Some think, why should we look at the reward, we must look to the rule, and see that our obedience be accordingly: but know, if you do not look to the reward, you do not only hinder yourselves of the good you might have, but do sin against God in it. Here you deceive yourselves, as Ahaz did deceive himself in Isaiah 7:11 where God bid him ask a sign; he was modest, and bashful, and would not ask a sign, he would not tempt God, he would believe the Lord without a sign, see how the Lord is angry: Is it a small thing to weary man, but will you weary God also? When as the Lord in favor towards you will vouchsafe you a sign, and you refuse it, as if you had no need, why will you weary God? so as when God for the help of our weakness, will grant us an argument to help us in our way, and we think it is modesty, or what you will to leave it, in this we sin against the Lord our God.

Fourthly, I never finde that the Scripture does accuse any of Hypocrisie, of unsoundness, and not to have truth of grace meerly for this, because that they did aim at the reward which is in Heaven, for that they did; you shall finde in Scripture many are discovered for hypocrites, for looking at the glory of the world as their aim, for seeking of riches and credit; but give me an instance where any is accused for unsoundness, for seeking of immortallity, and eternity, and happiness; this is that which troubles many Christians, that which they do is out of self-love, and they aim at themselves; God did never discover any to be unsound upon this ground, and therefore we should be cautious in accusing ourselves of this, as many do, because, for the present they cannot see how

they go further then seeking of themselves, though we cannot see how we do go further, yet it is an argument we do go further, if we get up to this. Paul made it a mighty work of grace in him, that he could have his heart taken off from all temporal things that are seen, and to look at eternal things that were not seen.

Fifthly, yet we ought to look at God, and to lift up God beyond ourselves, or any thing that concerns ourselves, and not to aim at God more then any worldly thing only; but to aim at God more then at the glory of Heaven.

But yet further, though we are to aim at God beyond our own good any way, yet it is the will of God that he would not have us to part with any of our spiritual good, no not for any glory to his own name: if you look at your reward in Heaven as spiritual, you may so far look at it, as not to be willing to part with it, for any glory that you conceive may come to God: by spiritual good, I mean grace. Now if it could be supposed that God should have never so much glory by my abating the least degree in grace, yet I am so bound to the work of grace, as I must not abate the least degree for the highest glory that can come to God; yea, though it is true I am to desire the glory of God, and that others should glorifie God: yet I should more desire the furtherance of grace in my own soul, so as I should not be willing to part with the least degree of grace, though thereby all the world should glorifie God.

But here lies one objection: Paul seems to go otherwise; for he wished himself accursed, or anathamized from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen after the flesh, so that it seems St. Paul did wish the glory of God in others, more then any grace in himself.

To this I answer, That separation from Christ we must understand rightly; we are not to understand by separation, that he should be separated from the Spirit and grace of Christ, but that he might be separated from the comforts of Christ, that he might not have that comfort and that happiness that comes in by Christ: If he had desired to be separated from the grace of Christ, he should have sinned in it; Gods glory and our good are so annexed together, that though we may suffer much for the good of others, yet we are not to desire to be in any sinful condition, though it could save all the world: If it could be conceived, unless I sin the least sin in thought, all the men of the world should be damned, I should suffer them all to be damned, rather then to sin the least sin. I remember St. Augustine has a tractate about an officious lye, to tell a lye for no hurt, but for good; says he, We are not to tell such a lye, though it were to save all the world: Christ had rather all the world should have been damned, then that he should have committed the least sin.

In the next place, whoever does understand what the true reward is that is in heaven, it is impossible, if he desire heaven aright, but he must desire the glory of God above himself: What is the heighth and top of heaven? it is not any carnal good, any carnal content that is the heighth and top of the glory of heaven? It is that our souls being in the perfection of them, might live to the praise of God for ever: Now if this be the end of all, we shall receive from God in heaven that we might live for ever, to reflect the glory upon God again in our praise; then it is impossible to desire heaven, but in our desires of heaven, we do desire God above ourselves: Surely we may freely aim at our reward in heaven, for if we aim at our reward, and know it aright, it is such as we cannot but aim at God

above ourselves; yea further, so near is Gods glory and our reward joined together, that we cannot aim at God above ourselves, but we shall by that means in the best manner provide for ourselves; and the more we strive to aim at God above ourselves, we come in the best manner, that possibly can be, to provide for ourselves.

And yet lastly, there is a great difference between a gracious heart looking to the reward, and a carnal heart looking to the reward: As

First, the difference lies here, a gracious heart does love the reward for the works sake; a carnal heart does only love the work for the rewards sake: As a gracious heart loves heaven, and loves the glory of heaven; but it loves heaven, and the glory of heaven the better, because there is such a blessed way to it. If a man were to go home, and had an ill way, he would love his home; but if he have a fair smooth way home, he loves his home the better for the ways sake; therefore many men are at great cost to have a fair going to their houses: And so a gracious heart loves the way, that God does reveal to come to heaven by, and loves heaven the better because of the way: A carnal heart may love heaven, but he does not love heaven the better for the way, but wishes the way to heaven were otherwise; he looks upon the way to heaven as a necessary burden to him: As a man that is going out a journey, and must go through a dirty lane, he goes through it, but complaining; and so, though they desire heaven, yet all the while they are complaining of the way: Certainly there is a great deal of difference between the desires of heaven in a carnal heart, and the desires of it in a gracious heart.

Secondly, the eye that a gracious heaat has to the recompence of reward, is another manner of eye then any carnal heart can have. What kinde of eye is it? First, the eye that a gracious heart has to the reward, it is a clear discerning eye; he does not take the things of heaven as guesses, and imaginary things, but looks upon them as certain substantial realties: For my own part, I much doubt whether any man in the world be able to see the glorious things in heaven, as certain substantial things, that has not the truth of grace: The truth of grace it is partly in this thing, in having that principle in the soul, that makes the soul able to look at the things of heaven as the only real, substantial, excellent things, so as to darken all the glory of the things of the world; so that when you come thus far, whereas before you heard something of heaven, and they were but imaginary things; and now there is such a light set up in your souls, as you see the things of heaven as the only real, substantial, glorious things; certainly there is the work of grace: The ground of it is that of Heb. 11:1 Faith is the evidence of things not seen, so that the work of faith is there seen: Whoever speaks of the reward that is in heaven, if the glory of the world be not darkned in their eyes, it argues there is no true saving faith.

A second difference is, a gracious heart looks upon the reward by some experimental sweet, and good that he findes in himself, as the beginning of that eternal good he expects; whereas others look upon the reward as a thing only to come unto them hereafter: He reads in the word, and hears Preachers say so, and so he can speak of them, but it is not from any experimental sweetness that he findes of the beginning of eternal life wrought in him: That place is very remarkable for this, in Heb. 10:34 Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and enduring substance: Other men

may know in others, in books, that there is a reward; but a gracious heart knows in himself, by that experimental sweetness of the beginning of eternal life that he findes in himself.

A third difference is, The eye that a gracious heart has unto the recompence of reward, is a fixed eye, a setled constant eye: Another man that is an hypocrite may have a flash of lightning, even from heaven it self, that may discover something unto him of the glorious condition of the people of God; as Balaam, Let me dye the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his: This was more then natural, I may call it a supernatural work that was upon Balaam, yet not saving and gracious: It appeared not to be saving, because it had not a saving power went with it, and it was not constant; and so many hypocrites that are unfound, when they have enlargement in prayer, they may have some flashes of lightning let into their hearts, they may have some glimmerings of the glorious things of heaven; and as the Holy Ghost speaks in Heb. 6:5 they may have a taste of the powers of the world to come; but a gracious heart has it not as a flash of lightning, but as a constant light that is set up in his soul, and as that light which does transform his spirit into light, and makes him to be a childe of light.

Fourthly, there is a great deal of difference in this, the eye that a gracious heart has is truly spiritual, the other is but carnal. A spiritual eye, what is that? that is, he looks at the reward as a spiritual thing, a carnal heart looks at it carnally: O the flashes of joy to have a crown and a kingdom! but a spiritual heart looks at the reward spiritually; time is coming when I shall be wholly free from the body of sin and death; time is coming, when as the image of God shall be made perfect in my soul; time is coming, when I shall behold the blessed face of God, and live to the praise of that

blessed God, without any intermission, joining with those blessed creatures that are eternally blessing God: Now the heart that looks at it thus spiritually, and looks at the top of it to be a spiritual good; such an one sees the reward after another manner then any carnal heart does.

The last difference is, the eye of the gracious heart is a believing eye, such an eye, as he looks upon the glorious and blessed things of heaven, as the things that his soul has an interest in, as the things in which his riches and happiness does consist; another may look upon them as glorious things that may be desired; but for an eye to be fixed upon the promise, so as to be content to venture all upon the bare word of God for such great things, so as to count his riches to consist in these things that he has but a bare word for; such a believing eye as this is not the eye of a carnal heart.

Chapter 41: What is this recompence of reward

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NOw the third thing that we are to come to is, to show what this reward is; we can but give you a little glimpse of it: Whatever will be said, it will rather even darken it then otherwise, in regard of the wonderful excellency of it; all the stars in heaven, if they were all Suns, they would be but a dark shadow to set out this reward, and therefore it is reserved to eternity to be known; but yet, because the Lord has been pleased to let out a beam of light unto us in his word, we shall endeavor to give a little glimpse of it to you, so that the hearts of Christians may be revived in their way, and they may gather up their feet to go on chearfully in their course, having respect with a discerning, experimental, spiritual, fixed, believing eye, unto the glorious recompence of reward.

First, take all the beauty, excellency, the sweet and good that there is in all the world; if there could be a confluence and extract of the quintessence of all good, in all creature in this world, and all to be communicated to one man, yet it were but as a dark shadow of the glory that is to be revealed.

Secondly, this reward, certainly it is that which is beyond all the expression that we have in Scripture of it: Great things are spoken in the word, but there is more to be revealed and to be enjoyed, then is yet revealed in all the Book of God, Isa. 64:4 For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither has the eye seen, O God, besides you, what he has prepared for him that waiteth for him. And therefore in 2 Thess. 1:10 it is said, Christ shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe: Now the cause of admiration, it is the sight of something more then was known before, that was not thought of, and was not understood; even then at the first coming of Christ, he shall appear in so much glory, as he shall be admired; as if the Saints should say, We heard much concerning Christ and his glory, but we never thought that there was so much glory in Jesus Christ, as now we finde; and therefore we stand admiring at the glory of Christ.

Thirdly, all those consolations, those admirable soul-ravishing comforts that the Saints of God have ever had in this world, have all been but the first fruits of those glorious things that are hereafter to to be revealed, they are but as the Clusters of grapes that that blessed Land of Canaan is so full of.

Fourthly, then all the expressions that man can give of those things that are to be hereafter, must needs be but dark resemblances of what shall be revealed hereafter: As the infant in the womb knows not what the light, the glory and beauty of the world is; so we, while we are in this darkness, know little of the beauty and glory of heaven. St. Augustine speaking concerning what we can say of it, says, It is but as a little drop of the sea, and a little spark of thegreat furnace: Those good things of eternal life are so

many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they are above all estimation. Augustine in one of his Epistles has this relation, That the very same day in which Jerome dyed, he was in his study, and had got pen, ink and paper to write something of the glory of heaven to Jerome, suddenly he saw a light breaking into his study, and a sweet swell that came unto him, and this voyce he thought he heard, O Augustine, what doest you? doest think to put the sea into a little vessel? when the heavens shall cease from their continual motion, then shall you be able to understand what the glory of heaven is, and not before, except you come to feel it as I now do, this therefore is beyond the expression of man.

Fifthly, all the desires of all the souls of Gods Saints in the world, they come infinitely short of that which shall be hereafter. We are straightned here in our spirits, in our desires; if we could enlarge our desires in a spiritual way, it would hereafter adde much to our glory; our desires are not only straighter then that we shall have, but the straightness of our desires here hinders much the capacity of the good that hereafter is to be revealed and communicated; and therefore Christians should labor in a spiritual way to enlarge their desires to the utmost, to get their hearts to be working after great things here, so that they may by them engreaten their hearts, and extend their hearts, to prepare them for the great things that are to be revealed. I may say concerning our straight desires, as the Prophet did to Joash, 2 Kings 13. 18, 19. where the Prophet bade him strike upon the earth, and he struck thrice; the Prophet was angry, and said, You should have struck five or six times, and so often should you have smitten your enemies: So according to the truth and spiritual working of our desires

here, shall we be made capable of glory hereafter; but now if we be straightened in our hearts, and we desire to be in heaven, and to have some good thing there, but our hearts are not after great things, not enlarged in our desires, it will be in some measure, in some proportion according to our desires, and therefore it is an evil thing for Christians to have their desires straightned here. There are glorious things to be had in God, and therefore our desires should be more enlarged then they are. It is an excellent expression of Basil, It grieves, it irks, it is tedious to our most munificent, great, glorious King (he has one word that expresses as much as all these) if we ask any thing little of him; he would have us ask great things of him.

Again, they are beyond all our hopes: It is said of Abraham, He believed above hope; we cannot believe above hope in this sense, that is above the great things that are hoped for, and yet God loves to have his people raise their hopes high.

Yea lastly, it is beyond all imagination; if men and Angels should set themselves to imagine what they would have, they would think if such and such things were, that would be a glorious condition, this reward shall be beyond imagination; we may imagine that which we could not almost desire, but whatever you can invent or imagine, you shall have that happiness, or that which is beyond it: sometime we think, what a sweet thing will it be in Heaven to meet our Father, our Mother, our Brother or Sister, our Husband or Wife? these relations shall cease there; but we may conclude, though we have not that there, we shall have that which shall be better, and that which we would rather choose.

But then if it be thus, that all the world be but a dark shadow, if that which is revealed in the word be but a glimpse, if all the comforts of the Saints here be but the first-fruits, if all the expressions of men come beneath, if all our desires come short, if all our hopes reach not to it, if all be above the imagination of men and Angels, what is it then? what is that which is thus great? we can tell you somewhat of this recompence of reward negatively, and somewhat comparatively, but very little of it positively; yet somewhat that way too.

First, negatively: There shall be no evil, there shall be such an estate of Gods people, in which they shall be fully, absolutely, everlastingly free from all kinde of evil; in this world evil sticks to every Christian, but there they shall be in an estate beyond all evil. When the Sun is got to the heighth, there is no shadow; so when Gods people come to the top of their blessedness, there shall be no shadow of any evil at all: that God that is infinite in good, certainly will not suffer evil to be always in his people: Freed from all evil of sin, and that is the greatest evil of all; never troubled with any hard heart any more, never pestered with an unbelieving straightned heart any more, never dull and heavy in Gods service any more; there shall never be any more blindeness and ignorances, any unconstancy, any mistake, any weariness in Gods service, delivered wholly from sin; yea, delivered not only from the sin that we have, but from the very savor of sin, and from all the remainders of sin: A man may be delivered out of prison, but he may smell of the prison; men may be healed of a wound, and yet have a scar remain; so it is with Gods people here, they are delivered from the guilt and power of their sin, but they smell of their prison garments, and there are some scars upon them, but all the smells and

scars of our sin shall be taken from us; yea, delivered from the very possibility of sin: To be in an estate without sin, is a blessed estate, but to be in an estate in which there shall be no possibility to sin, that is a blessed condition indeed: It is a kinde of misery that a godly man counts himself to be in, not only that he does sin, but that he may sin, that he has a possibility to sin; but to be free from that, that is a blessed condition: And this is the happiness of God himself, that there is no possibility that he should do any thing in the least degree to sin.

And as they are delivered from sin, so from sorrow, for that is the immediate consequent of sin: All tears shall be wiped from their eyes. And as from moral evil, so from natural evil; from external and internal evil, from all weakness of parts, and from all pains, and sickness, and deformities, from all labors, all incumbrances here in the world; freed from the company, and madness, and opposition, and tyranny, and injustice of wicked men; they shall be above Satan, and above the men of the world. Gal. 1:4 It is said, that Christ has given himself to deliver us from this present evil world; it is a part of the purchase of Christ, to be wholly freed from all the evils of this present world; and this purchase of Christ we shall have. Under the highest regions are the tempests and storms, but above there are none; so in this world the Saints meet with tempests and storms, but above are none. As the Psalmist says, In your light O God we shall see light: so in the light of God we shall see nothing but light: now when Gods light does shine into us, it does discover darkness; but time will come, though Gods light shall shine never so brightly, we shall see no darkness, but altogether light. We read concerning Moses and Elias in Luke 9. in the transfiguration of Christ, the Text says, They did confer about

his decease that should be accomplished at Jerusalem: the Saints of God shall meet together, and Moses, and Elias, and the Patriarchs, and shall confer no more about deceases, about troubles and sufferings that shall be accomplished; all those evils shall be done away. We may say of evils all, as Moses did to the people of Israel concerning the Egyptians, Those your enemies that now you see, you shall never see any more: So we may say to Gods people that go out of the world to partake of the recompence of reward; be quiet, be still: those evils of sin, of sorrow that now you see, and feel, you shall never see, never feel any more; that is something though it be negatively.

Secondly, comparatively, and herein are three things. First, to compare the good, the happiness that shall be hereafter, with all the good and happiness that we have here. Secondly, compare it with the condition of Adam in the estate of innocency. Thirdly, compare it with the happiness of the Angels.

Chapter 42: The differences between that good we receive here from God, and that we shall have hereafter

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First, we will compare that we have here, with that we shall have hereafter: Brethren, though we receive many mercies from God, yet look what difference there is between that close place of the womb, that the infant is in before it be born, and this space of the world that the childe comes into when it is born; such difference is between all this world, and any good and happiness here, and the world that is to come; this, and much more then this.

First, here we receive good from without: First unto our outward senses, and by them it comes into the soul; but now hereafter God shall first let out good unto the soul, unto the rational part, and from the redundancy of that good and glory that God shall communicate unto the rational soul, there shall flow glory, and sweetness, and good to the body, and outward senses: whereas here we see from without, and so it comes in; there shall be a spring, and a fountain of good within the soul; the kingdom of heaven shall be within, and more good shall be in the heart, and

flow from thence outwardly, then to be received from without, and so to come inwardly; for us to receive something in our sences, and so to convey it to the soul, this is but a low way; but to have a spring and fountain of all good and happiness to be within the soul, and so spread it self and flow out, this shows wonderfully the blessedness of Gods people, when God shall communicate himself to them in that way.

Secondly, here the excellency and eminency of an object does destroy the faculty, if the faculties of our souls be exercised about objects, that are very high above us, that are full of excellency and glory, they destroyed the faculty; as now though light be the most pleasing to the eye of all things in the world, yet the excellency and glory of light destroys the eye; so sound is the proper object of the ear, but if the sound be too great, it makes one deaf, but it is otherwise in heaven, the more excellent the object is, the more perfect will the faculty be; the object shall not only delight the faculty, but perfect and strengthen the faculty. nature as in a glass, but thus far, that as we see good in the creature now, then we shall see them by knowing God himself, more then by knowing the creature. And the reason is, because all excellency and good that is in the creature is eminently in God; for all the good of the effects must needs be eminently in all the principles, and the good of all principles in the first principle: If all good in the creature be eminently in God, and the souls of the blessed shall come perfectly to know God, so far as their created understandings shall be capable of, then they must needs see the excellency of the creature in God. We shall know as we are known, 1 Cor. 13:12 Upon this a learned man has this note, We shall know as we are known; now God knows all his

works, by knowing himself, by knowing his own power, and will, and nature, and so we shall know as we are known, because we shall know the creatures by knowing God.

Fourthly, here the mercies and good that we have from God are sweetned unto us by the sense of our wants: But hereafter we shall prize them, and have the sweetness of them in regard of their own fulness: not from such a low relation, as our wants and our necessities; when God would have us prize any mercy here, he first makes us sensible of the want of the mercy, and so it comes to be sweet to us, and scarce any mercy comes to be sweet, unless we feel the want of it first, for else we would prize the mercy at any time, but in that we do not prize all mercies always alike, it appears the great commendation of Gods mercy is from our wants: but hereafter the prizings, and the relish, and the sweet of all shall be from the fulness of the goodness that we finde in God: Gods goodness to us here, is but the supplying of some defect, but hereafter Gods goodness shall be the glorifying of perfect nature.

Fifthly, here when we do enjoy any comfort from God, we are much sensible of it at the present enjoyment, but after we have had it a little while, we grow to be less sensible, we begin to be cloyed with it: as the most beautiful sight that we did admire at first, if we see it every day, it does not affect us; as who is affected at the sight of the Sun, because he sees it every day? but suppose we had lived all our days in a dark dungeon, and this had been the first day we were brought out of the dungeon, and now see the Sun, and the Earths and Seas, how mightily would we be taken with the sights that we see? but now it is not so with us, because we have the Sun every day: and so the melodious sound to the ear, first we are ravished with it, but when we are used to it, it is nothing: and so for

the taste; the taste of sweet things is mightily pleasant to us at first, but afterward it is no more pleasing to us, then the taste of ordinary mean fare is to poor people, who have as much content in their mean fare, as rich men in their delicious fare, because rich men are used to such delicious things; but this is the excellency of Gods manner of communication of himself to his people hereafter, they shall be to all eternity as exactly and fully sensible of the glory of heaven, as they were in the first moment they came into it.

The sixth difference between Gods communication of himself to us here and hereafter, is, here we have much good from God, but much good is in the habits, and is not always in action: there are many habits of grace, that are not always acting fully, but sometime the act of one habit is called forth, and sometime the act of another; but here is the blessedness of Gods people, there shall be no habits lying still no instant, but every minute to all eternity, they shall act to the utmost of them, so far as may any way conduce to their happiness; for the end of the habit it is action, and in the enjoyment of our happiness we shall ever be enjoying to the full the highest and last ends; and therefore there shall always be the utmost activity of the habits of grace: There is a necessity here of cessation of actions, because we grow weary quickly of any action, though it be a gracious action, we must unstring our bows and cease, that some actions may give way to others, for the heart to be always up, it is not able to bear it, but then there shall be no need of any cessation any moment.

Again, here we are not able to exercise ourselves in the works of God without some difficulty: there is difficulty in raising our hearts unto any thing that is good, and to keep our hearts up; but hereafter there shall be that communication of God unto his peo-

ple, that they shall be exercised about the highest things, in the highest manner, without any difficulty, but as freely, and readily, and fully as the Sun shines: the Sun does shine without any difficulty, and the fish draws in water without difficulty; so there shall be that perfect working of the soul about the highest object, without any difficulty or labor.

Again, here in this world there cannot be an intention in one faculty, but it does hinder the intention in another; as if man speak to me, and I be intent in looking upon an object, I do not hear him that speaks: and so in all faculties, the intention of one faculty does hinder the intention of another; but in Heaven, all the faculties of the soul shall be intens'd to the highest intention, and the intention of the one shall not hinder the intention of the other.

Again, the good we receive here is in the root, in the promise, in election in great part, but that we shall have hereafter shall be in the fruit, in the actual communication of God: as before all our actings shall be acted upon God, so all the good shall not be contained in the root of his electing love, or in the promise; but shall be in actual communication.

Again, here we receive many mercies from God, that we do not understand ourselves, that we know but little of, we do not see into the large extent of the mercy that we have from God: but there we shall have no mercy from God but we shall know it fully, in all the circumstances of it, in all the principles of it, and in all the appertainances that do any way concern the mercy we have, and we shall know the issue of it, and the like.

Again, here we receive great mercies from God, and we know not how to manage them; Gods mercies lie and sowre in us, we turn our mercies many times into afflictions for want of skill: but hereafter we shall have the full improvement of all mercy that we receive from God.

Again, here we see and desire many good things that we do not enjoy and possess; but hereafter we shall see no good, nor desire any good, nor will any good, but we shall have it: And as God said concerning the Land of Canaan, unto the children of Israel, in Deut. 11:24 Every place whereon the soles of your feet shall tread, shall be yours; so in heaven, whatever the Saints see they shall have: Here we may will a thing, and will it lawfully, and yet it may be cross unto Gods secret will, and it shall never come to pass; the reason is, because the rule of our wills is Gods Commandment, and not his secret will; as David did will to build God a house, and God commends him for it, and yet God did not will it: And a childe may will the life of his parent, and yet God may will his parent shall not live, and yet he is not to be blamed, because he wills according to the rule; but hereafter God shall so far reveal his will to us, and our wills shall be so fully united to God, that there shall not be the least crossing between any thing that we will, and that God wills.

Again, here it is one especial excellency of the work of grace, for us to keep in our hearts and affections, to restrain them that they be not let out too far in that we do enjoy: but hereafter when we come to the recompence of reward, we shall not need keep in our hearts, we shall have liberty to let them out.

Object. But we may not let out our hearts too much upon the Saints, to love them above God.

Ans. Then we shall love nothing but in God, all shall be swallowed up in God himself, that we shal not need fear the letting out of our hearts to the utmost: Though I may love the creature, yet I may let out my heart fully upon it, because I love it only in God.

Here many times a thing is more prized before we have it, and when we come to enjoy it, we do not see so much excellency upon it, and so do less prize it; but though we may set a prize upon Heaven, and say, O the blessed time, when we come there, we shall infinitely more prize it and rejoice in it then we can here.

Yet further, here we can enjoy nothing that we can be so certain of, but that we can lose it wholly, or in some part; but the Saints of God hereafter shall be so certain of that they have in enjoyment, that they shall not lose any thing of it in the least degree.

Lastly, that we have from God here, is mediately conveyed through many Channels, through the Pipes of Creatures and Ordinances, but that we shall have hereafter, shall be let out immediately from God; and this is indeed the special difference of all, from whence flow many excellent consequences, which would even require a particular of it self: I may hereafter enlarge myself in this, in some other Treatise.

And thus you may see the blessed condition of Gods people, when they come to the recompence of reward. We have something here, and we rejoice in it, and bless God for it; but those ways that God has to communicate himself to his people hereafter, are glorious ways. O that our hearts were raised to look after that communication of God that we shall have hereafter! O those base and drossie spirits that we have! Because we receive some goodness of God here, we are ready to be quieted here, and rest here, as if God

had nothing to communicate to the Children of men, but that we have here. See the vileness of our hearts, we are here ready to rest upon the lowest things that God communicates, and do not so much as rise in our hearts to the highest things that are communicated here; but a christian heart should rise higher then the most excellent things that are here in the world; namely, to the most blessed things that are hereafter; let us show ourselves that we are men of hopes to enjoy God after another manner then here.

Many do not desire enjoyment of God; let them have the creature, they never think of any communication of God so much as through the creature, whereas a true Christian that has grace, he receives nothing in the world, but he thinks with himself, how have I God here? how does God communicate himself to me in meat and drink, and cloathes, and friends, and the like? it is well if you go thus far, but you must go higher; are there not choice mercies? O yes, there are blessed things communicated through the ordinances, through prayer, and the word, and sacraments, there are blessed things; few mens hearts look so high as to look to the communication of Gods choice mercies in this world; but a gracious heart rises higher, & does as it were bathe it self with those refreshments that are to come: through Gods mercy I have the creature, and the communication of God through that; and I have the ordinances, and Gods choice mercies communicated through them; but there are glorious things to be communicated hereafter, and those my soul rejoyces in. Now God does communicate himself only in that way which is suitable to our condition; now we are but narrow vessels, and have but narrow mouthes, and are not capable of that greatness of Gods communication; but time will come when as God will communicate himself in a more glorious manner,

and in that I bless myself; and therefore I will not regard any of Gods communication of himself to me here, but in order unto that glorious communication of God to me hereafter. And thus we have seen something of the recompence of reward, comparing it with what we have here. Now secondly, we are to compare it with the condition of Adam in the estate of Innocency.

As for the estate of Adam in Paradise, it was a blessed condition, yet far under the happiness of the Saints in the recompence of the reward. For Adams body was but natural, and his Paradise was but a natural Paradise; and a possibility there was he might lose his happiness: and if he should have stood, there should not have been that glorious distinct working of the three Persons of the Trinity about mans happiness, that there now is: and therein especially lies the difference.

Thirdly, compare it with the Angels, and you shall finde in Scripture some expressions of the happiness of the Saints, beyond the happiness of the blessed Angels themselves. For the union that the Saints shall have with the Deity, is a nearer union in divers respects, then the union that the Angels have with the Deity: and the righteousness wherewith the Saints stand righteous before the Lord, is an higher righteousness, then Adam or the Angels should have been in.

First, the union that the Saints have with the Deity, is a nearer union then that of the Angels. First, the humane nature in general, that is advanced to an higher dignity then all the glory of the Angels put together: Because there is an Hypostatical union between the humane Nature and the Divine in Christ. Again, we have many expressions in Scripture of the union of Saints with the Deity; whereby it appears, their union is nearer then the union of

the Angels: They are called the friends of Christ; They are said to have fellowship with Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 1:9 They are the Brethren of Christ, They are Co-heirs with Jesus Christ; There are no such expressions of the Angels. And yet, there are nearer expressions of their union; they are the Spouse of Christ, the Bride; the Angels are but as the servants. They are the members of Christ, and are made one with Christ: They are those that are to be one with the Father, as the Father and the Son are one: Iohn 17:21 Christ there prays, As you Father art in me, and I in you, that they also may be one in us: he never prayed so for the Angels. Lastly, they are said to be loved of the Father, with the very same love wherewith he loved the Son: now though God loves the Angels, yet it is not said that he loved them with the same love that he loved his Son: These are the expressions we finde in Scripture, concerning the near union that the Saints have with the Deity in some respects beyond the Angels; but of the union of the Saints with the Deity, we shall speak of more when we come to speak of the reward positively. And then the righteousness wherewith they stand righteous before God, is greater then the righteousness of Adam in Paradise, or the Angels; because it is the righteousness of the second Person of the Trinity; and that is of an higher nature, and a more glorious righteousness, then the righteousness of any meer creature. Now the righteousness of the Angels, though it be perfect in its kinde, yet it is not a righteousness of such an high nature, as that righteousness which is the Son of God. And thus of this recompence of reward comparatively.

Chapter 43: The perfection of the bodies and souls of the Saints in glory

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NOw thirdly, let us consider it positively; now in this positive consideration, these things are to be followed: First, the perfection of their natures that they shall be raised to: Secondly, the glory that shall be put upon them at the day of Judgement: Thirdly, the possession of Heaven: Fourthly, the having God to be their Portion: Fifthly, their blessed communion with Jesus Christ: Sixthly, their communion with the Saints and Angels: Lastly, the eternal Sabbath that they are to keep in Heaven. Under these seven heads, all that we have to say concerning the positive reward of the Saints, may be contained; First, the perfection that their natures shall be raised unto; and in that consider these three things: First, the perfection of their bodies: Secondly, the perfection of their souls: Thirdly, the perfection of the whole man. First, the perfection of the bodies of the Saints is no little matter; and because so long as we are in the flesh and live by sense, they are bodily things that do affect us; therefore I will show a little the perfection of the bodies of the Saints: they shall have much of the recompence of the reward in their bodies. In the general, their bodies

shall be made like the glorious body of Jesus Christ, Phil. 3:21 Certainly the body of Christ is very glorious; in the transfiguration of Christ, which was but a little glimpse of his glory, how glorious was the body of Christ? In Rev. 1. Saint John had a little glimpse of the representation of Christ, and how glorious is it set forth? the body of the meanest Saint shall be like the glorious body of Christ: What is that? I will go no further then that I finde in 1 Cor. 15. 42, 43, 44. and there are four things that set forth the glory of the bodies of the Saints, when they come to attain the recompence of reward: First, it is raised in incorruption: Secondly, it is raised in glory: Thirdly, it is raised in power: Fourthly, it is raised a spiritual body. First, every Saint of God shall have an incorruptible body, there shall be no more death: it shall be made incorruptible in regard of that fulness of the presence of God with it: If spices, & enbalming of dead bodies can keep them so long as they do sometime from smelling; surely the glorious presence of God with the body, shall have infinite more power to keep the bodies of the Saints incorruptible. What would we give if a Physitian were able to give us a potion to make our bodies incorruptible, that they should never dye? yet as they are now, it is hardly worth the desiring to have them incorruptible; but when they shall be glorified, and incorruptible too, that is glorious. They shall be incorruptible, not subject to any suffering: as God is able to binde up the active power of a creature that it shall not be able to act, so he can binde up the corruptible power, that it shall not work to corruption: as in fire God can binde up the power of fire, that it cannot burn; so God can binde up the power of any creature that has any corruptible power, that there should not be the least passion that tends to corruption. All sufferings come from the prevailing of the stronger agent over

the patient; and when any suffer, it comes from some kinde of inability of the form of the patient, whereby it begins to leave the matter in some degree: now the bodies of the Saints shall be so formed with such an excellent form, and so filled with the glory of it, as that there can be no power external or internal, that shall prevail against this form to weaken it. And besides, the reason that is given why the Heavens are incorruptible, may be given why the bodies of the Saints shall be incorruptible: the Heavens are of so excellent a form, that the capacity of the matter is fully filled up; and there may be truth in that reason: so the bodies of the Saints being in their blessed estate into which they shall be raised, they shal have such full satisfaction with the form wherewith they are informed, that there shall not be the least propension to receive any other from.

Secondly, it is raised in glory, and that consists in these two things: First, in the admirable beauty of it: Secondly, in the wonderful lustre and splendor of it: First, in the admirable beauty of it, having all parts in proportion and exact temper, whatever can make one beautiful shall be in the bodies of the Saints; if we could extract all the beauty of all the men and women in the world, and put them into one, it were but as a deformed thing in regard of the meanest of the bodies of the Saints in Heaven; and much of the beauty will be not only from their exact temper and comeliness that God shall put upon them; but likewise from the excellency of their souls within them, and from the unspeakable joy, and cheerfulness of the heart; And then the splendor and the lustre of their bodies, says the Scripture, They shall shine as the stars in the Firmament: look what splendor is in the stars, such shall be in these clay bodies of ours, Daniel 12:3 Yea, they shall be in greater

splendor then the stars, they shall be as the Sun, Matthew 13:43 He that has ears to hear let him hear, and believe this, that it shall be so, that the bodies of the Saints shall shine more glorious then the Sun in its strength. You will say, How is it possible that this should be? yes, this is but according to that expression in Phil. 3:21 Who shall change our vile bodies, that it may be fashioned according to his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself. It does not require a greater power to raise from the least degree of glory to the highest possibility, as it is to make a thing out of nothing; and therefore the making of the least creature out of nothing, will argue more power, then making the bodies of the Saints to shine brighter then the Sun in the Firmament. Now certainly, God in the glorifying of the Saints, will manifest that power that he did in the creating of the world; and if it does not require so much power to raise their bodies into such a glorious condition, as to create a creature out of nothing; then there is no reason why we should not believe this. We know when Moses had been but forty days on the Mount with God, when he came down among the Israelites, his face did so shine, that they were not able to behold it: surely the glorified bodies of the Saints, being eternally present with God, shall shine far more gloriously then Moses face did: and that is for the splendor of them.

Thirdly, it is sown in weakness, and raised in power: now the strength and power of them appears in these four things: First, in that the body shall be able for to attend the soul in the most high operations; here if the soul be exercised about any high and glorious object, the body presently fails: as in the extasies of the Prophet, when God revealed himself extraordinarily to Daniel, his

body failed; He fainted, and was many days sick, Dan. 8:27 But there shall be that power in the body, as it shall be serviceable to the soul in the most high and glorious operations that it shall have, when God shall manifest himself in the fullest way that possibly can be.

Secondly, in that it it shall every moment to all eternity, without any intermission, be exercised in the highest things that a body can be in, without any weariness.

Thirdly, there must be a great deal of power to be able to bear the weight of glory that shall be put upon them: 2 Cor. 4:17 Our light affliction which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory; such a weight, as certainly if the body were not by the power of God upheld, it were impossible it should bear it: here we finde, when there is great joy in the heart, the body is not able to bear it; but then there shall be a power to bear the weight of glory they shall have.

And the last, is that which I finde expressed in Luther, namely, The bodies of the Saints shall havethat power, as to toss the greatest mountains in the world like a Ball. And I finde it in an expression of Anselem, It shall be such power, as they shall be ableto shake the whole earth at their pleasure: and we cannot think this incredible upon that ground that was named before: there is not so much difference between the raising a thing from the lowest degree of power, to the highest possibility; as in raising a thing from nothing to the lowest degree of power. Suppose a creature had but so much power now, as to stir the least mote that is in the Sun; to raise this power so high as to stir the whole earth, does not require so much power as to make a thing out of nothing: and if God do intend to manifest his power in glorifying the Saints, and in making

of them powerful; why should we not think, that God will extend that possibility of power that is in the body to that heighth? certainly, glorious shall be the power of the bodies of the Saints: and that is the third thing.

Fourthly, it is sowen a natural body, and it shall be raised a spiritual body; not that it shall be turned into a spirit: It shall remain a body; but the spiritualness consists in three particulars.

First, that it shall be in a spiritual condition; they shall have no more need of meat, or drink, or clothes, or marriage, or the like, that now the body stands in need of: the Angels themselves shall have as much need of meat, and drink, and clothes as their bodies shall: so says Christ; They shall not be married, nor given in marriage, but they shall be as the Angels in Heaven.

Secondly, the spiritualness of the body consists in the absolute subjection of the body to the spirit, as to be fully and absolutely serviceable to the spirits of the Saints, which here they are not. Here many times is a strife between the spirit and the flesh; the spirit is willing, when the flesh is not; but then there shall be an absolute subjection of the body to the spirit: As here the spirit of a carnal man is called flesh, because his soul is serviceable to the flesh, to make provision for the sins of the flesh, his soul is counted carnal, the wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God: As the soul now is as it were carnal, because it is serviceable to the flesh, so the body shall be spiritual, because it shall be serviceable to the spirit: for you to have such a body as to be serviceable to your souls, as you would desire, it were a great blessing, time will come when it shall be so.

Thirdly, the spiritualness of the body consists in the agility of the body; the ability it shall have to move up and down which way it will, and that suddenly; they shall move in the Heavens, as the birds do in the ayr. I remember an expression that Luther has, that the body shall move up and down like a thought. And Augustine says, They shall move to any place they will, as soon as they will. These words we do not finde in Scripture; but lay this for a ground, that whatever we can expect for the excellency of a body, it is that we speak of, or beyond it; and then we have a great deal of liberty to invent what expressions we can for our comfort: certainly there shall be that happiness of the body that shall come to that we speak of, or to more.

Fourthly, some make the spiritualness of the body to consist in the transparency of it; Aquinas says, It shall be so clear and transparent, that all the veins,and humors, and nerves, and bowels shall be seen, as in a glass.

Now brethren, the reasons why God will reward the Saints in this part, are, First, because humane bodies, as well as humane souls, have an hypostatical union with the second person of the Trinity; and therefore God rejoyces to raise humane bodies, as well as humane souls unto happiness. Secondly, Christ suffered so much in his body; therefore God will glorifie the bodies of the Saints. Thirdly, our bodies are part of the members of Christ; our bodies are joined in a mystical union with Jesus Christ. Fourthly, our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and God will glorifie his own temples. Fifthly, our bodies are in part sanctified as well as our souls, and therefore shall also be glorified. Lastly, our bodies shall be glorified, for the further terror and confusion of the damned; because they in their bodies shall see the glory of the

Saints, and be confounded. Here you see a way to get your bodies in a blessed condition: here is a stir for clothing of our bodies, but there shall be a cloathing with immortality: you that have sickly and weak bodies, remember this, you shall one day receive your bodies in another manner then you have them now. Eusebius tels us of one of the children of the Macchabees that were put to death for the profession of the truth; when theycut off his members, says he, I have received these from Heaven, and now I do give them unto the God of Heaven, and I hope I shall have them again: Let us be willing to put our bodies to pain; if our bodies suffer hunger, or thirst, or nakedness, or be tyred, or suffer Imprisonment, or any violence be offered to our bodies in the cause of God, What great matter is it? we shall receive our bodies in another manner. The overcoming of the flesh is the destruction of it, but the overcoming the flesh, is the glory of it.

When we speak of the happiness of our souls, we are not so capable of it; but when we speak of the happiness of our bodies, we are sensible of that. Now certainly, there shall be much more for our bodies, here is a way to provide for your bodies: Lay up provision for your flesh, is spoken as an argument of a carnal heart, in Rom. 13:14 the Apostle exhorts them, not to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof: but there is a way of laying up provision for the flesh that is lawful, and that this day I exhort you too. If you love your bodies, be godly: if you did believe these things were so, would not these make you love godliness? if I should come unto you, and show you how you might get some good for your bodies, then I should prevail with you: give some credit to that we say now, if you will not believe these things, I may say unto you as the Prophet said unto the Noble man that would

not believe there could be great plenty, says he, You shall see the great plenty with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; so if you will not believe the great things that the Ministers of God speak of in his name to you, your eyes shall one day see those despicable, contemptible bodies of the Saints in this glory, though you shall not be partakers of any of it.

Now for the perfection of the soul: As the soul is of a far larger extent then the body, so it is more capable of happiness then the body is; and that being the proper seat of godliness, so it shall be the more rewarded: What splendor shall the soul have (says Bernard) when the body shall shine gloriously as the Sun? All that we can say for the soul for the present, because we understand so little of the soul, is, That the soul shall not depend upon the body, as it does now for its operation. And the soul shall no way be hindred by the body, as now it is hindred here. And all the faculties of the soul shall be extended to the utmost: Now if an infinite power can extend the least degree of power to such an heighth in the members of the body; much more can an infinite power extend the faculties of an immortal soul, that is capable of a great deal more power then the body is. Besides, as the faculties are extended, so all the graces of Gods Spirit, that the Saints of God have here, shall be extended to the heighth, and they are capable of a higher extention then any thing that is natural; for the more spiritual a thing is, the more capable it is of extention. As the plant is more capable to be drawn out to an higher excellency then a stone, and the sensitive creature to an higher excellency then the plant; and the rational creature to an higher excellency then the sensitive, and grace, which is supernatural, can be extended to an higher excellency then the natural: Besides, what increated excellency we might

imagine could possibly be put upon it shall be; who could have thought that the humane nature should have had an hypostatical union with the body of Christ? and as God has done for the bodies of men, more then all the Angels could have invented: so there is to be communicated to the soul more then can be invented.

Thirdly, the perfection of body and soul, does consist in the majesty of the person being united together: you know when Christ was here in the flesh, in the estate of his humility, when he did let out but one beam of his majesty, those who came to apprehend him were not able to stand, but fell backward; if Christ by letting out some small beams of his majesty, could make men fall backward, how glorious must he needs be, when those full beams of his majesty shall be let out? the majesty of the Saints shall have some proportion with his, and that very great, which must needs follow from that which has been said. We read of Stephen, that when he stood before the Councel arraigned as a malefactor, it is said, They looked upon his countenance, and it was as the face of an Angel: O what majesty will appear in the countenances of the Saints hereafter! And as in Adam in the estate of Innocency, there was such majesty in his countenance, that all the beasts were afraid of him, what will be the majesty of God in his Saints then, as they shall be hereafter? It is said of Basil, when he was sent for to be taken by his Persecutors, being in holy exercises, there appeared such a majesty in his countenance, that those that came to take him, were not able to stand before him. There is a majesty in the countenance of Gods people, when they walk close with God; but how much more will there be majesty in their countenances hereafter? So that you see Gods people shall not only be glorious

within, as the Kings daughter is glorious within; but they shall be glorious outwardly. And so much for the first thing, The perfection of the natures of the Saints.

Chapter 44: The glory that shall be put upon the Saints at the Great Day

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Secondly, the glory that shall be put upon them at the day of Judgement.

First, the glory of the day it self shall be their glory; for it shall be nothing else, but the solemnity of the marriage of the Lamb: Here there is a contract between the Lamb and his Bride, but the solemnity of the marriage is reserved to that great day, and all the glory of the day shall be to set out the solemnity of it; and God himself shall appear in his glory to make the day glorious. As the Parents upon the marriage day, appear in as much glory as they can, that they may honor the day; so God shall appear in his glory in the solemnizing of the marriage between Christ and his Spouse: And as the Bridegroom comes forth in his glory, so Christ will come in his glory, with all his Angels in their glory. As all the servants of the Bridegroom put on their best array upon the marriage day, so all the Angels shall appear in their lustre and beauty; and this sets out the wonderful glory of the Saints that shall be at that day, notwithstanding all the glory of the Father, and Christ, and the Angels that shall be then, yet they shall not lose their glory.

The Stars lose their shining lustre when the Sun rises, because their light is nothing in comparison of the great light; but the lustre of the Saints shall be bright shining and glorious, even in the presence of the glory of the Father, and of Jesus Christ, and of all the blessed Angels.

Great things will be done that day; there will be the Great Supper that God will make for the solemnizing of the Marriage, and the great meeting of the Saints with Christ: O what salutations can you imagine will there be between Christ and his members! and being met, the sentence of Absolution shall be pronounced before men and Angels: Christ shall honor the Saints before all the world, and say, These are they, these are the men for whom the eternal counsels of my Father did work to make them glorious; these are they for whom I came into the world, and shed my blood, and laid down my life; these are they in whom I am to be glorified for ever. Again, the glory of the day shall be in setting of the Saints with Christ upon thrones, in judgement, to judge the whole world, the Monarchs and great ones of the earth; and so to be honored in the eyes of those that were their enemies, and contemned, and reproached them, and vilified them before; and likewise their glory shall be in this, to rejoice in the execution of the sentence that is pronounced upon those that are condemned. Lastly, their glory shall be in their glorious ascension with Christ into the highest heavens, ranked in their comely order, with triumph and joy, singing, Stand open ye gates, and be ye open ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory and all his redeemed ones may come in.

Thirdly, the possession of heaven, the Kingdom of heaven shall be theirs, the heaven of heavens; great things are spoken of that; there are these things considerable in it.

First, it is the third heaven; there is the heaven, that is the space between the visible firmament and the earth; the second heaven is the Orbes in which the Sun, and Moon, and Stars are; and then there is an heaven above them, which is the seat of the blessed, which is of an infinite heighth above all: now it as a sweet confideration for the people of God, when you are going out in the evening, and seeing the firmament spangled with the Stars, to have such thoughts as these, What shall one day this body of mine be lifted up beyond yonder place? Though now you lie low in some dark hole, there is a time when God shall lift you up to be above that spangled firmament; that spangled firmament is but the pavement of your Fathers house, it is but the outside; and if the outside and footstool of Gods house be so glorious, how glorious is it within? how glorions is the presence Chamber? This world is made for Dogs, for the Enemies of God, and those that are more vile then any creatures: he does not think much to have swine live here, but you do not suffer swine to come into the presence Chamber, or into the Dining-room: now heaven is the presence Chamber and Diningroom, for that eternal feast to be solemnized in, and that must needs be glorious.

Secondly, it is called our Fathers house: This is not our Fathers house; though we should be caught up where the Stars are, that is not our Father house, that is but the out-room: Says Christ, In my Fathers house there are many Mansions: God was from all eternity a heaven to himself, before the world was; then he created the highest heavens to be the place of his presence, not that he is comprehended there, but that he would have a place for his glory more fully to shine in.

Again, it is a place prepared from the beginning of the world, and Christ is gone to prepare it for us: If there were such a building here, that all the men of the world had been building from the beginning of the world, and they had all the pearls and jewels of the world to set into it, and all the inventions and strength of men and Angels to help them to build, it would be glorious, but in comparison it is but a dungeon to this. The brightness of this is exceeding glorious, says Chrysostom; when you see a sumptuous pallace, you look upon it, and are taken with it, but it is but as a dungeon to your Fathers house.

The light of that shall be of another nature then the light of the world; the light that we have here is a material light, but the whole body of heaven is of an higher nature then the body of the Sun; and there shal be such a glorious presence of God, as there shall need no Sun, Moon and Stars to enlighten it; and then with the brightness of the body of Christ, and the brightness of the bodies of the Saints, there shall be a glorious lustre.

And for the large extent of it: the lowest heavens are but as a prick of the center, in comparison to the starry heaven; and the starry heaven is but as a prick of the center, to the highest heaven. Men boast here, if they have but a few clods of land; as Socrates put a scorn upon Alcebiades that boasted of his lands, he brought him to the Map of the whole world, and prayed him to show them there, and there was not one prick vouchsafed for them in it: What is a little land to a country? and what is a country to the world? and the world is but as a prick to the lowest heaven, and the lowest heaven is but as a prick to the starry heaven, and the starry heaven is but as a prick to the highest heaven, and the Saints shall possess

all that. You that have no possessions here, know there is a possession hereafter, that is more then if you had all the Lands in the world.

Besides, it is of an incorruptible nature, it is an inheritanceincorruptible: The reason why the heavens, and so the soul is incorruptible, is because it is not made out of pre-existing principles; it was made out of nothing, and nothing but an infinite power can annihilate a thing, as well as make a thing out of nothing. Much is said of that place for the description of it, Jerusalem was but a Type of it, and the Land of Canaan was but a Type of it, and Paradise was but a Type of this glorious place, that is provided for the Saints of God. Let us therefore raise up our hearts to consider of this. And as we read in Gen. 13. 14, 15. where God showed to Abraham the Land of Canaan, says God, look Northward, and Southward, and Eastward, and Westward; for all the land which you seest, to you will I give it, and to your seed: So consider the vastness of the Heavens, and the exceeding extent of them, and consider this is the Inheritance of the Saints.

We know we have an abiding, eternal inheritance; our bodies shall abide eternally, and the Heavens themselves are eternal: this should quiet our hearts, when we finde any discontent in our habitations: it is no matter in what Countrey we are here, there is a glorious Countrey we are going to; Christ our elder Brother is already gone, and has taken possession of Heaven for us: as if so be there were some great inheritance did befal you here, and you cannot go to possess it; and if you hear one is there for you, who has taken quiet possession for you, and you shall be sent for in time convenient; will you not be content? So we are not fitted for Heaven, but Christ is gone before to take possession; and within a while we

shall go and live with him. The earth is too mean a place for the Saints, and yet the world is not worthy of the Saints of God in a mean condition; then the world shall not be worthy of the Saints in their glorious condition; and therefore there must be a place above the world.

Yet know, Heaven is not enough for the Saints: the Saints of God are of such spiritual raised spirits, as that they cannot be satisfied with any thing, but God himself. Suppose God should cause all the Emperors and Kings of the world, to come and cast down their Crowns before the Saints, and say, All these are yours: An heart that is truly raised, would say, This is not enough, this is not God himself. Suppose God should bring all the splendors of all the creatures in heaven and earth, and they should be cast at the feet of the Saints, they would say, This is not enough, for this is not God. Suppose God should cause all the glory of heaven, not only of Sun, Moon and Stars, but of the highest heaven, to be laid before the Saints, they would say, This is not enough, this is not God. If all the Angels should come, and say, We are sent to put all our glory upon you, they would say, This is not enough, this is not God; and therefore when God has given them heaven, he must give them himself to, or else they are not happy: And that is the fourth thing.

Chapter 45: The Saints enjoyment of God to be their portion, their happiness in having his presence

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God himself will be the portion of the Saints. Augustine says of the happiness of the Saints, If God gives such good things to wicked men, does he keep nothing for the Saints? Yes, he keeps heaven it self; but says he, Surely I speak of too low a thing, when I speak of heaven, he will give himself to them. Heaven is beautiful, but more beautiful is God himself, the God of heaven: Therefore God must give himself to them, or else their souls are not satisfied. It is a sweet and excellent expression that Bernard has, Lord, as whatever we give unto you,unless we give ourselves, cannot satisfy you; so Lord, Whatever you givest to us, unless you givest yourself, we cannot be satisfied. The Lord said to Abraham, Fear not, I am your exceeding great reward; but says Abraham, What will you give me, seeing I go childeless. Surely he had respect to Christ, or else it could not but be a fault, that Abraham should not be fully satisfied in what God said; for as God does make the Saints to be his portion, so God is the portion, and the inheritance of the Saints. The enjoyment of God is Heaven it

self, and therefore in Scripture God is called heaven: I have sinned against heaven. In this there are these seven things: First, the presence of God. Secondly, the blessed vision of God. Thirdly, the happy union with God. Fourthly, the glorious communion with God. Fifthly, the fruition of God. Sixthly, the rest that their souls shal have in God. Seventhly, the enjoyment of themselves in God.

O beloved! for preparation to hear these things, that we had spiritual hearts, says one, It is not for your carnal, base, sensual, voluptuous spirits to hear of those things: For those that know no better things, then to eat, and drink, and to be unclean, what is it for them to hear of such excellent things? As for the pleasures of the flesh, they do infect and defile the soul, and make it unfit for the hearing of such things, we had need of spiritual ears to hear them. God says to Abraham in Genes. 13:16 I will make your seed to be as the dust of the earth: afterward in Gen. 15:5 he says, He will make his seed as the stars of heaven: The seed of Abraham are of two sorts. Some are of the seed of Abraham that are visible members of a Church, and yet have earthlyhearts: but there are others of his seed, and they are as the stars of Heaven, of spiritual hearts: now as we are of the seed of Abraham outwardly in profession, let us not be of that seed that are of the dust of the earth, only fit to hear of earthly things; but let us show that we are of the seed of Abraham, that are as the stars of Heaven, and shall hereafter come to enjoy the God of Heaven.

For the first, the presence of God, that glorious presence that the Saints shal have of God in Heaven, is a great part of their happiness: Heaven, it were not Heaven without the presence of God: The presence of God in the most miserable place that can be, were a greater happiness then the absence of God in the most glorious

place that can be. David would not be afraid, though he walked in the valley of the shadow of death, so that God were with him, Psalm 23. Luther would rather be in Hell with Gods presence, then in Heaven God being absent. If the presence of God takes away the dread of the shadow of the valley of death, and makes Hell to be more desired then Heaven, what will the presence of God make Heaven to be? The three Children in the fiery furnace with Gods presence were happy? how happy then are the Saints with Gods presence in Heaven? The Saints desire Gods presence even when he is angry, they are loth to be out of his presence then. It is very observable that we have recorded of David, Psalm 51. ver. 9. he cryes to God to hide his face from his sins, for Gods face was then an angry face against him: yet ver. 11. he cryes again, Cast me not away from your presence; he was not willing to be out of Gods presence howsoever, upon which St. Auguhath this expression, Whose face he fears, even his face he invocates. God made rich promises to Moses, yet he could not be satisfied without the presence of God: If your presence be not with us, bring us not hence. And the Apostle, when he would set out the misery of those that are damned, in 2 Thess. 1:9 says the Text, They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; now the presence of God must needs be the happiness of the Saints.

First, because this must needs draw out all their graces, in all the sweet savor of them, Cant 1:12 While the King sits at his table, my spikenard sends forth the smell thereof: As it is with the Sun, it draws forth all the vertue that there is in the plant, and makes a sweet savor in things; so the presence of God must much more draw forth the fragrancy of all the graces of his Spirit, in the souls of his Saints.

Secondly, the presence of God must needs quicken all the comforts of the souls of his people, and keep them always in vigor and activity; for as we know, the Sun it does quicken things that lay dead; so the presence of God has a wonderful quickning power, it keeps the comforts of Gods people fresh, so long as we have the presence of God, all our comforts are green and lively. The Saints in heaven have always the presence of God, and therefore their comforts are always vigorous and lively. When they shall be presented faultless before the presence of his glory, it shall cause exceeding joy, Jude 24. the word there signifies, leaping, springing, exalting joy.

Thirdly, the presence of God in heaven shall be the accomplishing of all that sweet and good that ever they have had in Gods presence in this world; they have had by pieces, many sweet manifestations of God unto them; but often God has been absent, and they have been fain to seek for their Beloved; but now all those pieces (as we may so speak) which they have had, some at one time, and some at another, shall be all joined together; and they shall have the accomplishment of all in one, and the perfection of all in one, and so for ever enjoy it.

Fourthly, the presence of God must needs fill their souls and bodies with glory, for it fills the heaven with glory; much more it must needs fill an immortal soul with glory, because that is more capable of glory then the heaven: If the Sun can put a glory upon these poor dark creatures here below, much more can the presence of God put glory upon the glorified bodies and souls of the Saints.

Further, the presence of God must needs be very glorious unto the souls of the Saints, in regard of the manner of the bringing into Gods presence, for they shall be brought into it by the hand of

Christ the Bridegroom; he shall, as it were, take the Saints by the hand, and lead them to the Father; he shall say, Come now, I will show you my Father that I have spoken so much of to you before, to that end that the Father may delight in you. As suppose the Prince were married to one, and upon their marriage he takes his Spouse by the hand to lead her unto his father, to that end his father may take notice of her, and manifest respect unto her; so this coming into the presence of God shall be by the hand of Christ. There is a glorious leading of our souls into the presence of God in this world, Eph. 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access; the word signifies, A leading by the hand: and in Canticles 1:4 it is said of Christ, That he brings the Spouse into the Chambers: He brings the Church, the souls of his people into the Presence-Chamber, and that makes the presence of God sweet unto the Church: but hereafter there shall be a more glorious leading of the Saints unto God by Christ, how much more shall the presence of God be sweet unto them then?

Sixthly, what a blessed security must there needs be to the souls of the Saints in the presence of God: To be under the shadow of the Almighty is a secure condition, to be hid in the secrets of Gods presence is a secure condition, but to be in the glorious presence of the Almighty, as it shall be in heaven, O the happy security then! A childe when it is gotten into the presence of his father or mother, thinks it self safe; the Saints then that shall always be in the presence of God, must needs be in an happy security.

Lastly, hence will follow an holy boldness: the Saints of God shall stand in the presence of God with an holy boldness, they shall have nothing whereof they shall be ashamed: though the light of God shall shine most gloriously upon them, yet it shall not dis-

cover any thing in them that shall cause any shame or fear in them. It is the promise of God to the diligent, They shall stand before Kings: Those that are now diligent in making their calling and election sure, in providing for their eternal estate, this is the blessing of them, they shal stand before the King of glory, before the King of heaven with an holy boldness: And this is the first thing which the Saints shall have in having God to be their portion, The presence of God.

Chapter 46: The happiness of the beatifical vision discovered

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Secondly, they shall have the Beatifical Vision of God, we shall be where he is, and we shall see his face. Says Christ, Father, I will, that those which you hast given me, be where I am, that is a blessing; but in Rev. 22:4 it is said, They shall see his face, and that is more, They shall know as they are known, 1 Cor. 13:12 It is the promise of the pure in heart, that they shall see God: 1 Iohn 3:2 Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. It is the happiness of the Angels that they behold the face of God; so it shall be the happiness of the Saints to behold the face of God in heaven: As for me, I will behold your face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with your likeness, Psalm 17:15 and so we may have the help of divers Scriptures to show, that this is the happiness of the Saints. The glory of this may appear in these particulars:

First, to see God as the first being of all, or the principle of all good, is a most blessed thing, to see Adam the first father, or Eve the first mother of mankinde, or for a childe to see his father, or mother, out of whose loyns and bowels he came, whom he has not

seen in many years, this is a joy and comfort; but to see the Creator, the first Principle of all things, that must be a great, an infinite contentment; and to see him that has done all the good in the world, has much satisfaction in it. We would rejoice to see a man that has been an instrument to do great things in some Countrey, as the King of Sweden, or the like; but to see God that has done all the great things in the world, what a blessed joy and contentment will that be? The rational creature does naturally desire to know the causes and principles of things, no other creature looks at the principles and causes of things, but the rational creature. If other creatures may have that which is suitable to sense, they look no farther; but a rational creature cannot be satisfied in whatever it has, unless it knows something of the principles and causes of the thing it has, and when it knows the cause of one thing, it would know the cause of that, and nothing will quiet it till it comes to see the cause of all; and when it comes to know that, it has full contentment: Show us the Father, and it sufficeth.

Secondly, they shall see God in his unity; whereas now we understand God only according to his several Attributes, as the manifestation of the Infinite Simple: First, being in one way we call Power, in another way we call Mercy and Bounty, in another way Justice, and so we apprehend God according unto the several Attributes that God has manifested himself in; whereas there are not many things in God, but all those several Attributes that we apprehend diversly, are but one excellency in God: as one beam of the Sun shining through a red glass, causes a red reflection; and the same Sun shining through a blue glass, causes a blue reflection; and so the same excellency of God shining one way, and working after one manner, we call by one name; and the same ex-

cellency of God working another way, we call by another name, and yet it is all one in God; and though we cannot apprehend it now, yet we shall see God in his unity afterward.

Thirdly, we shall see God in the Trinity: though there be but one God, yet there are divers persons: to see how the Father begot the Son, and how the Spirit did proceed from the Father and the Son, and the difference between the procession of the Spirit, and the generation of the Son; the sight of God in the mystery of the Trinity, is a most glorious thing.

Fourthly, we shall see God in his glory, in Isa. 33:17 there is a promise, They shall see the King in his beauty, or in his glory; there is a great deal of difference between seeing the King at an ordinary time, and seeing of him when he is in his Robes, with his Crown upon his head, and his Scepter in his hand, and set upon his Throne, with all his Nobles about him in all his glory: so God does manifest himself a little now, but this is not all that he does intend: and for to see God now as he does manifest himself, is somewhat, but to see God in his greatest glory that ever he shall manifest himself in, that must be a great happiness.

Fifthly, to see God in his eminency; that is, they shall see how all excellencies that are in the creature are eminently contained in the absolute perfection of the Divine nature; all the good that is in the effect, is in the causes, and the good of those causes in their causes, and so at length they come to the first principle: so all the good that we can see in all objects that give content, we may see all eminently in God, and see God in all. The latitude of the object of mans understanding, is such, as it comprehends all beauty, all ex-

cellency, all truth in it, and therefore cannot be satisfied till it sees into all; in God it findes all united, and therefore in him only it findes blessedness: it is eternal life to know him.

Sixthly, they shall see God as he is, 1 John 3:2 now there is a great deal in that to see God as he is; and for explication of that, there are these five branches.

That is first not to see him only negatively, that is, not to see him as he is: the most that we see of God now, is by way of negation, rather then any positive sight; when we say of God he is incomprehensible, that is, he is such a God as cannot be comprehended, that's but negation: when we say of God that he is infinite, that is, such a God as has no bounds of his being, this is stil a negation, to say what God is not: and when we say God is a spirit, though the expression seem to have an affirmation in it, yet it is but the apprehension of God rather by negation, that is, that God has no bodily substance in him; for to speak properly, God is not a Spirit; but only that is the most excellent thing that we can conceive of, and by way of negation, that he is no body, and is invisible, one that we cannot see, and feel, and the like: when we say he is holy, he has no spot of sin, this is by way of negation, but now in Heaven we shall not see God only by negation, but we shall see that positive excellency of God, we shall see him as he is.

Secondly, we see God much by relation unto other things; as when we speak of God, and would open the excellency of God, we say, God is the King of Heaven and Earth, and our Father, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Creator and Governor of all things, and these are but relative expressions, and a great part of our knowledge of God is by way of relation; but hereafter we shall see him as he is.

Thirdly, you shall see God as he is, not by framing any representations of him in our mindes; there shall be that immediate presence of God to the mind, that there shall not need be any representation, that we now form in our mindes; as in the sense of Seeing, the object of the eye being absent from it, there must be a species to represent it: so there are some kinde of representations of God to our understandings here; but there shall be that immediate union with God in the understanding, that there shall need no kinde of representation of God, but we shall see him as he is.

Fourthly, we shall see him, not in his effects in the creature; the greatest part that we see of God now, is in his effects, and not as he is in himself, we do not see the face of God, but his back parts. We look upon the Sun, and there we see somewhat of the power of God, but it is but the effect of Gods power, and not Gods power it self; and when we look upon the world, we see much of Gods wisdom, we see the effect of Gods wisdom, and not the wisdom of God it self.

Fifthly, we shall see God as he is distinguished from all creatures; here now we see almost nothing of God, distinguished from created things. Say what you will of God, that he is a Spirit, that he is a created thing, that he is wise, or holy, or just, or merciful, there is somewhat of all these in the creature, only he is infinitely above all, and that is by way of negation. But we do not see him in that positive excellency which does difference him from all created things; but now it will be a blessed thing to see God, as he is differenced from all created things, to see him as he is.

Sixthly, the Saints shall see the counsels of God, and all the ways of God, what have been, and what shall be to all eternity about election; what his counsels were about creating of things, be-

fore they were created, and what the workings of his counsels were about the several ways of his providence, before there was any manifestation of them in his creature; and so all his counsels about rejection of so many thousands of men and Angels. It is an expression of S. Augustine, We shall see the reason why one is reprobate, and one elected; why one is rich, and one is poor: we do not see the reason now, but by seeing God we shall see all things that may make for our happiness: we shall know all the works that ever God did, and that ever he will do to all eternity. It is a great thing for a man to know what is done in his generation: but to know all the ways of God since the beginning of the world, must be a glorious sight. It is not yet Six thousand years since God did any thing out of himself, and what is six thousand years to eternity? and if God have done such great things in Six thousand years, what may God do in the next Six thousand years, and so in the next, who now can tell? A Workman does his meanest works at first, and this world is but the beginning of Gods works, and for a creature to see what God shall thus work for ever, is an infinite blessed thing.

The seventh thing, in which this blessed vision of the Saints appears, is, that they shall look upon all the ways and works of God, as to see their happiness consisting in them: there is a great deal of difference in seeing an object that is excellent in its self, and to see an object that is excellent, in which consists my happiness. As in riding over a Land, one that is a Stranger rides over it, another that is an Heir; the Stranger rides over it, and takes delight to see the Trees, and Fruit to grow; but the Heir looks upon it after another manner, as the Land for which my Father laid out much, and all to enrich me, as the Land that is mine Inheritance: so, were it that we were but admitted to this glorious sight of God, meerly to have the

view of God, it were a great priviledge to the Creature, but to see all the shine, and all that excellency that is in God, is to make me happy; and all the counsels and ways of God are working for my happiness and glory, this is blessedness indeed. There is difference between a Stranger looking upon the King, and the Queens looking upon a King. A Stranger may see Beauty and Majesty in the King; but the Queen looks upon the King, and his Beauty and majesty, as her own; and so the souls of the Saints shall see all in God as their own, to make them happy.

Eighthly, the blessedness of the sight of God consists in this, that it shall be a transforming sight, such a sight of God, as shall be a transforming, perfecting sight, not only a perfect sight, but a perfecting, transforming sight: The light that shall come from God upon the mind, shall perfect the mind, and transform the mind into the same likeness with God: It shall not be a meer notional sight; as men may speak much of God, and have a notional vision of God; but there is a great deal of difference between the notional vision of God, and the Deifical vision of God; for it is not only beatifical, but Deifical, for it does transform a man into the likeness of God. A deformed man may see a beautiful object, and that sight shall not make him like that beautiful object; but the sight of God shall make the soul glorious, as God is glorious, as you shall have it in 1 Iohn 3:2 We shall be like him: what is the ground? We shall see him as he is.

Ninthly, the sight of God will be a full sight, a sight whereby the mind shal be raised to that heighth of excellency, as it shall be able to see God in his excellency: we cannot look upon the Sun now in its excellency, if we will see the Sun, we must see in its reflection; but the understanding of the Saints shal be raised to that

heighth, that they shall be able to look full upon the face of God, and this will be the reward especially of Faith; for those that are godly do believe above reason. Now because the Saints are willing to fear God so far, as to captivate their reason, and to believe upon bare testimony above reason; therefore hereafter God will give them this rereward, to see things fully, and the reason of things.

Again, it shall be such a sight of God, as shall be without any discourse, or labor, but there shall be the present vision of God, at the opening of the eye. We are glad if we can come to understand the creature with labor; but to come to understand God the Creator without labor, is a great happiness.

Again, to have the sight of God so, as never to lose it, that addes much to the happiness of the Saints: To have but one glimpse of the face of God, though it were gone presently, it were a great happiness, beyond all that the world affords, but God shall not only pass by, but stand still: so as the soul shall never lose the sight of God, but it shall have it to all eternity, and the eyes of the soul shall be eternally opened to see God. If a man looks upon a delightful object, he is loth to have the eye drawn from it; you shall never have your eye drawn from God.

Further, in the sight of God you shall see all things that do any way concern yourselves in ordering of you to all eternity: and this is made by some the ground, why it is impossible for the Saints in Heaven in the least degree to fall there; because they shall have a continual view of God, and in him see fully all circumstances of all actions, and all things that any way do or shall concern them to all eternity. For there is no falling, or declining from God, but it comes at first from some error in the theoretical or practical work of the understanding, or in some inconsiderateness; but there can-

not be the least error in the mind, or the least inconsiderateness; because the soul shall be so fully taken up with the sight of God: what an infinite delight must this needs be? It was the desire of a Philosopher to see the nature of the Sun, though it were to be burnt by it, he could be content; so if God should grant us this happiness, You shall come to see me, but the sight of me shall destroy you, this were a desireable thing; but to have a sight of God that is a perfecting sight, and such an excellent and glorious sight, in which our happiness shall consist for ever, how glorious must this needs be?

Lastly, to see God in ourselves: It is an happiness to see God in the Creature, but much more to see God in ourselves: the chiefest of the glory of God, next to that which appears in Jesus Christ, shall appear in the Saints, and the chief excellency of God that the Saints shall see, shall be within themselves: they shall see more of the glory of God within themselves, then in all the Heavens besides. The Heavens are glorious now, the Sun, Moon, and Stars are glorious; but to see the highest Heaven, that were more glorious. But the meanest Saint of God in Heaven, shall see more of God, and of his glory in himself, then does appear in all the Heavens beside, and then much more then does appear in all the World. We might make it out, there is more of the glory of God in one Saint, then in all the Heavens and Earth besides; for the Heavens and the Earth are but Gods foot-stool, not his image, but the Saints of God are are his image, and this shall be their happiness, to see the glory of God in themselves. A man may delight to see beautiful colours, but you take more delight, if you can by looking in a glass see yourselves beautiful, and see those beautiful colours in your own clothes; but if we could have the glory of the Sun, and the Moon,

and all the creatures in heaven shining within our bodies, that would be counted glorious indeed; but to see the divine excellency, and the top of the divine excellency of the infinite God shining within us, this will be a mighty happiness. Base sensual carnal hearts think there is no content but in satisfying the flesh. What sweet and content have many, but in their eating and drinking? and their pallate is pleased, and in that their other senses are satisfied, and they think this is the excellency of man: But take a schollar, that has but the exercise of his understanding to finde out truths, and those things that are suitable to the rational part, and he sees more excellency there, then in any sensual thing, and he can scorn sensual delights. If there be so much content to the mind in viewing the things here, what content will there be to the mind in beholding God, and his glory? There are two reasons of content in seeing things; In regard of the object, or in regard of the act of seeing it self. Let the object be what it will, there is delight in the act of seeing and understanding: For a man to understand that which is evil, it gives delight to the mind, and it is one of the perfections of God that he understands evil as well as good, so that there is content and delight in the act of seeing, though there be no delight in the object: but when the object is pleasing too, that addes much to comfort and delight, therefore content in the sight of God must be the highest content, because there is the highest act of understanding, and the highest object to see that can be.

And thus I have endeavored to open unto you the second blessed thing that the Saints shall have in Gods being their portion, they shall see God. Blessed are your eyes, says Christ, That you see those things that you see; and blessed are your ears, that heard those things you hear: So, blessed are the eyes of Gods peo-

ple that do see any thing of God here, and hear any thing of God here; but blessed are the eyes that shall see God hereafter. That which I labor for in pressing these things, is to take off your hearts from these things below, and that you may see what you are capable of; and if your hearts be mad upon your sins, and you will perish, you shall know what you lose: me-thinks if men did know what they lose by their sin, they would cast it off with indignation, and therefore when your sin comes and tempts you, say, What, shall I lose all this for such a way of sin?

Chapter 47: The blessedness of Union with God

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THirdly, they shall have union with God. Sight is higher then presence, and union is higher then sight. John 17:21 Christ prays to his Father, That they may be one in us, as you art in me, and I in you. For the opening of this union with God, you are to know that there is first an union that God has with all creatures in general. Secondly, an union that he has with the humane nature of Christ. Thirdly, the union that he has with the Saints. First, the union that God has with all creatures in general, and that union is twofold: An union of dependance; or an union of his immense presence: Of dependance, because all creatures in the world depend upon God for their being, and continuance of their being every moment, therefore there must be an union of God with them; for if the union of dependance were broke, evey creature would fall to nothing. As the beams of the Sun have an union with the Sun, and the beams could not continue if they were not united to the Sun; so all the creatures have an union of dependance with God, without which they cannot continue. And then the union of immense presence, that must be, because God is in every thing, and every where; there is not the least spire of grass or stone, but there is a way of Gods immense presence in that. Secondly, there is an-

other kinde of union that God has with the humane nature of Christ, and that we call an hypostatical union: for the humane nature, and the divine nature to be united in one person, this is that the Saints and Angels of God shall be adoring God for to all eternity; that ever there should be such an union between the Deity and the Creature, that if it were not revealed to us in the word, it were impossible to be imagined by any creature. It is a great work of God to unite an immortal soul with such a base creature as our flesh is into one person; I do not know any one work of God in creation so great as this, and this is to be admired at: but if this be so great a work to unite a rational immortal soul into one person, with a corruptible piece of flesh, then to unite mans nature into one person with the second person in Trinity, this is a great work.

Thirdly, there is an union of God with the Saints, and that is in this World, or in Heaven. In the World, there is a fourfold union that God has with the Saints. First, there is an union of the inhabitation of the Spirit; for the Saints of God in this World, are the Temples of the Holy Ghost, and the Spirit of God is said to dwell in them; and so there is a glorious union by the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost in them. The second union that the Saints of God have in this world, is the union of similitude; the Saints are like God here in some measure, they have the image of God stamped upon them, God sees his face in the Saints. The brightest glass in the world to show Gods face, is the souls of the Saints; and there is not only some likeness of God in the Saints, but the likeness of God in his very life. A glass may represent my image, but that image has not that life that I have, but the image of God in the Saints, does not only represent God, but they have the life of God: those that are converted live the life of God, and by sin we are estranged from

the life of God: they work as God works, God understands himself the highest and infinite good; and God wills himself as the highest and infinite good; these are the chief actions of Gods life. Now the Saints of God live this life, they in their measure do here understand God, as the highest and infinite good, and do will God as the highest and infinite good. A third union that the Saints have with God, is a union of love; love is an uniting grace, and there is a most entire love between God and every Saint, and so their hearts are close united, and mingled by love.

Again, in this life there is a mystical Union, and that is an union higher then any other; an union with Christ, being made members of the Son of God, and so they come to have union with the Son of God, according to that expression, in 1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. There is a mystical union between us and Christ, and so we come to have union with God the Father also, and to be joined to the Lord, we are one Spirit with him. Now for the union that the Saints have with God in Heaven, there are many intricate notions that some of the Schoolmen have about this; as, that the soul shall be turned into the same Idea that God made it of; and that there shall be an Illapsus of God into the soul; but we must know there can be no union with God, but it must be by vertue of the influence of some good from God; for speak of what union you will, God cannot in his Essence be more present with the creature then he is here, but only in regard of some manifestation, or communication of himself, in some gift or

good thing; but certainly, there will be a wonderful glorious union between God and the soul in Heaven, and that upon these four grounds.

First, there is not such distance between God and the soul, but that it is capable of union with God. One would think how is it possible that God should be so united to the soul, being there is such an infinite distance between God and it: but there is not such an infinite distance between God and the soul of man, as that there should not be a glorious union between them: there is a great deal of likeness between God and the soul; First, in the spirituality, God is a Spirit, the soul is a Spirit. Secondly, in immortality, God is immortal, the soul is immortal. Thirdly, in the high excellency of God, the understanding and will, the soul is endued with understanding and will; the perfection of God as we can conceive, is his understanding and will; and so it is in the soul. Fourthly, in the several operations that the soul has; and herein there is more likeness between God and mans soul, then is between God and Angels, in that one rational soul should perform so many works, as the same God, the same Excellency, working upon the creature, works in one thing one way, and in another thing another way; so the soul represents God in this, in that one rational soul has such variety of workings in the body, for understanding, for sense, for vegetation, which Angels have not. Again, the soul resembles God in the infiniteness; the soul is not only infinite in duration, but in regard of the infiniteness of the working of it: and here is a mighty difference between the soul of man, between rational creatures, and all other creatures: for the sensitive creature that only works about some particular thing that concerns its own preservation, and its own good within its narrow compass, but the object of

mans soul is universal, infinite: it is not any particular truth, that will satisfy the understanding, let there be never so many truths revealed, yet the understanding desires infinitely more; if there be any truth that is not revealed, it would have that. Let the sense have some particular object before it, suitable to sense, it looks no further; as if the eye have color, it goes no further, nor the ear goes no further then sound, but the understanding has desire to all truth: And so for good, the sensitive creature has no desire of good, but only that which does preserve sense, but the will of man is for good in general: and this shows how capable the soul is to be raised to such an excellency, as to have communion with God: if we knew what our souls were capable of, we would not think we could satisfy them with such things as bruit beasts are satisfied with. Secondly, there may well be a glorious union between God and and the souls of the Saints, because God shall see nothing but himself in the souls of the Saints: now when God shall see nothing but his own in such a creature, this is a full ground of Gods near and most glorious union with it: as when a man comes to see in another much of his own, his heart is united to him; things that are of a like nature do unite: Bring an hot fire-brand to the fire, and it does unite presently, because the fire does finde something of it self there; if there were some moisture in the brand, it would not so fully unite: And so here we cannot have full union with God, because though God sees somewhat of his own in us, yet there is a great deal in us, that is not Gods: but when we shall be wholly free from sin, and God shall see nothing but his own in us, that must needs be a ground of a most glorious union.

Thirdly, in Heaven there shall be nothing in God, but shall be suitable to the nature of a glorified Saint, and suitableness is the cause of union: if there be not a suitableness, there cannot be union. There cannot be suitableness between God and other creatures; but between a glorified Saint and God, there shall be an infinite suitableness, and therefore an infinite glorious union. Again, there shall be an infinite inflamed love; here is an union of love, but in Heaven there will be a further degree of love, and love being enflamed, there must needs be a most glorious union.

Fifthly, if you consider what the bond of connexion of the soul and God together is, namely, the mediation of the Son, the second person of the Trinity, there must needs be an infinite close and glorious union of the Saints with God. This vision and union with God, is enough to cause the souls of Gods people to be so satisfied, as to say, Let all things be taken from me, it is enough; I have somewhat of Gods presence here, but I shall have the glorious presence and vision of God, and union with God hereafter; and though my eyes should never see good day after, or never see comfortable object in the world, this is enough, I shall see God, and have full union with God: Though there be a separation between me and all temporal comforts in the world, though God should rend this creature or that creature, the dearest husband, or the dearest wife, or the dearest comfort in the world, and those things that my soul do most cleave to here, from me; yet it is enough that God and my soul are somewhat united, and that God and my soul shall have a glorious union hereafter. O that God would raise our hearts to these things, that we may know what is the business we

have to do in the world: If you do not know these things shall be your portion, never give satisfaction to yourselves in the flesh, till your know these things shall be your portion.

Chapter 48: The blessedness of communion with God

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NOw we come to the fourth thing, Communion with God, and this is more then the other three things. Union is the ground of communion; communion is that which rises from both parts being united, and the Saints shall have a glorious communion with God and the Trinity; in this life there is a communion that the Scripture speaks of, that we have with God the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, 1 John 1:3 Our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; and in 1 Cor. 13:14 The communion of the Holy Ghost be with you, says the Apostle; so that there is a fellowship with the Father and the Son, and communion with the Holy Ghost; but certainly, it shall be another manner of communion that the Saints shall have with God in the world to come. Now this communion, it stands either in regard of the work of God, upon and towards the Saints, or the work of the Saints upon and towards God; for communion is on both sides, and that in these four things: First, in the delight they have one in another. Secondly, in wishing all good to one another. Thirdly, in the communication of themselves one to another. Fourthly, in the blessed familiar converse that they have one with another.

First, communion consists in the delight they have in one another: There is a full, actual, mutual, everlasting delight between God and the Saints in heaven: First, there is a delight: Secondly, full: Thirdly, actual: Fourthly, mutual: Fifthly, everlasting.

First, there is a delight: God here rejoyces in them, the Scripture says, He rejoyces in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delight is with the sons of men, Prov. 8:31 why does God delight in the habitable parts of the earth? there are other glorious works of God that are not in the habitable parts of the world; but God delights in the habitable parts of the world, because there are rational creatures there; but he has more delight in his Church in this world, then in any other part of the habitable parts of the world; as Isa. 19:25 Assyria is the work of Gods hands, but Israel is his inheritance; but there will be a delight far higher: The delight that God has in heaven it self, is in regard of the Saints that are there, without which heaven were not heaven. First, it is delight in their persons, God takes infinite delight and content in the persons of the Saints; howsoever their persons are mean here, yet as they shall be hereafter, God will take an infinite delight in them. Secondly, he delights in conferring blessedness upon his people; there is much delight in the communication of good, as well as in the enjoyment of it: what good has a man who has a great estate more then another, but that he may communicate more good then another. Thirdly, he delights in the glory that he has conferred upon them: As those that have true communion one with another, delight in any good that one another has, God delights in the glory that is in his Saints, and takes much pleasure in it, his soul is satisfied in the glory that he sees upon his own people, and that because he loves them: The former arose from the pleasure in him-

self in the act of communicating; this from the love to his people, to see their good. Fourthly, God delights in their presence to have them with him, and by him, as the Father delights in the presence of his Children to have them round about him. Fifthly, God delights in their love, that he has these creatures to love: as a man delights to have love from others; What pleasure could a man have in all the world, if none loved him? If he should live in a Family or Town, and none loved him, he could have no pleasure in his life; but if a man live where he is loved, it makes up a great many wants, so God is not contented in any thing else he has to delight himself in, but that which must make up all, in that he has his people to love him. Sixthly, God delights the more in his own glory, because his Saints are partakers of it; it is so much the more sweet unto him, because they have a share in it; thus it is between entire friends, who have intimate communion one with another, their own happiness pleases them the more, because the other has a part in it.

Secondly, it is a full delight that God takes in his people: It is said of his people in this world, in Zeph. 17:3 he will rejoice over them with joy and with singing; the delight that God has with his people in Heaven must needs be full: First, in regard of the near relation that his people have to his Son, and because he takes such infinite delight in the Son; and they being one with him, thence flows that full delight. Secondly, because he shall see so much of his own Image; now that is infinitely delightful: that is the reason why the father or mother does delight in their children, because they see themselves in them: so God shall see himself in his people, and that will cause full delight. Thirdly, because of the glorious works of God upon the souls of his people, because he shall see his

own handy-work to be so glorious and full in them. As a man that makes a work that is very curious and glorious, he takes abundance of delight to look upon it; and if the work be full and perfect, then his delight is full and perfect. Now the great work of God is in the glory of the Saints: God loves to look back to the creatures, therefore when he had made the world, he looked upon what he had made, and saw it was good: As a workman when he has brought his work to some perfection, he will look upon it: Now when God shall see what he has done, in raising such a poor worm to such high excellency, God will take full delight in viewing this full work he has done. And this is more then all the former; for besides the delight in the act of communication and delight, because of the love to those to whom good is communicated: This is the delight in his own work, done in the beholding the beauty and glory of it. Fourthly, the delight of God must be full, because in them God attains his highest end, the highest end of his greatest design, the highest end of his deepest councels, the highest end of his most glorious work: It is a great delight to a man when he goes about a work, if he have his end; though a man have some benefit by his work, yet if he be crost in his last end, all his joy is taken away; and this is the evil of sin, sin seeks to cross God in his highest end that he aims at, but the Saints in heaven shall give God his full end: God shall have the highest end that he did aim at, he shall see it accomplished and fulfilled in them; now those objects in which Gods highest end is fulfilled, he must needs take delight in, and that shall be in the Saints. Again, the delight of God must be full, because God has no other object, but rational creatures, Angels and Saints to let out his delight to; if God does take any delight in any creature here, it is in order to the Angels and the Saints: Now when

God has no other object to himself, and his Son, and his Spirit, to let out his delight unto, but the rational Creatures, Saints and Angels, joined in one (for the Lord Christ shall be the head of the Saints and Angels) surely his delight in them shall be full.

Thirdly, this delight shall be actual; and that is necessary to communion; for though there be delight, yet if it should lie dead in the habits, there is no communion: If two friends have habitual delight one in another, they are not said to have communion, but when it is actual, so this delight shall be actual; the nature of delight is to be lively and active, even in us, though it be but an affection in us; but God being a pure act, there will be an infinite activity in his delight, and it is always vigorous and fresh, so as God shall make the souls of his people to be sensible of the activity of his delight. Fourthly, this delight shall be mutual, it shall be on the Saints part, as well as on Gods part. As God delights in the persons of the Saints, so they delight in God himself, not in that they receive from God, but their greatest delight is in the being of God himself; and as God delights in their glory, so they do delight in all the glory of God, in essential glory that they see in God, and in all the glory that is reflected upon God by his creatures; and they delight in his presence in being with him, and in his love, and in that they can give any glory to him; they delight in all they have, more because God has glory by it, then in that themselves are blessed in it. And it is full likewise; the delight of the Saints of God is full, as well as the delight of God in the Saints is full; and that for the very same grounds that the delight of God in them is full; namely, The fulness of Gods delight in them is their relation to Christ; so the ground of their full delight in God is, because God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and because they see their likeness in God;

what ever excellency they have in themselves, they see it to be infinitely in God; and as God delights in them, because of his works he sees in them, so the Saints shall see all the good that ever they have done, does redound to the glory of God; howsoever, the works of Gods people for the present seem to be mean, yet it shall appear, all the gracious works of the people of God shall be the most glorious things in the world: For God shall own them for the setting out of his glory, as the greatest things in the world; and this should be an infinite encouragement to us, to be abundant in good works, because God will glorifie our good works: and as the fulness of the delight of God in the Saints is, because God attains his end in them, how full must the delight of the Saints in God be, because the Saints do attain their end in God, the end of all their thoughts, and ways, and performances? and they shall have no other object to let out their delight to, but only God: here, though we have some grace, yet the stream is divided, we let out so much to one creature, and so much to another; the children so much to the Parents, and the Parents so much to the children; and husband so much to the wife, and the wife so much to the husband, and so much to our friends, that the stream we let out to God is but little: but when all the delight that we let out to the creatures, shall be taken away, and God shall be the only object of our delight, then our delight must be full.

And as this delight is mutual, so it shall be continual: for being withdrawn from all other objects, it will work upon that, both of them, Gods delight in the Saints, and the delight of the Saints in God, shall be for ever: the Saints shall be an eternal excellency, in which God shall delight, and God shall be an eternal excellency in which they delight, they shall be always keeping that feast of the

Lamb. We read of Ahasuerus, he kept a glorious feast, and the gloriousness of it is set forth by the continuance of it, Esther 1. 4, 5. it is observable, the difference between the feast that he made with his Nobles, and the feast that he made with the common people, and that may lively set out the difference of the goodness of God that he lets out to his own people, and that he lets out to other common people; he made a feast of a hundred and fourscore days to his Nobles, and but seven days to the common people: so when God comes to make a feast of joy to his people, it shall be everlasting. Men in the world have some content, but it is but for a little time; but the comfort and joy that is to be between God and the Saints in Heaven, is to be eternal, because it is such a feast as is made to his Nobles, and to show the riches of his glorious Kingdom, and the honor of his Majesty.

Secondly, in communion there is a mutual wishing and willing of good to one another; now God shall will all good to the Saints, and they wish all good to God: It is true, that God from all eternity did will all good unto his people, but here his people are not of a capacity to receive much; there is a great deal of difference in willing and determining good to them, before they were in being, or before they were capable of receiving this good, and willing good to them when they shall be made vessels fit to receive good; the bodies and souls either of the Saints or the wicked being united after the resurrection, they shall be vessels infinitely enlarged, capable of abundantly more then they are here, and then to have God will good to them, is far better then to have good willed to them here: The men of the world would fain have good here, while their hearts are narrow, and they cannot receive much from God; but the Saints look for good hereafter, when their hearts shall be enlarged;

when as the wicked, when their souls shall be enlarged, they shall have nothing but misery. There is a twofold love, when one shall will only good to himself by another, or will good to another; now the love of good will is most glorious in God, and it is mutual; God shall will his good to the creature, and the Saints shall will all good to God: What good can they will to God? It is true, there can be no addition to the essential goodness of God, but they can will that this his goodness be honored and praised; and this shall be in the blessed communion between God and his Saints in the mutual working of their wills.

Thirdly, in communion, there is the communication of what one have unto another; where there is right communion, there is a communication on both parts; if on receive good, and the other do not labor to communicate, it is not communion. Now there is a glorious communication on Gods part: First, immediate: Secondly, full: Thirdly, free: Fourthly, everlasting. First, immediate; whereas here God communicates himself through creatures, or through ordinances, there are conduits of conveyance; for there is such distance between God and us, that we cannot expect that immediate conveyance of Gods goodness, and of himself to us here, as we shall have in heaven.

Secondly, the fulness of Gods communication: Suppose that God should draw out all that beauty, sweetness, goodness, and power that he has communicated in all creatures in the world, and bring the quintessence of all, and communicate that unto the soul of one Saint, certainly it would not serve the turn, for the happiness of one Saint, there must be a greater communication: But conceive, if we see one creature have so much power in it by its influence upon the dunghil, as to produce such a glorious creature as

life, which is the most glorious thing that ever God did make. Saint Augustine says, There is more glory in the life of aflie, then in the Sun in the Firmament: Now if the Sun have such power to produce life from a piece of dirt, what power shall the influence of an infinite God have upon a glorified soul? No marvel though the Scripture says. That eye has not seen, neither ear has heard, neither has it entred into the heart of man, to conceive what God has prepared for them that love him.

Thirdly, it is free, as free as the Sun lets out its beams: It is natural to a good thing to communicate, much more for goodness it self: certainly, God being goodness in the abstract, his communication must needs be free.

Fourthly, it is everlasting; the letting out of himself to the Saints, shall preserve their strength, that he may let out himself unto them; as if there were that power in some excellent liquor that is let out into a vessel, not only to sweeten it, but perpetually to preserve it, that it may be letting out it self into it; so God does everlastingly in communicating himself unto his people, preserve them that he may communicate himself. And then the Saints of God do communicate to God in the same way that God does to them. They are always worshipping God immediately, not through ordinances; as they shall not receive any thing of God through ordinances, so they shall not worship God through ordinances; but as they receive immediately, so they shall worship God immediately, and their communication shall be full: but as they cannot will any essential good to God, so they cannot communicate any essential good, but they shall communicate themselves, and all that they are or have to God; or if they were able to make a thousand worlds, they would make them all for the glory of God; but

because that is beyond the power of any creature, therefore they communicate themselves, and all that they are, or have, or can do to God: as a drop of water is let out into an infinite Ocean, so they are let out unto God, as into an infinite Ocean: And then the communication is free, having the divine nature made perfect in them, that do flow to God, when they see his divine nature: and this communication shall be everlasting, God letting out himself to them, and they letting out themselves to God: This is the reward of the Righteous, and this is that which Moses had an eye unto, and all Gods people that have an eye beyond the vail, behold it with infinite soul-satisfaction.

Fourthly, in communion with God, there is a familiar converse between God and the Saints: And herein are these particulars:

First, God manifesting himself in a suitable way to the conditions of his people, so as it were condescending to their condition, that though his Majesty be infinite, yet it shall no way be a terror unto them: Here if a Saint of God sees but an Angel, he is amazed; but because God would have his people enjoy holy familiarity with himself, therefore he will manifest himself so, as though there be an infinite glory, yet there shall be no amazement; but that they shall be able familiarly to converse with him, as one friend does with another. The Scripture speaks of the familiar converse that God has with his people here, that they are called friends: Abraham was called The friend of God, and the Disciples were called friends, but hereafter the friendship shall be much more full and sweet; Job shall have his desire, O that the terror of God may not fall upon me: Here when God spoke by himself, many of the

dearest of his Saints have been afraid; but when we come to be made partakers of this blessed Recompence of reward, all such fear shall be done away.

Again, another thing in familiar converse, is the mutual opening of themselves one to another; much is said of Gods opening of himself to his people here, Psalm 25:14 Prov. 3:32 1 Cor. 2:16 John 15:15 and that is the reason why they are brought into the Chamber spoken of in Cant. 1:4 because their secrets are discovered; as they said to the King of Judah, concerning the Prophet, The Prophet that is in Israel, does reveal whatever you doest in your bed-chamber, because in them Kings reveal their secrets: The mysteries of the Kingdom are revealed to the Saints here, much more in heaven, there are many secret things that God has to tell his people, when they come to have familiarity with him. When a man comes to a woman a stranger, he does not tell her his secrets; but when she is marryed to him, then he tells her his secrets; so in heaven, God will reveal his secrets, and they shall not only see his face, but they shall see Gods heart. And they shall open their hearts to God, for they shall have nothing in their hearts that they shall be ashamed of. As the Sun-flower, when the Sun shines, the flower is open, but when the Sun is down, it shuts: So here when Gods face shines, their hearts are open to God, but often they lose the shine of Gods face, but in Heaven Gods shine shall be always upon them, and their hearts shall always be open to God.

Again, in converse there is discoursing one with another, it is much here, 2 Cor. 6:16 I will dwell in them, and walk in them: walks of friends are for discourse, in Canticles 7:5 The King is held

in the Galleries: Galleries are made for converse, and walking; so the Church is compared to the Galleries in which Christ is held: There is converse with God here, but much more in Heaven.

And then in familiarity there is abundance of delight, not only in one another, but in receiving one from another; when men do converse, they delight in being receiving, and being useful to one onother; so God will rejoice in any thing that they shall be able to give him, as they shall rejoice in what God does give them. And the ground of all, is because they live the same life of God; as now there cannot be a converse between plants and beasts, because they do not live the same life; but between one beast and another, there may be converse, because they live the same life; and so there cannot be converse between beasts and men, because they do not live the same life; nor between God and man, unless they live the same life; but there shall be a glorious life hereafter, fitting the souls of the Saints for converse with God: no creature is capable of converse with God, but the rational creature, because no creature can live the life of God, but the rational creature: and the ground the converse that the Saints have with God, is from the near familiarity that God has with Christ. Zach. 13:7 Awake, O Sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow; it is the voice of God concerning Christ: now because there is this familiarity between Christ and his Father; this is the ground why the Father has such a sweet familiar converse with the Saints. And from all this communion that is between the Saints of God, and God himself; hence it is that the Saints are carried to God, as the universal latitude of good; it is as natural for the will to will good in general, as it is for the fire to burn, or for the Sun to shine; but here is the mistake, some mistake good, they will good in general, but they look

for good in this creature and that creature, or in this lust or that lust: but here is the happiness of the Saints; as it is natural for their wills to will good, so it shall be as natural for their wills to will God as an universal good! this is the blessed communion that the Saints shall have with God, and this is the accomplishment and issue of all the communion we have with God here.

Chapter 49: The happiness of the Saints in their fruition of God, and their perfect rest in him

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The fifth thing in the Saints having God to be their portion, is fruition of God, enjoyment of God: Gods people shall not only be in his presence, and see him, and have union with him, and communion with him, but they shall have fruition and enjoyment of him: The fruition of God consists in these four things.

The first is, The reflect act of the soul, whereby it comes to know what it has; it has a God, and it knows it, by a reflect act; and upon this it is, that there is no creature can be said to enjoy a thing properly, but the rational creature; the beasts and plants have many things communicated to them, but they have no reflect act to know what they have, this is proper to the rational creature. If one have never so great a good, if he were ignorant of it, and did not know it, he could not be said to enjoy it: As one that has an inheritance given him, if he knows not of it, he is far enough from the enjoyment of it. This will adde much to the happiness of Gods people, they shall be filled with happiness and glory, filled with God,

and they shall know all their happiness: There are many excellencies that other creatures have, but they know not of their excellency; and many of Gods people have abundance of mercy from God, God communicates much to them here, but they cannot be said properly to enjoy it, because they do not know it; but time will come, though God lets out himself fully, yet he shall let out himself no further then we shall know him.

Secondly, there is in fruition the having use of all ; if a man be never so rich, and have never so great possessions, if he have not the actual use of what he has, he cannot be said to enjoy them; a man may have right to a thing, and yet for the present not enjoy the use of it. But now the people of God, as they shall have God to be their portion, so they shall enjoy God fully, to have what use they will of all the Attributes of God, and all that is in God: And this is an infinite good and happiness to the people of God, that they shall have as much use of Gods infinite wisdom, of the infinite power of God, and of the infinite mercy of God as they will; and they cannot will it so soon, but they shall have it, nor so easily, as they may enjoy it: Then we do enjoy the benefit of friendship, when one friend says to another, Make use of all I have as your own, as you will: So God shall come to his people, and bid them make use of all his riches, and glory, and excellency as they will: Hence it is, that God is not only the happiness of his Saints, causally or effectually, but he is formally the happiness of the Saints: He is not causally the happiness of the Saints; that is, That he should cause some good to come from him to the Saints; but he is formally the happiness of the Saints, because they have God himself to enjoy, and have the use of himself. The Sun is causally great good to the world, it causes the herbs and plants to grow; but

it is not formally the good of the creature here below: But God is not only causually good to the Saints, but formally: God is theirs, to be used unto the utmost that they are capable of.

The third thing in fruition, is to have the sweet and comfort of all that we do use, or else we do not enjoy that we have. If a man should have the use of his estate, and meat, and drink, if he have not the sweet and comfort of it, he cannot be said to enjoy it; but when the comfort is let out, that the soul is sensible of it, then he may be said to enjoy it: And hence it is that God is said to give all things to us richly to enjoy, 1 Tim. 6:17 There is no creature can give us to enjoy another; another may give a man such and such things in which may be comfort, but he cannot give him comfort in the thing, it must be God that must give to enjoy; no creature can properly give the enjoyment of another, because though it gives the thing, it cannot give the comfort with it, but God gives the thing, and he gives the comfort with it, and so a man is said to enjoy it.

Fourthly, it is such an enjoyment, as the having of it does perfect that which does enjoy it, and by that we shall understand the difference between other creatures attaining to their end, and the rational creature attaining his end; the other creatures, when they attain their end they perish, so as they cannot be said to enjoy their end; the plants and beasts that God has made for the use of man, when man comes to have the use of them, then they come to have their end, but they do not enjoy their end, because in having their end, they are destroyed; but the rational creature, when he comes to have his end, then he comes to have the highest perfection; and so he may be said to enjoy it, because when he comes to have his

end, he is made the more perfect; so take these four together, and you may know what I mean by fruition of God: and that is the fifth particular.

6. The sixth particular, in having God to be their portion, is the Rest that the foul has in God: The term of all motion is rest, every thing that moves, moves that it may have rest: Now here in this world the creature is altogether in motion, and especially man, because he is not here in his proper place; every thing moves to its center, till it comes to its place, Psalm 38:10 My heart panteth; the word in the Original signifies, such a kinde of motion, running up and down, as Merchants run up and down, from one Countrey to another; and it is observable, there is the two last radical letters double; and that is to note, That it is more then an ordinary stirring and motion of the spirit, because it is not come to its rest; but when the foul comes to the term unto which it moves, then it comes to have rest. God has let out good things to other creatures, and they never return back again directly to him; but the good that God lets out to mankinde, and to his people, it returns back again to God: The Saints are made by God, and they come and return to the first fountain from whence they came, whereas other creatures do not: As the wicked, they come from God, but do not return to God again as their rest: And therefore it is an expression of Jeremy, Those that seek only after the satisfying of their senses, they go out from God like unto rivers that run from the fountain, but there is no regress of them, they do not return back again; but the godly come from God, and have their returns back again unto God, unto their fountain, there to rest, and to have their happiness, Psalm 12:9 The wicked walk on every side; the wicked move up and down in a circle, but never unto the center, only keep their

round from one creature to another, but never have any direct motion unto God, to come to him as their center, and so to finde true rest in him: Return, O my soul, unto your rest, Psalm 116:7 The word translated Rest, is in the plural number, Return, O my soul, unto your rests: God is the rest of the souls of the Saints. Rest and glory seldom meets in this world; they who are in glory have not the quietest life, and they who have most rest, are furthest off from being glorious: Issachars condition likes some, Gen. 49:14 Rest was good to him, though under burthens; and if a man will have a name amongst the great ones of the earth, farewel rest; but in heaven rest and glory do both happily and perfectly meet together.

The Rabbies have a note from the name Jehovah, that all the letters of that name are quiescentes, and they say, There is a mystery in it, to show that all our rest is in God. Some creatures God has made so, as there is no other good they are capable of, but to continue in their beings; and therefore they only seek for their place, and no more, and there they rest; as the Fire, and Ayr, and the Earth, these creatures have no other good, but to continue in their beings: and you shall observe, if they be out of their places, with what violence will they move to their proper place: As if there be fire or ayr got into the earth, it causes earthquakes, it moves there with that violence, that it shakes the whole earth, that it may come to its proper place, because it has no other good but that. Then I would reason thus; If those creatures that have no other good, but only to be in their proper place, if they be out, to get that good shall move with such violence; then considering what a good mans soul is capable of, if he have not obtained that good, with what violence should he move? how should the kingdom of heaven suffer violence? how should we work toward God, who is our

proper place and center, in whom is so much good? But there are other creatures that have an higher good then being in their place; as the plants have a Vegetative place, and therefore they grow to it, and if they have attained that there, they rest; then the sensitive creature has an higher good, and that moves till it has got its end; namely, to all things that are agreeable to sense, and they go no further. The rational creature looks to that which is suitable to reason. And where there is grace, grace looks to attain that which is the proper perfection of the life of grace, and there it rests, and never else: Therefore it is the expression of an Ancient: O Lord, you hast made us for you, and our hearts are unquiet till they come to enjoy you; and when the soul comes to rest in God, that is glorious, and that is the Saints happiness to attain the end of their motion, and the more glorious is the rest, when the end is attained: and the glory of the end may be discovered much, by the glory of the means that tend to it: As if a man will bestow a great deal of Cost and Charges to get his Health, then he accounts health worth all those charges; and the greater charges are laid out for health, argues his greater esteem of it; and so if a man be at great charge about a Voyage, it is because he accounts much of the excellency of the end of his Voyage: and if this be so, how excellent is the end of Gods people, if we consider the most glorious means that are used to attain this end and rest? as namely, the work of God in sending the second person in the Trinity to take mans nature upon him; and all the works of God in Election, in Redemption, in Adoption, in Justification, in Sanctification; yea, all the works of God in creation, in providence, the designing the Holy Ghost to that office he is designed to, and all the Ordinances of God; look what preciousness is in all these works of God and means, it sets out unto us the

preciousness, and excellency, and glory that there is in the last end, to which Gods people shall attain, and that rest they shall have.

The seventh and last thing in having God to be their portion, is the enjoyment of themselves in God: as they shall enjoy God, and God in themselves; so they shall enjoy themselves in God, living in God continually: the fish does not more truly live in the water, and move in the water, then the souls of the Saints shall live in God, and move in God: Col. 3:3 Your life is hid with Christ in God: the life of Saints here is an hidden life, and it is hidden in God, but then it shall be a revealed life, and revealed in God, and enjoyed in God. Hence is that Phrase, Enter into your masters joy; that enters not into you, but you must enter into it: it is your masters joy, not only that joy that your master gives, but the same joy your master has, that you shall enter into and live in. It is said of Saint John, in Rev. 1. that he was on the Lords day in the Spirit; it is not said that the Spirit was in him, but it is said, he was in the Spirit; that was as a beginning of the glorious condition of the Saints of God, that they shall be in the Spirit of God, not only God in them, but they in God, as a drop of water in the Sea, swallowed up in it. Put a drop of wine into the Sea, it is changed into the nature of the Sea; and so though we cannot be changed into the Divine Nature, yet we shall be swallowed up in God, so as we shal not any further mind ourselves, our own good as a created thing, nor ourselves as creatures, but altogether God: our mindes shall be so wholly upon God, as if they were wholly emptyed of any created good, and had nothing to do but with an increated good; it shall not will any thing to it self, nor to any other creature, but all to God, and so wholly taken upon with God, and upon that ground, because they have that likeness

unto God, and partake of the Divine Nature: Here we do good to others, because of their likeness to ourselves; But the Saints shall will all good to God, not because God is like them, but because they are like to God, so that they shall love themselves for God.

There are three degrees of love to God, loving of God for ourselves, and loving God for himself, and loving ourselves for God: the one is but a natural love, the second is a gracious love, the third is a love of the glorified Saints: First, to love God for ourselves, so an hypocrite may love God, because he has gifts and many blessings from God, this is but a natural love. But grace goes further then nature, that is to love God for himself; though we should never have any thing, yet if we be gracious, we love God for himself: but the glorified Saints go further then grace, and that is to love themselves for God, whereas heretofore we did only love God for ourselves, or for himself, now we come to love ourselves for God: and in this kinde of love of God, and enjoyment of ourselves in him, the soul shall be ravished with God, and be in a kinde of extasie eternally.

Now there is a twofold extasie, one that is through the weakness of the inferior faculties of the soul; when the mind of a man is taken up about an high object seriously, the other faculties being weak they fail, and so men come to be in a trance and extasie; many have had great joy, that they have even dyed with it; the heart has so dilated it self, as the vital spirits have flown out. But there is an extasie comes from the excellency of the object, that the mind is busied about, but without any weariness of any inferior faculty. If then we put all together, that has been said about God, and the enjoyment of God, and having God to be the portion of the Saints, you see the principal part of Heaven, and the spiritual part

of the glory of the Saints. Here is faith called for, and why should not our faith go beyond reason to rectifie reason, as reason rectifies sense? these things be high, and great mysteries. When as reason says, How can this be? as when Christ was speaking of the new birth, says Nicodemus, How can this be? let but faith get as far above reason, as reason has got above sense, and we may easily see how they can be by sense.

If a man look up to the Firmament, and see the Sun shine, he would think it were little bigger then a Bushel, or the like, now reason will tell men otherwise; reason that tells men that this creature, that appears to be but in this bigness, it is many hundred times bigger then the Earth; now if reason can rectifie sense so far, Why should not faith go beyond reason as far? Now reason will tell us of much happiness that may be had: We may conceive by reason, by understanding, that the rational creature is capable of abundance of glory: but when you hear things delivered by the word, which are more then reason can conceive, let us get faith to rectifie reason, and we shall not call those truths into question, and yet know that our glory will be beyond our faith, as our faith is beyond our reason.

Here you may see that most people in the world mistake Heaven, and look at Heaven in a sensual manner: when we speak of Heaven, where have we a man or woman that looks at Heaven, in these spiritual excellencies, about enjoying God in this manner? As the Jews looked for a carnal Messiah, whose Kingdom should be in the earth, and whose glory should be external, not considering the Spiritual Kingdom of Christ: so most in the world look but for a carnal Heaven. It is a good evidence of the truth of grace, if you can look to Heaven with a right eye, in a right manner, to look

at the spiritual part, and spiritual excellency in Heaven. But that which makes people to call these things in question, is; first, because they are not acquainted with God, but are sensual, their hearts are acquainted with nothing but sensual and earthly things, and therefore their hearts are not raised to these things, but they look at them as notions; but that soul that is acquainted with God, and the counsels of God, and knows the mind of God, that soul can know how to savor these things, and know the reality of them. Again, another reason why these things are above the reach of most people, is, because they are not acquainted with the mysteries of the Gospel, and what in them is revealed concerning mankinde: If we were acquainted with the mysteries of the Gospel, we would not think these things strange that are revealed. Thirdly, because mens hearts are not enlarged with Gods image for the present, therefore they cannot savor any thing, but that which has some savor of the creature. Fourthly, because they are not acquainted with the first-fruits of Heaven; whereas those that are godly, have some beginnings of eternal life wrought in them here, and upon that, these things are not so strange to them, their hearts can close with them, and suck out abundance of comfort from them. And thus we have finished the fourth thing of the reward, namely, To have God for their portion.

Chapter 50: The Saints happiness in Communion with Christ

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NOw the fifth particular in the reward of the Saints, is the communion that they shall have with Jesus Christ, God and Man: there are divers things in which the happiness of the Saints consists in having communion with Christ, God and Man. It was one of Saint Augustines three wishes, To see Christ in the flesh: It would be a great delight to you to see Christ in the flesh. Many make much of the Picture of Christ, and if they had it right, they would make more of it; but if Christ should come to any of your houses, as he did when he lived upon the Earth, in his mean condition, would it not greatly delight you? but when we come to enjoy communion with Christ in Heaven, it will be another manner of communion, then that upon Earth: We accounted the Apostles blessed men, that lived with Christ upon the Earth; what a blessed condition will it be, to live with Christ in Heaven? If there were such vertue in Christ upon Earth, that there came such vertue from the hem of his garment, what glory will there be in Christ, in his full glory? If Christ were so glorious when he was in his transfiguration, how glorious is he, being glorified before men and Angels eternally in Heaven, With the glory that he had with his Father,before the beginning of the World! If there was so much

vertue in the Apostles of Christ, in regard of the reference they had to Christ, as from the shadow of Peter, and the Napkins that were taken from Pauls body, there was such power as to heal diseases, what vertue must needs come from Christ, when we shall come to enjoy him, when we come to see Christ that was the author of all our good? We read of the poor Cripple, when he was healed by the two Disciples, he ran and catched hold on them, and was loth to go from them, who had been the instruments of so great good to him; but for the Saints to come and be with Christ, who has been the instrument of so great good to them, as Christ has been, what an infinite happiness will this be? we read of many that would go long journeys, to see those men that had any excellency in them; as some would go from the utmost parts of Greece to Rome, to see Livie, Themistocles: to see Christ then, in whom is so much excellency, will be glorious. And then to have communion with him: it is he in whom God the Father takes full satisfaction; surely he must be the full satisfaction of the Saints: this is that which Christ prays for; First, he prays for his own glory, and then he prays for the Disciples, and all Believers, That they might be with him to see his glory.

O to see the Lord Jesus glorified as he shall be glorified, must be a glorious thing! As to see his glory in regard of the lustre of his Divinity, through his humanity; when Christ pleased to let out any lustre of his Divinity, through his humanity here, men were not able to bear it; as those that came to apprehend him, when he said, I am he, they fell down backward: now in Heaven the lustre of Christs Divinity, shall shine mightily through his humanity; so in him our bodily eyes shall come to see God as much as it is possible for any creature to see him; because God shall be let out through

the humanity of Christ, as much as it is possible for the Divinity to appear in any corporeal substance, or in any creature: We shall see him with these our eyes, as Iob says. We shall see how the power of an infinite God can convey the lustre of a Deity into a creature. Certainly, Angels and men will be continually viewing of Christ, he shall come to be admired of the Saints, he shall be admired at the day of Judgement in the Saints, but in Heaven they shall see such excellency in Christ, God and Man, as they shall be admiring at him to all eternity, as much as they did at the first moment; here if we see any thing that is excellent, we admire at first, but after a while we do not so: but there will be so much excellency in Christ, as we shall so admire at it, to all eternity, as we did at the first moment; for there shall be no abatement of our being taken with the glory of the sight of Christ. Blessed are your eyes, says Christ, that see those things you see; and blessed are your ears that hear those things you hear: It is a blessed thing to see the things we may see here; but to see the Divinity shine through the humanity, this will be a great blessing.

And we shall see him in the glory that the Father will put upon him; Certainly, God will put an infinite glory upon his Son, because the Lord was so infinitely well pleased with the satisfaction of his Son: Because he subjected himself to the death of the Cross, therefore He has given him a name above all names. And we shall see the glory of Christ, when all the Angels shall be worshipping of him, and all the Saints shall be singing with Praises and Hallalujahs to him. And this shall be the business in Heaven, eternally to be admiring Christ, and praising God for Christ. And then we shall see him in his glory triumphing over all his enemies, in bringing them down; and in his glory when he shall have brought

to perfection that great work that he did undertake: Now to see Christ thus glorified, and for us to enjoy communion with Christ thus in his glory, this will be a glorious reward for Gods people. This glory of Christ, will be made the glory of the Saints: as a Queen that sees the Prince in his glory, she delights in it, because it is her glory: and so the Church, when she shall see Christ her husband in his glory, she shall rejoice in it, because she looks upon it as her own, I speak of the Triumphant Church: The Angels shall admire at it; O that these poor worms should be raised from this low estate to such a glorious condition! they pry into the mystery of Salvation. Then the love of Christ shall be enflamed to his people, that love which caused him to plead with God for his people from all eternity, that caused him to undertake this great work for his people; from this love, there will be most glorious embracements. If at one salutation of the mother of our Lord, John Baptist springs in the Womb for joy, how shall the heart of a glorified Saint spring at the glorious embracements of Christ himself, when he is in his glory? And when we shall be in such a condition as we shall be fitted for communion with him, we shall be able to understand Christ in another way; we shall know the hypostatical union of his two natures, and know Christ fully, and be fitter to entertain the manifestation of his love, whereas here we are not able to entertain much; Christ looks through the lattess, and we have but some few drops of his love, but then when his love shall be enflamed and fully let out, we shall be fitted for it.

And it shall be such a communion with Christ, as we shall never leave, but follow the Lamb wheresoeverhe goes: There shall be no moment to all eternity, in which Christ shall be out of the sight of so many thousand thousands of Saints: And though that

Text in the Revelations be meant of the Church in this world, and the following of Christ wherever he goes here, following of him in the ordinances; but if it be an happiness here to follow the Lamb wherever he goes, much more in heaven: You that are willing to suffer any thing, to follow the Lamb in his ordinances here, know there is enough to pay for all, you shall be always following the Lamb in heaven, and you shall always be in the company of Christ; and this is the fifth particular, namely, The communion that the souls of Gods people shall have with Christ. There are yet two things to be opened in this branch, to show what the recompence of reward of Gods people is; and they are the enjoyment of communion with the Angels and Saints, and the keeping a perpetual Sabbath in Heaven.

The enjoyment of communion with the Angels and Saints: The Angels and Saints are joined together under one head; the Angels rejoice here in being ministring spirits unto the Saints; O what rejoicing will there be then in communion with them! the Saints of God shall enjoy communion with the Angels in a familiar way, they shall be fitted for communion with God and Christ himself, much more fitted for communion with Angels; yea, the Angels shall account it part of their happiness to have communion with the Saints: The sight of an Angel to us now in the flesh, though he comes to bring good tidings, is a great amazement; but then the sight of the Angels shall be no amazement, but we shall look upon them as our fellow creatures, to have communion with them, Heb. 12:23 Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and to the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of innumerable Angels: This is spoken of the priviledge of the Gospel; before by the Law there was nothing but terror, that made Moses to fear and

quake; now we are not to come to Mount Sinai, but to Mount Zion, and unto the City of the living God: Before, without Christ we were vagabonds, wandring up and down in the wilderness of the Word, but by Christ we are gathered unto the City of the living God, and the heavenly Ierusalem; there were nothing but troubles before, but now they are gathered to Ierusalem into peace, and to an innumerable company of Angels: Before the Angels were as Gods Host, ready to revenge the quarrel of God upon us, but now we are come to the innumerable company of Angels, who are ministring spirits to us here, and we shall enjoy communion with them: The Angels are full of wisdom, and therefore when the Scripture would set forth the excellency of wisdom, it sets it forth by the wisdom of the Angels. Doctor Taylor the Martyr, rejoiced that he came into prison with Master Bradford, that Angel Bradford, though he was but one that had the likeness of an Angel, and in prison, yet he rejoiced in being with him: What rejoicing will there be to be with all the Angels that are Angels indeed, and that in our Fathers house? The way and manner of the converse of Saints with Angels is very obscure; how spirits do converse one with another, we know but little; we converse one with another by speaking, there can be no such way of converse with Spirits. The Schoolmen say, By the act of their wills, they come to make known what is in their mindes, but we shall know more of the manner of converse with them afterwards.

Chapter 51: The happiness of enjoying communion with the Saints in glory

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But it is more familiar to us, to know our excellency in the converse with the Saints, Heb. 12:23 To the general Assembly, and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, &c. To enjoy communion with the Saints here is sweet, to enjoy communion with all the Saints, with all the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Iacob, and Moses, and Aaron, and Ioshua, and all the good Prophets, and the good Kings, and all Martyrs, and Worthies of the Lord: If to have communion with one or two be sweet, then to have communion with all at once must needs be sweet; it is worth the enduring much to get to heaven, if it were only to have communion with the Saints.

Secondly, to have communion with none but them: to have communion with the Saints is sweet, though we are forced to have communion with the world, but to have communion with the choicest of Gods servants, & with none else, that is sweet indeed.

Thirdly, to have communion with them made perfect: The best now have many weaknesses, and many frampold moods, and offensive carriages, that there must be a great deal born in commu-

nion with the best; but then we shall be delivered from imperfections, there shall be no ignorance, but we shall have communion with those that are knowing, and perfectly glorified. The life of my Lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life; it is the blessing of Abigail to David: Now Interpreters expound it thus, It is a Metaphor, taken from binding up of yong plants that are removed from one place to be set in another: Now there is a great deal of difference between a bundle of plants laid in the water, to preserve them till they be set in the garden, and those plants growing and flourishing in the garden: It is a great blessing to be bound up amongst Gods people here, that are plants that have life; but we are here but as plants, bound up and laid in water, reserved till we shall come to be planted in Heaven, and there to flourish: There is much difference between Gods people, what they are here, and what they shall be in Heaven, as there is between a plant that is bound up, and laid in water to be kept alive, and when it is in the Orchard, green and flourishing, and bringing forth fruit.

Fourthly, to have communion with them, when we shall know one another perfectly: It is an opinion of Thomas, as you heard, That the bodies of the Saints shall be so transparent, that they shall be able to see through one anothers bodies, as through a glass: Howsoever that be, yet the souls of one another, and the graces, and goodness of one another, shall be fully made known to one another: If now we did converse with a company of people, that we knew certainly had all true grace, and were all elected from all eternity, what an admirable comfort would this be? our communion is comfortable, because we have some hopes of their election, and we see some signs of grace; but if we were certain of this, if God should speak from Heaven concerning the poorest member

of a Church, and say, This man, or woman, is the man or woman that I have had thoughts upon from all eternity, and have elected to everlasting glory; would we not prize such a one, and rejoice to have such a one in our families and houses? Now when we come to Heaven, we shall certainly know every one was elected from all eternity, and so shall live with us to eternity; we shall never have any fears or suspitions of them, lest they should be hypocrites, as there are fears and suspitions given of one another now.

And then to have communion with them, when there shall be perfect love and union of heart to one another, that one shall love another as well as himself, and rejoice in the glory and prosperity of one another, as well as his own: If one have more glory then another, he that has least glory, shall rejoice in him that has more glory, as if it were his own, and therefore there shall not be any want of glory to any; says Anselm, Every Saint shall loveGod above himself, and love one another as himself, and God shall love them all, more then they either love themselves or one another; and he gives the reason of it, says he, They love both themselves and one another for God, and by God, and God loves himself and them for himself, and by himself; and therefore as they shall love God above themselves, so they shall love one another like themselves, and rejoice in the happiness of another, as in their own happiness: Now what an heaven upon earth is it to have brethren live together in unity? if it be in family communion, or in Church communion, to have entire love without any breaches, this is a blessing; but howsoever, while we are in this world, there will be breaches, yet there is an heavenly Jerusalem coming, where we shall live without breaches.

And then likewise to have communion one with another always in holy exercises: To have communion one with another in our civil converse, to eat, and drink at one anothers tables, and in recreating ourselves, this is sweet; but communion in holy ordinances, and holy duties, that is sweetest. Men love communion and society here, that they may play together, and eat and drink together; indeed, if it be in a moderate Christian way, there may be some delight in it; but know, it is an evident sign of a carnal heart, when as your chief affections shall be let out in the exercising yourself that way: If the chief joy of your hearts be not in exercising yourselves in holy duties, your hearts are carnal: There is a great deal of difference between that day, in which a company of gracious men have communion with one another in recreating themselves, and that day in which they shall have communion with one another in exercising themselves in holy ordinances, in praying together, and hearing the Word together; and therefore examine whether you finde a day of communion with Gods people in holy exercises, better then a day of communion in outward society.

Again, it is such a communion as we shall never part with, such a communion as we shall always enjoy: Here we have communion, but it is often darkned, because we are often in our dumps, and many times there is an occasion of sorrow given; but to have communion where there shall be always joy, continual being at the feast, the supper of the Lamb, that must needs be sweet. Therefore that Text you have of Lazarus in Abrahams bosom, sets out the continual feast of the Lamb that the Saints shall have, because that was the manner of the Jews feasting, to lean in the bosom of one another; and therefore John when he sate to eat with Christ, he leaned in his bosom, noting that the Saints shall be always as the

children of the Bride-Chamber: There is a question made by some, of the knowing of one anoanother in heaven. It is reported of Luther, the night before he dyed, he was reasonable well, and sate with his friends at the Table, and the matter of their discourse was, Whether they should know one another in heaven or no, whether the father should know the childe, or the childe the father? Luther held it affirmatively; and this was one reason he gave, As it was with Adam, as soon as he saw Eve, he knew what Eve was, not by discourse, but by the Spirit of God, telling him what she was; and so we being filled with the Spirit of God, we shall come to know one another, we shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Iacob; we shall have communion with them, not only as godly men, but as with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and if with them, why not with others? This we have in Scripture, that spiritual relations shall adde much to the glory of the people of God in Heaven, though natural relations shall be taken away; as the Father, if he know the childe, there shall not be that natural affection to the childe as is now; yet the Scripture seems to speak of spiritual relations, that they shall continue even in Heaven for the glory of the Saints; and therefore St. Paul says to the Philippians, You are our crown, and our rejoicing in the day of Christ: It shall be known, who were converted by such a Ministery, and it shall be a crown to a Minister, that such were converted, and edified, and built up by him.

But we need not trouble ourselves about this question, because we have one thing that will satisfy us, about all questions that are not clear: Either we shall have all that happiness we do think in our thoughts, or can think, or else we shall have that (we being our own judges and choosers) that shall be as good or better: so that if a Parent thinks what an happiness were it for me to see my childe

in heaven; and the childe shall think, what an happiness were it for me to see my Parents in Heaven, you think so here: We guess at things thus childishly, but yet either this shall be, or that which is as good or better then this. As suppose I should think, how glad should I be if such a one would give me a shilling, if after I come to know he will give me this, or a Twenty shilling piece, I do not trouble myself to know whether he will give me a shilling or no. And so much for Communion with the Angels and Saints.

Chapter 52: The happiness of God's people in the Perpetual Sabbath that they shall enjoy

NOw the last thing in the Explication is, to show in which the happiness of the Saints consists, is that Perpetual Sabbath that they shall keep with God, whereof this Sabbath is but a Type, Heb. 4:9 Sabbaths here are comfortable, and we have felt some sweet, and some comfort in some Sabbaths; but take all the comfort that ever you had in all the Sabbaths you have had here, and put all into one, that would be a comfortable Sabbath; but that perpetual Sabbath that shall be hereafter, will be the accomplishment of all those Sabbaths, and that will be sweet. Now I shall express myself in these six or seven particulars, to show the happiness of Gods people in that perpetual Sabbath.

First, they shall be exercised in the highest employments that any creature can be exercised in, or that they are capable to be exercised in: The happiness of a creature consists much in that which it is exercised in; as there is a great deal of difference between the happiness of a Noble-man in Court, and the happiness of one that is employed only in cleansing channels, and the meanest employment that is, because their exercise is different; the one is exer-

cised about business that concerns a King, and a State, and the other is imployed about mean things; therefore according as the exercise is, that any creature is raised to, so is the dignity and excellency of that creature: Now we are exercised in mean things here, in comparison of what we shall be hereafter, and yet our business here in making provision for the flesh, in getting meat, and drink, and clothes, and money, is sweet; but though out of obedience to God, we ought to go on comfortably in our callings and places in which God has set us, because God calls us to these low mean things, yet we are to account them a mean condition, in regard of that which our natures are capable of, it is but a sore travel that is laid upon man, and this shall not satisfy us, as if we were capable of no higher things; but when we shall be raised to be busied about the highest employments that a created substance is capable to be busied about, that must be comfortable; as the Psalmist speaks, The highpraises of God shall be in their mouthes: They shall be always busied in the high contemplations of God, and of the Trinity; and they shall be always singing praises to God, and to him that sits upon the throne, and to every Verse of the Song that they shall sing to the Lamb, there shall be a Selah put to it; it must be glorious, because this is the highest glory that God has, not only from his works here, but from all the counsels of his wisdom about the great mystery of redemption, from all his works in Heaven, and the highest glory, that he has from all the communications of himself to the Saints in Heaven, in his praises that they shall be exercised in: all the happiness that we have from God here, is a way of subserviency unto the actual praising of God; there whatever God communicates to his creature, the top of all is not that the creature should have it, but that it should reflect the

praise of all upon God. The end of all that God does in the world is his glory that he shall have in Heaven, and the end of all he does in Heaven, is the actual working of the souls of his Saints upon himself.

Secondly, the happiness of the perpetual Sabbath, may be expressed in this, in that the souls of Gods people shall be always up, and fit for these high works: God calls us many times to most excellent things, to be exercised about himself, but our hearts are not fit for these exercises; sometimes we finde our hearts enlarged, and when our hearts are up, we take delight in holy exercises; but at other times, how hardly are we drawn to them? and we are weary in obedience, and count it a slavery, those exercises are heavy to us; but there is a time coming, when our hearts shall be always up, never to seek, but shall be always upon the highest pin, enflamed with heat continually: as it is an heavy curse for a mans heart to be suitable and fitted for temptation, when a temptation shall come; so it is a wonderful blessing to be fitted for any holy employment, when we are called to it; this there shal be always in the Saints in heaven, in keeping this their perpetual Sabbath. It is reported of Anselm, as he was walking out of his house, he saw a bird, that was fluttering to fly up, and could not get up, but fell down, and looking upon it wishly, he saw a string tyed to the leg, and a stone at the end; upon this his heart broke, and he bemoaned himself, This is my condition, says he, though sometimes I would fain get up in holy exercises with God, O but this burden of sin, and weight of sin, is like a stone, and presses me down, when I am got up a little way, I am pull'd down again, my heart is seldom fitted for holy exercises: So it is with us usually, though through Gods grace there are some wings to move up a little, yet this weight

and burden of sins presses us down, and makes us unfit for holy duties; let us go humbly a while under that sore burden, but know we shall be freed from it ere long.

Thirdly, the happiness of the Sabbath consists in this, there shall be no intermission, but they shall continue day and night (though there shall be no night) then we shall not go to duty and break off again, and go again, and break off again, no, there shall be no other imployment; though the duties of Gods worship here be of an excellent nature, yet we are not to spend all our time in them; but then there shall be nothing else to spend one moment of time in to all eternity.

Fourthly, there shall be no weariness; though we do spend some time in holy exercises here, we are quickly weary before we have done, Though the spirit be willing, the flesh is weak; but when we shall have been praising of God millions of years, we shall be as fresh at the end of them, as at the first moment; when we are exercised in holy duties with others, it is good to consider of their weakness, whether they be able to hold out, and join with us; but there we shall not need fear weariness in ourselves, or any others.

Again, we shall see nothing else done by no body else: Here we get together, and sing, and pray, and hear the Word, and this is comfortable; but we see the Sabbath broken by others, and that damps our hearts; but there is a Sabbath coming shall be so kept, as we shall see none break it, but every one we have to deal withal shall keep it: But yet by the way, it is better in a place where it is not altogether so well kept, and is in a rising way, then in a place where it is better kept for the present, but is in a declining way; but

though it be a grief to us to see the Sabbath broken, yet know, there is a Sabbath coming that we shall keep, and none shall break it.

Again, the happiness of the Sabbath consists in this, to keep this Sabbath in these high exercises, when so many thousands shall be yelling and roaring under the wrath of an infinite God; they shall consider, we are now in the presence of God, keeping a Sabbath unto him, as the children of the Bridechamber, singing songs of triumph to him that sits upon the throne for ever; whereas others are cast out from God, and are roaring and yelling under the burden of the wrath of an infinite God, and that might have been our portion: This addes to the glory of the Saints; and therefore the Scripture has this expression, Without shall be dogs: That expression is taken from the manner of the Iews marriages, usually they were in the night, and the Bridegroom and his Bride and their company were taken in with torches and delight into the Bride-chamber, others were without without light, & not taken into the chamber: so in Heaven, some shall be taken to be exercised in these glorious things, and others are cast out: as would it not adde much to ones happiness, to think thus with ones self; I am now going into a place where I shall have abundance of mirth and joy with my friends; and others in the mean time lie in the cold, starving in the dungeon, and I might have been there as well as they: if a man should go along with the King in triumph, and be at the right hand of the King in glory, and as he goes by, he should hear a company of poor wretches out of a dungeon, crying, yelling, this sets out his glory: so to be at that time, thus exercised in those heavenly employments, when as others shall be cursing themselves, and the time that they were born, and blaspheme the name

of God: it is a comfort to a company of gracious hearts when they are got together in holy exercises, to think there are others in the Tavern, drinking and swilling, and blaspheming: what difference is between our condition this day, and their condition? this does mightily refresh ones heart, and enlarge it to praise God for his mercy; and so in Heaven the Saints shall know every instant when they are keeping this Sabbath; others are howling under the wrath of God, and cursing the time they were born.

Lastly, this Sabbath is to be kept in our Fathers house: we shall not sing the songs of Zion in a strange Land, but in our Fathers house. Those godly persons in the times of the Maccabees, accounted themselves happy, that they might worship and serve God though in the Dens, and Caves of the Earth; it will be more happiness to serve God in Heaven, and in our Fathers House. I remember I read of one Marcellus a godly man, being cast into a stinking place, he did make that his Temple to God, and perfumed it with his prayers, and after the Christians built a Temple in that place; and so we may make a filthy dungeon a Temple; but if it be comfortable to be exercised in holy duties in the most filthy and vile places, much more comfortable shall it be when we come to Heaven, in our Fathers house. In Rev. 15. we read of those that sung the song of Moses, they stood upon the sea of glass mingled with fire; to sing the song of Moses, though it be upon the sea of glass, this uncertain life of ours full of trouble, it is comfortable, but to sing it in our Fathers house, will be comfortable indeed; though we do meet with troubles here, yet if we can enjoy the Sabbath, we comfort ourselves, but we shall have a better Sabbath then these, even a perpetual Sabbath in our Fathers house; put these together, and you shall see what this perpetual Sabbath is

that Gods people shall have in heaven. Now put all together that we have said negatively, comparatively and positively, the perfection of their natures, their bodies, and souls, and whole persons; their glory at the day of judgement, their possession of heaven, their having God to be their portion, their communion with Christ, their communion with the Angels and Saints, and this perpetual Sabbath that they shall keep, and do but apprehend what infinite joy must flow from all these; these are as the several streams of this Paradise of God. In Gen. 2. we read of Paradise that God made for Adam, and there were four streams that were to water it; this Paradise of Heaven have these seven streams to water it, to make the Saints happy; do but consider what infinite joy must flow from all these put together; every one does cause joy, but put them all together, and the joy that comes from hence is a most pure joy, and a most spiritual joy, and a full joy, and a divine joy.

First, pure; that is, not only free from any mixture of sorrow, but without any thing that should sully it, without any sin: Here all our pleasures are mixed.

And spiritual: If it were to rejoice in the good that our bodies shall have, it were admirable joy, but the joy shall not be so much in regard of the happiness of our bodies, but in regard that God is our portion, it shall be spiritual; yea, the happiness of our bodies shall be spiritual and supernatural.

And it shall be full: How full must it needs be, they shall enter into their joy, because the joy cannot enter into them: We rejoice in believing with joy unspeakable and glorious: If the seed time be so glorious, how glorious will the harvest be? says Cyprian,They shall not taste, but they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of your house: The fatness of Gods house in the world does

abundantly satisfy the souls of Gods people, but the fatness of Gods house hereafter, how will that satisfy them? The people of God shall have such objects to rejoice in, as is the essential glory of God, and all the glory that is put upon him by all his creatures, and all the good they have by Gods communication of himself to them, and all the glory of one another: Look how many Saints shall be in heaven, they shall rejoice in every ones happiness as in their own; their own happiness will cause joy, but so many Saints as shall be happy, so many times shall their joy be double, and therefore it must be full joy: Comfort proceeds from the suitableness between the faculty and the object; now here is the greatest suitableness between the faculty and the object that can be, because here is not only good in the Concreat, but goodness in the Abstract; and union with goodness it self, is more then union with a good thing. Surely the joys of heaven must needs be great, because a little taste of them here that the Martyrs have had, has made exquisite tortures, grievous and dreadful pains, not only tolerable, but comfortable.

And it is Divine joy: It may be said to be Divine in three respects: First, it comes from God: Secondly, it is in God: Thirdly, it is with God. First, it comes from God, being caused by the Spirit of God, and that is another manner of joy then the men of the world have. Secondly, it is in God, rejoicing in God, and that is other manner of joy then rejoicing in meat and drink: Look what difference there is between the excellency that is in God, and the excellency that there is in meat, and drink, and idle sports, so much difference is between the joy that Gods people have in God, and the joy that wicked men have in the creature: And it is divine, in regard that it is joy with God, it is the same joy that God himself has; carnal hearts rejoice one with another in sensual things, but God

does not rejoice in those things you rejoice in, but the Saints in heaven shall be exercised in the same joy that God himself has, and rejoice in the same things that God shall rejoice in; to have the beams of our joy mingle with the beams of Gods joy, and so to have Gods joy and ours put into one, that must needs be admirable joy. Notwithstanding this joy of the Saints shall be thus glorious, yet the utmost happiness of man consists not in it; though joy be a necessary concomitant to mans blessedness, yet mans blessedness consists not in it. We do not seek the enjoyment of God, that we might delight in this enjoyment, but we seek delight in the enjoyment, because the enjoyment is the greatest good.

And besides all this, there are some circumstances that serve to set out all that I have said yet further, and to make the happiness of Gods people yet more glorious.

First, it is a prepared happiness, that happiness that God has had his thoughts upon from all eternity, and laid the ground of it from all eternity, God has been working from all eternity to provide this.

Secondly, in that it comes to the people of God, by such a glorious way, as the purchase of Jesus Christ, that I have it, and that I have it by such a glorious way, that will be exceeding comfortable.

Thirdly, that we who are so vile, and so wretched, and so abominable as we are in ourselves, that we who by nature are but firebrands of hell and fuel for eternal wrath, that we should be raised to such a height of happiness.

Fourthly, that we are so few: Not many wise, nor rich, nor noble, but the mean ones of the world, that there should be so many of the world, and the great ones of the world cast out, and a hand-

ful of poor contemptible people should be raised to this glory, this is a mighty aggravation of the happiness of Gods people.

Fifthly, that this should be a reward for that which we owe in a way of obedience; we owe all our services in a way of obedience to God, and we may say, When we have done all, we are unprofitable Servants; and that we do, we are bound to do as creatures, and yet that God should reward that which we owe to him in a way of obedience, this aggravates the happiness of the Saints: as if a Master should give his Servant all his estate for doing that which he is bound to do: We have more then wages here, then how much more is that we shall have hereafter?

Again, that which God is pleased to reward, it is but poor mixt service: take our duties at the best, they are such as deserve Hell; there is no one act, but if God should observe what is amiss, you deserve to be cast from God for ever for it; now when we rather deserve that God should cast us down to Hell, yet that God should reward us with all this glory, what a glorious thing is this?

Again, that the Lord is pleased to make this sure to us: if God had left it to uncertainty, and bidden us work, it might be well with us, and may be he will think of us, this might have been a comfort to us: but that God is pleased to binde himself thus, and to make all sure: As if a King should make his Crown & Kingdom sure to a poor wretch, in the way of reward for a poor service; so does God, he makes this glory ours by reward, in a way of Covenant and Testament; by Covenant, such a Covenant as he does not only cause to be written in his word, but in our hearts; & we have witness of this in heaven and earth, three bear witness in heaven, and three in earth; and he gives us seals to confirm this Covenant, and he confirms it by an Oath, he swears by himself, because there is

no greater to swear by; and he makes it sure by way of Testament: Covenant we think we may break, but that which is given by Testament, and confirmed by the death of the Testator, that is sure, and thus has God made it sure unto us.

Again, all things that do befal us in this world, and all the ways of Gods providence, do but tend to the furtherance of us to our reward, and to the increase of our reward, and that is the wonderful happiness of Gods people, this should sweeten all conditions: If I be in a meaner condition then another, yet this is in order to my reward, and this is more then if I had a Kingdom in the world, if it were not in order to that; but whatever I have in the world, though never so hard to flesh and blood, it is in order to this, this satisfies.

Again, this reward is near, we shall not stay long for it: If God required of us to be burning a thousand years, and then to have it, we had yet cause to rejoice; but it is at hand, and nearer at hand to us in this latter age of the world, then to our Fore-fathers; God has but a few things to do in the world, to gather but a few more of the Gentiles, and his own people the Jews, and to pull down Antichrist, and then all is done: The time is short, says the Scripture; the word that is translated short, in 1 Cor. 7:29 is a Metaphor taken from a piece of cloth that is rolled up, only a little left at the end; so God has rolled up all his works, only he has a little left at the end, and then all this glory shall appear; the frame of Heaven and earth does but stand till that time, and if that time were come, the frame of Heaven and earth should presently be dissolved, and the ways of Gods providence in this world should be at an end, the Heavens and earth groan for this time. It is said of Doctor Taylor, when he was near at the stake, he fetch'd a leap, and said, I have but two stiles to my Fathers house. We in our way

here are as Travellers, some ride it may be a little faster, and get to the Inn first, and then another comes a quarter or half an hour after, but it is but a short time in comparison; he has promised, and he will come quickly, with the glory of his Father, and all the glory of Heaven with him.

And then this shall be after all our troubles: As Painters first draw all black, and then the other beautiful colours; so all our troubles here are but as the black ground-work, to make our glory the more beautiful hereafter: To see land after a long and dangerous voyage, how joyful is it? As the Trojans, after they had been wandring a long time in the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, as soon as they espied Italy, they cryed out with exulting joys, Italy, Italy; how much more the Saints after they have passed this troublesom world, and come to Heaven, what acclamations of joy will the heavens ring of? Heaven, Heaven.

Lastly, all these things are eternal; this puts an infiniteness of worth upon every particular: How was Haman puffed up by Esthers inviting of him to one Banquet? How shall the hearts of the Saints be taken with that eternal Supper of the Lamb? Obed-Edom was blessed in having the Ark but three moneths in his house, how blessed they who shall have Gods not only gracious but glorious presence eternally? And so I come to the fourth particular, which was propounded in the handling of this point; namely,

4. In which lies the power of the consideration of the recompence of reward to help a man through sufferings. Much has been said, but more may be said, to show that there is a mighty power in it to enable the heart to suffer any thing for God; it is that which has mightily wrought upon the Saints of God heretofore: That is an observable place that we have concerning Christs Transfiguration,

and Christs Agony: when he was transfigured upon the Mount, and his glory was showed, even a glimpse of the glory of Heaven; Christ took with him only three Disciples, Peter, James and Iohn; afterward when Christ was to come to his Agony, when his soul was heavy to death, and he sweat clods of blood, he only took those three Disciples that had seen him in his glory, to see him in his sufferings; to show, that those that know what the glory of Christ means, those are the fittest to join with Christ in his Agony, and to endure the greatest sufferings that they can meet withal. See in Dan. 7. there is mention made of a cruel Tyrant that should make War with the Saints, and should persecute Gods people, that devoured and brake in pieces, yet there were some that should bear out all, that should have the Kingdom given them, and God should reward them gloriously; Who are they? at the 22 verse, The Saints of the most high: so you read it, or, TheSaints of the highest; not only of the highest God, but of the highest places, of the highest things, they are those to whom the Kingdom shall be given, those Saints that did see the most glorious things of the Kingdom of God, they had the reward, for they held out in sufferings, but others, whose hearts were low in the earth, they did not hold out.

So those that should hold out in the time of Antichrist, and should not worship the Beast, Rev. 13. 6, 7, 8. were such as dwelt in Heaven. He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his Name, and his Tabernacle, and them that dwelt in Heaven: in many places of the Revelations, Heaven is taken for the Church of God, and the People of God, and so Interpreters take it here: And it was given to him to war with the Saints, and to overcome them: but though he prevailed against the Saints to kill them, yet he could not prevail against them that dwelt in Heaven

to worship him: but all that dwell upon the Earth shall worship him; all that know no higher good then the Earth, they shall follow Antichrist and worship him. Here we see the reason why people will not endure the sufferings inflicted by the Beast, but follow the Beast, & have his mark either upon their foreheads openly, or in their hands secretly, because they do not apprehend the glory of Heaven; but if they can come to see those glorious things of Heaven, though Antichrist do persecute them, they would not worship him: in these latter times of the world Antichrist will prevail to get many to worship him, but the sight of these glorious things will keep us we shall not worship him. In Rev. 12. the Church who is compared to a Woman that was cloathed with the glory of the Sun, she had the Moon, and all sublunary things under her feet: When the soul is seeking after the glory of Heaven, and that is always in its eye, this causes it to have the Moon, by which is signified all things below that are subject to changes, under its feet. I read of a Martyr that was whipped, and almost scourged to death, and then being led to the execution, he met with his Mother, who being a godly gracious woman, did not fall of tearing her hair, and rending her cloathes as other women used to do; but cryed, Son, Remember eternal life; look up to Heaven, and see him that reigns there: Hence we see that having an eye to the recompence of reward, does make the heart to choose the Choice of Moses, To suffer affliction with the people of God, and to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches then the treasures of Egypt; you see there is a great deal of power and efficacy in it; but in which does this power consist? In divers particulars.

Chapter 53: Wherein the power and efficacy of eying the recompence of reward consists

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First, there is a great deal of power in looking to this glorious recompence of reward; because the glory of this does so much darken all the glory of the things of the world that we are called to part withal, when we are called to suffer any thing: Now then the argument lies thus; That which darkens all the glory of the world, and makes it appear to be nothing, that must needs have a great deal of power to enable the heart to part with any thing in the world in the cause of God: those who by the eye of faith are able to behold the reality and certainty of those glorious things, they look upon all things below as poor, mean, slight, contemptible things: As we know the glory of the light of the Sun, darkens the glory of the light of a candle; the light of a candle is comfortable in the night, in the dark, but when the light of the Sun rises, that is nothing: So long as the men of the world are in darkness, the light and comfort of the creature is a great matter to them; but when God lets the glory of the things of his Kingdom appear to them, then the comfort of the creature is nothing. A Glowworm glisters in the dark, but when the day comes, the brightness

and the glistering of the Glow-worm is not seen: so all the brightness and glistering of the creature that takes the hearts of men, is gone when God lifts up his light upon them, and shows them the greatness of his Kingdom.

And the reason why people are so hardly brought to suffer any thing for God, is because they have such high esteem of these things; that which a man has high esteem of, he is loth to part withal; but when a mans heart is taken from them, as there is no longer a high esteem of them, he is willing to part with them. As Saint Paul said, I am ready not to be bound only, but also to dye for the name of the Lord Jesus; his life was not dear to him, he accounted it not worth the least degree of glory to God: A gracious heart, as it accounts nothing low in any duty that tends to this glorious reward, so it accounts nothing high to part with for the recompence of reward. It is a notable passage we have of Joseph to his Father Jacob, Gen. 45:20 Regard not your stuff, for the good of all the Land of Egypt is yours: It may be Joseph thought his Father Jacob might think, I have many Goods here, and what, shall I leave all that I have here to go to Egypt, into a strange country? he might think this might be some let to his Father; but Ioseph calls it all stuff: you have a deal of stuff and lumber, but let it not grieve you to leave your stuff and lumber, all the good of the Land of Egypt is yours: So God says to a gracious heart, when it looks upon any thing it should part withal, and it is loth to part with it, says God, Regard not your stuff, and lumber you have here; for not the good of all the Land of Egypt is yours, but all the good that is in Heaven is yours, and the good that is in the God of Heaven, and the good that is in Christ is all yours: That soul that understands the glory of Heaven, and the Interest that it has in it, shall hear a voyce tell it,

That all the good in Heaven, and in God, and in Christ, is its own; and therefore he will not regard any thing here: if we knew no better things then these, we would be loth to part with them; if we had never seen the light of the Sun, we would have accounted the Moon a glorious creature, and as a mighty Ornament to Heaven, and to the world; but when we come to see the glory of the Sun, that is nothing to us in comparison. Children that are born in a dungeon, and know no better things, would be loth to part with that they have there; but when they come to know what is in the world, then all they had before is nothing to them; greater glory diminisheth that which is less. So that we may apply that the Apostle speaks concerning the comparison of the Gospel with the Law, to this we are speaking of, 2 Cor. 3:10 That which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth; though there was some glory in the administration of the Law, yet it is no glory in comparison of that which excelleth: So though there may be glory in the outward comforts of the world, yet there is no glory in comparison of that glory which excelleth, in comparison of that glory which has been opened; and that is the first thing.

Secondly, as the glory of the world is darkned by having respect to this glorious recompence of reward, so all the evils of the world are wonderfully lessened: You know what the Apostle says, in Rom. 8:18 That the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us: As we use to say, It is not to be named the same day, not to be reckoned with the glory that shall be revealed in us: A Father upon that place has a notable gloss, says he, Sufferings are not to be compared & looked upon, in respect, first of the punishment that we have deserved, which is passed by, and pardoned; and then not to

be compared and reckoned with the present grace and comfort that Gods people have here: But then much less is to be compared and reckoned with the weight of glory that is to come, that is promised to us. And so in 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18. While we look at things that are eternal, not temporal, this light affliction; all is but light, and nothing in comparison: What is it for one to have a rainy day, who is going to take possession of a Crown? there is no man would be much sensible of a little cold in his head, if it were uncovered a while to have a Crown of gold put on. I have read of a foolish woman that was afraid her Son should get cold by putting off his night-cap to have a Crown set upon his head; but no wise man would much consider the cold he should get in his head upon that ground: Great things swallow up small things, and great joys will swallow up small evils; there is no comparison between the evil we suffer here, and the glory that is to come; What is a drop of vinegar put into an Ocean of sweet wine? it is not so much as taken notice of; here when a man receives a great good, he is not affected with lesser evils: As for example in Saul, when Saul had the Kingdom, some did despise him, 1 Samuel 10:27 but Saul held his peace; he was not troubled at that, though he was a man afterward froward enough; he thought, this good of the Kingdom is enough to take away the apprehension of any evil in being despised; what though a company of poor people despise me, and speak against me when as I have the Kingdom, and am anointed of God, and have this dignity put upon me? A man that knows any thing of his own worth, and that God has bestowed much upon him; this takes off any other evil, that appears to be in others prating of him; but now when men do not understand any great good in themselves, then they account the evil of the world despising them a great evil:

Many men judge of themselves rather by the esteem other men have of them, then by any good they know in themselves, and no marvel though these men be so much troubled at other mens despising of them. If a Merchant have a Ship come home laden with many thousand pounds worth of rich Commodities, though his Servant should do something amiss that day, he would not be froward at it, but pass it by, because he has such great profit and good coming in; so the evils of the world are nothing in comparison to that soul that knows the great things of the Kingdom of God to be its own.

Thirdly, there is a mighty deal of power in it; because this respect unto the recompence of reward, does so much take up the faculties of the soul, the intention of the mind being taken up about so great an object, other things are not minded in comparison; and this is the reason why those that are in a phrensie, are insensible of what you do unto them; because their mindes are taken up about that which they apprehend so strongly, as nothing else is minded by them; and if there was any object made known to take up the mind of man, it must be such great things as these, made certain and real to the soul by faith. It is a property peculiar to God, that though he has many glorious things that he exercises his wisdom about, yet he does mind the least thing, the least creature in the world, as much as if there were nothing else to mind; but no creature can do so, no creature can mind great things with intention of mind, and yet mind inferior things with any strength of intention too, but if he mindes great things with intention, other things must be lightly minded. An Ecclesiastical Historian tells us of the Christians they did so mind the glory of God, and the glory of Heaven, as that the pains they suffered were as in the bodies of

other men, and not in their own bodies. It is reported of Archimides, who was a great Mathematician, that when the City was taken in which he was, and the Warlike instruments of death clattering about his ears, and all was in a tumult, yet he was so busie about drawing his lines, that he did not know there was any danger, and heard no noise: If such objects as these can take up the intention of the mind, so as not to mind other things, then much more such an object as eternal life, and eternal glory and happiness. And therefore that place is very observable, in 2 Cor. 4:16 We faint not in our sufferings, because we look not at things that are seen, but at things that are not seen: We are so intense about Heaven, and the glory of God, that we do not give a look at things that are seen. So in Heb. 11. 15, 16. They were not so much as mindeful of that Countrey from whence they came, becausethey sought a Countrey that was better, and heavenly. It is a notable expression that Basil has concerning the Martyrs, says he, They do not look at the danger they are in, but at the crown: And again he says, They do not look at the Officers, and Executioners that are whipping of them, but they look to the Angels that are giving acclamations, and that are encouraging of them. As a carnal heart, a man that mindes earthly things, his mind is so taken up about them, because they are an object suitable to him; as when all the glory of God, and of Christ, and of Heaven is set before him, he lets it pass without any minding; so a gracious heart that by faith can see into the reality of the glory of Heaven, and eternal life so taken up with them, as not to mind earthly things; and that is the third particular.

Fourthly, the respect unto the recompence of the reward has a mighty power to carry on the soul in a way of suffering, because the soul by this comes to see how infinitely well pleased God is with it, and with that it undertakes for his names sake, in suffering any thing in his cause; and this does mightily prevail with a gracious heart. If God does but give his command to do a thing, this might be enough to show Gods good pleasure in that action; but when with command God reveals such infinite glorious things that he will reward that action withal, this discovers more of the infinite good pleasure of God; so that the soul in this does not only see its own happiness, but sees the infinite good pleasure of God in it; and reasons thus, How has God set his heart upon me? And what infinite good pleasure is it that he takes, in that I poor worm shall suffer for his names sake, when he does not only tell me it is according to his will, but he has such infinite glorious things to reward that I do, except his heart were much upon it, & taken with it, there would never such great and glorious things have been for the rewarding of it; but in that these things are so revealed, and I in some measure see them, I cannot but think God takes infinite delight in these sufferings, for his names sake, & God forbid that any thing in the world should take off my heart from that which I see God takes such infinite pleasure in: when a gracious heart shall see God holding forth a crown to set on his head in suffering, it sets the soul on fire in suffering for God; if you hadst only given forth your command, it had been enough to make all creatures obedient to you; but that you shouldest manifest yourself thus to crown them with this glory, and to lay up these treasures of the riches of your glory for them, Who would not do and suffer any thing in your cause, O blessed God!

The fifth particular, in which the power of this argument consists, is the abundance of sweet that there is in the hope of this reward, to fill the heart with joy and peace; the more joy and peace the heart is filled withal, the more certainly it is able to do great things. So Nehemiah tells the people when he would have them rejoice, The joy of the Lord is your strength, Neh. 8:10 When as the heart is strengthned with joy, it is able to do mighty things; now the hope of these glorious things do mightily fill the heart with joy, and so strengthens the heart: A man that has his body strong, he can endure cold, and bear great burthens that a weak body cannot bear; and nothing strengthens the heart more then this joy of the Lord, where the heart is filled with it. Vessels that are empty will soon be broke with the heat of the fire, which they will not be if they be full: this hope of the glorious reward fills the heart with precious liquor, that you may set it by the fire, and put it into troubles, it will not break. As a Gyant refreshed with wine, has great strength to undertake any thing, so the soul that is filled with this comfort of the hope of Heaven and glory, can go forth as a Gyant refreshed with wine, and make nothing of those things that others make great matters of. When the heart is filled with joy & hope of believing, and so filled with light within, whatever darkness is abroad it cares not. As Oecolampadius when he was to dye, and they spoke of the light without, says he, What is the light without? I have light enough within; And so a gracious heart says, there is enough within to strengthen me, let there be without what there will. When Alexander gave away great things, almost all he had, one of his Officers aked him what he would have left for himself,

says he, Hope: so says a gracious heart, though all things be gone, yet it is enough to fill my heart with joy, that I have hope of the glory that is to be reveald.

A natural chearful spirit can be able to undergo great things, that one that is naturally timorous cannot; the Wise man says, The Spirit of a man shall sustain his infirmities: A man that has a natural chearful spirit, is able to sustain many infirmities that others cannot; As for melancholy spirits, every thing that comes cross to them is ready to sink them, and they cannot undergo. those troubles which a chearful spirit can, because they want the sweetness within; What strength is there then in the filling the heart with joy in believing of these things? As a man that has his bones filled with marrow, and has abundance of good blood, and fresh spirits in his body, he can endure to go with less cloathes then another, because he is well lined within; so it is with a heart that has a great deal of fat and marrow, joy and peace within, though such a one has not many cloathes, and outward comforts to strengthen him, he will go through troubles well enough; Proverbs 14:14 A good man is satisfied from himself: And it is enough for good men to know within themselves that they have an enduring substance, Heb. 10:34 A tree that has a great deal of sap within, can bear great weights and burthens that others cannot; and that is the fifth ground, because the hope of these things does fill the heart with joy, and so strengthens the heart.

A sixth thing in which the power of having respect to the recompence of reward appears, is in that it has a great deal of power to resist any temptation of Satan, and to quench the fiery darts of Satan. In Ephes. 6. where the spiritual armor is spoken of, the helmet, the armor that is for the head, and keeps that from being hurt

with any stroke, is the hope of salvation, and the hope of glory; so that whatever temptations of the Devil comes, by this helmet they are kept off, that they do not so much as take the judgement: As we might instance in the several temptations that the Devil has to keep one from sufferings; as when he comes and says, Why will you undo yourselves in such a way as this? Presently the hope of salvation is held up, and the soul answers, It is so far from undoing of me, that it is the only way to provide for myself; He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for my sake, shall save it. If the Devil comes with this temptation, Surely God does not require such things of his people, to be brought into such straits, and suffer such hard things: The soul that has the hope of his glory, holds it up, and makes this answer; Why, seeing the Lord has laid up such glorious things hereafter, why should I not think that God may require hard things for the present? If he comes with this temptation, Why will you go on in a singular way from others? A gracious heart upon this argument, answers, I expect choice and singular mercies from God, and why should I think much to go on in a way that is singular? though others do otherwise, it may be they shal never be partakers of such singular things. If the Devil comes and say, Surely God does not love you, if he did, he would not suffer such great calamities, and sore troubles to befal you, and if it were his cause, he would assist you in it: the soul answers, Has the Lord laid up such glorious things for me hereafter, and shall I call Gods love in question, because I am deprived of these mean things, and undergo such afflictions as these? certainly those things that God has laid up for me shall so uphold my heart, as that I shall never call in question Gods love, though I suffer never so much here; and that is the sixth particular.

Seventhly, there is a great deal of power in this argument to help on the soul in a way of suffering, because by looking at this recompence of reward, the soul comes to see what glorious things sufferings do prepare for, hasten unto, and work to the increase of. First, what glorious things sufferings prepare for: As it is a notable expression Mr. Hawks has in a Letter he writ to encourage Mr. Philpot, being cast into the Bishops Cole-house, says he, This Bishops Cole-house is but to scour you, and make you bright, and to fit you to be set up upon the high shelf, meaning Heaven; as when you would set up vessels of brass, or iron, you first take cinders or ashes and scour them, and by rubbing them with such things, they are fit to be set up; so all sufferings are but the means that God uses to scour his people to make them bright, to set them up on high; God will not set up his servants [⟨1 page duplicate⟩] [⟨1 page duplicate⟩] on the high shelf, till first he has made them bright, and he uses this way to do it, and then they hasten to great things; the more one suffers, the nearer he comes to glory, and to Heaven: Let the world do the worst it can, it can but take away your estates, and meat, and drink, and put you in the cold, and hasten death, and the hastening of death is the hastening of glory: The greatest sufferings of Gods people, are but as the fiery Chariots to carry Gods people home in. This was the answer of Basil to the Emperors Lieutenant, when he threatned death to him, Death is a benefit to me, it will send me sooner to God, to whom I live, to whom I desire to hasten. And then they do increase glory, it is but a trade of less things to increase greater; all sufferings are the seeds of glory.

Eighthly, there is a great deal of power in this to carry on the soul in a way of suffering, because it does mightily enflame the soul with love to God, and Jesus Christ; it seeing that the bottom and ground of all this glorious recompence of reward is in the free and eternal love of God in Jesus Christ, that did work about this before the foundation of the world was laid; this does mightily enflame the heart with love to God, and therefore it wishes as that Martyr did, O that I had as many lives as I have hairs on my head to lay down for Christ. And it is sorry that it has no other opportunity to testify its love to God, the soul says, I have but this little time to testify my love to God, and I can but testify little in doing: O what a happiness is it, that that which I want of testifying my love in doing, I have it in testifying my love in suffering! Shall a dog that has but a few crums or bones from his Master, be willing to venture his life in defense of his Master; and shall not a gracious heart, that expects not crums and bones, but Crowns, and unconceiveable glory in Heaven, be willing to venture life for God in the cause of God?

Ninthly, there is a great deal of power in having respect to the recompence of reward to carry on a soul in suffering: because according to the things that are apprehended, there is the like impression left upon the spirit: As a gracious heart apprehending holy things is made holy, and apprehending spiritual things, is made spiritual, and apprehending great things, is made great, you is a holy gracious magnanimity put into the heart: A man that is lift up on high upon a high Tower, or a high Mountain, he looks upon things below as little things: The apprehension of this glory lifts the soul on high, and puts an impression of greatness and glory upon the heart, and so causes an heroical spirit in the heart,

to look upon all things below as small: as the Martyrs, though they were weak spirits by nature, even women and children, yet apprehending such great things, they had heroical magnanimious spirits, and looked upon their sufferings as small things, because they had an impression of the object they beheld left upon their spirits, and in some measure were made like it.

Lastly, there is a mighty deal of power in looking to the recompence of reward to help in sufferings, because it has much power to cleanse the heart: every one that has this hope purgeth himself, 1 Iohn 3. And hence the Christians in the Primitive times fering. Those that write the stories of Egypt, report that there is no country in which there are more venemous Creatures then in Egypt; and also they write, there is no Country has so many Antidotes to help against poyson: so godliness brings with it many troubles and sufferings, but then godliness has much in it to help against troubles and sufferings.

Thirdly, hence we come to see the reason why so many are overcome in a way of suffering, and do yield, and so basely Apostatize, rather then they will go on in a way of suffering for God: they have not an eye to look up to Heaven, and to see all the glory that is revealed: they do not know within themselves that there are such things, as it is said of those in Heb. 10:34 They knew within themselves what they had in Heaven; they look upon these things as conceits and imaginations. In Phil. 3:18 the Apostle speaks of some that were enemies to the Cross of Christ, but what were they? They were men that minded earthly things: but says the Apostle, Our conversation is in Heaven. What was the reason that Demas forsook Paul? It was for this present world; he was not acquainted with the powers of the world to come, and therefore he

forsook Paul, rather then he would suffer in the cause of God with Paul. Certainly, those that fall off in the time of suffering, are such as never had a taste of the powers to come, or have lost it: this dew of Heaven has not faln upon their hearts to moisten them, and therefore every suffering does scorch up the root: If the root be kept moist, though scorching heat come, it does not dry up the plant, but it is green and flouwere so able to suffer, because they had their hearts so purged by faith, Acts 15:9 Take a man that was strong, if he have many ill humors in his body, all his strength is gone, but if the Phisitian gives him something to purge out his ill humors, though hee have no Cordials given him to strengthen him, yet he is strong, and he is able to endure, and to do more then before: So those spirits that are full of distempered humors, that are unsound, they can bear nothing, undergo no difficulty, but when there is any thing to purge the heart and make it clean, then it is able to do or suffer more: sin lies rotting at the heart, and by rotting does weaken; a rotten rag has no strength to bear any thing, so those that have old sins lie rotting, they can bear nothing: The spirit of power, and of a sound mind is put together, 2 Tim. 1:7 now the hope of this glorious reward purges the heart, and makes it sound, and so carries it on in power. Now put all these together, and no marvel that Moses by having an eye to the recompence of reward could suffer so much: many are afraid of suffering hard things in the cause of Christ; but you see what will enable you to endure all. Now I should apply this in many particulars.

First, If there be such power in this to help to suffering, then surely there is power in this to help to service: you that know what these things mean, be ashamed to complain of any difficulty in any service.

Secondly, hence we see cause much to bless God that reveals such things to us, to carry us through sufferings; though godliness brings much suffering, yet it brings that which will strengthen against sufrishing still: It is the dew of Heaven, the hope of the glory of Heaven that keeps our root moist, and so we shall hold out in the time of suffering: It is given as the cause of the seed in the stony ground not come to perfection, Luke 8:6 Because it wanted moisture; many froward people in Religion prove like the stony ground, they have not moisture, this dew of Heaven lies not at their hearts: And the reason why many do not hold out, is because they want the Anchor of hope: In a tempest if there be not an Anchor well fastened, the ship will be carried upon the rocks or the sands: Now Hope is the Anchor that must hold the soul in all affliction, if that hold, let storms and winds be never so loud, yet the heart will be kept from being split upon the rocks, and swallowed up in the sands: but many have but a paper Anchor, a conceited hope, not a strong hope fastned upon the infallibility of God in his word and promises, and therefore they cannot hold out in the time of danger. To conclude all, we see what will do it, what will carry us through sufferings.

Let us make use of this argument, and not look upon the greatness of our sufferings, to think my sufferings are greater then others, but rather let us look up on high to our God, and the greater things that are prepared for us. As St. Augustine speaking to a Christian that was to suffer, Do not so much attend what punishment you hast, what share you hast in the whip, or in correction, but what you hast in the Testament, in Gods Word, what is revealed there for tby encouragement. And labor to have the light within you, or else all will never do; though many things have been

revealed to your eyes, and so you may have light outwardly; yet if you have not the inward light, this outward light will never strengthen you to hold out: And labor for faith to put life in all these arguments that have been spoken of; unless faith come and breathe the breath of life upon them, they will all lie dead. Labor that nothing be between your eye and Heaven, and if any thing of the world, or vain reasonings shall come between your eye and Heaven, labor to remove it, keep all clear, that upon the turning of your eye you may see beyond the vail; and be not only thinking of these things, and make them lively by faith, but let your conversation be much in heaven, sending up your spirits to heaven, and opening your hearts to receive the influence of heaven, and then you will be able to endure what God calls you to: Who knows what God will call us to? God is stirring in the world, as if he intended to do some great things in the world, and therefore we had need of strong arguments to keep our hearts close to him, when many thousand hypocrites shall fall. And thus we have finished four things in the opening of this point: First, that there is a reward for Gods people. Secondly, how far they may have respect to this reward. Thirdly, what the reward is. Fourthly, in which the power of having respect to this reward lay to undergo any suffering. Now the fifth thing that remains, is, the Application of all that has been said.

And if there be such a glorious reward for the people of God, then in the first place the offense of the cross is taken away; let us be ashamed ever to be hindred in the way of God, because of the cross, because of any thing we shall suffer in the way of God, when as there is such a glorious reward hereafter. No storm of the raging Sea should terrifie us,considering that everlasting calm that is a

coming, says Jerome: Let no man speak hardly of Gods ways any more. I remember I read of St. Augustine before his conversion, he said he was convinced of the ways of God, but says he, I did not like to go through those straits: He found the ways of God difficult, and that he was like to suffer much, and that hindred him; and so it does many, they see straits, they must deny themselves, and suffer hard things, and upon this they are hindred; but let us never be hindred more by this, seeing there are such great things revealed of the reward of Gods people hereafter: Why should we be so shy of the way, afflictions that lead thither; is not here enough to pay for all? God will not, says Lactantius, have thepath that leads to this immortal blessedness, be a delicate path. Certainly, if any of you should be hindred from the ways of God by any hardship you are like to meet withal, how will this confound you, when God shall come and say, Did not I show unto you those glorious things I intended for my people? and was not all that sufficient to draw your hearts over these difficulties?

In the Primitive times, the offense of the cross was taken away, after once they came to be enlightned in such glorious things as these; in Heb. 10:32 Call to remembrance the former days, in which after you were illuminated, you endured a great fight of afflictions; before they were not able to indure that fight of afflictions, but after they were illuminated they were; so howsoever you might have some hard thoughts of the ways of God before, yet now being illuminated, having the light of this blessed truth of the reward that is to come, revealed to you, be willing to endure any fight of afflictions; do not look at this stumbling block, look up to Heaven, and that wil keep you from stumbling. When men walk upon the earth, if they look upward, they may stumble upon stones

& blocks; but it is otherwise in our walking in Religion, our looking upwards to heaven does keep us from stumbling: Wisdom is on high; the way of the righteous is a high way, he is lifted above all stumbling blocks by looking at this recompence of reward. St. Paul when he had his thoughts about this, says he, Neither life, nor death, principalities, nor powers, nor any thing should be able to separate him from the love of God.

Secondly, if there be such a glorious reward, consider , that this is a mighty aggravation of the evil of sin, that when God has revealed himself so gracious, as to lay up such glorious things for those that walk in the way of obedience, for any after this yet to embrace the ways of sin, must needs aggravate the horrid and desperate wickedness of mans heart: There is evil enough in sin, though we should lose nothing by it, that it is a disobedience to God, a breach of the Law, and going against the mind of God; but for men to venture upon the ways of sin, although they know they shall lose such an infinite good as this is, here is not only desperate wickedness, but desperate folly; it is a sign that mans heart is desperately set upon sin, that he wil go on in sin, though it be with the loss of all this glory, and these blessed things. I remember Ambrose reports of one Theotimus, that having a disease upon his body, and the Physitian told him, Except he did abstain from intemperance, drunkenness or uncleanness, he was like to lose his eyes; his heart was desperately fet upon his sin, that he said, Farewel sweet light then; as if he should say, I must have my pleasure in that sin, if I must lose my eyes, then farewel eyes, farewel the light. I suppose there is none of you dare reason thus desperately, when we come to you in the name of God, and speak of some particular sin that your consciences tell you you are guilty of, and

profess unto you as in the name of God, that that way you take cannot stand with eternal life, that you must eternally perish, and lose all that happiness that God has prepared for the Saints, perhaps none dare say, Farewel God, and Christ, and eternal life, and all, I must have my sin: Though you do not say so directly, yet if after you have heard all this, you go on in a sinful way, you do in effect say so; for the Scripture says, Know you not that no drunkard, nor whoremonger, nor covetous, nor unclean person, nor extortioner, and the like, shall enter into the Kingdom of God: You know this, it is not possible that any should be so ignorant, but he knows such shall never enter into the Kingdom of God; you going on then in such a way, you do as it were say, Farewel God, and heaven, and farewel all that Christ has purchased by his blood, rather then I will lose my sin: How will this confound you another day? how will conscience accuse you? when it shall tell you what you have heard, and what you might have had, and you have lost all for your lust: God shall say, I revealed to you what my ways and counsels were concerning man, that this was the great work and design, that I intended to makewretched man happy, to bring vile dust into glory; and was that my great master-piece, that I intended nothing in your eyes, but must it be despised for the satisfying of your lusts? Christ shall plead against you, Was I content to leave the bosom of my Father, and to be in the form of a servant, and to be made a curse, & to lose my precious blood, & my life, to purchase glory for man, and must this be slighted for your base lusts? How will the Spirit of God plead against you? What, was not I in the mouth of my Ministers to reveal these glorious things, and deep things of God, that now in the Gospel are made known, and must all that work of mine be neglected and slighted for your base

lusts? Yea, how may all the creatures in the earth come to plead against you? Lord, you didst not make us capable of any such happiness as you didst the children of men, and yet we did honor and serve you in our order, but you madest this creature capable of eternal happiness, and yet all is despised for the satisfying of their base lusts. Yea, how may the Devils come and plead against you? Lord, when we were once fallen, you would never enter into covenant with us, to give us any hope of any mercy at all, much less hope to receive any such great things; there was hope for these wretched creatures to be eternally happy, and yet they neglected all for their lusts, & therefore shal their punishment be no more then ours? shall their fire be no hotter then ours?

These things that I have delivered, though they be comfortable to the people of God, they will be terrible things to the wicked, and will be a dreadful aggravation to sin, as Heb. 10:29 Of how much sorer punishment do you think those worthy of, that in neglect of these things do even tread under foot the blood of the Son of God, as cap. 2, 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? If the salvation that we speak of were not great salvation, it would not deserve such great punishment for the neglect of it: See how great the mercy of God is in revealing such great salvation, so great shall the punishment be of those that neglect such great salvation: We use to say to some that will be bold to venture upon such ways as others will not, They may say and do what they will, they have nothing to lose, but if a man have any thing to lose he is more wary; it is true, if we had nothing to lose, it were not so much for us to go on boldly and carelesly in our way, but know we are capable of abundance of glory, that we are in danger to lose if we go on carelesly: Consider what you are like to lose, and let that raise your

heart against the ways of sin, nothing can make it up. For one to do any thing that shall prejudice the right to a Crown, this is counted a great offense, and is not past by without blood: Sin seeks to deprive us of a Crown, of Heaven, of immortality; O the mischief that is in sin! let our hearts rise against it with hatred to death: when any temptation comes, let us use this argument as a help to answer temptation, O in this temptation there is that will deprive me of all my hope of heaven, & of glory, and of my crown, and of all my good, if I take not heed; and therefore now shal I sin? will any sin do you that good as will countervail the cutting you off the hope of all this glory? will it make you amends for this evil?

If a man might have a whole world given him for to lose his eyes, no wise man would lose the benefit of his fight for the whole world; will you venture the loss of the sight of God, and of Christ, and of all communion to be had with them for a lust, and for a base pleasure? what worth is in it to make you so venturous? When a temptation to sin comes, make use of this argument, as Saul did to his men, What, can the son of Jesse give you vineyards, and oliveyards? So you may say to every temptation, to the ways of sin, What, can my sin give me Heaven, and glory, and immortality? can my sin reward me as God will reward me if I walk in his way? If a Chapman should come to you who are Merchants, and offer you for a commodity twenty times less then it is worth, your hearts will rise against him, in disdain and contempt of him: Now when sin comes to offer any pleasure or content to the flesh, let your hearts rise in disdain against it, it offers you infinitely to your loss, base momentary pleasure for Heaven, and all the glory that has been opened to you. As one said when a Harlot askt a great price for pleasure with her one night, I will not buy repentanceat such a

rate: And so when sin comes, say, I will not buy pleasure at such a rate. It was an aggravation of the sin of Israel, that they would return into Egypt, because the Land of Canaan was so good a Land; So it argues base hearts in people to despise all that is in Heaven, and the glory of it for to turn to Egypt, to some base lust.

Thirdly, if there be such a glorious reward for the Saints, this rebukes all base worldly drossie spirits , that seek for no higher good then meerly to enjoy the use and comforts of the creature, and content to their flesh for a while: How many are there in the world that would bless themselves in these things? Might I have but such an estate, and such content in theworld, it were enough, they should think themselves happy. As that Duke of Burbone in France, if he might have his Palace in Paris, he would not change it for Paradise. A company of base drossie spirits that could be content to have the things of this world for their portion, it argues you have low thoughts of an immortal soul; you know not what an immortal soul is capable of, who can think yourselves satisfied in any creature. You have but low thoughts of God; are there no richer treasures in God then only a few outward delights, meat, and drink, and sports here? Has God nothing else to communicate to the creature? what mean thoughts hast you of Christ, and of all the purchase of the blood of Christ? What, has Christ come and laid down his blood to purchase nothing but this, to have content in the creature? Certainly the God of this world has blinded your eyes, that you should not see into the glorious things of eternal life that are in the Gospel, and in the Word: How many would frame to themselves a kinde of Heaven here, an imaginary Heaven? As I have read of a King of Persia, that he would have an imaginary Heaven, and therefore he made a brave Palace, and in the top he

made the heavens, and painted Sun, Moon and Stars, and underneath Clouds, that with Art moved up and down, and distilled rain, and made thunder, and he had a brave Throne glistering above those clouds, this might be sufficient for a Heathen; and yet how many Christians are guilty of this, to imagine Heaven to themselves? If they had but this and this, that were Heaven. Certainly you will finde the loss of these things a hell, if there were no pain; but know, you can not lose Heaven, but you must of necessity be plunged into hell; you cannot lose all this glory, but you must of necessity be under that misery which is contrary to this glory; whoever loses the one, though that be ill enough, he must be under the misery of the other.

And know, whatever your heart is set upon in this world, if it be not in order to this reward, it is cursed to you, for the blessing of all comfort does consist in order to this last end. O that men were throughly principled in this one principle, namely, That the good of all things in the world, consists in the subordination they have unto the highest and last end for which they were made: Now whatever a man has, if there be not a subordination of it unto the last end, it is all cursed: O know your folly, that hast sought to satisfy yourself in the things of the world! Know your folly, that you hast in this, like a Swine sought to take contentment in swill and husks, when as you hear there is bread enough in your Fathers house. Mark what the Psalmist says in Psalm 4:3 How long will you turn my glory into shame? how long will you love vanity and seek after lyes? By your loving vanity, and seeking after lyes, you turn the glory of God into shame; so all carnal hearts that seek for their portion in this world, put a shame upon all that glory that God has opened to you in this recompence of reward: O be not

guilty of this, when as you have heard of these glorious things in the recompence of reward, do not you cast shame and filth upon them, as if they were all imaginations. Know those things that you esteem to be real and substantial, are vanities and imaginations, and all substances and realities are in this recompence of reward.

Fourthly, if there be such a glorious recompence of reward for the Saints, those also are to be rebuked who seem to go on in those ways that might bring this reward, and yet through the wickedness of their hearts do deprive themselves of this reward, and these are hypocrites. There are three sorts of these:

First, such as though they go on in the hearts same ways that Gods people go in, yet there are so base and vile therein, as they seek no greater things in them then their own base ends, and so lose all.

Secondly, such as go on in the ways that tend to this reward, and yet perish at last for some one base lust.

Thirdly, such as go on in those ways, and are in a good forwardness, and yet prove to be Apostates, and so lose all their labor, and all their reward.

First, such as go on in the ways that lead to this reward, the ways of Religion and godliness, they do the same things that Gods people do for this reward, but only this, their ends are different; they pray as much, hear as much, and receive Sacraments, make a great profession in Religion, and their hearts seem to be mightily up in duty; yea, perhaps they suffer much in the ways of God, and are resolute in the ways of godliness, and yet lose all in the conclusion upon this ground, because though they be in the ways that lead to this reward, yet their ends are so base and low, they do not

look at the glorious reward in these actions, but look at some under thing; as to give content to men, and applause of men; and to be accounted some body in the place where they live, and to gain some outward respect from such and such, and this is the highest pitch their hearts rise unto in the duties of Religion: If ever there were any sottish desperate delusion of heart, this is it, to undertake to do that which others do, that come to enjoy all this glorious reward; and though you do as much as they, and take as much pains as they, yet you in the conclusion miss of all, and lose all upon your base ends: you follow Christ as others do, but a gracious heart follows Christ for Christ, but you follow him only that your own mindes and wills may be satisfied, it may be you know not how to live: and this is that you aim at in following Christ, and in prayer, and in speaking of good things, all that you aim at, is that you may be accounted those that have parts and gifts; and in giving of alms, you only look upon some low and base ends which you shall attain, and this is like to be all your reward, so says Christ, Wo to you hypocrites, you have your reward: And wo indeed when this shall be said, You are forward in Religion, to gain to yourselves such base things, you shall have them, says God, and this is all the reward you shall have. O be ashamed and confounded in your own hearts, that you should perform the duties of Religion, and take such pains in the ways of God, that do lead to such glorious things, and yet your ends are so low; by having such low ends in religious duties, you make Earth your throne, and Heaven your footstool, whereas God says, Heaven is my Throne, and Earth is my footstool; Why should you be so cross to God in the foolish ways of your vile hearts?

Some there are that perform these duties to satisfy natural conscience, and so they may be unsound, and their consciences not accuse them; but these hypocrites are the basest that can be, their consciences cannot but accuse them, that they undertake the ways of Religion, to employ them for no more then for the attaining such low ends. Yea, many that are now in Heaven, and have this glorious reward, did not finde so much difficulty in the ways of Religion as many Hypocrites do. There are three Reasons for it.

First, that they do is by their own strength, and when one comes to perform the duties of Religion by his own strength, they are hard to him; a gracious heart has strength from Heaven, and from Christ; now when a man has received strength, he can do that with ease that was difficult before: A man that has a base unclean heart, the ways of Religion must be tedious to such a one; as a mans body being corrupted, whatever he does is tedious to him, if he were sound it would not be so tedious; and so the ways of Religion are tedious to an hypocrite, because he does all in his own strength, and his soul is corrupted.

Besides, the ways of Religion are not suitable to his principles, but he is fain to force himself to them, and all forced things are tedious; but a gracious heart goes on in the ways of Religion as suitable to his principles.

Besides, an Hypocrite has not those comforts as those that are gracious have in their ways, they have the assurance of Gods acceptance, and the light of God shining upon them, which Hypocrites have not; so that the ways of God are more difficult to Hypocrites, then to the godly; and yet they get nothing by them but some base ends, and the godly that do not endure so much diffi-

culty, get Heaven, and immortality, and a Crown of glory, and all because their ends are different: O be sure your ends be right, you see what vast difference mens ends may make!

As if two should go to sea, it may be they go out both together, and one endures as much tempest and storm as the other, and they are at the like charge; perhaps yet the one comes home richly laden, and the other brings nothing but Cockle shells, and a little gravel; when he that brought home the Cockle shells and the gravel, shall see the difference between him and the other, when as they were at like charge, and endured the same difficulty, how will he be ashamed? This is the difference between a gracious heart and an hypocrite, both go out in Religion, the one makes as much stir as the other, and suffers as much disgrace and contempt as the other; the one enjoys all the riches of the Kingdom of God; the other, what does all his profession come to? he gains a little respect from some, that this body or that body says, He is a man of good parts, and here is all. O miserable voyage that such as these are have made, when all their profession comes but to this! Yea, it may be they do not so much as gain respect from those that are wise and judicious, but only from a company of pratlers, that will speak well of you when you please them, and when you do not please them, they will speak as ill of you: like a great blaze that a little fire will make in straw for the present, and when it is past, you see nothing but a few black ashes; so many Professors make a great blaze, and a great noise and show, and all that it comes to, is, that they get a little esteem in the world; or, like Kites they will flutter up a little, but their eye is upon the carrion; so many seem to be above in the ayr in the profession of Religion, and yet their eyes are upon the carrion, they make things below their aim.

What dishonor is this unto the ways of godliness? those ways that are the most precious things in the world, all the world is nothing to the profession of godliness; and those ways that God has appointed to lead to such glorious things as these are, how are they vilified and abased? you do not only vilifie yourselves, but you vilifie Gods ways, when as they tend to such a glorious end, you put them under your base ends: If a man were a Nobleman by birth, what greater dishonor could be done to him, then to make him serviceable to a drudge? So the ways of God that are so glorious, to make them serviceable to your base ends, what dishonor is put upon the ways of God in this? Certainly God cannot take it well at your hands; to make the meanest creature of God, our own civil actions serviceable to our lusts, is a great sin; but to make Prayer, and the Word, and the Sacraments, and the ways of godliness to be serviceable to our lusts, this is most horrible impiety. Again, how do you pollute that which is holy? The way of God is a holy thing, and take heed of polluting of it, by having such low ends in it. Again, consider how you do take the name of God in vain; the name of God is in the ways of Religion, and for you to have no higher ends in Religion, but such base ones, you take Gods name in vain, and God will not hold you guiltless.

These two men, a gracious heart, and a hypocrite, may be compared to two men that follow the King; one that follows the King for some Dukedom, and place of Office, to obtain some great thing from the King; and a begger that knows not the King, but runs after him for an alms, and if he may have six pence or a shilling, he goes away quieted: So in the ways of Religion, both seem to follow God, a gracious heart follows God, and knows what God is, he knows that God is a blessed God, a glorious God, and that there are

wonderful great and glorious things to be communicated from God to the souls of his people, and therefore he follows God for great things, for heaven, and eternity, and glory, and immortality; an hypocrite, he knows little of God, and he follows God that he may have a little credit and content for a while, and he looks no higher: O base ignoble spirits, that have no higher thoughts in the ways of God! though we must take heed of high thoughts of ourselves, yet in the ways of God we must lift up ourselves, and have high thoughts, and high aims. O what difference is there between an hypocrite and a true gracious heart! A gracious heart has high ends for God in the meanest actions, in eating, and drinking, and an hypocrite has low ends in his highest actions, in the most solemn duties of divine worship.

Secondly, those hypocrites are to be rebuked that go on fairly in the profession of Religion, and make conscience of secret sins, and not only in shows, but really are escaped many pollutions of the world, and yet at last lose all for cleaving to some one sin: but there is a great deal of difference between a real escaping, and true sanctifying escaping; many may really forsake many pollutions, and many sins, and yet at last lose all this reward for closing with some secret sin. O take heed lest this be any of your portions, you have been vile, and you have reformed your ways in many things, and are not guilty of such and such sins as you were before; but look to yourselves that you do not lose all this reward for some one sin at last: let them do what they will in profession, if their hearts do not come off from every sin, it is all nothing; not but that there may be some remainders of sin, and yet the heart be taken off from every sin; but if there be any secret closing with any sin, all your profession, and the leaving of all the other is to no purpose, it will

never bring you to this reward: As suppose a wife should be very serviceable to her husband in many things, and forsake many lovers, yet if she entertain but any one lover besides her husband, her husband does not care for all her service and respect; and so it is with those that make profession: Look that there be no one secret sin lodge in your hearts, if there be you will lose all. It was a vexation to Lysimachus a King, that his staying to drink one draught of water, lost him his Kingdom: And so it will be a vexation to any that have gone on in the ways of godliness, that he has lost Heaven for one sin.

It was a grievous affliction upon Moses, that he came towards Canaan within the sight of it, and yet for one sin, not sanctifying Gods name at the water of Meribah, he was deprived of it, it went to his heart; and so it will be a grievous thing when you shall come towards Heaven, and for one sin, not sanctifying Gods name as you ought, you shall be deprived of heavenly Canaan. Many Prodigals have an inheritance, and at one cast of the Dice lose it; to lose this Inheritance at one cast, is a grievous thing. A man may scape many wounds, and shots in the Wars, and yet may be killed at last with the wound of a Pen-knife, or the wound of a pin or needle: so many that have escaped many gross sins, may by some little secret lust be deprived of the glory of heaven. You that are going on in this way, that tend to the reward, take heed you do not lose all for some one sin.

Thirdly, those that apostatize are to be rebuked; Apostates go far, and lose all this reward, because they do not endure to the end, but go back and decline: You were once in a blessed way, and had a blessed gale, and you were going on apace to heaven, and now you are turned back again; O what have you done! it may be you were

near your end, as Christ said to the yong man, He is not far from the Kingdom of Heaven: as the Israelites were within a few days journey of Canaan, and yet lost it; so many, though they be near in their profession, and have had as it were the taste of heaven, yet turning back again, they lose all. As if a man were going a rich Voyage, and just as he was entring into the Haven, there should come a gust of wind and blow him home again, how does it grieve him? I was just at the Haven, and if I had entred I had been enriched for ever: So many have gone on in the profession of Religion, if they had continued, who knows but that they might have had all this reward? but for want of continuance they have lost all, and they are come short of the glory of God. We may say to them, as the Angel said to Hagar; Hagar, from whence comest you, and whither goest you? So it may be said to an Apostata, Poor creature, from whence comest you, and whither goest you? You comest from heaven and eternal life, and you art going to hell and eternal death. You know how earnest the Apostle was with the Galatians, when they had once received the faith, and drew back again, says he, Who has bewitched you? Was there ever such wickedness like this? to receive that faith that brings such happiness, and after you have received it to turn back again; Who has bewitched you? And this is the fourth Use.

Fifthly, if there be such a glorious recompence of reward for the people of God; this should then encourage such as are looking towards, and such as are walking in the ways of God.

First, it may encourage to begin betimes in Gods ways: It is your wisdom to begin to work at the first hour, seeing God will reward so richly. If you were to work for another, and you knew he would give you a great sum of money for every hour you wrought,

you would be sure to be betimes at work that day: You that are yong, you are deferring, and putting off your repentance; what a sottish delusion is this? What do you lose, you lose a great deal of the reward you might have: Therefore you little ones, as soon you come to know any thing of the ways of God, embrace them, for you shall be rewarded abundantly for every minute of an hour: Therefore the losing the time of youth, yea, the losing of any opportunity of doing any gracious action, is an eternal loss: for if God reward every one according to his works, then the loss of an opportunity to do a good work, is an eternal loss; they that have neglected opportunities, let them consider what they have lost, and you that have your time before you, begin betimes; if a man were working, and knew not when he should be paid, or how he should get his wages, he would come late to work, and would be negligent, but God would not have you come into his vineyard upon those terms, but promises he will reward you, and therefore begin betimes.

Secondly, here is an incouragement to Gods people to be strict, if we look for such a glorious reward, we had need be accurate; many cry out, What need men be so strict? Indeed if they had no higher ends then your base ends, you might say so; a base hypocrite what need he be so strict? but for a gracious heart, that has such high, and noble, and glorious ends as these are in his work, as a crown, and glory, and the like, he had need be strict and precise. In ordinary pieces of work, by which workmen do not expect much, they are not so strict and exact; but if a man be about some curious work, that he expects some great matter for, then he will be very strict: and so because Gods people do expect such great matters for Religion, no wonder that they are so strict and precise.

Thirdly, if there be such a glorious reward, here is an encouragement to be very fervent and zealous in the ways of God, because they serve such a God, and shall have such reward, says the Apostle, in Rom. 12:11 Be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; as if he should say, Do you know whom you serve? You serve the Lord, the high, and mighty, and glorious, and infinite God; and therefore you had need be fervent in spirit; do that you do with all your might and power, for it is for that God that will do such great things for you. As David when he danced before the Ark, he did it with all his might: Michol not knowing his meaning, scorned him in her heart; but says he, It was before the Lord that chose me before your Fathers house, that has bestowed such mercies upon me, and will bestow more mercies, and if this be to be vile, I will be more vile. Carnal hearts cannot endure earnestness, and fervency in Gods service; as the wilde beasts cannot endure fire, so beastly carnal spirits cannot endure fire, fervency, and zeal in Gods ways; but suppose they should oppose you for fervency in Gods ways, you might answer them, If this be to be vile, I will be more vile; It is for that God that has done great things for me, and that I hope to receive great things from hereafter eternally.

Fourthly, if there be such a glorious reward, be encouraged to be abundant in Gods service; this is the Argument of the Apostle, in 1 Cor. 15:58 Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know your labor is not in vain in the Lord. By that which has been said, you may know your labor is not in vain with the Lord; be abundant in service, there shall not be one tear, nor one sigh, nor one prayer lost; many say, Why do you so much, will not less serve? The godly do not only aim at the reward, that will require abundance, but they would

have the heigth of the reward, and therefore they think they never have done enough. It is an expression of Austin, If a man should serve the Lord a thousand years, it would not deserve an hour of the reward in Heaven, much less an eternity: Though it is true, the grace of the Lord is glorious, and he does accept of his grace, as the most glorious thing in the world, yet considering what our actions are, how much corruption is mingled with them, it would not deserve a moment in Heaven, and therefore we had need do as much as we can. 2 Peter 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all manner of holy conversation and godliness? We should be ashamed and confounded in our thoughts that we can do no more; and if there should be shame in Heaven, when the Saints shall see and enjoy so much there, would they not be ashamed that they have done no more for that God so glorious in his bounty & goodness here?

Fifthly, if there be such a glorious recompence of reward, then let us labor to be faithful with God, because we have such a good Master, that is so good and gracious to us. Princes make account they engage the hearts of their subjects that are about them, to be faithful with them by their great rewards, and by keeping of them in expectation of great things: The great things that God has prepared for us, do lay more engagements upon our hearts to be faithful with him: Let us not be false to such a God as this is; God expects we should be faithful upon this ground, Isaiah 63. 7, 8. There are large expressions of the goodness of the Lord unto his people; and what follows, Surely they are my people, children that will not lye: As if he should say, These are a people that I expect should be satisfied with me. In Psalm 36:5 there God joins his mercy and his faithfulness both together: As Gods mercies and faithfulness are

joined together, so let the hope of Gods mercies to us, and our faithfulness unto God, be joined together. It was an argument of God unto Abraham, I am God All-sufficient, and I am your exceeding great reward, walk before me, and be upright: As if he should say, You need not go and shark unto any other creature, you have reward enough in me, therefore walk before me, and be upright: So by all that which God has revealed unto you concerning this glorious reward of his people, God says, You need not go and seek any thing else, you need not be sharking up and down after the creature, Is there not enough in me to satisfy any creature living? The ground why any depart from God in a way of unfaithfulness, is because they have distrustful thoughts, and think there is not enough to be had in God, but they had need shift for themselves another way: If we understand this glorious reward, and our hearts close with it, this temptation could not have power to draw our hearts from it: Therefore God is so plentiful in the manifestation of his goodness, because his people should not have any shifting thoughts; there is enough in God, and in the treasures of his grace to make up all.

Now by that which has been said, be encouraged to go on in those ways in which you have no present encouragement; there are many ways in which you have no encouragement from God or men; you pray, and hear, and perform duties, and do not finde God come in that way, let the reward that is to come be enough to encourage you. You do many good things, and men are ungrateful, and will not requite them; well, let this quiet you, There is a glorious reward to come. I remember a speech of Luther, That servitude to men, though it be to ungrateful men, does please God, and God, says he, wil abundantly reward you for it, and that should be

more sweet to us then all the treasures in the world. In Isa. 49:4 says the Prophet, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet truly my judgement is with the Lord, and my work with my God. It is a speech of Latimer, speaking of Ministers that would leave their flock because they did no good; says he, It is very naughtily done, we must look to that which God commands us, and leave the issue to God: Christ says, Follow me, me, me, (three times he has it) and not your own lusts; let us do our own work, and leave the reward with God: Though it be a sweet encouragement for the Ministers of God to see something of their labor, yet if they do not, it is enough to make them go on in a way of obedience for the present, because God commands it though there were no reward, but when we do obey God, and please God for the present, and it shall be rewarded so gloriously hereafter, let not this be any excuse, We can do no good: if you be convinced of a duty, whether there be good or no good come of it, whether there be present encouragement or not, it is enough that it shall be gloriously rewarded hereafter.

Sixthly, if there be such a glorious reward, such blessed things as these reserved for the people of God: hence then let us dwell a little in admiring at the goodness of God, at the infinite treasures of the riches of the glory of the grace of God towards the children of men: Certainly, Brethren, great are the thoughts of God towards mankinde, wonderful are his ways to this poor creature of his: What is man, says the Psalmist, nay, what is man indeed? when as we consider what God has done for him. In Rom. 8:31 after the Apostle had spoke of glorification, and of the blessed estate of Gods people hereafter, says the Apostle, What shall we say to these things? So seeing these things are so that are revealed, What shall

we say to these things? O the heighth, and length, and depth, and breadth of the loving kindeness of the Lord! how unsearchable are his judgements! shall we say, How unsearchable are his mercies? and his mercies past finding out. O how great is your goodness which you hast laid up for them that fear you, which you hast wrought before the sons of men! Psalm 31:19 If ever God wrought about any thing, it was about the communication of his goodness to mankinde; yea, how great is it before the sons of men, before us that have but a little made known to us? How great is it before Angels then, and before God himself? In Psalm 113:6 it is said, God humbleth to behold things that are done in heaven: It is much that God should vouchsafe to behold any thing in heaven; but now that God should vouchsafe to behold such a poor wretched creature as man is here upon earth, and not to behold him only, but to work thus gloriously for him, and that from all eternity, to make it his great work to communicate himself to man; O how does God humble himself here, and how is his mercy and goodness to be admired and adored by the sons of men! God is to be praised for the least of his mercies here, but he is to be admired in the glory of his rich grace in heaven. We read Psalm 136. God is praised twenty five times for his mercies, but the conclusion of all is, Praise the God of Heaven, for his mercies endure for ever; his mercies, as he is the God of heaven, they are the glorious mercies indeed. When the Scripture would set forth the excellency of a thing, it expresseth it by heaven, as the excellency of Christ, He is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. 15:47 The excellency of God, the God of heaven, Jonah 1:9 It is made the top of Christs glory, that he is made higher then the heavens, Heb. 7:26 When Christ would show the excellency of the bread of life, he says, It is bread from heaven; the excellency of

spiritual blessings is set out in this, that they are blessings in heavenly places, Eph. 1. Because gold is the most precious mettal, therefore we lay it over other things, not only wood and cloth, but silver it self: so because heaven is so excellent, the Lord gilds as it were his choicest blessings with this adjunct, and all to show the wonderful excellency there is in heaven it self.

Brethren, God has therefore revealed these things to us, to that end that the glory of his grace might be great in the world: God would have us have high, and honorable, and glorious thoughts of his goodness; God would have the high praises of his grace to be in the hearts and in the mouthes of his Saints; it is a great evil to have low and mean apprehensions of the glorious grace of God to mankinde; you do not know what dishonor you bring to God in it: If your hearts be not raised on high, and enlarged in the thoughts of the free and glorious grace of God to mankinde, it is an exceeding dishonor to him. To see the riches of Gods glorious grace to the children of men, it is a mighty work of faith, and such a work as the soul is enabled to do only by a mighty and glorious work of the holy Ghost in it; indeed there is in the world a base, and poor, and mean apprehension of the grace of God in Christ, such as does not work at all to raise, and enlarge, and glorifie the heart of a man, but the true sight of the riches of Gods glorious grace, it has a mighty power to raise, and enlarge, and glorifie the hearts of the children of men while they are here; as mark the expressions of the Apostle in his Prayer for the Ephesians, 1 Ephes. 17:18 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; The eyes of your understanding being enlightned, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the

glory of his inheritance in the Saints: not the inheritance of the Saints, but the inheritance in the Saints, and the glory of the inheritance, and the riches of the glory, and they must not only have understanding to know this, but the eyes of their understanding must be enlightened, and this must come from the knowledge of Christ, from the Spirit of wisdom and Revelation, and from the Father of glory, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. The sight of the excellency and riches of Gods grace here, it is that that is the work of God shining into the heart, 2 Cor. 4:6 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: The unsearchable truths of the Gospel are in that which has been revealed so far as we are able to wade into them. The sight of Gods rich glory, is that which the Princes of the world have not known, it is that which requires a work of the Spirit of God, Of that Spirit which searcheththe deep things of God.

O brethren, if you had a true spiritual sight of the richness of the goodness of God in the way of his communication of happiness and glory to the children of men, then you see into the great design of God, into the deep counsels of his wisdom, then God has laid open his heart unto you, God has brought you into the treasures of his riches, and given you a view of them; the very secrets of Gods soul are imparted to you, and blessed are your eyes that have seen these things: if the sight of Gods glory in his grace towards mankinde be seen in true beauty and height, and glory indeed, there is no fear that they should do hurt to any soul; it is true, the apprehension of the grace of God in a natural way, is the cause of security or presumption in many, but there was never any in the world that was furthered in a way of security and presumption

upon the spiritual sight and view they have had of the heighth and depth of the riches of the glory of the grace of God in the face of Jesus Christ: That sight of Gods grace that is the cause of security in people, is that which is grounded meerly upon a natural light, which has no efficacy to raise, and enlarge, and to purge the heart: But this true spiritual sight of Gods grace, it has a mighty efficacy, and nothing more, to raise, and enlarge, and purge the heart. In 2 Corinth. 3:18 says the Apostle, We beholding the glory of the Lord as in a mirror: What then, are we secure and presumptuous upon this? No, We are changed into the same image from glory to glory. What was that glory that the Apostle did behold? the glory of God in the mirror of the Gospel, the glory of God in the riches of his grace towards the Saints: Now says he, While we behold, as in a mirror, this glory of God, this is the fruit of it, We are changed from glory to glory. People talk of Gods mercy, but how few ever had a spiritual sight of Gods mercy? they would have Ministers preach much of Gods mercy, but if people had eyes to behold it in the glory of it, how would it change their hearts? therefore then, I beseech you, labor to have more then a natural sight of Gods mercy and goodness towards mankinde. A man by a low apprehension of Gods mercy and goodness may think thus: So long as I serve God, it shall be well with me, God will bless me, and be merciful to me; but that spiritual and supernatural sight of the riches of the glory of Gods mercy, is this, for a soul though it sees it self a base vile wretched worm, a lump of filth, and sees it self standing guilty before the Lord, and God seems to look with an angry face upon it, and conscience within it accuses it, and the threats of the fiery Law come out against it; yet for a soul to be able to look into the deep bowels of Gods infinite compassion that are in Christ, and

in them to look upon it self for all this as an heir of glory and eternal life, so as to have the soul raised, and enlarged, and devoted to the magnifying, praising and adoring the riches of Gods grace, and to venture all upon this, this is more then a natural sight of Gods grace, and of his mercy towards mankinde.

You will say, We could admire Gods grace and mercy towards mankinde, and praise him, and bless him for it, and our hearts would be enlarged, If we were sure these things did belong to us, and that we had any interest in them; there is enough in them to enlarge and raise our hearts, but this is that which hinders, We do not know that we have an interest therein.

To that I answer, That this very work of God it self, that gives this sight of his grace to raise up the heart to close with it, and to make the soul venture all upon it, that does bring the soul to devote it self to the praise and honor of it; this very work of it self does interest your souls in it, therefore do not say, If I were interested in these things, then I could praise and magnifie God for them: If you can do this, you are interested in them, for this is an immediate work of faith, and it is from a divine principle to be able to do this, and therefore though you know no good at all in yourselves before, and you had no arguments to encourage you before, and you had no preparation in your own apprehensions before, yet if you have but this work of grace, it does interest your souls in all that which has been revealed concerning the recompence of reward of the Saints of God.

But may we not presume to think that such great things belong to us?

To that I answer, Where ever presumption is, it is built upon a natural sight of Gods grace, and that is a poor low flat dead thing, that has no such efficacy to raise the heart to such a glorious work as this is, and therefore if the heart be raised to such a glorious work as this, by the appprehension of the riches of the grace and goodness of God towards mankinde, that is not presumption: And this is the sixth Use.

Chapter 54: God's people to be highly honored

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Seventhly, if there be such blessed things reserved for the people of God: Hence let us look upon all the servants of God as honorable in our eyes, and let them be honored in our thoughts, for great are the thoughts of God upon them and towards them, and therefore great and honorable should be our thoughts of them, though they be never so poor and mean in the world. We use to look upon great heirs with admiring thoughts, and blessing of them every time we look upon them. Do you see one walking in the ways of God? whatever he be for his outwards, let your hearts bless him, and say, Here is one indeed born to great things, other manner of things then any the world affords. Did we know what were the things that the people of God should be possessed of within a while, we would say in our hearts, O blessed that ever they were born, blessed is the womb that bare them, and blessed are the paps that gave them suck: Did we with a spiritual believing eye behold what things they should have, and saw them as now possessed of them, we would see cause to fall down and kiss the ground upon which they tread: The blessed Angels look upon them as great ones, as the glory of the world, and therefore do joyfully minister unto them, because they know they are the

great heirs of Heaven, for whom such great things are prepared: Great things are spoken of you, O you City of God, says the Psalmist; Great things are spoken of you, O ye Saints of God. If Heaven must be so glorious to entertain the Saints, how glorious are those for whom heaven is prepared? Says Ahasuerus, What shall be done to the man whom the King will honor? O what shall be done to those whom an infinite God has set his heart upon to raise to honor, and to manifest to Angels, and to all the world, what his infinite power is able to do in raising of a creature to glory: In the Saints there is a meeting, as it were of the beams of Gods grace and goodness as in a center, and that must needs be very warm and hot indeed. The beams of the Sun in the circumference scattered in the ayr, are warm; but in a glass, where they are united together as it were in a center, there they warm after another manner, there they burn; so all the works of Gods grace abroad in the world, they are as the beams of the Sun in the circumference, that are scattered abroad; but in his people there is the center where they are united together, and there they burn, and are glorious indeed, and therefore high and honorable thoughts you ought to have of the Saints. It is a great argument to show Gods greatness, that all the creatures in the world are his, and for him. What an argument then is it to set forth the greatness of a Christian, that Heaven, and God, and Christ, and all are his and for him? and this has been shown in this glorious recompence of reward: How great and honorable then should they be in our eyes?

Eighthly, if there be such a glorious reward, and great things prepared for Gods people, then what love is due to Christ, and to the Gospel, and to the ways of godliness?

First, love to the Lord Christ, who is the cause of all this.

Secondly, to the Gospel that reveals these things to us.

Thirdly, to the ways of godliness that leads to all this: great and blessed are the things of the Kingdom of Heaven; from whence is all this? It is the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom all this comes, another reward was due to us, we were wretched guilty creatures, fire-brands of hell, children of perdition, cast out unto an eternal curse; but the Lord Christ, who was the wisdom of the Father, set his heart upon us, and spoke for us from all eternity, and would not satisfy himself in delivering of mankinde from that miserable and lost condition in which they were, but so set his heart upon them, as he intended to make it his great work for the manifestation of the riches of his grace, to raise this poor wretched creature to a height of happiness and glory, that it might appear to Angels, to the world, yea to the blessed Trinity it self, what the Son of God is able to do, to raise a creature from misery unto glory; and so his heart was set upon mankinde, that though it must cost him the eclipsing of his own glory, though he must come to be made a prey to the world, and if a man, a man of sorrows, yea, made a curse it self in the abstract, that man might have this glory and happiness, and yet he was content with all; and at last this is all he prays for as a fruit of his sufferings and merits, Father, I will that they also whom you hast given me, be where I am, that they may behold my glory which you hast given me; as if he should say, If I can but have this, I am well, I have enough for all the sufferings that I did endure. This indeed is called a reward, but it is the reward of another manner of righteousness then our own; were it that there were no other righteousness but our own, though our own should be true righteousness, the reward would never come to this height; but

this is first the reward of the merit, of the death, of the blood, and of the perfect righteousness of the Son of God, and so in him it comes to be our reward, therefore it is Christ that is our life, and happiness, and glory. O let us join with those blessed Elders in Rev. 5. 8, 9. that fell down before the Lamb, having all harps in their hands, and golden vials full of odours, and sung, Worthy art you who were slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by your blood, to receive honor, and blessing, and glory; and that we might join in that blessed melody that St. John heard in that Chapter, in Verse 13. He heard all creatures in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and in the Sea, saying, Blessing, honor, glory and power, be unto him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever; that we might say Amen to this. If any man wish good to us, we count it worthy of love; but the Lord Christ having wrought such infinite good for us as this, how should our hearts be enflamed to him, and that none should be dear to us, and prized of us in comparison of Christ: Let us cry out with that blessed Martyr, None but Christ, none but Christ.

Again, how should our souls love the Gospel, and prize the Gospel, that has revealed all this to us? In 2 Tim. 1:10 it is said, Life and immortality is brought to light by the Gospel: These are the things that in comparison were kept hid from the beginning of the world, before the manifestation of the Gospel, but now they are revealed: O blessed be God that we had the preaching of the Gospel amongst us, to open the treasures of grace to us in this manner. What poor low thoughts should we have had of the happiness of mankinde, had not God made known these glorious things in the Ministery of the Gospel? Many wise men by the light of nature have risen high in the contemplations of happiness, that mans

nature is capable of, but how far beneath these things have their highest thoughts been? It is a great part of the glory of the Gospel, that it sets out unto us these high and glorious things.

And then the ways of godliness, those we should love, because those are the ways that lead and tend to all this; godliness has the promise of the life to come, as well as the promise of this life annexed to it: Were the ways of godliness never so hard and rough, never so difficult, yet they are glorious ways, and to be loved, because of the glorious end they tend unto: Great is the gain of godliness, if these things be believed. You that are Merchants love and prize trading and merchandizing that brings in great gain; as some in a way of trading and merchandizing, by a bargain in a morning will bring in a hundred pounds, when as many other poor people are fain to work hard to get a shilling or eighteen pence a day; now you prize that trade that with a few words can get in so much: O prize the trade of godliness then, there is gain to be had. I may compare all the works of morality, and common grace, to the poor mean trade of the laboring man, that is fain to work hard for a shilling or eight pence a day, they work, and get but some few outward blessings from God, but godliness is the trade of merchandising, that brings in hundreds together, and that our hearts should be upon; God would have our hearts to be after great and glorious things. It is an expression of Cleopatra to Marcus Antonius, It is not for you to be fishing for Gudgeons, but for Towns, and Forts, and Castles: And so those that are acquainted with the ways of godliness, it is not for them to be trading for poor things, but for eternal life, glory and immortality.

The ninth Use, is an Use of Examination, to know who those are that have interest in these glorious things, to the answering of that question in Psalm 15. Who shall abide in your Tabernable? who shall dwell in your holy hill? I confess that Psalm does principally aim at communion with the Church of God; such as are fit for communion with a Church, are fit for heaven, and therefore the question may be true, Who shall dwell in your holy hill? who shall be partakers of these things? Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God; But who are they? It is necessary you should labor to make this sure, because it is a matter so great, and so glorious, and not to lay the weight of that which is of infinite consequence, upon poor, weak, slight, and sandy foundations; certainly we do not know what the grace of God towards mankinde is, if we content ourselves with slight hopes; but if God has enlightned your souls to know the reality and glory of them, they wil never be at rest, till you have got certain and infallible grounds for them. In things of small consequence we are content with slight evidences, but if a man have to deal in any business upon which his whole estate depends, he would not have any man think it ill if he does make sure, if he will have bonds and seals: so we should make sure of heaven, and of glory, because it is such a great matter.

Some I suppose, that meerly upon the hearing of the greatness of these things, cannot but have some misgiving thoughts; If these things be so great, surely they concern not me, they belong not to me; Can I think in my conscience that I am that man or woman that God should have such great thoughts upon, and should look upon me, so as to make it the greatest design that he has to glorifie the riches of his mercy upon me? What work of Gods grace have I ever had upon me? I would not have those that are affected with

the greatness of Gods grace to mankinde, think that these things do not belong to them because they are great. But those that never had their hearts affected with the excellency and glory of Gods grace toward man, when they hear of the greatness and glory of those things that are reserved for the Saints, they may justly have their consciences misgive them, and think surely they do not belong to them. can you that art a base drunkard, that prizest nothing but a little drink, and some outward things, think that God should make it the greatest work that he has in the world, for to communicate the riches of his grace and goodness unto you? The greatness of these things may be enough to cast you off; As it is with a Beggar, a Beggar comes and asks an alms, if a man put his hand in his pocket, and take out a peny or two pence, he has hope to have that; but if he take out a piece of gold, he has no hope of that, because it is so much: So when men have but natural thoughts of heaven and happiness hereafter, you think you might have that, but when you come to have heaven opened to you, and you see it is such a great and glorious thing, your hearts may justly think it is not for us. Cast a bone to a Dog, he falls to it presently, but set a joynt of meat before him well drest, in a large dish, and he goes away, he dares not venture upon that: So for these things in the world, the ordinary favors of God, these bones that God casts to Dogs, you may fall upon them, and think these are for you; but when you come to the dainties, and infinite treasures of God, can such a swinish heart, such a base, filthy, unclean spirit as yours is, that never minded nothing but the satisfying of your base lusts, think that these are for you? you cannot but have misgiving thoughts, and think either these things are but notions, or else I have no part in them.

Chapter 55: To whom the Recompence of reward appertains

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But how may any know that they shall have this glorious reward?

Carnal and sensual hearts, because they have no principles of Gods grace, to show them the great things of God, and the mind of God, they think no man can know; we must have hopes, and hope well, but who can know what God has in heaven for us? Those that are acquainted with the mysteries of God in the Gospel, they know what Gods mind has been from all eternity concerning them, and what God will do for them to all eternity. How do they know?

First, would you know whether you shall have this Recompence of reward? Have you made Moses Choice? Certainly, those that have made Moses Choice, shall have Moses Reward: What Moses Choice was you have heard, Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: Moses might have had honor and esteem enough in Egypt, but he accounted afflictions with the people of God, in Gods ways a great deal better; He esteemed the reproach

of Christ greater riches then all; so I may have Christ and communion with his people, let me be reproached, and contemned, and despised, I care not. Now do you finde this? Though there was a time my heart was taken with the glittering shows of things here, and I saw no excellency in the ways of God, they were but notions to me; at length God wrought mightily upon my soul, and showed me the vanity of all things that I accounted for glorious things, and showed me a beauty in Gods people, and began to knit my heart to them, so as I was willing to part with any thing to have communion with them, and to venture all upon the bare word and promise of God, for those glorious things that are revealed in it, and this choice I have made, and my soul is setled in it, whatever befals me in this world; has there been such a work upon your souls, that you have made Moses Choice? then you shall have Moses Reward.

Secondly, are you begotten unto the hope of these glorious things? Whoever shall be partaker of this glorious reward, must be one that is born to it. There are some dignities in the world that are got no way, except they be born to them; so if you have this reward, you must be born to it, 1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us unto a lively hope: Whoever has the true hope of Heaven, it is one that is begotten to it, that is, There must be a mighty work of God upon your hearts, a new birth, a regeneration in you, otherwise there is nothing you have done or can do that can get this reward. In Mat. 19:28 says Christ unto his Disciples, after Peter had spoken what they had left for him, Ye that have followed me in the Regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel: As if Christ should say,

Peter, you have forsaken all and followed me, but know, the bare forsaking is not enough, but you who have felt the work of God regenerating your souls, upon which you have followed me, you shall sit upon twelve thrones: Some do interpret this place Regeneration, the estate of the Gospel, and so make it not to be the work of God upon the soul, but the work of God upon the world, to make a new world; as the glorious estate of the Church under the Gospel is called a new heaven, and a new earth, and so take it, Ye that have followed me in this new world, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, &c. but I rather take it the other way, not wholly excluding this, they are only those that follow Christ in the Regeneration, that shall have this reward.

It is called the new birth, because there is such a strange change; there is a new spirit, and a new life put into a man: Suppose a rational soul were put into a beast, what a change would be in that creature? Suppose an Angelical nature were put upon us, what a change would there be? By the change that is wrought in regeneration there is a greater difference; the highest degree of glory in heaven is not so different from the lowest degree of grace here, as the lowest degree of grace here is different from the highest excellency of nature, because the difference between the highest degree of the glory of heaven from the lowest degree of grace, is but a gradual difference, but the difference that is between the lowest degree of grace, and the highest excellency of nature, is a specifical difference. Therefore you that hope for glory, know there must be a regeneration, that work of God upon your souls that must cause a greater difference in you from that you were by nature, then there is in the glorified Saints, that have the highest degree of glory, from the meanest Saint in the world; as the reward is a mighty glo-

rious thing, so the work of God in preparing a soul for this reward is a mighty glorious work. And therefore do not content yourselves in every poor slight thought of heaven, know heaven lies upon that which is a mighty work of God in you.

Thirdly, if you ever come to Heaven, there is a principle of heaven put into your souls here, that is, a heavenly principle that carries you heavenward, I mean the work of God, causing you to have heavenly mindes, and heavenly hearts; Our conversationis in heaven, says the Apostle. In Cant. 3:6 the Church is compared to pillars of smoke that ascend upward to heaven; Though the Church be black and dark in regard of her infirmities, yet it has a principle to carry it upward to heaven. The Saints are compared to Eagles that fly aloft towards heaven, though their bodies are not there, their hearts and souls are there; if our treasures be in heaven, our hearts are there already. I read of Edward the first, who had a mighty desire to go to the holy Land, to Ierusalem, and because he was hindred, and could not get thither, he gave his Son a charge upon his death-bed to carry his heart thither; and he prepared Two and thirty thousand pound to carry his heart thither: So the Saints, though they have not their bodies in heaven, their hearts are there, and they take much pains, and are at great charges to get their hearts thither.

All things in nature have a principle to carry them to their proper place; because the place of fire is on high, therefore fire has a principle to carry it on high; and because the place of earth is below, therefore earth has a principle to carry it downward: So if the place and center of the heart be in Heaven, then certainly it has a principle to move naturally thither, to move upward to heaven; and therefore that soul that has nothing but a principle to carry it

downward to the earth, and to the lusts of it to these things below, heaven is not the proper place for such a soul, and when the soul goes out of the body, it wil not go to Heaven: Take earth, and close it in a vessel, and take fire, and put into a vessel, open the vessels, and let them out, and they go both to their places; so the souls of men when they are gone out of the body, they go to the place whither they had a principle to carry them, therefore do not think the principle shall be put into them when you dye, but you must have a principle before: if your hearts be prest down by earthly things, when you dye they will fall down; and therefore observe which way your souls work: Can you say, as in the presence of God, My soul works heavenward, though I have weights of corruption that would weigh me down, yet I have a principle that does work to Heaven? But the consciences of many tell them their souls work downward, to vanity and sensuality, and you have no other principle, and therefore when your souls depart, they fall downward.

Fourthly, what soul soever has an interest in heaven, heaven is in that soul already: The kingdom ofGod is in them, and they have taken hold of eternal life, now eternal life abides in them; Whom he has justified, he has glorified already, they have the glory of heaven begun; you heard what that was. In heaven there is the perfection of our natures, the image of God shall be renewed; now is the image of God begun? has God marked you, and set the stamp of his image upon you? There is no soul that God does intend to put glory upon, but he marks that soul, and stamps his image upon it in the work of conversion, and says, Here is a soul I set the stamp of my image upon, because I mark it out to glory: if ever you come to Heaven, God must see his own Image and Superscription upon you. As the Beast set his mark upon men, and would suffer

none to trade but those that had his mark: so God will set his mark upon his people, and none shall come into his Kingdom but those that have his mark: now a mans Image is upon a thing, when by beholding of it I am put in mind of him that it is an Image of; so if you have this Image and stamp of God, a man that knows God, as soon as he looks upon you, as soon as he beholds your conversation, he is put in mind of God, and he says, I have heard and read much of God, of the holiness and righteousness of God, and by this mans conversation I am put in mind of that holiness and righteousness of God, the brightness of which I see shining here.

Again, in Heaven you know God himself is the portion of the Saints, they have the presence of God: What presence of God do you enjoy here? Were your souls ever acquainted with the presence of God in the Ordinances? What blessed vision have you of God here? Those who come to Heaven, God gives a sight of himself here. And what union have you with God? What union of grace? What mystical union between God and your souls? And what fruition have you of God? Is it God that you enjoy in the creature? and God in all things? God in the Ordinances? and what rest do your souls finde in God? though you be tost up and down in regard of the uncertainty of the creature, yet is God your rest: yea, do you enjoy yourselves in God? the beginning of all these are now for the present. And likewise for communion with Jesus Christ, what communion and converse is there between your souls and Jesus Christ? Is it not a riddle to you? Are you delighted in the communion of the Saints? Are the Sabbaths your delight, as a beginning of the eternal Sabbath you shall keep in Heaven? Therefore now do you ask, Who shall have Heaven? and, Who shall ascend into the Mount? Those whom the Mount now comes down unto. Many

hope they shall have God when they dye, but surely if God be not so merciful as to give you spiritual mercies for the present, he will not be so merciful as to give you eternal mercies hereafter; if he do not give you mercies of grace here, he will not give you mercies of glory hereafter.

Fifthly, what are the apprehensions that you have of this reward? there may be a special note drawn from thence, whereby you may see whether this reward shall be yours or no. What is it that you apprehend to be the heighth and excellency of that reward and glory that you expect? Is it that spiritual and supernatural good that is in Heaven? Do you not apprehend Heaven after a carnal and natural way, when you hear speaking of Crowns, and dignity, and happiness, and glory, and the like? but has God showed you that the heighth and top of all consists in those spiritual and supernatural things, in the image of God, and in communion with God, and those things that have been opened? are your hearts more after these then after any thing else? then it is like that Heaven is for you, for these things are kept hid from those that Heaven is not for.

Sixthly, consider what your hopes are for this recompence of reward.

First, where hopes are true, they are such as are wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, they are purging hopes.

First, they are such hopes as are wrought by the power of the holy Ghost, Rom. 15:13 Certainly, hopes of such great things as these, must be raised by a great power, they are hopes that could never be raised by any natural apprehensions, by any work of

Reason: you have hopes of Heaven, and of the glorious reward; How came you by them? What almighty power of the holy Ghost have you felt that has raised these hopes? If you have no other hopes but those that may spring out of nature, natural conceits and apprehensions, you are far short of this recompence of reward: but this recompence of reward being glorious, it has a glorious principle to raise hopes, such hopes as can bear down strong difficulties that shall oppose them: the holy Ghost does stretch out the hopes of the soul beyond that which nature can do. In the Hebrew that word that signifies hope, signifies a line, because by hope the heart is stretched out as in a line to the thing it hopes for: now the hopes that nature raises is but in a short line, and they stretch out the heart but a little way, but the hopes that are wrought by the power of the holy Ghost, are such hopes as the heart is stretched out very far by them; and there must be a mighty stretching out of the heart, and that by a mighty power, to make it hope for such great things as these, that God should bring such a poor worm to such high things as these are: Ordinary base drossie hopes that have nothing in them, they are not stretched out to these things, they have some confused apprehensions, and slight opinions about heaven, & they are loth to think they should be damned for ever, and cast from God, and therefore they will have some conceits it shall be well with them, and they hope well; but to have their hearts stretched out to expect these blessed things as the happiness of their souls, and as the real, substantial, and only good, this is by the mighty power of the holy Ghost.

Secondly, they are purging hopes; 1 John 3:3 And every man that has this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure: It is a lively working hope, 1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be God who has begotten

us again to a lively hope. As a fountain that has dirt cast into it, it being a living fountain, it works, and works, and never leaves till it has got the dirt out; cast dirt into a puddle, and it lies there, and putrifies: And this is the difference between the sin of one that is natural, and one that has hope of eternal life: When sin comes into a carnal natural heart, it lies there and putrifies; but where sin comes into a gracious heart, that has hope of eternal life, such a heart by these hopes are as a living fountain, that will never leave working till it be pure again: Such a soul as apprehends it self a vessel of such rich and glorious mercies as these, do labor to cleanse it self to the utmost: if you have a vessel that you put ordinary water into, you care not though there be some dust in the bottom, but if you will put in some precious liquor, you will cleanse it again, and again, and will not suffer any dust to be there: So carnal hearts that do not know what great things God has laid up for his people, that are not vessels of mercy, but only look for some common things, they can suffer their hearts to filled with noysom lusts, but where the soul does apprehend it self a vessel of mercy, such a one as God will fill with these glorious things, it would not have any filth and corruption abiding in it. In 2 Tim. 2:21 The Apostle speaks of two sorts of vessels that are in Gods House, that is, in the Church, Vessels of honor, and Vessels of dishonor; But how shall we know we are vessels of honor, or of dishonor? if therefore a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honor; a vessel of dishonor is an unclean vessel, a vessel of honor is a clean vessel: If therefore your hopes be such as can stand with any beloved sin against knowledge, you are vessels of dishonor: And here is the liveliness of this hope; if you hast a hope to be a vessel of honor, it purges you from filth, and by that purging from filth,

there comes to be a readiness and preparation to every good work, here is such a one as shall ascend up into the holy Hill of God. This is the sixth note.

Seventhly, examine what your claim is, whether your claim to Heaven, and eternal life, and this recompence of reward do lie right in the point of Justification or no? If you look at nothing but the works that you do, though they be never so glorious and good, & do not lay your claim first right in the point of Justification, you will mistake and miscarry, and be disappointed of all this recompence of reward. Therefore Paul, in Rom. 8:30 says, Whom he has justified, them he also glorified; so that Glorification does depend upon Justification: Now then the first thing that a soul is to look after for the assurance of its portion in this recompence of reward, is to make sure in the point of Justification, for there lies the claim to heaven, and all the rest comes but as a consequent of this. Now the laying our claim right in the point of Justification consists in this, When a soul comes to apprehend the infinite need it has of a perfect righteousness of a Mediator, and looks upon that righteousness of the Mediator as well pleasing to God, as sufficient to absolve it from former sins, and to discharge it from former guiltiness, whereby another reward was due to it, and by faith applies this righteousness, whereby it comes to be perfect before God, and lays the weight of all its confidence of Heaven, and of glory upon this; then you may hope to have interest in this recompence of reward: but if your claim come in any other way then this, it does not give you any interest to heaven; and therefore look much to the point of Justification, and be sure that your hearts have laid the claim and interest it has to heaven and eternal life right there, and then there may be great hope of the recompence of reward, though

afterward there be many failings in your works and services: And if you will look at any work whereby you should have the reward, especially look at the work of believing, closing with the righteousness of Christ in the apprehension of your own unworthiness; This is the greatest work that any man is able to do, that shall have the greatest reward in heaven.

You think if you were able to perform duties, and do such and such things, to keep your hearts up for God, you should have this reward; but the greatest work of God that ever any creature did, is when it apprehends its own unworthiness, to venture upon the righteousness of Christ; if you were able to perform full obedience to every particular of the Moral Law, it were not so great a work, not so accepted of God, not so well pleasing in his eyes, nor should not be so gloriously rewarded in Heaven, as this one work of believing in his Son. God takes such infinite delight in his Son, as he looks more at that work of the souls believing in his Son, and venturing it self and its eternal estate upon his Son, then he does upon all works besides: and therefore look upon the point of Justification by faith first, and if that be right, the assurance of the reward will come in: divers objections will rise, that can never be answered, till the heart be setled in the point of Justification. All the Objections that rise from our weakness and sinful infirmity comes from this, because we do not settle ourselves well in the claim we make to the recompence of reward in the point of Justification, in the righteousness of Christ by faith.

Eighthly, examine what your works are, see whether they be such as shall attain to this recompence ofreward: If all the excellencies of all the moralities of all the men in the world were put

into one, these could never reach to this reward; it is a supernatural thing, and therefore if you would know whether you shall have it, there must be something supernatural in you.

But when is a work supernatural, so as I must have some comfortable hope, that it shall reach unto this supernatural reward?

A supernatural work has, First, supernatural Principles. Secondly, it has supernatural ends. Thirdly, it is performed in a supernatural manner.

First, the principles are supernatural; first, they are above nature; and secondly, they are fetched from a fountain that nature has no skill of. For the first, there is something above nature, that puts you upon duties; you do not only go on in the ways of godliness, because you know you are bound to them, you cannot be saved else, but because you finde a new light let out by God from heaven, that shows an infinite excellency and beauty that is in the way of godliness. And you finde a principle of Divine nature put into you, that makes the ways of godliness agreeable to you; and the more Spiritual and Divine they are, the more suitableness you finde between your souls and those ways.

And secondly, do you finde that you draw your principles that enables you to any good work from a Mediator? The natural principles come at highest but from reason, it sees reason for such and such things to be done; but a supernatural principle is drawn from a Mediator, from God-Man, from God in Christ, and by vertue of the promise, and so it comes to be an Evangelical obedience.

And it has supernatural ends, beyond self, and all self, and creature respects: That work that is natural rises no higher then nature in its ends; as the water ascends no higher then from the

place it descends: so all natural works have some self or creature respects, but when you finde your hearts are raised above self and creature respects in your obedience to God, there is a supernatural end.

And then they are performed in a supernatural manner. Seneca has this expression of desires; You may know it is not a natural desire when it rises beyondbounds: He applies it to evil desires, when a man desires things without bounds, that is no natural desire: Now that which he applyes to the corruption of nature, we may rather apply to the perfection of nature. All the desires of nature are such as are limited in a narrow compass; no natural man in the world does go on in the ways of obedience with an infinite desire to dilate himself infinitely as far as he is capable, but is always limited in a little narrow compass, so far he will go, and no further; but when the soul comes to walk with God in a way of supernatural obedience, it comes to be without bounds, all those bounds that did limit the soul are taken away, and there is a letting out of the heart to God in the ways of godliness in an infinite manner; and this is a most clear evidence of a supernatural work, that will go for currant in Heaven, and shall be rewarded there; there is the impression of Gods infiniteness upon the heart in every work that is performed; examine whether your works be not like those that the Apostle speaks of, in 1 Cor. 3:15 where he speaks of the works that shall burn; therefore let us consider whether our works be such as when they come to the tryal, shall be found to be stubble, and burn.

There are a great many whose works are like to burn, and themselves too: Many of the works of Gods people are like to burn, but look too yourselves for your main and principal works,

whether they will hold when they are examined by the rule of heaven, and shall be rewarded: It is nothing what your works are before men, the people of God may highly esteem of your works, but when they come to be examined in heaven, they shall be examined strictly, and unless God see a supernatural stamp upon them, they will burn; and therefore look to your works, see whether they be supernatural in the principles, in the ends, and in the manner of doing of them: and examine by these rules the assurance of this reward. Mr. Latimer says, the assurance of heaven, is the sweet meats of the feast of a good conscience: In great feasts there are good meats and banquets: There are other dainty dishes in this feast, and the assurance of heaven is the sweet meats and the banquet. Now that we may have the feast of a good conscience made full, let us take pains in examining whether this recompence of reward be ours: if we did but apprehend this reward to be ours, it would make us go on with power in our way, whereas now every little thing is ready to turn us aside.

Again, if upon examining by these arguments you finde some comfortable hope that the recompence of reward is yours, what concerns you, but patience to wait for it; and in the mean time to live as those that shall have these things, and labor to dye so?

First, patiently to wait; St. Iames says, The Husbandman waits for the precious seed till the harvestcome: Though it be precious seed, the Husbandman casts it into the earth, he is not discontent because he has not harvest next Week, but he is content to let the winter, the frost and snow go over it; and so we must be content to have many troubles between the hope of the reward, and the possession of it. We must work in the vineyard of the Lord, and endure the heat of the day, and not expect our peny till night. Mark

how the Apostle would have those to walk who have the hope of heaven, Rom. 2:7 To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life. Great things are to be expected and waited for; If a man have a great venture at Sea, that he expects some mighty profit by, he is content to wait two or three years, because he thinks it will make amends for all: So in your way of merchandizing, if a man go and buy a commodity of five or ten shillings, he lays down present money, but if the commodity come to a great sum of many hundred pounds, he does but give something in earnest, the great pay is to come many moneths after: so when men will bargain with God for their obedience to have credit and esteem in the world, yea, those men that aspire after the greatest things in the world, these are poor trifling matters, and God gives them presently: but because the Covenant that is between God and Christ, & so between Christ and us, is about great matters, and God intends to reward his people with glorious things eternally in the Heavens, they have but the first-fruits of them for the present, and they must not expect the fulness of them suddenly.

Great men have two kinde of Servants usually, some servants that they hire by the day, or the moneth, or the year, that they shall have so much wages, and so their wages is paid them, it may be every night, or every week; other servants have not their wages presently, but that which they serve for, is the expectation of some great office or living that their Lord should give to them after many years service, and therefore they go on in their service, though nothing come presently. Here is the difference between the men of the world and others, I speak of those who live the best lives who are not truly gracious; they in some measure are the servants of

God, they do God some service, only such service as poor laboring men do that are hired in a great mans House, that have their pay every week, or day; so you have your pay every day, you have meat and drink, and the comfort of the creatures; but God has other greater Servants, godly people, Christians, and though they have not so much pay presently, as wicked men have, yet there are reversions, and some glorious things that they expect hereafter, and therefore they go on patiently, though for the present they have not so much as others. And you have no cause to envy others: If there be two Servants in a great mans House, the one sees the poor laboring man have his shilling given him, shall he envy him, and say, I have served many years, and have not had a shilling? No, he does not envy him, because he expects some great things: And so when you see the men of the world have the great things of the world, do not envy them, because you serve God for greater things.

Queen Elizabeth, she envyed the milk-maid when she was in prison, but if she had known what a glorious Reign she should have had for four and forty years, she would not have envyed her. Wait therefore patiently, because the things are great, and the longer you wait, the greater they will be: as it was the speech of the Son of an Emperor, says he, The longer the Cooks are preparing the meat, there will be the better chear, meaning, The longer he staid for the Empire, the greater it would be; so go on in your way, wait patiently, the longer you wait, the better it will be at the last: and it is sure enough, Christ is gone before to take possession, and God never so wrought to make any thing sure, as he has wrought for the assuring of the good in the Covenant of grace. Yet long after it and desire it. In Rom. 8:21 it is said, The creature groaneth to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, to come into the glori-

ous liberty of the children of God; and therefore we ourselves should much more desire it, and pant after that time, we should cry out with David, though with patience, When shall I appear before God, the living God?

Chapter 56: Christians should live and dye as becomes heirs of such a glorious estate

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SEcondly, learn, if there be such a glorious reward, to live and dye as becomes such glorious heirs: this is the Exhortation of the holy Ghost unto us by St. Paul, in his Epistle unto the Thessalonians, As you know how we exhorted, andcomforted, and charged every one of you that ye would walk worthy of God that has called you unto his kingdom and glory: here is an exhortation, and in the name of God a charge upon every soul that does expect to have the portion of it in these great things, that they would walk worthy of God, who has called them unto his kingdom and glory: it is a great charge to walk worthy of God, but to walk worthy of God who has called us to his kingdom and glory, this is great, but the life of a Christian must be thus. Now consider, what life have I? Is my life such as may be said to be worthy of God, and that God that has called me unto his kingdom and glory? Surely great things must be in the lives of Gods people: people talk much of strictness, and preciseness, that they may be too precise; what do you think must this life be that must be worthy of God who has called us to his kingdom and glory?

It must not be a dead-hearted life, go on with a holy and heavenly chearfulness and courage in Gods ways: It becomes the children of the Bride-chamber to be joyful: see that in any case you rejoice before the Lord; comfort yourselves and one another by these sayings. We belye the truth of God, if we do not walk joyfully: Rejoyce in this, that your names are written in the Book of life; says Christ, they rejoiced that the Devils fell down before them: If there were any thing in the world to be rejoiced in, one would think they might rejoice in that, but Christ would not have them rejoice in that, in comparison of this. Caesar when he was sad, he said to himself, Think you art Caesar, that that might take away his sadness; and so say I to a Christian, Think of your Crown and glory, let your lives be such as may make it appear you have your portion in these things. I may say to some, as Jonadab said to Amnon, Why art you lean from day to day, being the Kings Son? So may I say to every childe of God, Why is your heart so troubled, and Why walkest you so dumpishly in the ways of God, being the King of Heavens Son? Possibilities of heaven is enough to take away the sting of afflictions, but having comfortable hope of these things, this should take away even the sense of them, at least, so far as that they be no way disturbing to us; Seneca says, That vertue does notconsider what it suffers, but whither it tends. It beseems them well enough, but not you, it beseems Swine to follow the trough, but not the heirs of a Kingdom. Plutarch tells of Themistocles, that he accounted it not to stand with his state to stoop down to take up the spoyls the enemy had scattered in flight, but says to one of his followers, You may, for you are not

Themistocles. Thus may it be said to worldly spirits, You may be greedy of these things, for here is your portion, your names are written in the earth, you are not the heirs of the kingdom.

Secondly, walk above the world, above all things that are here below, take heed of ensnarling your hearts, & of too much mixing yourselves with them. There is a generation whose names are written in the earth, Ier. 17:13 and it beseems them to look after the things of the earth, because their portion is there, it is their All: but Gods people have their names written in heaven, and therefore they should not regard the things below as they do. Whoever was free of the city of Rome, might not accept of any other freedom in any other city; they counted it a dishonor to the freedom of Rome, to take freedom any where else: So those that are free of the kingdom of Heaven, should not seek to be free here, but they should be satisfied with a mean condition here, and take heed they do not entangle themselves too much in the things below.

Besides, those that have hopes of Heaven, they should labor to have their lives like to Heaven: It is that we pray for, that the will of God may be done in earth as it is done in heaven: How is it done in heaven? The Saints and Angels there do it fervently, universally, readily, constantly, and therefore the Angels are called by the name of Seraphims, it notes burning, because they burn with zeal for God; labor to conform your life to the life of Heaven.

Again, labor to be much trading for heaven in this world, let there be much intercourse between you and Heaven, let your conversation be in heaven, Phil. 3:20 If a man intend to live in another Countrey, he will have much traffique in that Countrey before he goes; and if we believe we shall come to Heaven, let there be much trading that way. Our conversations should be so in Heaven, as all

the mercies we enjoy here should raise our hearts to heaven. We read Exod. 25. that upon the Table of Shewbread there was set a crown of gold. In those provisions that we have here for souls and bodies, our hearts must be raised to that Crown of glory reserved for us; for the Show-bread set before the Lord was to signifie Gods provision for us, and the dedication of our bread of all our provision to God.

Again, let us labor to increase heaven in our hearts, and to bring as much of heaven into them as possibly we can.

And keep yourselves in a continual readiness whensoever God shall call you to such a glorious recompence of reward as this is. It is said of Daniel, though he was in Babylon, he opened his windows towards Jerusalem, he kept his heart in a readiness to go: So you should do, keep your hearts in a heavenly frame ready for heaven, waiting upon the Bridegroom with your lamps burning, that when he comes you may open immediately to him. There is a difference between a wife that has been faithful to her husband, and waits for his coming home, and another that has been unfaithful to her husband, and has other lovers in the house when her husband knocks; if her husband knocks, she does not go immediately, but there is shuffling up and down, and she delays the time, till she have got the other out of the house; but a faithful wife, she immediately opens; it is true, though the wife be not unfaithful, yet if the house be not handsom, and things be not prepared, she is loth to open: So Christians they have been dallying with their lusts, and their hearts are out of frame, and they are loth to open to Christ; but we should keep our hearts in such a readiness, as immediately to open to Christ, and to be willing to dye.

And when we dye, to dye as heirs of such things, not to respect things below, house or lands, or any thing here. We read of Pope Adrian, when he was to dye, he laments his condition, because he was to leave all his delights and pompous vanities, and cryes out, O my soul, whither goest you? you shall never be merry more; he was loth to leave these things, because he did not know whither he went; but a soul that knows what inheritance it shall have hereafter, it is not loth to go hence: Many are loth to dye, because they have treasures in the world, as those ten men said, in Isa. 41:8 Slay us not, for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oyl; but a godly man is willing to dye, because he has treasures in Heaven. Keep open the eye of faith, exercise faith to see God that is now sending for his childe home: And look upon Christ as having that prayer granted, Father, I will that those whom you hast given me be where I am: by faith you shall see Heaven opened, and the crown prepared, and see God in his glory, that you may express chearfulness of heart in going to take possession of that glorious recompence of reward; behold the Angels of God coming to take you up into Heaven. It was an expression of the honor of one Hugh Bishop of Lincoln, that King John and his Nobles would carry him to the grave; more honor shall the Saints have, for God to send his Angels to convey them to that place of glory.

And further, let you spirits work mightily after Heaven; now when they draw near to it, as the nearer any thing is to the center, the more strongly and swiftly it moves; As a stone that falls down from a high place, it moves more swiftly when it is nearer the ground, then when it was higher; so at death, the soul is nearer its center, grace is changing to glory, and when grace and glory is to

meet, there must need be a mighty working of heart, and mighty shouts: As it is reported of the Duke of Bulloin and his company, when they went to Jerusalem, as soon as his company saw the high Turrets, they gave a mighty shout, that the earthrang: and so when the soul sees the turrets of this heavenly Jerusalem, and when you see yourselves ready to go and possess it, what mighty workings and shoutings of your heart will there be?

And when you are to dye, speak well of God, and of the ways of godliness to all that are about you. Christians should now labor so to live, as there may appear a mighty difference between their deaths, and the death of others; whereas ordinarily such is the vanity and drossiness of the hearts of Christians in their lives, as when they come to dye, they are so heavy and sad, as if no such things were prepared for them. In 2 Pet. 1:11 the Apostle having exhorted them before to adde one grace to another, and to give all diligence to make their calling and election sure, says he, So an entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: Christians should labor so to live, as when they come to dye, they may not only have an entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord administred unto them, but that they may have an entrance administred unto them abundantly: Many make shift to get to heaven, but they have not an entrance administred abundantly. As a Ship may make shift to get into harbor, but with the Anchors lost, and Cables rent, and Sayls torn, and the Masts broke; another Ship comes in with the Sayls up, and the Flags up, and Trumpets sounding, and comes bravely into Haven; so much difference is sometime between true Christians; some through carelesness, and unbelief, and sadness, and sullenness of Spirit, although they make shift with much ado

to get into Heaven, yet so as their anchor of hope was even gone, and they had little or no comfort at all; but those that have added one vertue to another, and have been diligent to make their calling and election sure, they come to Heaven with much glory and joy, and that should be our care so to live in adding one grace to another, that when we dye our deaths may be glorious.

Yet further, from the consideration of this glory revealed, which God has prepared for his Saints, we are to draw this meditation, If Heaven be so glorious, then we had need fill up the comfort of our lives by doing and getting as much good as we can while we live here, that we may as much as possibly we can recompence that which we suffer in the staying from the possession of such glorious things reserved for us; when we hear of such things as these are, we cannot but think in ourselves, it were better for us many ways to be in Heaven, this life is but a bondage to us while we are absent from such things, and therefore we had need have something to recompence this bondage; we had need do much good, and get much good, while we live, to pay the charges of our lives; what a tedious thing is it to us to live so much to sense as we must necessarily do here, when we are heirs of such glorious things? if we do not do much good, and get much good here, what have we to sweeten and recompence this tediousness? If a man be from home, and by his absence suffers much loss of what he might have had at home, he is the more diligent and careful in his journey to get something that may recompence this loss; so it should be with us: It costs us dear (as I may so speak) to live in the world, for it costs us the forbearance of such glorious things; if we fill not up our lives with service for God, what have we to pay our charges to countervail this that our lives here cost us?

Chapter 57: The great things of eternity to be much sought after

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THe last Use is an Use of Exhortation to all, now to set your hearts to seek after these great and blessed things of eternal life that have been opened: O that now the hearts of people that have been wandring after other things might be brought in, and set upon eternal life and Heaven: Let every soul reason with it self: Are there indeed such things to be had? has God such intentions to communicate himself thus to mankinde? And am I the man or woman that shall lose all this? that shall never be partaker of this? O wo unto me that ever I was born! In Luke 16:16 The Law and the Prophets, says Christ, were till John, but since that time the kingdom of God suffers violence: The Law and the Prophets did but darkly reveal the things of the Kingdom of God, but St. John he did more clearly reveal the things of that Kingdom, and since that time the kingdom of heaven suffers violence: O that it might be said concerning any man or woman that have heard this argument opened; since that time that the recompence of reward was opened, the kingdom of heaven has sufferedviolence: Surely there is strength enough in that which has been said to draw forth

the heart with violence after it. I remember Plutarch reports in the life of Camillus of the Gauls, that after they had once a taste of the sweet wine of the grapes that grew in Italy, they inquired in what Countrey such sweet wine was, and after they understood where the grape of that wine grew, they would never be at rest till they got to that Countrey where such sweet and pleasant things grew. I have endeavored in the opening of this point, to bring unto you some of the Clusters of Canaan, and some of that wine which is to be drunk in the Kingdom of Heaven; now if you account it to be sweet and good, let not your hearts be at rest till you come at that Countrey, till you come to enjoy the sweet and good of that Countrey.

It is reported of one Adrianus, who seeing the Martyrs suffer such grievous things in the cause of Christ, he asked what was that which caused them to suffer such things; and one of them named that Text, Eye has not seen, nor ear has not heard, neither has it entred into the heart of man to conceive what is laid up for those that love God; and the naming of that Text converted him, and had such an effect as made him to profess Religion, and so to profess it, as to be a Martyr for it: You have not only one Text named, but many have been used about this argument, let not all be in vain. We read in Mark 10:17 of a yong man that came running, and kneeled before Christ, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? O that God would move the hearts now of some yong ones, that hearing what eternal life means, they may now come running to get part in it, that that activity and vigor of their youth may be exercised and spent about this, What may I do that I likewise may be partaker of eternal life, and of these glorious and blessed truths that are here revealed?

You that are in a poor condition in the world, that have little here, here are great things for your hearts to make after, here are glorious things that are as obvious for you ac for the greatest in the world; you cannot expect to have great matters in the earth, but here you may expect to have great matters. You that are old likewise, though you have not been acquainted with the excellency of the Kingdom of God, now bless God that you may yet further know more concerning it. If a man come to know more of an inheritance that did befal him, or of any outward gain then before, he is glad that he lived to that time; so bless God that you may know yet more concerning eternal life before this life be at an end. What is it that your hearts are set upon? There are none but their hearts are set upon some good that they apprehend to be good; Now what is that good? Certainly there is an eminency of all good contained in this.

It was a charge of God unto Baruch, that we read of in Jer. 45. ult. Seekest you great things for yourself? Seek them not, for I will bring evil upon all flesh, and that which I have planted I will pluck up: The argument runs thus, Seekest you great things for yourself in any outward matter? do not seek them, for I am about to bring evil upon my people, the time of publique calamity is coming, and doest you seek great things for yourself? But when we are about this argument, the glory of the Kingdom of God, Doest you seek great things for yourself? We cannot say, Seek them not: God would have his people seek glorious things for themselves, seek them to the utmost that possibly you can: So follow these things as not to be satisfied with any thing under these.

God would have his servants to be of such spirits, as though content with the least mercies they do enjoy, to acknowledge themselves unworthy of them, yet not to be satisfied with the greatest things in the world for their portion. What, will a reprobates portion serve you? Certainly, the glory of the world, if you had it all, it were but the portion of a reprobate. What, will a Dogs portion satisfy you? All the things of the world are but Dogs meat, so the Apostle calls them in Phil. 3. I account all things in the world as dross and dung, or dogs meat; and will this satisfy you? Is there nothing else for you to seek after? First seek the Kingdom of God (says Christ) and the righteousness of it, let that be your first endeavor: Strive to enter into the strait gate, though it be never so strait, yet if it be the way unto life, and unto these things, strive to enter: We have not spoken more then that is real. It is a saying of one, Neither Christ, nor Heaven can be hyperbolized; that is, there cannot be more said of the excellency of Christ, and of Heaven, then it is in its self, and therefore do not think any thing that has been spoken is an hyperbole, but a real expression of some little glimpse of the glory of the recompence of reward.

It may be some of your hearts when you hear much of the wrath of God against sin, and the dreadfulness of Gods displeasure, your hearts are ready to rise, and belk, and these are hard things, and hard sayings, and who can bear them? but now you have not heard so much concerning that, but you have heard of the goodness of God, and of the glory of God, and of the riches of the grace of God, and of the wonderful thoughts that God has for the everlasting good of mankinde, how do your hearts work now? Shall your hearts stir when you hear Gods wrath, and when you hear of Gods grace shall not your hearts stir then? If God does intend good

to any soul, he will cause that soul to see into the reality and excellency of these things, and that all things should be neglected (in comparison) in seeking after these.

Consider that God has given unto you natures capable of these glorious things; God might have made you worms or bruit beasts, and there would have been an end of you presently, you had not been any way capable of these things; but God has made you of such a nature, such creatures, as ye are capable of the highest excellency that ever any creature that God made was capable of, and therefore being of such a nature, of such a large extent, it concerns you to seek after those things which might fill it; they are not little things that can fill large capacities, now mans nature an immortal soul, is of a large capacity; and when the time shall come that God shall discover to any soul what it was capable of, how infinitely will it be confounded in it self, when it shall know what poor things it sought after and minded? Men live here in the world as though they were capable of no other happiness but meat, and drink, and clothes, and such kinde of things, as if there were no higher things that concerned the souls of men. Heathens were mighty inquisitive what should be the true happiness of man, they did think surely man was made for higher things then those that are here, and there were mighty disputes about it what it should be, there were fourscore Opinions that were amongst them about the happiness of man; they did but beat the bush, God has given us Christians the bird, and we have the Gospel that reveals glory, and immortality, and happiness unto us.

The Heathens would have counted it a great good to have known in which the true happiness of man did consist: And those who had most wisdom did come near that in which we seek happi-

ness, and yet wavered in their thoughts, but we are assured of it, we have God himself revealing from Heaven, in which our true and utmost high good consists, and therefore if we should not seek after that happiness which God tells us is happiness, but should follow our own ways still, how just will our condemnation be.

Again, this is not the time that God will communicate much of himself in, and therefore we must look beyond this life. It is a witty elegant speech Bernard has, God reserves his new and best wine until afterward. Amongst the Latins they call prosperous things second things, because they are to be had hereafter, they are not the first things. So true prosperity is not to be expected here in the first way of Gods communication of himself to the creature, but in the second way, in the life that is to come: If a man have good wine, he reserves it till the last; so God reserves the riches of his grace, and the treasures of his goodness, his best wine, till they shall come and drink with him in his own presence before him continually.

And know further, that Christ has wrought hard to provide happiness for mankinde; and shall we neglect it? In his working for the glory of mankinde, and this happiness of the children of men, he sweat at it, and so sweat, as clods of blood trickled down his flesh in the garden, though it were in the winter time, and a cold night, and he lay upon the ground, and shall it now be neglected by us? You that have neglected this all this while, who might justly have had your reward amongst those creatures that are cast out from the presence of God: yet know there is a possibility for that tongue of your that has been guilty of so many blasphemies, to be singing Allelujahs to the Lord, and to the Lamb that sits upon the throne for ever. Who knows but that body of your

that has been so intemperate, and but a sink of filthy lusts, may be made glorious like the body of Christ? and what is it that God requires of you for all this? Nothing but only to work his own work in you, and it is not a dishonorable work, but a glorious work, that in which there is more excellency then in any thing in the world: were it that there were no reward of godliness, the very excellency of godliness it self, has more in it then the whole world: but take godliness with that excellency which it has in its own nature, and take it with its glorious end, and who would not come into this way? Many men care not what base thing they do, so they may be a little regarded, but now to have the highest reward that ever God will communicate to any creature, and that for doing those things which are the highest honor for the present, this would encourage any living to come into this way.

Alexander inviting many to a supper, he provided a Crown of a hundred and eighty pound to be given to those that did drink most, and in that he did like a Heathen; but though it was such a base work, and so dangerous to themselves, yet there was one and forty that killed themselves with drinking to get that Crown: Thus we may see the baseness of mens hearts, that to get a little honor in the world, will not only do somewhat that is base, but the basest things of all, and that although they be dangerous too. What shame and confusion will this be, that any should do more for the things of the world, yea more for a lust, then we shall do for Heaven? How shall we ever think to get Heaven, when this may be said, You do not so much for Heaven and Glory, as many will do for their lusts, for their filthy sins. I have read of the Panther, that it does love the dung of man so much, as if it be hanged a height from it, it will skip and leap up, and never leave till it have burst it self in

pieces for to get it, and that is the way they get that creature: we may apply it to the filthy base lusts of mens hearts which are like dung, & yet so are many men set upon them, that they wil venture all for them, and labor after them, though they burst themselves, and damn themselves eternally for them: what an infinite shame is this, that men should be content to labor, and suffer so much for their lusts, and that we should do no more for glory? If men do so much for the things of the world, why should we be backward in doing for Heaven? How will men endure the cutting off the members, and much pain for health and life, and yet for this reward, and this inheritance, how little is done in the world?

Sorun, says the Apostle, that you may obtain, not a corruptible, but an incorruptible crown: Those that run a race for a corruptible crown will be temperate, and deny themselves in their diet, But we, says the Apostle, strive for an incorruptible crown; therefore let all our ways be such as it may appear to all the world that we are striving for an incorruptible crown, and that God has shown us glory and salvation to draw our hearts more then any thing in the world; and strive, for now by striving you may come to the reward, but if you stay but a while, you must be eternally receiving the reward of sin, then though you would do a thousand times more, God will not care for it; if then you should say, Now Lord I will seek your face, and do any thing you will have me to do, God will not then regard it. As one Lamachus a Commander said to one of his Soldiers that was brought before him for a misbehavior, who pleaded, He would do so no more; says he, No man must offend twice in war: So God will not suffer men twice to neglect the day of grace; if it be neglected once, it is neglected for ever, if you lose this reward here, you lose it eternally; and therefore now look about

you to attain this here, that you may not cry out in the anguish of your spirits hereafter, That God, and Christ, and Heaven are eternally gone.

Chapter 58: How the Recompence of Reward may be attained

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But what is to be done that we may attain to this glorious recompence of reward?

I answer, Are your hearts serious in asking this question? Do your souls ask this question indeed in the earnestness of them? as they did, Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved? so as to be willing to yield to whatever God shall reveal: If you have such a resolution, know this comes from Heaven, and if it be followed to purpose, it will bring you to Heaven: But for direction, if you would make yourselves partakers of this reward,

First, consider the infinite distance that is between you and Heaven naturally. That blessed Martyr Mr. Hooper, though he was a gracious man, yet he cryed out, Lord, you art Heaven, and I am hell; If he cryed out so, how much more may many of you, whose consciences may accuse you, Lord, you art heaven, but I am one not only that deserve hell, but that am hell it self? What ever wickedness is in hell, is in every mans heart naturally; when as any are cast into hell, certainly hell puts no new sin into them, there is but the venting of that sin which was there before, and all the

wickedness of mens hearts that was restrained, is now let open: Now look what infinite distance is between hell, and all this glory, and the glorious thoughts of God for the salvation of a poor creature, the same difference is between this glory and that condition a man is in naturally: O labor to see this, and be convinced of this, and work this upon your hearts, what is that reward that you do deserve, make your hearts truly sensible of that.

Secondly, it concerns us much, if we would not miscarry here, to acquaint ourselves with the mystery of the Covenant of Grace, for it is upon that your eternal estate depends more then any thing else; only in the Covenant of Grace is revealed the counsels of God concerning bringing mankinde to eternal happiness, and how he will bring about this glory, and without some knowledge of the Covenant of Life and Grace in Christ, all that can be done in the world, can never bring any soul to Heaven; and that soul is in a very good forwardness to eternal life, that is acquainted with the Covenant of Grace.

Thirdly, consider what is the special sin that your heart is naturally most inclined unto, and you finde the corruption of your hearts vent it self most in, and look to that, take heed that be not your bane in the conclusion, let there be a renouncing of that, or else all is to no purpose, all your serving of God is nothing. St. Paul when he spoke concerning his running the race, and attaining an incorruptible crown, says, I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, and so fight I, as not one that beateth the air; as if he should say, I hope my labors and endeavors after Heaven and this incorruptible Crown shall not be in vain, as one that beateth the air: How so? because I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, myself should be

cast away. He was afraid of that body of his, in which corruption did stir, and his giving way to some bodily fleshly content that he found stirring in him should disappoint him, and therefore says he, I keep down my body, in the Original it is, I beat my body black and blew, I club it down: his conscience was convinced of Gods ways, but he felt the flesh and body of his working in some sinful way, and his conscience began so far to reflect upon himself, as to think if I do not look to this body of mine, I shall lose this incorruptible crown, and I shall but beat the ayr, therefore says he, I keep under my body. What shall St. Paul, such a glorious Apostle, so filled with the grace of God as he was, have such thoughts, for fear he should labor after Heaven and the incorruptible crown, as one that beateth the ayr; what shall become of a company of wretched creatures, that do nothing but satisfy the flesh, & mind nothing but to give full satisfaction to the desires of the flesh every way, their thoughts are after nothing else but to make provision for the flesh. If you will not labor after heaven as one that beats the ayr, beat down your bodies; if you do not beat down your bodies, there is little hope of the salvation of your souls: it was St. Pauls care, let it be yours.

Again further, if you would have this recompenceof reward, labor to unsnarl yourselves from the creature, labor to get your hearts loose and untangled from whatever is in the world, from all earthly engagements. It is a speech that I have read of one Demades, when the Emperor sent to his Countreymen of Athens, to give him Divine honor, and they were loth to yield unto it, but consulted about it, says he, Take heed you be not so busie about heavenly matters, as to lose your earthly possessions; that indeed is the voyce of a carnal heart, Let not me look after the high con-

ceits of heavenly matters as to lose my earthly possessions: but rather turn it the other way, Take heed you be not so busie about earthly matters, as to lose your heavenly possessions.

I have read of Antipater King of Macedonia, that when one presented him a Book treating of happiness, his answer was, [〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉], I have no leisure; you have been presented with Sermons, and now with a Book treating of heavens happiness, take heed that no earthly entanglements so take your heart, that you should put off all with such a thought, I must mind and follow my occasions; let no other things take up your heads or hearts, that you should have no liberty to your spirits to seek after these glorious things, or at least not so to seek after them as becomes things of such a high and glorious nature as these are.

The Apostle in 1 Tim. 6:19 says, They that will be rich, fall into a temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition: they that set their hearts upon the creature, they must have so much of the creature, they drown themselves in the creature. As a man when he is drowning, he catcheth hold of any thing that is next him, and by fastening upon that which is next him, he loses fastening upon that which might save his life: So those that have their hearts engaged to the creature, and resolve they must have so much of the creature, they are drowning in perdition, and they catch hold upon that which is next them, some present content and pleasure; and though something be cast to deliver them, they let that go: We in the Gospel cast forth a line to you to help you from drowning, (for every man naturally is sinking in perdition) but because your hearts are set upon the creature, and engaged there, you falling down to the ground, catch hold upon that which is next you, some

contentment in the creature, and that drowns you in perdition, and all our preaching is not available to such a soul that has fastened it self upon any creature contentment here, you take not hold on our line that we throw out to you, and so you drown in eternal perdition, take heed therefore of all creature earthly engagements.

Again, if you will obtain this recompence of reward, follow that Scripture, and make much use of it, in Psalm. 73:24 Guide me with your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory: Would you be brought to glory? Be willing to be guided by the counsels of God: What do you think in your consciences are the counsels of God concerning you? Take heed it be not said of you, as it was of the Pharisees., They rejected the counsels of God: Never talk of hoping and trusting in Gods mercy, if you neglect the counsels of God revealed in his word: those counsels of his which were in his heart from all eternity, that should be the way of bringing men to happiness. It is all one with that of the Psalmist, in Psalm. 17:15 As for me, I will behold your face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with your likeness; as if he should say, I look to receive satisfaction from the likeness of God, by beholding his face in righteousness. Now I appeal to you, can you behold the face of God in righteousness? Are they such righteous ways as you walkest in, as you can look upon his face, and behold him with comfort? this is the way to come to this recompence of reward, for so the Scripture says, God has called us to glory and vertue; if you would come to glory, go on in the way of vertue.

Lastly, be willing to endure any difficulty, any hardship in the world; The stone will fall down to come to its own place, though it breaks it self in pieces: so we, that we may get to our center which

is upward, though it be to break our souls in pieces, that should suffice us. It is said of Cyrus, one day he set his Soldiers to hew wood, and to do hard work; the next day he feasted them, with a great deal of delight and pleasure, then he asked them, which day they had rather have? they said, the latter: he says to them, If you would always have such days, you must be willing for a while to strive with your enemies, and then you shall have the spoil, and always have such merry days: and this he did to put heart into them. Shall eating, and drinking, and a little pleasure here, put heart into men to suffer hardships, to endure difficulties? How much more should the obtaining of this glorious recompence of reward, put heart into us to endure any difficulty? We read of the Devil, he came to Christ, and showed him all the glory of the world, and said, Fall down and worship me, and all this will I give you: but here is another manner of invitation to worship God; God says to every man and woman, Fall down and worship me, and all the glory of heaven will I give you: It was but the glory of the world that the Devil showed, and he could not give it him; it was but the Devil that offered it, and it was by worshiping of the Devil to get it; but it is the God of glory that has all glory at his dispose, that calls to you this day to worship him, that is so infinitely worthy of all worship; fall down and worship me, and not only the glory of this world, but the glory of heaven, and of an incorruptible crown, will I give unto you, I will make it sure to you. God does outbid all the world: when sin and temptation comes to offerany thing to you, know that God out-bids them, they cannot give that which will reach this. If a chapman come and bids for a commodity, and another man comes and out-bids him, he carries it away: Has any temptation come to draw away your hearts from God? God comes

and out-bids all temptations in the world, to that end you may come and fall down and worship the Lord. O do not stick in the dross and mire of your filthiness still. I have met with a Text in 1 Chron. 4:23 which one interprets to be meant of the baseness of people, that regard base things, rather then joining in Church-communion with Gods people, God speaks of them in away of disgrace, These were the potters, & those that dwelt, &c. When the people of God should return to Ierusalem, they would still dwell with the King of Babylon, and live amongst their pots, so they might have maintenance, rather then return to Ierusalem, where the true worship of God was, their own country, and a type of heaven, these are those base spirits. It may be applyed to many, if they live in places where they may follow their callings, make pots so as to get a livelihood for themselves, and their families, rather then they would venture any thing to join with the people of God, they would stay there. But how much more base is it, for people still to stick in the mire and dross, rather then to seek after these glorious things?

Therefore for conclusion of the Exhortation; as St. John preached, and so Christ himself, Repent, repent, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand: So say I; Repent, repent, break off sin, reform, for the kingdom of heaven, not only the kingdom of the Gospel, and of grace, but the kingdom of glory is at hand. And therefore what remains, but as we read in Rom. 1:18 the Apostle speaking of the glory of heaven, says, There is glory to be revealed in us. We have had in the opening of this Point, the glory of heaven revealed to us; the Lord grant that the glory of heaven may be revealed in us. And thus we have finished the Application of the glorious rec-

ompence of the reward of Gods people; the great argument that encouraged, that strengthned, that confirmed Moses in this his blessed choice.

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