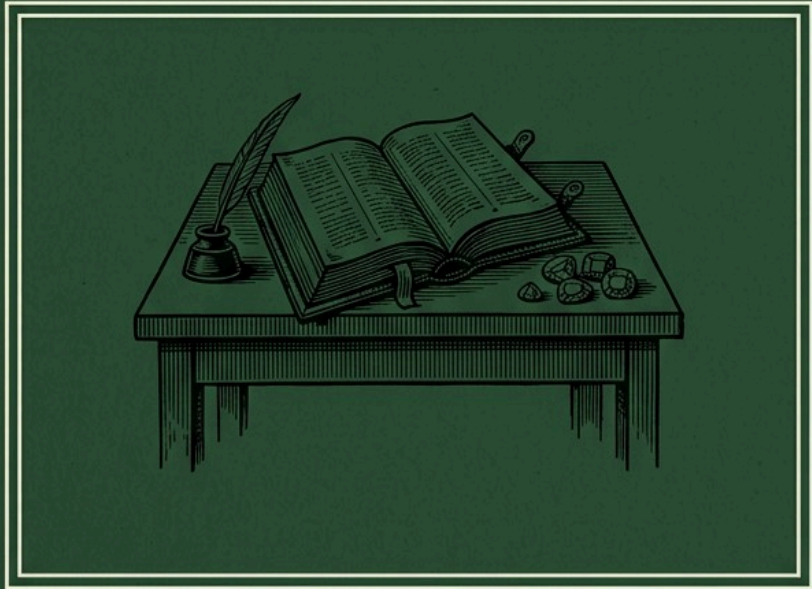


RELIGION OUR TRUE INTEREST

THOMAS WATSON



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Thomas Watson



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ABOUT THIS BOOK



A rich Puritan exposition of Malachi 3:16-17, tracing the **marks of true godliness** — holy fear, sacred conversation, and meditation on God's name — and the remarkable rewards God bestows on those who fear him. Watson unfolds how God **listens, records, and rewards** his people's piety, owning them as his jewels and sparing them as a father his son. Practical, searching, and warmly devotional, this treatise closes with extended notes on Psalm 119:65, celebrating God's faithful dealings with his servants.



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PRACTICAL NOTES UPON MALACHI
3:16-17



Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord listened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. And they shall be mine (says the Lord of Hosts) in that day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them as a man spares his own Son that serves him, etc.

CHAP. 1. SHOWING THAT
CHRISTIANS SHOULD HOLD FAST
THEIR INTEGRITY IN TIMES OF
DEFECTION



THE Scripture of Truth, is the Ground of Faith. This Portion of Scripture which now presents it self to our view, has its Sacred Elegancies, and is all glorious within. It was composed by Malachy, whose name imports Messenger; he came upon an Ambassage from the God of Heaven. This Prophet was so famous, that Origen and others (though injudiciously) supposed him to be an Angel. He lived after the building of the second Temple, and was, contemporary with Haggai, and Zechariah.

This blessed Prophet did lift up his voice like a Trumpet, and tell the Jewish Nation of their sins; and he was the last Trumpet that sounded in the Old Testament. In the words of the Text are these parts.

- I. A Character of the Godly. 1. In General, they were Fearers of God; they that feared the Lord. 2. In Special: (1) They spoke often one to another. (2) They thought upon Gods Name. - II. The Good Effects of their Piety. 1. The Lord regarded it; he listened and heard. 2. He recorded it; a book of remembrance was written. 3.

He rewarded it; and this reward consisted in three things. (1) Gods owning them; they shall be mine. (2) Gods Honouring them; in that day when I make up my Jewels. (3) Gods Sparing them. I will spare them as a man spares his own Son that serves him.

Before I come to the several parts distinctly, here is a connective particle stands in the front of the Text which may not be omitted, namely, the word Then.

Then they that feared the Lord, etc. Then, that is, after Israels return from the Babylonish Captivity; then, when the major part of the people grew corrupt, and came worse out of the Furnace than they went in, verse 13, 14 in this bad juncture of time, then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another. Hence observe,

That the Profaneness of the times should not slacken but heighten our zeal. The looser others are, the stricter we should be. In those degenerate times when men were arrived at the and highth of Impudence, and durst speak Treason against Heaven; then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another. When others were Plaintiffs these were Defendants; when others spoke against God, these spoke for God.

In Noah's days all Flesh had corrupted it self, (the old World was drowned in sin before it was drowned in water:) now at this time, Noah was perfect in his Generation, and Noah walked with God, Genesis 6:9. He was the Phoenix of his age. Athanasius stood up in the defense of the Truth, when the World was turned Arrian. The more outrageous others are in Sin, the more couragious we should be for Truth. When the Atheists said, 'tis Vain to serve God, Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another.

Why should we be holiest in evil Times.

1. Because of the divine Injunction. God chargeth us to be singular, Matthew 5:47. to be circumspect, Ephesians 5:15. to be separate from Idolaters, 2 Corinthians 6:17. to shine as Lights in the World, Philippians 2:15. He forbids us to symbolize with Sinners, or doe as they doe: the way to Hell is a beaten road, the Lord calls to us to turn out of the road, Exodus 23:2. You shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. This is reason enough to keep our selves pure in a time of common Infection. As Gods Word is our Rule, so his Will is our Warrant.

2. To be holiest in evil times is an Indication of the truth of Grace. To profess Religion when the times favor it, is no Great matter. Who almost will not court the Queen of the Gospel when she is hung with Jewels? but to own the ways of God when they are decried and maligned, to love a persecuted truth, this evidenceth a vital Principle of Goodness. Dead Fish swim down the stream, living Fish swim against it. To swim against the common stream of evil shews Grace to be alive. The Prophet Elias continuing zealous for the Lord of Hosts, when they had digged down Gods Altars, 1 Kings 19:10. shewed his heart and lips had been touched with a Coal from the Altar.

1 Use. See hence how unworthy they are of the Name of Christians who use sinful compliance, and cut the Garment of their Religion according to the Mode and fashion of the times. They consult not what is best, but what is safest. Complying spirits can truckle to the humours of others; they can bow either to the East or to the Host; they prefer a whole Skin before a pure Conscience. They can with the Planet Mercury vary their motion; they can as the Mariner shift their Sail with every wind: and as the Mungril Israelites speak the Language of Canaan and Ashdod. These are

like the Samaritans of whom Josephus says, when the Jews flourished they pretended to be a-kin to them, and come of the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh, but when the Jews were persecuted, they disclaimed Kindred with them. The old Serpent has taught men crooked windings, and to be for that Religion not which has truth on its side, but power.

2 Use. Let us keep up the vigour of our zeal in times of degeneracy. We should by an holy Antiperistasis burn hotter in a frozen age. We live in the dregs of time; Sin is grown common and impudent: 'Tis excellent to walk Antipodes to the World. Romans 12:2. Let us be as Lillies and Roses among the Briars. Sin is never the better because it is in fashion, nor will this plea hold at the last day, that we did as the most. God will say, Seeing you sinned with the Multitude, you shall go to Hell with the Multitude. O let us keep pure among dregs; let us be like Fish that retain their freshness in salt waters; and as that Lamp which shined in the smoaking Furnace, Genesis 15:17.

Consider, 1. To be holy in times of General defection is that which God is Greatly pleased with. The Lord was much taken with the holy conferences and dialogues of these Saints in the Text. When others were inveighing against the Deity, that there should be a parcel of holy Souls speaking of Glory and the Life to come, their words were Musick in Gods ears.

2. To keep up a spirit of Holiness in an adulterous Generation, is a Christians honor. This was the glory of the Church of Pergamus, that she held fast Christs Name, even where Satans seat was, Revelation 2:13. The Impiety of the times is a Foil to set off Grace the more, and make it cast a greater lustre. Then a Christian is most lovely, when he is (as Ambrose says) like the Cypresse,

which keeps its Viridity and freshness in the Winter season. Psalm 37:37. Mark the perfect man, and behold the Vpright: An upright man is always worth beholding, but then he is most to be admired when like a bright Star he Shines in the dark, and having lost all, holds fast his integrity.

3. To be Good in a profligate Age, does much animate weak beginners; it Strengthens feeble knees, Isaiah. 35:3. And shores up those Temples of the Holy Ghost which are ready to fall. One mans Zeal is a Torch for others to light at. How did the Constancy of the Martyrs inflame the love of many to the Truth! Though only Christs blood does Save, yet the blood of Martyrs may strengthen. St. Paul's Prison Chain, made Converts in Nero's Court, two of which were afterwards Martyrs as History relates. Mr. Bradford's holy advice and example so confirmed Bishop Farrar that he would not touch with the Roman Pollution.

4. How sad will it be for Christians to fall off from their former Profession, and espouse a novel Religion. Julian Bathed himself in the blood of Beasts Offered in Sacrifice to the Heathen Gods, and so as much as in him lay wash'd off his former Baptism. In the time of Iulius Cesar this Prodigy happened, after a plentiful Vintage there were wild Grapes appeared upon their Vines, which was looked upon as Ominous. When men seemed to bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness, and afterwards bring forth the Wild Grapes of Impiety, it is a sad Omen and Prognostick of their Ruine, 2 Peter 2:21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the Holy Commandment. Let all this make us maintain the power

of Holiness in the worst Times: Though others wonder we do not sin after the rate that they do, yet, remember, it is better to go to Heaven with a few, than to Hell in the Crowd.

How may we keep up the briskness and fervour of Grace in times of Apostacy.

1. Let us beware of having our hearts too much linked to the World. The World damps zeal, as Earth chokes the fire. We are bid to love our Enemies; but the World is such an Enemy as we must not love, 1 John 2:15. Love not the World. The World bewitcheth with her Blandishments, and kills with her silver Darts. He who is a Demas, will be a Iudas; a lover of the World, will for a piece of Money betray a good Cause, and make Shipwreck of a good Conscience.

2. Let us be Voluntiers in Religion; that is, Choose God's service, Psalm 119:30. I have chosen the way of truth. It is one thing to be good out of Design, and another thing to be good out of Choice. Hypocrites are good only out of worldly design, they embrace the Gospel for secular advantage, and these will in time fall away. The Chelidonian Stone keeps its Virtue no longer than it is inclosed in Gold, take it out of the Gold, and it loses its virtue. False Hearts are good no longer than they are inclosed in golden Prosperity, take them out of the Gold, and they lose all their seeming Goodness: But if we would retain our Sanctity in Backsliding times we must serve God purely out of Choice. He who is good out of Choice loves holiness for its beauty, and adheres to the Gospel, when all the Jewels of preferment are pulled off.

3. Let us be inlaid with sincerity. If a piece of Timber begin to bend, it is because it is not sound. Why do any bend and comply against their Conscience, but because their hearts are not sound, Psalm 78:37. Their hearts were not right with him, neither were they stedfast. Sincerity causes stability. When the Apostle exhorts to stand fast in the evil day, among the rest of the Christian armour, he bids them put on the Girdle of truth, Ephesians 6:19. Stand fast therefore, having your loins Girt about with truth. The Girdle of Truth is nothing else but sincerity.

4. Let us get love to Christ. Love is an holy transport, it fires the affections, steels the Courage, carries a Christian above the love of life, and the fear of death, Song of Solomon 8:7. Many waters cannot quench Love: Love made Christ suffer for us. If any one ask what Christ died off; it may be answered, he died of Love. If we love Christ, we will own him in the worst times, and be like that Virgin Basil speaks of, who not accepting deliverance upon sinful terms, cried out, Let Life and Money go, welcome Christ.

5. If we would keep up the sprightly Vigour of Grace in evil times, let us harden our Hearts against the taunts and reproaches of the wicked. David was the Song of the Drunkards, Psalm 69:12. A Christian is never the worse for reproach. The Stars are not the less Glorious though they have ugly names given them, the Bear, the Dragon, etc. Reproaches are but Assulae Crucis, the Chips of the Cross. How will he endure the Stake, who cannot bear a Scoff? Reproaches for Christ, are Ensigns of Honor, Badges of Adoption, 1 Peter 4:14. Let Christians bind these as a Crown about their Head. Better have men reproach you for being good, than have

God Damn you for being wicked. Be not laughed out of your Religion: If a Lame man laugh at you for going upright, will you therefore halt?

6. If we would keep up the Vigour of devotion in a General Epilepsy, let us beg of God confirming Grace. Habitual Grace may flag; Peter had habitual Grace, yet was foiled; he lost a single Battel, though not the Victory. We need exciting, assisting, corroborating Grace; not only Grace in us, but Grace with us, 1 Corinthians 15:10. Auxiliary Grace (which is, a fresh gale of the Spirit) will carry us undauntedly through the Worlds blustering storms. Thus shall we be able to keep up our Heroick zeal in corrupt times, and be as Mount Zion which cannot be moved.

CHAP. 2. SHOWING THE CHARACTER IN GENERAL OF THE GODLY, AND WHAT THE FEAR OF GOD IS



1. HAVING done with the frontispiece of the Text, I begin (1) with the Character in General of the Godly, they are Fearers of God, they that feared the Lord.

What Fear is meant here?

1. Negatively; It is not meant (1) of a natural Fear, which is a tremor or palpitation of Heart, occasioned by the approach of some imminent danger, Ecclesiastes 12:5. Fears shall be in the way.

2. It is not meant of a sinful Fear, which is twofold.

1. A Superstitious Fear: An Hare crossing the way, is by some more dreaded than an Harlot lying in the Bed.

2. A Carnal fear; this is the Ague of the Soul which sets it a shaking. He who is timorous will be treacherous; he will decoy his friend, and deny his God. Three times in one Chapter Christ cautions us against the fear of Men, Matthew 10. Verse 26, 28, 31.

Aristotle says the reason why the Camelian turns into so many colors, is through excessive fear: Fear makes men change their Religion as the Camelian does her Colors.

1. Carnal Fear is discruciating, 1 John 4:18. Fear has torment in it; the Greek word for Torment, is sometimes put for Hell, Matthew 25:46. Fear has Hell in it.

2. It is Pernitious. 1. It Indisposeth for Duty. The Disciples under the power of Fear, were fitter to Fly than to Pray, Matthew 26:56.

2. It puts men upon indirect means to Save themselves, Proverbs 26:25. The Fear of man brings a Snare; what made Peter deny Christ, and Origen sprinkle incense before the Idol, but fear?

2. Positively; the Fear meant in the Text is a Divine Fear, which is the reverencing and adoring Gods Holiness, and setting our selves always under his Sacred inspection. The infinite distance between God and us causes this Fear. When Gods Glory began to shine out upon the Mount, Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake, Hebrews 12:21. Such as approach Gods presence with light feathery Hearts, and Worship him in a rude careless manner, have none of this fear. In the words are two parts.

- 1. The Act, Fear. - 2. The Object, the Lord.

They that feared the Lord: The fear of God is the Summe of all Religion, Ecclesiastes 12:13. Fear is the leading Grace, the first seed God sows in the Heart. When a Christian can say little of Faith, and perhaps nothing of Assurance, yet he dares not deny but he fears God. God is so Great that he is afraid of displeasing him, and so Good that he is afraid of losing him.

It is an indispensable Duty incumbent on Christians to be Fearers of God. Ecclesiastes 5:7. Fear you God. Deuteronomy 28:58. That you maist fear this Glorious and fearful name the Lord your God. This goes to the very constituting of a Saint. One can no more act as a Christian without Fear, than he can act as a man without reason. This Holy Fear is the fixed temper and Complexion of the Soul; This Fear is not Servile but Filial; there is difference between Fearing God, and being afraid of God; the Godly fear God as a Child does his Father, the wicked are afraid of God as the Prisoner is of the Judge. This divine Fear will appear admirable, if you consider how it is mixed and interwoven with several of the Graces.

1. The Fear of God is mixed with Love, Psalm 145:19, 20. The Chast Spouse fears to displease her Husband because she loves him: There's a necessity that fear and love should be in conjunction. Love is as the Sails to swiften the Souls motion, and Fear as the Ballast to keep it steady in Religion: Love will be apt to grow wanton unless it be poised with fear.

2. The Fear of God is mixed with Faith, Hebrews 11:7. By Faith Noah moved with fear, etc. When the Soul looks either to Gods Holiness, or it's own sinfulness, it fears, but it is a fear mixed with faith in Christs merits; the Soul does tremble yet trust. Like a Ship which lies at Anchor, though it shakes with the wind, yet it is fixed at Anchor. God in Great wisdom couples these two graces of Faith and Fear. Fear preserves seriousness, faith preserves cheerfulness. Fear is as Lead to the Net to keep a Christian from floating in presumption, and Faith is as Cork to the Net to keep him from sinking in despair.

3. The Fear of God is mixed with Prudence: he who fears God has the Serpents eye in the Doves head. He foresees and avoids those Rocks which others run upon. Proverbs 22:3. Though divine Fear does not make a Person Cowardly, it makes him Cautions.

4. The Fear of God is mixed with Hope. Psalm 33:18. The eye of the Lord is on them that fear him, that hope in his mercy. One would think Fear should destroy Hope, but it cherisheth it. Fear is to Hope as the Oil to the Lamp, it keeps it burning: the more we fear Gods Justice, the more we may hope in his Mercy. Indeed such as have no Fear of God do sometimes hope, but it is not, Good hope through Grace, 2 Thessalonians 2:16. Sinners pretend to have the helmet of Hope, 1 Thes. 5:8. but want the breast-plate of Righteousness, Ephesians 6:14.

5. The Fear of God is mixed with Industry, Hebrews 11:7. Noah moved with fear prepared an ark. There is 1. A fear of diffidence, which represents God as a severe Judge, this takes the Soul off from duty. 2. A fear of diligence; a Christian fears and prayes, fears and repents. Fear quickens Industry. The Spouse fearing lest the Bridegroom should come before she is dressed, hastens and puts on her Jewels, that she may be ready to meet him. Fear causes a watchful eye, and a working hand. Fear banisheth sloth out of it's Diocese. The Greatest labor in Religion (says Holy Fear) is far less than the least pain the damned feel in Hell: no Greater Spur in the Heavenly race than fear.

CHAP. 3. COGENT REASONS ENFORCING THE FEAR OF GOD



THe Reasons enforcing this Holy Fear are, 1. Because Gods eye is always upon us. He who is under the eye of his earthly Prince, will be careful of doing any thing that should offend him. Job 31:4. Does not he see my ways, and count all my Steps? God sees in the dark. Psalm 139:12. The darkness hides not from you. The night is no Curtain, the clouds are no Canopy to hinder or intercept Gods sight. He sees the Heart. A Judge can judge of the fact, but God judgeth of the Heart. Jeremiah 17:10. He is like Ezekiels wheels, full of eyes, Ezekiel 10:12. and as Cyril says,, all Eye. Should not this make us walk with fear and circumspection? we cannot sin but our Judge looks on.

2. God interprets our not fearing him a slighting of him. As not to praise God, is to wrong him; so not to fear God, is to slight him. Of all things a person can least endure to be sleighted. Psalm 10:13. Wherefore does the wicked contemn God? For a worm to slight it's Maker causes the fury to rise up in Gods face. Ezekiel 38:18.

3. God has power to destroy us. Matthew 10:28. Fear him who has power to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell. God can look us into our Grave, and with a breath blow us into Hell, and shall we not fear him? Is it easie to wrestle with flames? Psalm 90:11. Who knows the Power of his anger? What engines or buckets can quench the infernal fire? We are apt to fear men who have power in their hand to hurt us; what is their power to Gods? They threaten a Prison, God threatens Hell. They threaten our Life, God threatens our Soul, and shall we not tremble before him ? O dreadful, when the great Fountains of Gods wrath shall be broken up, and all his Bitter Vials poured out! Ezekiel 22:14. Can your heart endure, or can your hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with you?

But are not we bid to serve God without Fear? Luke 1:74.

We must not Fear God with such a fear as the wicked do; they fear him as a Turkish Slave does his Pateroon; they fear him so as they hate him and wish there were no God. We must not serve God with this hellish fear, but we must serve him with an ingenuous fear sweetned with love.

CHAP. 4. CONTAINING A PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROPOSITION



IT confutes the Papists, who hold that a Christian cannot have Assurance, because he is to serve God with fea. Assurance and Fear are diversa but not Opposita, different but not contrary. A Child may have assurance of his Fathers love, yet has a fear of offending him. Who more fearful of Sin than St. Paul? 1 Corinthians 9:27. Yet who had more assurance? Galat. 2:20. Who Loved me, and Gave himself for me. Faith procures assurance, fear preserves it.

Is it a duty to Fear God, what strangers then are they to Religion, who are void of this Holy Fear? The Godly fear and sin not, the wicked sin and fear not. They are like the Leviathan, who is made without Fear, Job 41:33. Want of the fear of God is the innate Cause of all Wickedness, Romans 3:14. Whose mouth is full of Cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood. Whence was this? verse 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes: Abraham surmized the men of Gerar would stick at no Sin; why so? Genesis 20:11. I thought surely the fear of God is not in this place. The Judge in the Gospel is called an unjust Iudge, Luke 18:6. And no wonder, for verse 2. he feared not God. There must needs

be an excess of Sin where there wants the Fear of God to restrain it. The water must needs Overflow where there are no banks to keep it out. We live in a Godless age; durst men Sin at that rate as they do, if the fear of God were regent in their hearts? durst they swear, be unclean, use False weights, bear false witness, hate purity, deride Gods signs in the Heaven, Forge Plots, Persecute Christs body, if they had the fear of God before their eyes? these men proclaim to the World that they are Atheists; they believe not the Immortality of the Soul. They are worse than brutish, a Beast fears the fire, these fear not Hell Fire. They are worse than Devils, for they believe and tremble, Jam. 2:19.

Let us bewail the want of the Fear of God.—Terras Astraera reliquit.

Whence is it so few fear God?

1. Because they have not the knowledge of God. Proverbs 1:24. They hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: did men know God in his immense glory, they would be swallowed up with divine amazement. When the Prophet Isaiah had a glimpse of Gods Glory, he was stricken with holy consternation. Isaiah 6:5. Wo is me, I am undone, for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts. But the Ignorance of God banisheth fear.

2. Men fear not God because they presume of his Mercy. God is merciful, and they doubt not of the Virtue of this sovereign Balm. But who is Gods mercy for? Luke 1:50. His mercy is on them that fear him. Such as fear not Gods Justice, shall not tast his Mercy.

Let this be for a Lamentation, that the fear of God is so vanished. Where almost is it to be found? Some fear shame, others fear danger, but where is he who fears a Deity? Diogenes came into

a full Market with a Candle and Lanthorn; they asked him what he sought? says he, Hominem quaero, I seek a man; that is, a wise man. So in the Crowd of people we may go and seek a man fearing God.

And not only among the Commonalty, but even among Professors how few fear God in truth! Profession is often made a Mantle to cover sin. Absalom palliated his Treason with a Religious Vow. 2 Samuel 15:7. The Pharisees made long Prayer a preface to Oppression, Matthew 23:14. This is sordid, to carry on wicked designs sublarva Pictatis, under a pretext of Piety. The Snow covers many a dung-hill. A snowy white Profession covers many a foul heart. The sins of Professors are more odious. Thistles are bad in a Field, but worse in a Garden. The sins of the wicked anger God, but the sins of Professors Grieve him.

It reproves Iovial Sinners, who are so far from fearing God, that they spend their time in mirth and wantonness. Luke 17:27. They did eat, they drank, they married, till the flood came and destroyed them all. There is a place in Affrica called Tombutium, where the Inhabitants spend all the day in piping and dancing. What sensual effeminate lives do the Gallants of our age live! They spend their Life in a Frolick. As if God had made them to be like the Leviathan who plays in the Sea. Job 21:13. They take the Timbrel and Harp, and rejoyce at the sound of the Organ. They ride to Hell upon the back of Pleasure, and go merrily to damnation.

Though the Times are sad, they have no fear in regard of the publike: Does not God call us to trembling? our sins are the fiery Comets that presage evil. May not we fear the Glory is departing? may not we fear the death of Religion before the birth of

Reformation? May not we fear some portentous calamity should bring up the rear of former Judgments? and (as the Prophet Ezekiel says,) Should me then make-mirth? Ezekiel 21:10. But Jovial spirits have banished the fear of God. Amos 6:4, 5. That lye upon beds of Ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, that drink wine in Bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief Oyntments. Sinners whose hearts are hardned with soft pleasures, let them have their lusts, and farewell Christ and his Gospel. Jude 12. Feeding themselves without fear. But they Forget death will bring in the reckoning, and they must pay the reckoning in Hell. The Great Turk when he intends the death of any of his Bashaws, invites them to a Sumptuous Feast, and then causes them to be taken away from the Table and strangled: so Satan Gluts men with sinful pastimes and delights, and then strangles them. Foolish Gallants are like the Fish that swim pleasantly through the Silver streams of Iordan, till at last they fall into the dead Sea.

It reproves secure Sinners who have no Fear of God. Like Laish of old, Iudg. 18:27. A people quiet and secure. Those who are least safe, are most confident. Security casts men into a deep Sleep. Birds that build and roost in Steeples, being used to the continual ringing of Bells, the noise does not at all disquiet them. So Sinners who have been long used to the sound of Aarons Bells, though ever and anon they have a peal rung out against their sins, yet being used to it, they are not startled. A secure sinner is Known thus:

1. He lives as bad as the worst, yet hopes to be saved as well as the best. He does bless himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, Deuteronomy 29:19. As if a

man should drink Poison, yet not doubt but he shall have his health. A secure sinner lies in Delilahs lap, yet hopes to be in Abrahams bosom.

2. A secure sinner thinks all is well, because all is in peace. He hears others speak of a Spirit of bondage, and the terrors they have felt for sin, he thanks God he never Knew what Trouble of spirit meant; he thinks his Conscience is Good, because it is quiet. When the Devil keeps the Palace all is in peace, Luke 11:21. The Philosopher says, one Great sign of an Earthquake is excessive Calmness of the Air: ungrounded peace does presage an Earthquake in the conscience.

3. A secure sinner is careless about the main Chance. The Soul is the princely part, which is crowned with reason; it is a glass of the Trinity, as Plato calls it. A secure sinner provides for his Body, but neglects his Soul; like one that waters his Flowers, but never minds his Jewels. Behold here a secure person, who is in a spiritual Lethargy; he has no sence of the life to come, he is destitute of the fear of God.

It reproves Scoffers, who are the vilest of sinners. 2 Peter 3:3. There shall come in the last daies Scoffers. Such were Lucian and Porphiry. These Ishmaels jeer at holy walking, and make all Religion a Ridicule. They throw Squibs of reproach at the Saints. Quintinus scoffed at Christs Apostles. In the Massacre at Paris, the Papists cried out to the Protestants when they murdered them, Where is now your God? what is become of all your Psalms now, and your Prayers? Some Martyrs in Prague, as they were at Supper (being the next day to suffer) comforted themselves saying, That this was their last Supper upon Earth, and that to morrow they should sup with Christ in Heaven; a Great Papist flouted them,

saying, Has Christ Cooks for you in Heaven? These are Devils in the likeness of men. They are far from the fear of God: The Scorners chair stands at the mouth of Hell.

It exhorts us to get the fear of God planted in our hearts. Proverbs 28:19. Happy is he that feareth alway. The fear of God would influence all our actions. It would make us Good in both Tables. It would make us Holy towards God, and Righteous towards men. We would be true in our Promises, just in our dealings. Matthew 7:12. That I may press you to this Holy Fear, let me shew you the dignity and excellency of it.

1. The fear of God is the very Badge and Livery of a Saint. The Saints of old were men fearing God. Genesis 22:12. Act. 10:22. 1 Kin. 18:3. Obadiah feared the Lord Greatly. Not all the Moral Vertues in their Highest elevation make a Saint, but here is his true Character, He is one that Fears God. Saint Austin said of himself, that he did knock at Heaven-gate tremibunda manu, with a trembling hand; Christ calls his Elect his sheep, John 10:27. Sheep are of a trembling nature. The Saints are tremulous, they dare not take that liberty as others do.

2. The Fear of God is a main branch of wisdom. 'Tis called, the Head of wisdom, Proverbs 1:7. Wisdom is more precious than Rubies, Proverbs 3:15. No Jewel we wear, does so adorn us as wisdom; now the fear of God is our wisdom: Job 28:28. And to man he said, the fear of the Lord that is wisdom.

Wherein is the fear of God the true wisdom?

1. The fear of God is Wisdom as it makes us careful about our spiritual accounts. Wisdom lies in nothing more than in keeping accounts exactly. The fear of God teaches one to examine the state

of his Soul critically. O my Soul how is it with you? dost you gain or lose? is your Faith in it's Infancy, being but newly laid to the breast of a Promise? or is it Grown to some stature? how is it? does Grace prevail or Sin? Thus the fear of God makes us wisely ballance our accounts, and see how matters stand between God and our Souls. Psalm 77:6. I commune with my own heart, and my spirit made diligent search.

2. The fear of God is Wisdom as it makes us understand divine secrets. Psalm 25:14. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. He must needs be wise who is acquainted with the Arcana coeli, the secrets of Heaven. A fearer of God is acquainted with the secret of Election, 1 Thess. 1:4. of Gods love, Revelation 1:5. of the holy unction, 1 John 2:20. He knows Gods mind, 1 Corinthians 2:16. We have the mind of Christ.

3. The fear of God is Wisdom as it makes us considerative. Psalm 119:59. I considered my ways. A great part of wisdom lies in consideration. He who fears God considers how Vain the world is, therefore dares not love it; how short Time is, therefore dares not lose it; how precious Salvation is, therefore dares not neglect it.

4. The Fear of God is Wisdom as it makes us walk wisely. Colossians 4:5. Walk wisely,, towards them that are without. 1. The Fear of God makes us walk affably. Genesis 23:7. Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the Children of Heth. Piety does not exclude Curtesie. 2. The Fear of God makes us walk inoffensively: it prevents not only Scandals but Indecencies. 2 Corinthians 11:12. That I might cut off occasion from them that desire occasion. The Veneration of a Deity causes circumcision of Heart, and circumcision of Life.

5. The Fear of God is Wisdom, as it preserves us from Hell: 'tis wisdom to keep out of danger; fear makes us fly from the wrath to come.

3. The Fear of God is the best Certificate to shew for Heaven. Have you knowledge? so has Satan; have you Profession? so has Satan, he transforms himself into an Angel of light. But have you filial fear? herein you excel him. The fear of God is, though not our Plea, yet our Evidence for Heaven.

4. There is that in God which may command fear. Job 37:22. With God is terrible Majesty.

1. With God is Majesty.

1. There is Majesty in Gods Name, Iehovah. It comes from an Hebrew Radix, which imports Gods absolute, Eternal, and Independent being. 2. There is Majesty in Gods Looks. Job had but a glimpse of God, and he was even swallowed up with divine amazement, Job 42:5. Now mine Eye sees you, wherefore I abhor my self. 3. There is Majesty in Gods Words, he speaks with Majesty; as when he gave the Law in thundring, insomuch that the people said, Let not God speak with us lest we dye. 4. There is Majesty in Gods Attributes; his Holiness, Power, Justice, which are the Irradiations of the divine Essence. 5. There is Majesty in Gods Works, Psalm 145:5. I will speak of the Honor and Majesty of your wondrous works. Every Creature sets forth Gods Majesty; we may see the Majesty of God Blazing in the Sun, Twinkling in the Stars: Gods Majesty is discernable in those two Wonders of nature Behemoth and Leviathan, Job 40:18. chap. 41:19. In short, the

Majesty of God is seen in humbling the Children of Pride. He turned King Nebuchadnezzar to grass, and made him Fellow-commoner with the Beasts: Does not all this call for Fear?

2. With God is Terrible Majesty. Psalm 76:12. He is terrible to the Kings of the Earth. There is a time coming when God will be dreadful to his enemies; when Conscience is awake, when Death strikes, when the last Trump sounds. And shall not we Fear this God? Jeremiah 5:22. Fear ye not me, says the Lord, will ye not tremble at my presence? The Fearing Gods Justice is the way not to feel it.

And let it not seem strange to you, if I tell you, that in respect of Gods infinite Majesty, there will be some of this blessed Fear in Heaven. Not a Fear that has Torment in it, for Perfect love will cast out Fear. But an Holy, Sweet, Reverential fear. Though God has so much beauty in him as shall cause love, and joy, in Heaven, yet this beauty is mixed with so much Majesty, as shall cause a Veneration in Glorified Saints.

5. The Fear of God tends to life, Pro. 19:23. It is true, 1. In a temporal sence, Proverbs 10:27. The fear of the Lord prolongeth daies; in the Original it is, It addeth days. Long life is Promised as a blessing, Psalm 91:16. With long Life will I satisfie him. The best way to come to an, a Good Old age, is the Fear of God. Sin curtails the life: many a mans excess wastes his Vitals, enervates his strength, and cuts him short of those years which by the course of nature might be arrived at. You that desire to live long, live in the Fear of God. Deuteronomy 6:24. The Lord commanded us to fear the Lord our God, that he might preserve us alive.

2. It is true in a Spiritual sence. The Fear of the Lord tendeth to life: namely, to life Eternal. Life is sweet, and Eternal makes it Sweeter. The Life of bliss has no Tearn of Years wherein it expires, 1 Thes. 4:17. Ever with the Lord: The Lamp of Glory shines, but does not spend; so that divine Fear tends to Life; a life with God and Angels for ever.

6. The Fear of God gives full satisfaction, Proverbs 19:23. He that has it, shall abide satisfied. Such as are destitute of Gods Fear never meet with satisfaction. Job 20:22. In the midst of his sufficiency he shall be in straits. This is a riddle, to be full yet not have enough. The meaning is, there is still something wanting: he who Fears not God, though his Barns are full, yet his Mind is not quiet. The sweet Waters of Pleasure do rather inflame the thirst than satisfie it. *Omnia fui et nihil expedit*; I have run through all the delights and Grandures of the world, and could never find full contentment, said the Emperour Severus. But he who has the Fear of the Lord, shall abide satisfied.

1. He shall be satisfied.

His Soul shall be filled with Grace, his Conscience with peace: an Holy man said, when God had replenished him with inward joy, It is enough Lord, your Servant is a clay vessel and can hold no more.

2. He shall abide satisfied.

This satisfaction shall not cease; it shall be a Cordial in death, and a Crown after death.

7. The fear of God makes a little to be sweet, Proverbs 15:16. Better is a little with the fear of the Lord. Why is a little better? because that little a Believer has he holds in Capite, in his Head

Christ; that little is sweetned with the love of God. He has with that little a contented mind; and contentment turns Daniels Pulse into Venison. Again, that little is a Pledge of more; that little Oyl in the Cruse is but an earnest of that Golden joy and bliss which the Soul shall have in Heaven. Thus a little with the Fear of God is better than all unsanctified riches. Lazarus's Crumbs were better than Dives his Banquet.

8. The Fear of God is a Christians safety. He is invulnerable, nothing can hurt him: Plunder him of his Money, he carries a treasure about him he cannot be robbed of. Isaiah. 33:6. Cast him into bonds, his Conscience is free; Kill his Body, it shall rise again. He who has on this Breast-Plate of Gods Fear, may be shot at, but can never be shot thorow.

9. The Fear of God makes all things go well with us, Psalm 128:2. Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord, happy shalt you be, and it shall be well with you.

Is it not well with that man who has all things go on his side, and has nothing wanting that may do him Good? Psalm 84:11. If God sees Health or Riches Good for him, he shall have them. Every Providence shall center in his happiness. O what an inducement is here to solid Piety. Come what times will, it shall be well with them that Fear God. When they dye they shall go to God, and while they live every thing in the world shall do them good.

10. The Fear of God is a great Cleanser, Psalm 19:9. The fear of the Lord is clean. It is so, 1. In its own nature, it is a pure, Christal, Orient grace. 2. It is clean Effective, in the effect of it; it cleanseth

the Heart and Life; as a Spring works out the mud, so it purgeth out the love of sin. The Heart is the Temple of God, and Fear sweeps and cleanseth this Temple that it be not defiled.

11. The Fear of God makes us accepted with God, Act. 10:35. In every nation he that Feareth God is accepted with him. What was St. Paul so ambitious of? 2 Corinthians 5:9. We labor that we may be accepted with him. Divine Fear ingratiates us into divine Favor. Such as are Fearless of God, neither their Persons or Offerings find acceptance, Amos 5:21, 22. I despise your Feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn Assemblies; though ye offer me burnt-offerings, I will not accept them. Who will take a Gift from one that has the plague?

12. The Fear of God layes a train for spiritual joy: some may think the Fear of God breeds sadness; no, it is the in-let to joy The Fear of God is the morning Star, which ushers in the Sun light of comfort, Acts 9:31. Walking in the Fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy ghost. The Fear of God has solid joy in it, though not wanton. Oecolampadius an holy man being on his sick-bed, was asked if the Light offended him? he putting his hand to his heart said, Hic sat lucis; Here I have light enough. God mixeth joy with Holy Fear, that fear may not seem slavish.

13. The Fear of God drives out all other base Fear. Carnal fear is an enemy to Religion. The Fear of God frights it away; it causes Courage, Exodus 18:21. Able men, such as Fear God: some Translations render it, Men of Courage. When a Dictator Governed in Rome, all other Offices ceased. Where the Fear of God rules in the Heart, it expells fleshly Fear. When the Emperess Eudoxia

threatned to banish Chrysostom, Tell her, says he, I fear nothing but sin. The Fear of God swallows up all other Fear, as Moses Rod swallowed up the Magitians Rods.

14. To be void of Gods Fear, is Folly, Psalm 75:4. I said to the Fools, deal not Foolishly, and to the wicked, lift not up the Horn. 1. Are not they Fools who gratifie their Enemy? They who want the Fear of God do so. Satan baits his hook with pleasure and profit, and they swallow bait and hook and all; this pleaseth Satan, mens sins feast the Devil. Who but a Fool would humour his enemy?

2. Is it not folly to preferre Slavery before Liberty? if a Slave in the gally should have his freedom offered him, but he should say, he had rather Tug at the Oar and be a slave, than have his liberty, would not he be Judged indiscreet? Such is the case of him who Fears not God. The Gospel offers to free him from the miserable captivity of Sin, but he chooses rather to be a slave to his lusts. He is like the Servant under the Law. Exodus 21:5. I love my Master, I will not go out free. He was displeas'd with a year of Iubilee: The Foolish sinner had rather have his Ear bored to the Devils service, than be translated into the Glorious liberty of the Sons of God, Romans 8:21.

3. Is not he a Fool, who having but one Jewel will venture the loss of it? The Soul is this Jewel, and the sinner is fearless of it, he will throw it away upon the world; as if one should throw Pearls and Diamonds at Pear-trees. Ephrem Syrus used to say, He who Pampers his body and neglects his Soul, is like him who feasts his Slave and starves his Wife.

4. Is not he a Fool, who refuseth a rich offer? if one should offer to adopt another, and make him Heir of his Estate, and he should refuse it, would not his discretion be called in question? God offers Christ to a sinner, and promiseth to entail all the riches of Heaven upon him, but wanting the Fear of God he refuseth this Great offer. Psalm 81:11. Israel would none of me: Is not this a Prodigy of madness? may not the Devil beg every sinner for a Fool at the last day ?

15. The Fear of God is a Sovereign Antidote against Apostasie: the Devil was the first Apostate. How rife is this sin! more shipwracks are at Land than at Sea; men make shipwreck of a Good Conscience. Apostates are said to put Christ to open shame, Hebrews 6:6. The Fear of God is a, a preservative against Apostacy. Jeremiah 32:40. I will put my Fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. I will so love them, that I will not depart from them; and they shall so Fear me, that they shall not depart from me.

15. There are excellent Promises made to them that Fear God, Malachi 4:2. To you that Fear my Name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his Wings. Here is a promise of Christ; he is a Sun for Light and Vivifical Influence; and a Sun of Righteousness, as he diffuseth the Golden beams of Justification. And he has healing in his Wings; the Sun heals the Air, dries up the Cold moistures, exhales the Vapours which would be Pestilential; so Christ has healing in his Wings, he heals the hardness and impurity of the Soul. And the Horison in which this Sun ariseth, is in hearts Fearing God. To you that Fear my Name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise. And, there is another Great Promise, Psalm 115:13. He will bless them that Fear the Lord, both

Small and Great. God blesseth such in their Name, Estate, Souls. And this blessing can never be reversed: As Isaac said, I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed, Genesis 27:33. Such as Fear God are priviledged Persons, none can take away from them either their birth-right, or their blessing.

16. Fear is an admirable Instrument in Promoting Salvation, Philippians 2:12. Work out your Salvation with Fear. Fear is that flaming Sword, which turns every way to keep sin from entring. Proverbs 6:16. Fear stands Sentinel in the Soul, and is ever upon it's Watch-Tower. Fear causes circumspection, he who walks in Fear treads warily: Fear begets Prayer, and Prayer engageth the help of Heaven.

17. The Lord is much pleased with such as Fear him. Psalm 147:11. The Lord takes pleasure in them that Fear him. In the Septuagint it is, The Lord bears Good will towards them that Fear him: Pagnin and Buxtorf render it, The Lord delights in them that Fear him. Never did Suitor take such pleasure in a Person he loved, as God does in them that Fear him; they are his Hephshibah, or chief solace, Isaiah. 62:4. He says of them as of Sihon, Psalm 132:14. Here is my rest for ever, here will I dwell. A sinner is a vessel in which is no pleasure, Hosea 8:8. But Fearers of God are Favourites.

18. Such as Fear God are the only persons that shall be saved. Psalm 85:9. Salvation is nigh them that Fear him. Salvation is said to be far from the Wicked, Psalm 119:155. They and Salvation are so far asunder, that they are like never to meet. But Gods Salvation is nigh them that Fear him: What do we aspire after but Salvation? 'Tis the end of all our Prayers, Tears, Sufferings. Salvation is the Crown of our desires, the flower of our joy. And who shall be en-

riched with Salvation, but the Fearers of God? His Salvation is nigh them that Fear him. Let these cogent arguments perswade to the Fear of God.

Let us put our selves upon a strict Scrutiny and Tryal, whether we have the Fear of God planted in our hearts.

How may we know it?

1. The Fear of God will make a man fear sin, Genesis 39:9. How can I do this Great wickedness and sin against God; indeed sin is the only Formidable thing; this is the Gorgons Head, that affrights; it is the Evil of Evils. 'Tis the Poison the Old Serpent has spit into our Virgin-nature: In Sin is both Pollution and Enmity: Sin is compared to a Thick Cloud, Isaiah. 44:22. which not only hides the light of Gods Face, but brings down showers of Wrath. Sin is worse than all penal evils: there is more evil in a drop of Sin, than in a Sea of Affliction. 1. Sin is the cause of Affliction, it conjures up all the Winds and Storms in the World. Out of this Viperous womb come Mutinies, Divisions, Massacres, and the cause is worse than the effect.

2. In Affliction Conscience may be quiet; the Hail may beat upon the Tiles, when there is Musick in the room: but Sin terrifies the Conscience. Nero in the midst of Feasts and Roman sports was full of horreur of mind; the numbers of men he had Killed, troubled him. Cataline was frighted at every noise. Cain in Killing Abel stab'd half the World at one blow, yet could not he Kill the Worm of his own Conscience.

Sin is the Spirits of Mischief distilled, it puts a Sting into death, 1 Corinthians 15:56. It is worse than Hell. 1. Hell is a burden only to the sinner, but sin is a Burden to God, Amos 2:13.

2. There is Justice in Hell, but sin is the most unjust thing. It would rob God of his Glory, Christ of his Purchase, the Soul of it's Happiness. 'Tis more bitter to sin against Christ, than to suffer the torments of Hell, says Chrysostom: Is not sin then to be feared? he who Fears God is afraid of touching this forbidden fruit: More Particularly:

1. He who Fears God, is afraid to do any thing that he doubts may be sinful, Romans 14:23. He will not swallow Oaths like Pills, lest they should afterwards work in his Conscience: he dares not mix any thing in Gods Worship which he has not appointed, he doubts it is like Offering strange fire. Where Conscience is Scrupulous, it is safer to forbear; for, what is not of Faith is Sin.

2. He who Fears God, fears the appearance of Sin, 1 Thes. 5:22. Abstain,, from all appearance of Evil. Some things are Male colorata (as Bernard speaks) they have a bad look, and carry a show of evil in them: To go to the Idol Temple, though one does not joyn with them in Worship, is an appearance of evil. He whose Heart is ballasted with Gods Fear, flies from that which looks like sin. It was a good speech of Bernard to Eugenius, By avoiding the Act of sin we preserve our Peace, by avoiding the appearance of it we preserve our Fame. The Fear of God makes us shun the Occasion of sin: the Nazarite under the Law was not only to forbear Wine, but he must not eat Grapes, which might occasion intemperancy. Joseph fled from his Mistresses temptation, he would not be seen in her company.

The appearance of evil though it defile not ones own Conscience, it may offend anothers Conscience: and hear what the Apostle says, 1 Corinthians 8:12. When ye wound the weak Conscience, ye sin against Christ. Such as avoid not the appear-

ances and in-lets to sin, make the truth of their Grace to be suspected: How far are they from the Fear of God, who forgetting their prayer, Lead us not into temptation, run themselves into the Devils mouth? they go to Plays and Masquerades, which are the Lures and Incentives of Filthiness; others associate familiarly with the Wicked, and are too often in their Company: which is like going among them that have the Plague. 1 Corinthians 5:9. I wrote to you not to Company with Fornicators. Traffique is one thing, keeping Company is another. Polycarp would have no Society with Marcion the Heretick. Twisting into a cord of Friendship with sinners is a show of evil, it hardens them in sin, and wounds the credit of Religion.

But did not Christ often converse with Sinners?

1. Christ did sometimes go among the Wicked, not that he approved of their sins: but as a Physitian goes among the diseased to heal them; so Christ intended to Work a Cure upon them, Mark 2:17. It was their conversion he aimed at.

2. Though Jesus Christ did sometimes converse with Sinners, yet he could receive no Infection by them: his divine nature was a sufficient Antidote against the contagion of sin. As the Sun cannot be defiled with the thick Vapours which are exhaled from the Earth, and fly into the middle Region: so the black Vapours of sin could not defile the Sun of Righteousness. Christ was of that spotless purity that he had no receptibility of Evil; but the case is altered with us, we have a stock of corruption within: therefore it is dangerous to incorporate with the Wicked lest we be defiled.

Such as revere the divine Majesty dare not go near the borders of Sin. Those who went near the Fiery Furnace, though they did not go into it, were burned, Daniel 3:22. A wise Christian should in all his transactions put those three questions of Bernard to himself; Whether is this I do lawful, or decent, or expedient.

3. He who Fears God, dares not sin secretly. An Hypocrite may forbear gross sin, because of the shame; but not clandestine secret sin. He is like one that shuts up his Shop-windows, but follows his Trade within doors: But a man Fearing God dares not sin, though he had Gyges's Ring and could walk invisibly, and no eye see him. Levit. 19:14. You shalt not curse the deaf, or put a stumbling block before the blind; but shalt Fear your God. If one should curse a deaf man, he cannot hear him; or lay a stumbling block in a blind mans way, he cannot see him: Yea but the Fear of God will make one avoid those sins which can neither be heard or seen by men. Gods Seeing in secret is a sufficient Supersedeas and Counterpoison against Sin.

4. He who Fears God dares not commit sin, though it might bring him in Emolument. Gain is the Golden bait with which Satan fisheth for Souls: this was the last temptation the Devil used to Christ, All this will I give you, Matthew 4:9. How many bow down to the Golden Image! Ioshua who could stop the course of the Sun, could not stop Achan in his pursuit after the wedge of Gold. But he who Fears God dares not sin to get preferment: David durst not touch the Lords anointed though he knew he was to reign next, 2 Samuel 26:23. A Godly man is assured that a full Purse is but a poor recompence for a wounded Conscience. If any shall go to choak him with Steeples, he says as Peter, Acts 8:20. Your mony perish with you.

5. He who Fears God, dares not gratifie his own revengeful humour. Homer says, Revenge is sweet as dropping Hony; but Grace makes a man rather bury an injury than revenge it. He knows who has said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, Romans 12:19. He who has the Fear of God before his eyes, is so far from revenge, that he requites good for evil. Miriam murmured against Moses, and Moses prayed for her, that God would heal her of her Leprosie, Numb. 12:13. The Prophet Elisha instead of smiteing his Enemies, set Bread and Water before them, 2 King 6:22.

6. He who Fears God dares not do that which is of evil report, though possibly the thing in it self may be no sin. 1 Corinthians 6:1. Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust? Yes, might some say, what sin is it to have a just cause brought before unbelievers, that it may be decided? O but, might the Apostle reply, though the thing in it self be lawful, yet because it sounds ill, and exposeth your Religion to the Scorn and insult of unbelievers, you that Fear God should not dare to do it. It were better to decide it by a prudent arbitration. 1 Corinthians 6:12. All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient.

7. He who Fears God is not only afraid of evil actions, but to offend God in his Thoughts. Deuteronomy 19:6. Beware that there be not a thought in your wicked heart, etc. To think of sin with delight is to act it over in the fancy, this is Culpable. A man may think himself into Hell. What were the Apostate Angels damned for, was it for any more than Proud thoughts? This is the first note of Trial, He who reverenceth a Deity flies from Sin. It is a saying of Anselm, If Sin were on one side and Hell on the other, I would rather leap into Hell than willingly sin against God.

2. He who Fears God, walks by Rule rather than Example: Example is for the most part corrupt. Examples of great men are influential. Pharaoh had learned Ioseph to swear, but Ioseph had not learned Pharaoh to pray. The examples of others cannot justify a thing intrinsically evil. A fearer of God steers the Rudder of his Life according to the Compass of the Word. He looks to the sacred Canon as the Mariner to the Load-Star, or Israel to the Pillar of Fire, to direct him. Isaiah. 8:20. To the Law, to the Testimony.

3. He who Fears God keeps his commandments, Ecclesiastes 12:13. Fear God, and keep his commandments. Luther said, He had rather obey God than work miracles. A Gracious Soul crosseth his own will to fulfil Gods: if the Lord bid him Crucifie his bosom-sin, forgive his enemies, he instantly obeys. An Heathen exercising much cruelty to a Christian, asked him in scorn, What Great Miracle his Master Christ ever did? The Christian replied, This Miracle, that though you use me thus Cruelly, I can forgive you. An Holy Heart Knows there is nothing lost by obedience. David sware to the Lord, that he would not rest till he found a place for God, Psalm 132:4, 5. And God Sware again to David, that of the fruit of his body he would set upon his throne, Psalm 132:11.

4. He who Fears God is alike Good in all Companies: He dif-fuseth the sweet savor of Godliness where ever he comes. Hypocrites can change themselves into all shapes, and be as their company is; Serious in one comcompany, and Vain in another: He who reverenceth a Deity, is semper idem, alike Good in all places. An even Pulse shows Health: an even walking shows Grace. If a Good man be providentially cast among the wicked, he will not co-alesce with them, but in his deportment shows forth a Majesty of Holiness.

5. He who Fears God is good in the Station where God has set him. Take an instance in Ioseph, Genesis 42:18. I fear God. And see a pattern of Relative sanctitie: He showed towards his Master fidelity, towards his Mistress chastity, towards his Father duty, towards his Brethren bounty. A good man makes his family Palaestra Pietatis, a Nursery of Piety, as it was said of Cranmer.

6. He who Fears God, dares not neglect Family or Closet-prayer, Psalm 109:4. I Give my self to Prayer. Prayer whispers in Gods ears. Clemens Alexandrinus calls it private conference with God. Why was Nymphas's house call'd a Church, Colossians 4:15. But because it was consecrated by Prayer? A Gracious Soul puts forth fervent sighs in Prayer, Romans 8:26. And sure that prayer does soonest pierce Heaven which pierceth ones own Heart.

If Prayer be made the Touch-stone, then the number of those who Fear God is but small. Are there not many prayerless Families in this City and Nation? Job 15:4. You casteth off fear, you restrainest prayer. When men restrain prayer, they cast off the Fear of God. It is the brand set upon a Reprobate, Psalm 14:4. He calls not upon God.

7. He who Fears God will not oppress his Neighbor. Levit. 25:17. Ye shall not oppress one another, but you shalt fear your God. How can he be Holy who is not just? A Saint, yet an Extortioner is a Soloecism. A cruel oppressor is like Iudas, his bowels are fallen out. The Fear of God would cure this. Nehemiah 5:8. Will ye sell your brethren? v. 9. Ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God? As if Nehemiah had said, If ye had the Fear of God ye would not be so wicked, ye would not rise upon the ruines of others, and to wrong them, damn your selves.

8. He who Fears God is given to works of Mercy. The Fear of God is alwaies joyned with love to our Brethren. Grace may have a Trembling hand, but it has not a Withered hand, it stretcheth out its self to relieve the indigent. Iam. 1:27. Pure Religion before God and the Father is this, to Visit the Fatherless and the Widdows in their Affliction. To Visit them is not only to go to see them in Affliction: our Saviour expounds what Visiting is, Matthew 25:36. Ye visited me; how was that? verse 35. I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat. Good works are not the Cause of our Justification, but they are the Evidence. How far are they from the Fear of God, who are hard-hearted to Christs Poor! You may as well extract Oil out of a Flint, as the Golden Oil of Charity out of their hearts. Dives denied Lazarus a Crumb of Bread, and Dives was denied a drop of Water.

9. He who Fears God had rather displease man than God. Exodus 1:17. The Midwives Feared God, and did not as the King commanded, but saved the Men-children alive. What, not obey the Kings Command! How could this stand with their Allegiance? Very well, because it was an unlawful command. The King bad them put to death the Males of the Hebrews, which they durst not doe, for Fear of incurring Gods displeasure. King Nebuchadnezzar, erected a Golden Image to be worshipped, but the three Children (or rather Champions) said, Be it known to you O King, we will not serve your Gods, or worship your Golden Image, Daniel 3:18. They would rather burn than bow: He who Fears God, knows it is best to keep in with God; he is the surest Friend, but the sorest Enemy.

10. The Fear of God will make a man Fear these six things.

- 1. Satans Snares. - 2. His own Heart. - 3. Death. - 4. Judgement. - 5. Hell. - 6. Heaven.

1. The Fear of God will make a man afraid of Satans snares. He has the eye of Faith to see these snares, and the wing of Fear to fly from them—*Pedibus Timor addidit alas*—2 Corinthians 2:11. We are not ignorant of his devices. The word is, subtile Stratagem. Satan is called the Old Serpent, Revelation 12:9. Though he has lost his Holiness, he has not lost his Policy: his snares are so Cunningly laid, that without the Guidance of Gods Fear we cannot escape them.

1. One subtil Artifice of Satan is, he baits his Hook with Religion: he can change his Flag, and hang out Christs Colors; here he Transforms himself into an Angel of light. The Devil tempts men to Evil, that Good may come of it, Romans 3:8. He whistles them into the snare of preferment, that hereby they may be in a capacity of doing God more service. The white Devil is worst. Who would suspect Satan when he comes as a Divine, and if need be, can quote Scripture?

2. Another snare of Satan is, to tempt to sin under a plea of Necessity. Lot offered to expose his Daughters to the lusts of the Sodomites, that he might preserve his Angel-guests who were come into his house, Genesis 19:8. Did not Satan instigate him to this? Necessity will not excuse impiety.

3d. Snare is to Color over sin with the Pretence of Virtue. Alcibiades hung a Curtain curiously embroidered over a foul Picture full of Owls and Satyrs. Satan puts Good names on sin, as Physitians call that Film in the eye which hinders the sight, a Pearl in the eye. Satan Color'd over Jehu's Ambition with the Name of Zeal, 2 Kin. 10:16. He makes men believe Revenge is Valour, Covetousness Frugality: as if one should write balm-water upon a glass of Poyson.

4th. Snare of Satan is, to carry on his mischievous designs under a pretence of Friendship. He puts off his Lions Skin, and comes in Sheeps Clothing. Thus Satan came to Christ; Command that these Stones be made bread, Matthew 4:3. As if he had said, I see you art Hungry, I therefore out of Pity Counsel you to get something to eat, turn stones to bread that your hunger may be satisfied: but Christ spied the Serpent in the Temptation and repulsed him. Thus Satan came to Eve under the Notion of a Friend. Eat, says he, of the Tree in the midst of the Garden, Ye shall not dye, ye shall be as Gods, Genesis 3:4, 5. As if he had said, I perswade you only to that which will put you into a better condition than now ye are; eat of the Tree of knowledge and it will make you Omniscient. What a kind Devil was here! but Eve found a Worm in the Apple. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*—.

5th. Snare, if Satan cannot take a Christian off from duty, he will put him on too far in duty. Humiliation is a duty, but Satan suggests that the Soul is not humbled enough: and indeed he never thinks it humbled enough till it despairs. Satan comes thus to a man: Your sins have bin great, and your Sorrow should be proportionable; But is it so? canst you say you hast bin as great a Mourner as you hast bin a Sinner? what is a drop of Sorrow to a Sea of Sin? This is laid only as a Snare: the subtil enemy would have a Christian weep himself blind, and in a desperate humour throw away the Anchor of Hope. And if Satan has such fallacies, and as a Decoy draws so many Millions into his snares, is there not cause of jealous fear lest we should be trappan'd? The fear of God will make us Fear Hells stratagems. Satans snares are worse than his darts.

2. The Fear of God will make a man afraid of his own Heart. Luther used to say, he feared his Heart more than the Pope or Cardinals, Jeremiah 17:9. The Heart is deceitful above all things.

1. It is deceitful.

The word signifies, it is a Jacob, or Supplanter. As Jacob supplanted his brother, and got away the blessing; so our Hearts would supplant and beguile us.

2. Above all things.

There is deceit in Weights, deceit in Friends; but the Heart has an art of deceiving beyond all. In the best hearts there is some fallaciousness. David was upright in all things, save only in the matter of Vriah, 1 King 15:5. A Godly man Knowing there is a spice of this deceit in his Heart, Fears himself. The flesh is a Bosom-Traitor. No man can believe what evil is in his Heart. 2 Kin. 8:12. Is your Servant a Dog? Hazael could not believe his Heart had bin big of such Monsters. If one had come to Noah and said▪ you will be drunk shortly; he would have said, Is your Servant a Dog? No man knows what is in his breast, or what scandal he may fall into if God leaves him. Christ warns his own Apostles to take heed of surfeiting and drunkenness, Luke 21:34. A Godly man therefore fears his Heart with a Fear of Caution and jealousy. The Heart is not only stubborn, but subtil. Let us a little Trace this Impostor, and see if there be not cause to fear it. The heart shows it's deceitfulness about 1. Things Sinful. 2. Things Sacred.

1. The Heart shows it's deceitfulness about things sinful; this deceit is 1. In hiding of sin, as Rahab hid the spies in the flax, Josh. 2:6. So the Heart Hides sin: and how does it hide it? Just as Adam hid himself under figleaves, so the Heart hides sin under the

figleaves of excuses. It was done against the will, or in a Passion; or it was long of others: Aaron laid his sin in making the Golden calf upon the people, Exo. 32:22. The people are set on mischief: And Adam tacitly laid his sin upon God himself, Genesis 3:12. The Woman you gavest me, she gave me of the tree. As to say, If you hadst not given me this tempting woman, I had not eat.

2. The Hearts deceit is seen in Flattering of us, it will make us believe we are not so bad as we are. The Physitian deceives the patient, when he tells him his disease is not so dangerous, yet he is falling into the hands of death. The Heart will tell a man he is free from Theft, when yet he robs others of their Good Name; he is free from Drunkenness, when, though he will not be drunk with Wine, he will be drunk with Passion. Thus the Heart is a flattering Glass, to make one look fairer than he is: and is there not cause to suspect this Impostor?

2. The Heart shews it's deceitfulness about things Sacred; it will be ready to put us off with Counterfeit Grace. Many have bin deceived in taking false Mony, and it is to be feared in taking false Grace.

1. The Heart is ready to deceive with a false repentance. A Sinner is troubled a little for Sin, or rather, the consequent of it, and perhaps sheds a few tears, and now his Heart soothes him up that he is a true Penitent. But every legal terrour is not Repentance, Acts 2:37. They were pricked in their Heart: yet after this, Peter said to them Repent, ver. 38. If every slight Trouble for sin were true Repentance, then Iudas and Cain may be listed in the number of penitents. Evangelical Repentance works a change of Heart, 1 Corinthians 6:11. It produceth Sanctity. But the false penitentiary, though he has trouble of Spirit, yet no Metamorphise or

change. He has a weeping Eye, but an adulterous Heart. Ahab Fasts and puts on sack-cloth, but after this, he puts the Prophet Micaiah in Prison, 1 Kin. 22:27.

2. The Heart is apt to deceive with a false Faith, it would put the dead child in the room of the living. They in the second of John are said to believe: But Christ did not believe their faith, John 2:24. True Faith, as it casts it self into Christs arms to embrace him, so it casts it self at Christs feet to serve him: But spurious Faith though it be forward to Receive Christs benefits, yet it plucks the Government from his shoulders, Isaiah. 9:6. It would have him a Priest, but not upon his throne, Zach. 6:13. Thus the Heart is full of fallacies; he who Fears God fears his Heart lest it should rob him of the blessing. That saying of Epicharmus is Good, Remember not to trust.

3. The Fear of God will make a man Fear death. Death may challenge a part in our Fear. 1. Because it is such a serious thing, it is the in-let to eternity: and puts us into an unalterable estate. 2. Because of it's Proximity: it is nearer to us than we are aware : it may be within a few hours march of us. God may this night seal a Lease of Ejectment, and say, Give an account of your stewardship; and what if death should come before we are ready? 3. Because after death there is nothing to be done for our Souls, there is no repenting in the Grave, Ecclesiastes 9:10. There is no work nor device in the Grave whither you go. So that death is to be feared with an holy and Religious Fear.

How far may a child of God Fear death?

1. So far as the Fear of Death is a Curben-bit to keep him from Sin. A believer may lawfully make use of all means to deter him from sin. No stronger antidote against sin, says Austin, than the Fear of Death. Am I sinning, and to morrow may be dying?

2. A Child of God may so far Fear death, as it makes him dye to the World. The Fear of death would sound a retreat and call us off from Vanity. What is the world? we must leave it shortly, and all we can purchase is a burying-place

3. A Child of God may so far Fear death, as this Fear fits him more for death. Jacob feared his brother Esau's coming against him, and he prepared to meet him, he addressed himself to Prayer, Genesis 32:7, 24. So when we Fear deaths coming and we prepare to meet it, we set our Soul in order. This is a Good Fear of death.

But this Fear of death in the Godly must be mixed with hope. The nature of death to a Believer is quite changed: death is in it self a curse, but God has turned this Curse into a Blessing. To a Child of God death is not a destruction but a deliverance. When the Mantle of his flesh drops off, he ascends in a fiery chariot to Heaven.

4. The Fear of God will make a man fear Iudgment. Anselm spent most of his thoughts upon the day of Judgement; and Hierom thought he alwaies heard that Voice sounding in his ears, Surgite mortui, Arise ye dead and come to Judgment. That there shall be such a day is evident, 1. From Gods Veracity: He who is the Oracle of truth has asserted it, Psalm 96:13. For he comes, for he comes to Judge the earth; There is a duplication, 1. To shew the Certainty he comes, he comes, it is an indubitable Maxim. 2. To

shew the Celerity, he comes, he comes, the time draws near, it is almost day-break, and the Judge is ready to take the bench, Jam. 5:9. Gods decree cannot be reversed.

2. There shall be such a day for the Vindication of Gods Justice. Things seem to be carried in the World Partially: the Godly suffer, the Wicked Prosper. Atheists are ready to think God has cast off the Government of the World, and minds not how things are transacted here below: therefore there must be a judicial Process that God may undeceive the World and set things right.

3. That there shall be such a day is evident by the Principles ingrafted in a natural conscience. When Paul reasoned of Judgment to come, Felix trembled, Acts 24:25. The Prisoner at bar made the Judge tremble. That a Wicked man dying is so surprized with terrors, whence is this but from a secret apprehension of Judgment ensuing?

It will be a great Assizes, never was the like seen. 2 Corinthians 5:10. We must all appear before the Iudgment Seat. There is no flying, no absconding, no bribing, no appearing by a Proxy, but all must make their Personal appearance They who were above Trial here, and the Law could not reach them, must appear before the Tribunal of Heaven.

Who shall be Judge?

Jesus Christ, John 5:22. Acts 17:31. He has appointed a day in which he will judge the world by that man whom he has ordained. In that Christ is called a Man, hence the Socinians blasphemously deny the essential Deity of Christ. That he is God, is most clearly evinced from Isaiah 9:6. Ioh. 1:1. 1 Corinthians 8:6. 1 John 5:20. We are in him that is True, even in his Son Iesus Christ, this is the

true God. Christ is, Consubstantiate with God the Father, Hebrews 1:3. But Christ the Judge is called Man, because he shall Judge the world in a Visible Shape. He must be both God and Man: he must be God that he may see mens Hearts: and he must be man that he himself may be seen.

What a solemn day will this be, when Christ shall sit upon the Bench of Judicature! he will judge righteously, Psalm 9:8. Though he himself was wronged, he will do no wrong: And he will judge Critically, Matthew 3:12. Whose fan is in his hand and he will throughly purge his floor. He will see what is Wheat, what is Chaff, who have his Image upon him, and who the mark of the beast. Sure the Fear of God will cause an holy trembling at the thoughts of this day.

In what sence should those that Fear God, Fear the day of Judgment?

Not with a Fear of amazement or despondency, for the day of Judgment will be a Iubile, a blessed comfortable day to them. The Thrush sings at the approach of Rain: so may Believers at the approach of Judgment: Christ who is their Iudge is their Advocate. But,

1. The Godly should so fear Judgement, as every day to renew their Sorrow for Sin. They have sins quotidiani incursum, that creep upon them daily, and they must with Peter, weep bitterly; they must steep their Souls in the brinish Tears of Repentance: It would be sad to be found at the last day in any sin unrepented of.

2. The Godly should so Fear the day of Judgment as it makes them afraid of Sins of Omission. The not dressing a wound brings death: the not discharging duty may bring dmnation. You may

read the solemn Process at the last day, Matthew 25:42. I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat, naked and ye cloathed me not, sick and in Prison and ye Visited me not. The charge here brought in, is for sins of Omission. Christ does not say, Ye took away my meat from me, but, Ye gave me no meat; He says not, Ye put me in prison, but, Ye visited me not. The sins of Omission condemned them. Not praying in the family, not sanctfying the Sabbath, not giving Almes, will be the fatal Inditement.

3. The Godly should so far Fear the day of Judgment, as it makes them afraid of dissembling in Religion. For at that day false hearts will be unmasked. Why did Paul walk with such integrity? 2 Thes. 2:10 Ye are witnesses and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved our selves among you. What was the cause of this? sure a Fear of the Judgment day approaching, 2 Corinthians 5:10. For we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The word in the orinal is, we must be made manifest, our hearts must be laid open before Men and Angels. Such is the Witchcraft of Hypocrisie that it is hard in this life to know who is false, and who is sincere; but shortly there will be a full discovery. 'Tis good for Gods people so to Fear Judgment, as it makes them strive against prevarication and Hypocrisie: for then the Hypocrite will be found out.

5. The Fear of God makes a man Fear Hell. Hell is called the place of Torment, Luke 16:28. Not only fligitious Sinners, but such as Fear God ought to Fear Hell, Luke 12:4. I say to you my friends, Fear him who has power to cast into Hell.

How far should Gods people Fear Hell?

Not so as to let go their Hope. A Mariner fears a Storm, but not so as to throw away his Anchor. Such as Fear God should Fear Hell four ways.

1. They should fear Hell *tanquam meritum*, as that which they have deserved. Their sins have merited Hell. Wo to the Holyest man alive if God should weigh him in the ballance of his Justice.

2. They who Fear, God ought so far to Fear Hell, as it is a means to make them shake off Spiritual sloth. This disease is apt to seize upon Gods own people: the Wise Virgins Slumbred, Matthew 25:5. Now so far as the fear of Hell is an alarum or Watchbell to awaken the Godly out of security, and make them run faster to Heaven, so far it is a good and blessed Fear.

3. The Fear of Hell is so far Good in the Godly, as it makes them afraid of being in the number of those who shall go to Hell. There are certain Persons in danger of Hell. 1. Who have all their Heaven in this Life, Isaiah. 47:8. You that art given to pleasure. Epicures swim in sensual delights; they had rather displease God than deny the flesh: these shall take up their quarters in Hell; Isaiah. 22:12, 13. In that day did the Lord of Hosts call to weeping, and behold joy and Gladness, eating Flesh, and drinking Wine: surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till you dye, says the Lord. That is, this Sin shall not be done away by any Sacrifice.

2. They are in danger to be cast into Hell who live in the Sin of Adultery; they who burn in lust shall burn in Hell: 2 Peter 2:9. The Lord knows how to reserve the unjust to be punished; but chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness. See the corruption of mans nature! If God had made all common, he would have sought an enclosure; and now God has made an encl-

sure, he endeavours to lay all common. Instead of drinking Water out of his own Cistern, he loves stolen Waters: The same Latine word *praesepe* signifies a Stable, and a Whore-house: both are for Beasts.

3. They are like to go to Hell, who by giving bad Example cause others to Sin. Bad example like the Plague is catching. Great men are Glasses which the common people dress themselves by. Such as give bad example have not only their own sins, but the sins of others to answer for: and that doubtless was the reason why Dives intreated Abraham that one might go from the Dead to Preach to his Brethren, Luke 16:27. Not that Dives had love to their Souls, but it was because while he was alive he had occasioned his Brethrens sins by his Wicked example, and he knew that their coming to Hell would encrease his Torment.

4. They are like to go to Hell who live and dye in the contempt of Gods Word. Ministers have preached till the bellows are burnt, their Vitals wasted, but men stop their Ears and harden their Hearts, Zach. 7:12. They make their Heart as an Adamant. Hardness of Heart lies in the insensibleness of the Conscience, and the inflexibleness of the Will. Obdurate Sinners shake out the Arrow of Conviction, Scorn Reproof. When the Prophet cried to the Altar of Stone it rent, 1 Kings 13:2. But Sinners Hearts rend not; these are like to have the Wrath of God flame about their Ears, 2 Thes. 1:8. The Lord Iesus shall be revealed from Heaven in flaming fire, taking Vengeance on them who obey not the Gospel.

5. They shall go to Hell, who fall away Finally, Matthew 13:6. Because they had no root they withered. Flowers in a Waterpot will keep Green and fresh a while, but having no root wither. Demas and Julian made a fair show a while, but ended as the Silkworm,

which after all her Curious Spinning, at last becomes a Common fly. Hebrews 10:26. If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more Sacrifice for sin. Thus we see who are like to be thrown into Hell: Now it is good for the Godly so to Fear Hell, as to fear to be in the number of those who shalt go to Hell.

4. The Fear of Hell is so far good in the Godly, as it is a Fear mixed with Rejoycing, Psalm 2:11. Rejoyce with trembling. A Believers Fear of Hell must be like the Fear of the two Maries going from the Sepulcher, Matthew 28:8. They departed from the Sepulcher with Fear and great Joy: Fear, because they had seen an Angel; and Joy, because Christ was risen. So must the Godly look on Hell, with Fear and Joy; Fear, because of the Fire; Joy, because Christ has freed them from it. A man that stands upon an high rock, Fears when he looks down into the Sea, yet Rejoyceth that he is not there struggling with the Waves: So a Child of God when he looks down into Hell by Contemplation may fear because of the dreadfulness of the Torment; yet this Fear should be mingled with Joy, to think he shall never come there. Iesus has delivered him from Wrath to come.

6. The Fear of God will make a man Fear Heaven. You may say, that is strange, rather Hope for Heaven; nay, a Regenerate person is to Fear Heaven lest he fall short of it. Hebrews 4:1. Let us Fear lest a promise being lest us of entring into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 'Tis a Metaphor taken from Racers, who Growing weary and lagging behind come short of the prize. Who had more hope of Heaven than St. Paul? yet he was not without his Fears, 1 Corinthians 9:27. I keep under my Body, lest

when I have preached to others I my self should be a Cast-away. And well may he who shall go to Heaven Fear least he miss of it, if you consider,

1 It is Possible for many who make a Splendid Profession to lose Heaven. What think you of the Foolish Virgins? They are called Virgins because they were not tainted with any gross Sin; yet these Virgin-Professors were shut out, Matthew 25:10. Balaam a Prophet, Iudas an Apostle, both cashiered. We have seen some Ships have had glorious names given them, the Good-speed, the Hope, the Safe-guard, yet cast away at Sea.

2. It is possible to come near to Heaven, yet fall short of it, Mark 12:34. You art not far from the Kingdom of God; yet he was not near enough. Men may countenance the Ministry of the Word, have their Affections moved at an Ordinance, and in outward show out-go the Children of God; yet not having the Oyl of Sincerity in their Vessels, they may be frustrated of happiness: And how dismal is that, to lose God, to lose their Souls, to lose their Hopes! The Millions of Tears shed in Hell are not sufficient to bewail the loss of Heaven. Well may such as have Heaven in them Fear their coming short of it. Thus much for the Use of Trial.

How shall we arrive at this Blessed Fear?

1. Let us set God ever in our eye, study his Immensity. He is God Almighty, Genesis 17:1. He gives laws to the Angels, binds the Consciences of men, cuts off the Spirit of Princes, Psalm 76:12. The Thoughts of Gods incomprehensible Greatness would strike an Holy awe into our Hearts. Elijah wrap'd his face in a Mantle when

Gods Glory passed by. The reason men Fear not God, is because they entertain slight thoughts of him. Psalm 40:21. You thoughtest I was such an one as your self.

2. Let us pray for this Fear of God, which is the Root of all Holiness, and the Mother of all Wisdom. Psalm 86:11. Vnite my Heart to Fear your Name; the Lord has Promised to put his Fear in our Heart, Jeremiah 32:40. Let us pray over this Promise: while some pray for Riches, and others for Children, let us pray for an Heart to Fear God.

To conclude this, you who have this Fear planted in your Souls, bless God for it, Psalm 135:20. Ye that Fear the Lord bless the Lord. God has done more for you than if he had made you Kings and Queens, and caused you to ride upon the High places of the Earth. He has enriched you with that Jewel which he bestows only upon the Elect.

O stand upon Mount Gerizim blessing. The Fear of God is an Immortal▪ Seed springing up into Glory, Psalm 22:23. Ye that fear the Lord praise him. Begin the Work of Heaven now, be Spiritual Quiristers: sound forth Holy Doxologies and Triumphs; say as David, Psalm 71:8. Let my Mouth be filled with your Praise, and with your Honor all the day. God has but little praise in the world: Who should pay him this Quit-rent if not they that fear him?

CHAP. 5. SHOWING THE FIRST SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE GODLY: SPEAKING OF GOD



2. HAVING done with the Character of the Godly in General, I proceed next to their Special Characters. 1▪They spoke often one to another. When the Wicked said, It is Vain to serve God, then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another. The meaning of this word, they spoke often, is, they did discourse Religiously together, their Tongues were Divinely tuned by the Holy Ghost.

Christians when they meet together should use holy Conference. This is not only an advice, but a charge, Deu. 6:6. These words shall be in your Heart, and you shalt talk of them when you sittest in your House, and when you walks by the way, and when you lyeest down, and when you risest up. Indeed where there is Gratia infusa, it will be effusa; Grace changeth the Language, and makes it Spiritual. When the Holy Ghost came upon the Apostles, they spoke with other Tongues, Act. 2:4. Grace makes Christians speak with Other Tongues. A good Christian has not only the Law of God in his Heart, Psalm 37:31. but in his Tongue, verse 30. The body is the Temple of God, 1 Corinthians

6:19. The Tongue is the Organ in this Temple, which sounds in Holy discourse, Proverbs 10:20. The tongue of the Iust is as Choice Silver. He drops Silver sentences, enriching others with Knowledge, Matthew 12:35. A Good man out of the Good treasure of his Heart brings forth good things. In his heart is a Treasure of Goodness, and this is not like a bag of Mony Sealed, but he brings something out of the Treasure within to the enriching of others. Grace is of the Nature of fire, which will not be pent up: like new Wine it will have Vent. There is a principle within constrains to holy Conference, Job 32:18. The Spirit within me constraineth me.

CHAP. 6. CONTAINING THE APPLICATORY PART



IT shews the Genius and temper of true Saints, they speak often one to another; their Lips drop as an Hony-comb. A man is known what country he belongs to by his Language. He who belongs to the Jerusalem above speaks the Language of Canaan; none of Gods children are dumb; their mouth is a well-spring of Wisdom, Proverbs 18:4.

Here I may draw up a bill of Indictment against five sorts of Persons. 1. Such as are silent in matters of Religion. They would be counted Good, but he must have good eyes that can see it, I know not whether it be Ignorance or Bashfulness that makes good discourse waved. Many are so mute in Religion as if their Tongues did cleave to the roof of their Mouth: had they any love to God, or had they ever tasted how sweet the Lord is, their mouth would talk of his Righteousness, Psalm 71:24. Friends, what should we mind but Salvation? what are the things of this world? they are neither Entia, nor Manentia. Do not we see men heap up Riches, and on a sudden, death as Gods Serjeant Arrests them? What should we talk of but the things Pertaining to the Kingdom of God? Let this cause blushing among Christians, that their meetings are so unprof-

itable, they leave God out of their discourse. Why is there no good conference? Have you so much Knowledge that you need not have it increased? Have you so much Faith that you need not have it Strengthened? Silence in Religion is a loud sin. We read of one who was possessed with a Dumb Devil, Mark 9:12. How many are Spiritually possessed with a Dumb Devil!

It is a rebuke to such as when they meet together, instead of speaking of Heaven, they have idle frothy discourse. They do but no, as Plutarch said of Alcibiades. Their Lips do not drop as an Honey-comb, but run as a Spout; their speaking is Just like a Childs scribbling, Psalm 12:2. They speak Vanity every one with his Neighbor. If Christ should ask some as he did the two Disciples going to Emaus, Luke 24:17. What manner of Communications have you as you walk, they could not say as they did, concerning Jesus of Nazareth; no, perhaps about Toyes, or new Fashions. If Idle words must be accounted for, Mat 12:36. Lord, what an account will some have to give!

It reproves the Avaritious Person, who instead of speaking of Heaven, talks of nothing but the World: the Farmer speaks of his Plough and Yoak of Oxen, the Tradesman of his Wares and Drugs; but not a word of God. John 3:31. He that is of the Earth speaks of the Earth. Many are like the Fish in the Gospel that had Money in it's Mouth, Matthew 12:27. They talk only of Secular things, as if they Imagined to fetch happiness out of that Earth which God has Cursed. Seneca being asked of what Countrey he was, answered he was, a Citizen of this World: we may know many to be Citizens of this World, their speech bewrayeth them.— *O curvae in terras animae, et caelestium inanes.*

4. It reproves them who do indeed speak often to one another but in a bad sence. 1. They speak one to another in hasty words. Their words should be like the Waters of Shiloah that go softly, but too often they are fierce and Pungent. Water when it is hot soon boils over; when the Heart is heated with anger it soon boils over in furious speeches, Jam. 3:6. Passion transports. Many curse in their anger. The Tongue is made in the fashion of a Sword, and it cuts like a Sword: Angry words often prejudice him that utters them: Rehoboam with one churlish word lost ten tribes. A fiery Spirit is unsuitable to the Master we serve, the Prince of Peace; and to his Ambassage, the Gospel of Peace. Such whose tongues are set on fire, let them take heed they do not one day in Hell desire a drop of Water to Cool their Tongue.

2. They speak one to another in a bad sence who Murmure and complain one to another; they do not complain of their Sins, but their Wants. Murmuring proceeds from unbelief, Psalm 106:24. They believed not his word but murmured. When men distrust Gods Promises, they murmur at his Providences: this is a Sin God can hardly bear, Numb. 14:27. How long shall I bear with this People that murmur against me? Israels speeches were Venomous, and God punished them with Venomous Serpents, 1 Corinthians 10:10.

3. They speak one to another in a bad sence, who vent themselves in filthy scurrilous Language. The Heart is a Vessel full of Wickedness, and the Tongue sets it a-broach. When the Face breaks out in Sores and Pimples, it shews the Blood is corrupt: when men break forth in unsavoury speeches it shews the Heart is Profane. 1 Corinthians 15:35. Evil communication corrupteth good

manners. We read that the Lips of the Leper were to be covered, Levit. 13:45. It were happy if we had such Magistrates as would by their Authority cover the unclean Lips of these Lepers.

4. They speak one to another in a bad sence, who instead of seasoning their words with Grace, mix them with Oaths. Swearers rend and tear Gods Name, and like mad Dogs fly in the face of Heaven, Jeremiah 23:10. Because of swearing the Land mourns. Some think it the Grace of speech to interlard every sentence with an Oath; as if they would go to Hell Genteelly. But says one, it is my Custom to Swear. Is this an excuse or an aggravation of the sin? If a Malefactor should be arraigned for Robbery, and he should say to the Judge spare me for it is my custom to rob on the High way, the Judge would say, you shalt the rather dye. For every Oath that a man Swears, God puts a drop of Wrath into his Vial.

5. It reproves them who instead of speaking in an holy manner one to another, speak one of another; 1. In censuring, some make it a part of their Religion to Descant and Criticize upon others. They do not imitate their graces but reflect upon their failings. God grant professors may wash their hands of this. Were peoples hearts more humble, their Tongues would be more charitable. 'Tis the sign of an Hypocrite to censure others and commend himself.

2. They speak one of another in slandering; Psalm 50:20. You sittest and slanderest your own Mothers son. Slandering is when we speak to the prejudice of another, and speak that which is not true. Worth is blasted by slander. Holiness it self is no shield from this sin. The Lambs Innocency will not preserve it from the Wolf. Job calls slandering the scourge of the Tongue, Job 5:21. You may smite a man and never touch him. A slanderer wounds anothers fame, and no Physitian can heal these wounds. The Eye and the

Name are two tender things. God takes it ill at our hands to calumniate others, especially to asperse those who help to keep up the credit of Religion. Numbers 12:8. Were not ye afraid to speak against my Servant Moses? what my Servant, who has wrought so many Miracles, whom I have spoken with in the Mount Face to Face, were not ye afraid to speak against him? The Greek word slanderer signifies Devil. This is the Devils proper Sin, he is the accuser of the Brethren, Revelation 12:10. He does not commit Adultery, but he bears false Witness. The slanderer may be indicted for Clipping, he clips his Neighbors credit to make it weigh lighter. This our nature is prone to; but remember, it is as well a sin in Gods account, to break the Ninth Commandment, as the Eighth.

Put this Great duty in Practice, imitate these Holy ones in the Text, They spoke often one to another. Hierom thinks they did speak something in defense of the Providence of God, they vindicated God in his dealings, and exhorted one another not to be discouraged at the Virulent speeches of the Wicked, but still hold on a course of Piety. Thus (Christians) when you meet, give one anothers Souls a visit, drop your Knowledge, impart your experiences each to other, Psalm 66:16. Sampson having found Hony did not only eat of it himself, but carried it to his Father and Mother, Iudg. 14:9. Have you Tasted the Hony of the word? let others have a Tast with you. He who has bin in a Perfumers shop does not only himself partake of those sweet smells, but some of the perfume sticks to his cloaths, so that those who come near him partake of those perfumes: so having our selves perceived the sweet Savor of Christs Oyntments, we should let others partake with us, and by our Heavenly discourse, diffuse the perfume of Religion to them,

Colossians 4:6. Let your words be seasoned with Salt: let Grace be the salt which seasons your Words and makes them Savory. Christians should take all occasions of Good discourse when they walk together, and sit at Table together. This makes their eating and drinking be to the Glory of God, 1 Corinthians 10:31. What makes it a Communion of Saints but Good conference?

But some may say they are barren of matter, and know not what to speak of?

No, have you walked so often through the field of Scripture, yet gathered no ears of Corn? have not you matter enough in the Word to furnish you with discourse? Let me suggest a few things to you. When you meet speak one to another of the Promises. No Honey so sweet, as that which drops from a Promise. The promises are the support of Faith, the springs of joy, the aints Royal Charter. Are you Citizens of Heaven, and not speak of your Charter? Speak of the preciousness of Christ: he is Beauty and Love; he has laid down his blood as the or price of your Redemption. Have you a friend that has redeemed you, and never speak of him? Speak one to another of Sin, what a deadly evil it is, how it has infected your Virgin-nature, and turned it into a lesser Hell. Speak of the Beauty of Holiness, which is the Souls Embroidery, filling it with such Oriental splendor as makes God and Angels fall in love with it. The Graces are (as Damascen says) the Sacred Characters and Impressions of the Divine nature. Speak one to another of your Souls: enquire whether they are in health. Speak about Death and Eternity: can you belong to Heaven and not speak of your Country? Speak one to another of the Times, wherein God is the Greatest sufferer: let your hearts bleed for his dishonours. Thus you see here is matter enough for Holy conference.

Why then do you not set good discourse on Foot? I perswade my self one main reason of the decay of the Power of Godliness is want of Christian conference: people when they meet talk of Impertinencies, but God and Heaven are left out of their discourse. That I may perswade you in your converses to put in a word about your Souls, let me offer these few things to your consideration.

1. It was the practice of the Saints of old. Elijah, and Elisha went on talking good discourse till the Chariot of Heaven came to part them, 2 Kin. 2:11. Davids Tongue was Tuned to the Language of Canaan, Psalm 71:24. My Tongue shall talk of your Righteousness. The Primitive Christians into whatever company they came, were speaking of a Glorious Kingdom they expected, in-somuch that some thought they were ambitious of worldly honor; which made Iustin Martyr Apologize for them, that the Kingdom they looked for was not of this World, but a Kingdom with Christ in Heaven. Ierom says of some of the Roman Ladies, They did spend much of their time in communing together, and they would not let him alone, for asking him Questions about their Souls.

2. We are bid to Redeem the Time, Ephesians 5:16. The Poets painted time with Wings, because it flies so fast— *Volat ambiguis mobilis alis hora*—Time lost had need be redeemed; and is there any better way to redeem time, than to improve it in trading for Heaven, and speaking of God and our Souls?

3. Jesus Christ has set us a Pattern: his words were perfumed with Holiness, Luke 4:22. All bare him witness, and Wondred at the Gracious words which proceeded out of his Mouth. Christ had Grace poured into his Lips, Psalm 45:2. In all companies he set good discourse on foot. When he sate on Iacobs Well he falls into an Heavenly discourse with the Woman of Samaria about the

Water of Life, John 4:14. And so when Levi made him a Feast, Luke 5—He feasts him again with Heavenly discourse. And no sooner was Christ risen from the Grave, but he was speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, Acts 1:3. The more Spiritual we are in our speeches, the more we resemble Christ: should not the Members be like the Head? Christ will not be our Saviour, unless we make him our Pattern.

4. Good discourse would prevent sinful discourse. Much sin passes in ordinary talk, as Gravel and Mud pass along with the Water. How many are Guilty of Tongue-sins! Good discourse would prevent evil, as labor prevents idleness. By inuring our Tongues to the Heavenly Dialect, the Devil would not have so much Power over us.

5. We may guess at mens Hearts by their common discourse. Words are the Looking-glass of the Mind. As you may Judge of a Face by the glass whether it be fair or foul; So by the words we may Judge of the Heart. A lascivious Tongue shews a lustful heart, an earthly Tongue a covetous heart; a Gracious Tongue, a Gracious Heart. The Ephraimites were known by their Pronunciation, saying Sibboleth for Shibolet, Judg. 12:6. So by the manner of our speech we may be known who we belong to. The Tongue is the Index of the Heart. If you broach a Vessel that which is within will come out; by that which comes out of the Mouth, you may Guess what is within in the Heart, Luke 6 45. Out of the abundance of the Heart the mouth speaks.

6. Good discourse is beneficial, Job 6:23. How forcible are rights words? A word spoken in season may make such a powerful impression upon anothers Heart as may do him Good all his Life. One single coal is apt to dye, but many coals put together keep in

the heat. Christians by their Heavenly talk do, blow up one another's Grace into a flame. Monica Austins Mother, hearing others discourse of Heaven, was greatly affected and cryed out, What do I do here? Why is my Soul held any longer with this Earthen fetter of my Flesh? When the Daughters of Ierusalem had conversed a while with the Spouse, and had heard her describe Christs admirable beauty, their Affections began to be enflamed, and they would seek him with her, Song of Solomon 6:1. Whither is your beloved gone O you fairest among women, that we may seek him with you? A Christian by divine discourse may enlighten another when he is ignorant, warm him when he is Frozen, comfort him when he is sad, confirm him when he is wavering. Latimer was much strengthened by discourse with Mr Bilny in Prison, and hearing his confession of Faith. A good life adorns Religion, a good Tongue Propagates it. When the Apostle would have us edifie one another, what better way could he prescribe than this, to have such Holy speeches proceed out of our Mouths as might Minister Grace to the hearers? Ephesians 4:29.

7. We must be accountable to God for our speeches. Words are judged light, but they weigh heavy in Gods Balance; by our words we shall be either saved or damned, Matthew 12:37. For by your words you shalt be justified, and by your words you shalt be condemned. If our words have been seasoned with Grace, then the acquitting sentence is like to go on our side.

8. Good discourse is a Christians Honor. The Tongue is called our Glory, Psalm 30:12. Because it is the Instrument of Glorifying God. When our Tongues are out of tune in murmuring, then they are not our Glory; but when these Organs sound in Holy discourse, then our Tongues are our Glory.

9. Good discourse will be a means to bring Christ into our company. While the two Disciples were conferring about the death and Sufferings of Christ, Jesus Christ himself came among them, Luke 24:15. While they communed together, Iesus himself drew near, and went with them. When bad discourse is set on Foot, Satan draws near, and makes one of the Company; but when Good discourse is promoted, Jesus Christ draws near.

Let all that has bin said excite good conference: certainly, there is no better way than this to encrease our Stock of Grace. Others by spending Grow Poor; but the more we spend our selves in Holy discourse, the richer we Grow in Grace, as the Widows Oyl by Pouring out encreased.

CHAP. 7. MEANS CONDUCTING TO HOLY CONFERENCE



IF it be asked how may Good conference be arrived at? 1. If you would be discursive in Religion, get your minds well furnished with knowledge. Hereby, you will have a Treasure to fetch from, Job 38:18. I am (says Elihu) full of matter. Some are backward to speak of Good for want of matter: the empty Vessel cannot run. If you would have your Tongues run fluently in Religion, they must be fed with a spring of knowledge, Colossians 3:16. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. In one of the Miracles that Christ wrought, he first caused the Water-pots to be filled with Water, and then says he, Draw out now, John 2:8. So we must first have our Heads filled with Knowledge, and then we shall be able to draw out to others in Good discourse.

2. If you would discourse readily in the things of God, make Religion your delight. What men delight in, they will be speaking of: the sensualist speaks of his sports; the worldling of his rich purchase. Delight makes the Tongue as the Pen of a ready writer. The Spouse being delighted and inamoured with Christs beauty, could

not conceal her self; she makes an elegant and Pathetical Oration in the commendation of Christ, Song of Solomon 5:10. My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

3. Pray that God will both Gift and Grace you for Christian conference, Psalm 51:15. Lord open you my Lips. Satan has lock'd up mens Lips, pray that God will open them. Perhaps you pray that you may Believe in Christ, but do you pray that you may Confess him, and not be ashamed to speak of him before others? Psalm 119:46. I will speak of your Testimonies before Kings, and not be ashamed. To end this, let me briefly insert two Cautions.

1. Not but that it is lawful to confer of worldly Negotiations sometimes; Traffick requires conference: But with this proviso, that we should shew more Delectation and Earnestness in speaking of Spiritual things, than Earthly; Remembring the Soul is far more Valuable than the World.

2. When persons speak of Religion let it not be for any Sinister Unworthy end, not for Ostentation, but Edification; and then having your aim right, speak of the things of God with Life and Affection, that others may perceive you feel those Truths which you speak.

CHAP. 8. SHOWING THE SECOND SPECIAL CHARACTER OF THE GODLY: THINKING OF GOD



2. THE Second Character of the Godly in special is, they thought upon Gods name; these Saints when they were together did speak of God, when they were alone they did think of God; That Thought upon his name.

What is meant by Gods name?

1. By the Name of God is meant his Essence; Gods Name is put for God himself.

2. By the Name of God is meant his Glorious Attributes, which are the several Letters of his Name.

3. By the Name of God is meant his Worship and Ordinances where his Name is called upon, Jeremiah 7:12. Go ye to my Place which was in Shiloh where I set my Name at first: That is, where I first set up my Public worship.

Now this Name of God, the Saints in the Text did contemplate, they Thought upon his Name. Thoughts are the first-born of the Soul, the conceptions of the mind, the immediate Fruit and Issue

of a rational being. Thoughts are the Images of things in the Fancy. These devout Souls in the Text were chiefly busying their Thoughts about God and Heaven.

It is the inseparable sign of a Godly man to imploy his chief Thoughts about God, Proverbs 12:5. The Thoughts of the Righteous are Right. That is they are set upon the Right Object. 'Tis natural to Think. Thoughts fly out of the Mind, as Sparks out of a Furnace. The Hebrew word ▪ for a Thought, signifies the Boughs of a Tree; Because Thoughts shoot out from our Minds, as branches do from a Tree. 'Tis I say natural to Think, but it is not natural to Think of God, this is proper to a Saint: his Thoughts are Sublime and Seraphical, they fly to Heaven. The Mind is a Mint-house where Thoughts are Minted. David minted Golden Cogitations, Psalm 139:18. I am still with you. That is (as learned Ainsworth expounds it) by Divine Contemplation. Thoughts are Travellers in the Soul. Davids Thoughts kept Heaven-road, Psalm 73:23. I am continually with you. As the Mariners needle turns to the North-pole: so a Saints Thoughts are still pointing towards God.

Whence is it that the Saints thoughts mount up to God?

There will be this Thinking on God, 1. From those intrinsecal Perfections which are in him. The loveliness of the Object attracts the thoughts: God is the supreme Good. There is nothing but God worth thinking on. Psalm 119:57. You art my Portion, O Lord. Will not a mans thoughts run upon his Portion? A gracious Soul has found Pleasure in thinking on God, Psalm 63:5, 6. He has had those Transfigurations on the Mount, those Illapses of the Spirit,

those Incomes of Gods Love, those praelibations and foretastes of glory, that he cannot keep his thoughts off from God: To hinder him from thinking on God, is to bar him of all his Pleasure.

2. There will be thinking on God from the powerful. Operations of the Holy Ghost. We cannot of our selves think a good thought, 2 Corinthians 3:5. but the Spirit elevates and fixeth the heart on God. Ezekiel 3:14. The Spirit lifted me up. When you see the Iron move upward, there has been some Load-stone drawing it: so when the thoughts move upwards towards God, the Spirit has, as a divine Load-stone, drawn them.

CHAP. 9. CONTAINING A SHARP REPROOF



OUT of the quiver of this Text I may draw several Arrows of Reproof. 1. It reproves such as do not think upon Gods Name. It is the Brand-mark of a Reprobate, God is not in all his thoughts, Psalm 10:4. He endeavours to expunge and blot God out of his mind: though he draws his Breath from God, yet he does not think of him: his thoughts shoot into the Earth, Philippians 3:19. Had not sinners by their fall lost their Headpiece, they would reason thus with themselves: Sure God is best worth thinking on; is there any excellency in the World? then what is there in God that made it? He gives the Star its beauty, the Flower its fragrancy, Food its suavity; and if there be such deliciousness in the Creature, what is in God? He must needs be better than all. O my Soul, shall I admire the Drop and not the Ocean? Shall I think of the Workmanship, and not of him that made it? This is the fruit of Original Sin, it has warped the Soul, and taken it off from the right Object.

It reproves such as indeed think of God, but they have not Right Thoughts of him. As the Lord said to Eliphaz, Job 42:7. Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right; so some think of

God, but they do not think of him the thing that is right. 1. They have Low unworthy Thoughts of God, they Fancy God to be like themselves, Psalm 50:21. Men think God is as short-sighted as they, and that he cannot see them through the thick Canopy of the Clouds: but he that makes a Watch knows all the Wheelles and Pins in it, and the Spring which causes the Motion. God who is the inspector of the Heart, sees all the intrigues and Private Caballs in the Thoughts. God knows the true Motion of a false Heart, Jeremiah 29:23. I know and am a witness, says the Lord.

2. Men have Injurious Thoughts of God: 1. They deem his ways unequal, Ezekiel 18:25. Is not my way equal? Some call Gods Providence to the Bar of Reason, and Judge his proceedings eccentric; but God laies Righteousness to the Plummet, Isaiah. 28:17. His ways are secret, but always just. God is most in his way, when we think he is out of his way.

2. They think his ways are not Profitable, Malachi 3:14. What profit is it that we have kept his ordinance? we cannot shew our earnings. These are not Right Thoughts of God. Men think him to be an hard Master: But God will be in no mans debt, he gives double pay, Malachi 1:10. Neither do ye kindle a fire on my Altar for nought.

It reproves such as instead of thinking on God, their minds are wholly taken up with Vain Thoughts. Vain Thoughts are the froth of the Brain, Jeremiah 4:14. How long shall Vain Thoughts lodge with you? I deny not but Vain Thoughts may sometimes come into the best Hearts, but they have a care to turn them out before night, that they do not Lodge. This denominates a Wicked man, his Thoughts Dwell upon Vanity; and well may his Thoughts be said to be Vain, because they do not turn to any profit, Jeremiah 16:19.

Vanity, and things wherein there is no Profit. They are Vain Thoughts which are about Foolish things, and run all into straw. They are Vain Thoughts which do not Better the Heart, nor will give one drop of Comfort at death, Psalm 146:4. In that very day his Thoughts perish. Vain Thoughts are Pernititious, they Fly-blow the Heart and leave an ill tincture behind.

4. It reproves such as have not only Vain Thoughts, but Vile Thoughts. 1. Proud Thoughts, while they view themselves in the Glass of Self-love, they begin to take up Venerable Thoughts of themselves, and so Pride fumes up into their Head and makes them Giddy.

2. Impure Thoughts. They think how to Gratifie their Lusts, they do make provision, or as the word signifies, become Caterers for the Flesh, Romans 13:14.

Sin begins in the Thoughts; first men Devise sin, then Act it, Mica. 2:2. For instance, would one have preferment: he bethinks himself by what Ladder he may climb to Honor. He will Cringe and comply, and lay aside Conscience, and this is the way to rise. Would a man Grow rich: he sets his Thoughts a work how to compass an estate, he will circumvent, and pull down his Soul to build up an estate. Would he wreak his Malice on another; he frames an Engine in his Thoughts to take away his Life: as Iezabel (that Painted Harlot) when she would ruine Naboth, presently fains a Sham-Plot and Subtily thinks of a way how to dispatch him, 1 Kings 21:9. Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the People, and set two men Sons of Belial to Witness against him, saying, you did blaspheme God and the King, and carry him out and stone him. O the Mischief of Thoughts! A man may Deny God in his Thoughts, Psalm 14:1. The Fool has said in his Heart there is

no God. He may commit Adultery in his Thoughts, Matthew 5:28. Whosoever looks on a Woman to Lust after her has committed Adultery with her in his Heart. A man may Murder another in his Thoughts, 1 John 3:15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer. O how much contemplative wickedness is in the World! Tremble at sinful Thoughts. We startle at Gross sin, but we are not troubled so much for sinful Thoughts. Know, 1. That sin may be committed in the Thoughts, though it never blossom into outward Act, Proverbs 24:9. The Thought of Foolishness is sin. See this in two things.

1. Envy, the Jews envied Christ the fame of his Miracles, Matthew 27:18. Pilat knew that for envy they had delivered him. Here was sin committed in the Thoughts: the Jews sinned by envying Christ, though they had never Crucified him.

2. Discontent, Genesis 24:5. Cain was wroth and his Countenance fell. He did Malign his Brother, and his thoughts were boiled up to Discontent. Here was sin committed in the thoughts. Cain sinn'd by Discontent though he had never Murdered his Brother.

2. God will punish for sinful thoughts. We say Thoughts are free; so they are in mans Court; but God will punish for Thoughts: it was set upon Herods score, that he thought to have destroyed Christ under a pretence of worshipping him, Matthew 2:8.

Let us be humbled for the sins of our Thoughts, Proverbs 30:32. If you hast thought evil, lay your hand upon your Mouth. That is, humble and abase your self before the Lord. The best alive had need be humbled for their thoughts. 1. The Instability of their

Thoughts. How do the Thoughts Dance up and down in Prayer: like Quick-silver they will not sit. 'Tis hard to tie two Good Thoughts together.

2. The Impiety of their Thoughts. In the fairest fruit may be a Worm, and in the best Heart evil Thoughts may arise. Did mens Hearts stand where their faces do, they would blush to look one upon another. Let us I say be deeply humbled for our Thoughts. Let us look up to Christ that he would stand between us and Gods Justice, and that he would intercede for us that the Thoughts of our Hearts may be forgiven us.

Let us think of Gods Name; let us lock up our selves with God every day; let our Thoughts get Wings, and with the Birds of Paradise fly up towards Heaven. Christians, look up on that day to be lost, wherein you have not conversed with God in your Thoughts; think of God in your Closet, in your Shop: Trade above the Moon. Isaac went out into the field to meditate, Genesis 24:63. He did take a turn in Heaven by holy Ejaculations. Our Minds should be steeped in holy Thoughts. It is not enough to have a few Transient Thoughts of God by the By, but there must be an immoration or staying our Minds on God, till our Hearts are warmed in love to him, and we can say as they, Luke 24:32. Did not our Hearts burn within us?

But what should be the matter of our holy Musings?

1. Think of Gods Immense Being. Adore his illustrious Attributes, which are the Beams by which the Divine nature shines forth. Think of Gods Omniscieny: he makes a Curious and Critical descant upon all our Actions, and enters them down into his day-book. Think of Gods Holiness, which is the most sparkling Jewel of

his Crown, Exodus 15:11. Think of Gods Mercy: this makes all his other Attributes sweet. Holiness without Mercy, and Justice without Mercy would be terrible. Think of Gods Veracity, Exodus 34:6. Abundant in Truth; that is, God will be so far from coming short of his word, that he does more then he has said. He shoots beyond the Promise, never short of it.

2. Think of the Works of God, Psalm 77:12. I will meditate of all your Works. Gods works are bound up in three great Volumes, Creation, Redemption, Providence: here is sweet matter for our Thoughts to expatiate upon.

CHAP. 10. INCENTIVES TO HOLY THOUGHTS



LET me, to enforce the Exhortation, propound some Swasives and Inducements to be frequent in the Thoughts of God. 1.

The end why God has given us this thinking faculty is, that we may think on his Name. When our Cogitations run out in Impertinencies (like water running beside the Mill) we should think with our selves thus: did God give us a Talent to misimply? did he give us Thoughts that we should think of every thing but him? were these Arrows given us to shoot beside the Mark?

2. If we do not inure our selves to Good thoughts, we cannot be Good Christians. Thinking seriously on Heavenly things, makes them stay in our Mind, causes delight in them, and makes them Nutritive. Musing on Holy Objects is like concocting food, which turns it to Blood and Spirits: so that without Holy Cogitation, no Religion. Can a man be Religious and scarce ever think of it?

3. We are deeply obliged to think on God. 1. God is our maker, Psalm 100:3. It is he that has made us, and not we our selves. Our bodies are Gods curious needle work, Psalm 139:15. And as God has wrought the Cabinet, so he has put a Jewel in it, the Precious Soul. Has God made us, and shall not we think of him? 2. God has

sweetned our Lives with Various Mercies. The city of Syracuse in Sicily was so curiously scituated, that the Sun was never out of sight: God has so placed us by his Providence, that the Sun-shine of Mercy is never out of sight. We are Bemiracled with Mercy; Mercy feeds us with the Finest of the wheat, the Bread of Life; Mercy guards us with a Guard of Angels; it makes the Rock pour forth Rivers of Oyl: and shall not the Stream lead us to the Fountain? shall not we think of the God of our Mercies? this were high Ingratitude.

4. To have frequent and Devout Thoughts of God witnesseth Sincerity. No truer Touchstone of Sanctity, than the Spirituality of the Thoughts: that a man is, that his Thoughts are, Proverbs 23:7. For as he thinketh in his Heart so is he. Thoughts are freer from Hypocrisie than words: one may speak well for applause, or to stand right in the Opinion of others; but when we are alone and think of Gods Name, and admire his Excellencies, this shews the Heart to be Right. Thoughts are freer from Hypocrisie than an Unblamable Life. A man may in his outward carriage be fair, yet have a Covetous, Revengeful mind. The Acts of Sin may be forborn, when the Heart sits brooding upon Sin; but to have the Thoughts Spiritualized and set upon God, is a truer Symptom of sincerity, than a Life free from Vice. Christians, what do your Thoughts run upon? where do they make their most frequent Visits? can you say, Lord, our Hearts are still Mounting up to Heaven, our Thoughts are lodg'd in Paradise; though we do not see your face, yet we think on your Name? this is a good Evidence of Sincerity. We Judge of men by their Actions; God Judgeth of them by their Thoughts.

5. Thinking much on God would Cure the Love of the World. Great things seem little to him that stands high. To such as stand upon the top of the Alps the great Cities of Campania seem little Villages: they who are Mounted High in the contemplation of Christ and Glory, how do the things of the World disappear, and even shrink into nothing! A Soul elevated by faith above the Visible Orbs, has the Moon under his feet. A true Saint intermedles with Secular Affairs more out of Necessity than Choice. St. Pauls Thoughts were sublime, he lived in the Altitudes, and how did he scorn the World ! Galatians 6:14. The world is crucified to me *.

6. Thinking on God would be expulsive of Sin. Whence is Impiety but from Incogitancy? Did men Ruminat upon Gods Holiness and Justice, durst they sin at that rate as they do? That which check'd Ioseph, was the Thoughts of a Sin-revenging God. When the delights of sin Tickle, let the Thoughts of God come into mens Minds, that he is both the Spectatour and the Iudge, and after the Golden Crowns and Womens Hair come the Lions Teeth, Revelation 9:8. This would put them into a cold Sweat, and be as the Angels drawn Sword, it would scare them from sin.

7. Thinking on God is an admirable means to encrease our love to God. As it was with Davids musing on Mortality, Psam 39:3. As I was Musing the fire burned; so it is with our Musing on the Deity: while we are thinking on God, our Hearts will kindle in love to him. The Reason our Affections are so chill and cold in Religion is, because we do not warm them with the Thoughts of God. Hold a Burning-glass to the Sun, and the glass burns that which is near to it: So when our Thoughts are lifted up to Christ the Sun of Righteousness, our Affections are set on fire. No sooner had the Spouse been thinking on her Saviours Beauty, but she fell sick of

love, Song of Solomon 5:8. O ye Saints, do but let your Cogitations dwell upon the Love of Christ, who did pass by Angels and think of you; who was wounded, that out of his wounds the Balm of Gilead might come to heal you; who leaped into the Sea of his Fathers wrath, to save you from drowning: think of this unparallel'd love which sets the Angels a Wondring, and see if it will not affect your Hearts and cause Tears of love to slow forth.

8. Thinking on God will by degrees transform us into his Image. As Jacobs Flock looking on the Rods that had White streaks conceived and brought forth like them, Genesis [••], 39. So by contemplating Gods Holiness, we are in some measure changed into his likeness. 2 Corinthians 3:18. Beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same Image. The contemplative sight of God was transforming: they had some Print of Gods Holiness upon them; as Moses when he had been on the Mount with God, his face shined, Exodus 34:35. What is Godliness but God-likeness? and who are so like him as they that think on his Name?

9. Thinking on God is sweet, it Ushers in a secret delight into the Soul Psalm 104:34. My meditation of him shall be sweet. He whose Head is got above the Clouds, his Thoughts are sled aloft, and he has God in his eye, is full of divine Raptures, and cries out as Peter in the transfiguration, Lord, it is good to be here. Holy Thoughts are the Dove we send out of the Ark of our Souls, and they bring an Olive branch of Peace. Some complain they have no Joy of their lives; and truly no wonder, when they are such strangers to Heavenly Contemplation. Would you have God give you Comfort, and never think of him? Indeed Israel had Manna drop'd into their Tents, and they never Thought of it; but God will

not drop down this Manna of Heavenly Joy on that Soul which seldom or never thinks of him. Would you have your Spirits cheerful? let your Thoughts be celestial. The higher the Lark flies, the Sweeter it sings: The higher a Soul ascends in the Thoughts of God, the sweeter Joy it has.

10. Thoughts of God will turn to the best account. Thoughts spent on the World are often in Vain. Some spend Thoughts about laying up a Portion for such a Child; and perhaps, either it dies, or lives to be a Cross. Others beat their Brains how to rise at Court; and when Royal Favor has shined upon them, on a sudden an Eclipse falls out, and the Kings smile is turn'd into a frown, and then their Thoughts are frustrated—*Et stultus labor est ineptiarum* —. How oft do men build Castles in the Air? But the Thoughts of God will turn to a good account, they Augment Sanctification, and bring Satisfaction, Psalm 63:5. My Soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, when I remember you on my bed, and meditate on you, etc. The Thoughts we have of God in the time of health, will be a Comfort to us in the time of sickness.

11. God thinks of us, and shall not we think of him? Psalm 40:17. The Lord thinketh upon me. God thinks on us every Morning, Lam. 3:23. His Mercies are new every Morning. He gives us Night-Mercies, he Rocks us every Night asleep, Psalm 127:2. So he gives his beloved Sleep: and if we chance to wake he gives us Songs in the Night, Job 35:10. If God be thinking of us Day and Night, shall not we think of his Name? How can we forget a freind who is ever mindful of us? Jeremiah 29:11. I know the Thoughts that I think towards you (says the Lord) Thoughts of Peace. Though God be out of our sight, we are not out of his Thoughts.

12. God will one Day reckon with us for our Thoughts. He will say I gave you a Cogitative faculty, what have you done with it? If God asks a Covetous man, what have been your Sentiments? which way have your Thoughts run? he will Answer, to heap up Riches: if God asks Princes and Emperors, how have you employ'd your Thoughts? they will say, how by our Scepter to beat down the Power of Godliness. What a dreadful account will these Persons have to give at last! Not only mens Actions, but their Thoughts will accuse them, Romans 2:15.

13. Our Thoughts of God shall not be lost. God accepts of the Thought for the deed. David had a good Thought come into his Mind to build God an House, and God took it as kindly as if he had done it, 2 Chron. 6:8. Forasmuch as it was in your Heart to build an house to my Name, you did well that it was in your Heart. When Christians have Thoughts of promoting Gods Glory, they would do such good Acts if it were in their Power, build Hospitals, distribute Justice, cut off offenders from the City of God, the Lord looks upon it as if they had done it: so that our Thoughts of God are not lost.

Let us think of God in a Right manner. A Good Medicine may be spoiled in the making: so may a Good Duty be spoiled in the doing. Thoughts may be Good for the matter of them, yet may be Faulty in the manner. I shall shew you 1. How Thoughts of God may fail in the Manner. 2. The Right Manner of Thinking upon God.

1. How Thoughts of God may fail in the Manner. 1. A man may Think of God, yet not intend his glory. Jehu had good Thoughts came into his Mind, to destroy the Baal-worshippers, but his intent was to advance himself into the Throne. Bad aims Fly-blow good Actions. 2. A man may have Good Thoughts but they are forced,—

Virtus nolentium nulla est— When one bleeds under Gods afflicting hand, he may Think of God, yet have no love to him, Psalm 78:34. When he slew them, then they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer: nevertheless they did flatter him with their Mouth. These were good Thoughts, but it was to complement with God, and to get rid of the Affliction. 3. A man may have Thoughts of God out of design to stop the Mouth of Conscience. Conscience does lash the profane Sinner; what art you so Wicked as never to Think of God, who indulgeth you with so many favors? Hereupon he may have a few good Thoughts; but they are irksome to him: this is not from a Principle of Conscience, but to quiet Conscience. 4. A man may think of God with Horrour: he thinks of Gods Sovereignty, and dreads the Thoughts of God. You see one may think of God, yet these Thoughts may become sinful.

2. I shall shew you the Right manner of Thinking upon God: 1. Our Thoughts of God must be Serious. Feathers swim on the top, but Gold sinks into the Water: Feathery Spirits have some floting Thoughts; but good Hearts sink deep in the Thoughts of a Deity. 2. Our Thoughts of God must be Spiritual. Take heed of framing any gross conceits of God in our Minds, representing him by the similitude of the Creature, Deuteronomy 4:15. Ye saw no Similitude. Conceive of God in Christ: we cannot see him any other way, as we cannot see the Sun in the Circle but in the Beams, the God-head dwells in Christs Humane nature, Colossians 2:9. Think of God as a Spirit full of immense Glory, propitious to us through a Mediatour. 3. Our Thoughts of God must be Delightful. With what Delight does a Child think of his Father! A gracious Soul counts them the Sweetest hours which are spent with God. 4. Our

Thoughts of God must be Vertual and Efficacious, leaving our Hearts in a a better Tune: The Thoughts of Gods faithfulness must make us confide in him, the Thoughts of Gods Holiness must make us conform to him. This is the Right thinking on God when it is influential, it leaves us in a more Heavenly frame.

CHAP. 11. HELPS TO HOLY THOUGHTS



IT shews us how to have our Thoughts frequently fixed upon God. 1. Begin the day with Holy Thoughts, Psalm 139:17.

When I awake I am still with you. God should have the first buddings of our Thoughts. In the Law, the Lord would have the first fruits offered him: give God your Virgin-thoughts in the Morning—*Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu*—what the Vessel is first seasoned with, it keeps the relish a long time after. The Mind being seasoned with Good Thoughts in the Morning, will keep the Heart in a better Decorum all the day after.

2. If you would think of God take heed of hindrances. 1. Turn away your eyes from beholding Vanity, Psalm 119:37. Vain Objects Poyson the Imagination, lascivious Pictures, and wanton talk leave bad impressions upon the fancy. 2. Call off your Thoughts what you can from the world. If worldly Thoughts come Crowding into our Mind, good Thoughts will be lost in the Crowd.

3. Get a love to God and his ways. One cannot but think of that which he loves, Jeremiah 2:32. Can a Maid forget her Ornaments? when she has not her Jewel on her Ear, she will have it in her Thoughts. A person deeply in love cannot keep his Thoughts off

from the Object he loves. The reason we Think on God no more, is, because we love him no more. Let there be but one spark of love to God, it will fly Upward in Heavenly Ejaculations. By nature we have Quick-silver Hearts which cannot be made to fix on God, but by love.

4. If you would think often on God, get an interest in him, Psalm 48:14. This God is our God. We think most upon that which is our own. If a man ride by brave Houses and Gardens, he casts his Eye slightly upon them, and does not much Mind them; but let him have an house of his own, and his Thoughts dwell in it. Why do men think no more of God, but because God and they are strangers. Let a mans interest in God be cleared, and he will not be able to keep his Thoughts off from God.

CHAP. 12. SHOWING THE FIRST GOOD EFFECT OF THE SAINTS' PIETY



2. THE Good effects of the Saints Piety. 1. God Regarded it. The Lord listened and heard.

These blessed ones in the Text were speaking and thinking of God, and he did not turn away his Ear from them, as if he had not minded them; but he listened and heard; which expression denotes.

- 1. Diligence. - 2. Delight.

1. It notes the diligent heed God gave to these Saints, He listened. Here was attention of Ear, and intensness of Mind. Harkening is the Gesture of one that Listens to what another says.

2. Gods hearkening shews the delight he took in the Holy Dialogues of these Saints: he was pleased with them, they were to him as sweet Melody.

That God takes special Notice of of the Good which he sees in his People. The Children of God may perhaps think that God does not regard them, Job 30:20. I cry to you, and you dost not hear me. The Church complains, God did shut out her Prayer, Lam. 3:8.

But though God be sometimes Silent, he is not Deaf: he takes Notice of all the good Services of his People, the Lord listened and heard.

Whence is it God takes such Notice of his Peoples Services?

1. Not from any Merit in them, but the Impulsive cause is his or Free-grace. The best duties of the Righteous could not endure Gods ballance, but God will display the Trophies of his Mercy. Free-grace accepts what Justice might condemn.

2. Gods taking Notice of the good in his people, is through Christ, Ephesians 1:6. He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Or as Chrysostom renders it, he has made us Favourites. Through the Red glass every thing appears of a Red Color: through Christs blood, both our Persons and Duties appear Ruddy and Beautiful in Gods Eyes.

3. God takes Notice of the Services of his People, because they flow from a Principle of Grace. God regards the Voice of Faith, Song of Solomon 2:14. O my Dove, let me hear your Voice, for sweet is your Voice. The Services of the Wicked are harsh and sowre, but the Godly give God the first ripe Cluster Which grows from the sweet and pleasant Root of Grace.

CHAP. 13. INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE PROPOSITION



IF God hearkens and hears, hence I infer Gods Omniscency. How could, he being in Heaven, hear what the Saints speak and think, were he not Omniscient? Through the bright Mirror of his own essence he has a full Idea of all things. He knows the Intrigues of States, the Stratagems of his Enemies, Exodus 14:24. Future Contingencies fall within his Cognizance. Gods Knowledge is Primary: he is the Original, Pattern, and Prototype of all Knowledge. Gods Knowledge is Instantaneous. He knows all at once: Our Knowledge is Successive, we know one thing after another, and argue from the Effect to the cause; but all things are in Gods view uno intuitu, in one intire prospect. Gods Knowledge is infallible and not Subject to mistake. Such is the Infinity of his Knowledge, that the Apostle cries out in Admiration, O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! Romans 11:33. The World is to God as a Bee-hive of Glass, where you see the working of the Bees, and the framing of their Combs. All things are unvaild to the Eye of Jehovah.

See Gods Goodness who often passes by the failings of his People, and takes Notice of the good in them, He listened and heard. 1 Peter 3:6. Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord. The Holy Ghost passes by her unbelief and Laughing at the Promise, and took Notice of her reverence to her Husband, she called him Lord. Jam. 5:11. Ye have heard of the Patience of Job. We have heard of his Impatience, cursing his Birth-day: But the Lord does not upbraid him with that, but observes the good that was in him; ye have heard of the Patience of Job. The Painter who drew Alexanders Picture, Drew him with his finger upon his Scar; so God puts a finger of Mercy upon the Scars of his Children. He sees their Faith, and Winks at their failing.

See Gods different carriage towards the Godly and the Wicked: If the Godly Think of his Name, he hearkens and hears; but if the Wicked meddle with Religious duties, he turns away his Ear, Genesis 4:5. To Cain and his Offering God had no respect. Suppose a man had a Sweet breath, yet if he had the Plague, no body would come near him: So, though a sinner may give God many a sweet elegant Expression in Prayer, yet having the Plague of the Heart, God will not receive any Offering from him. If God shut mens Prayers out of Heaven, it is a sad Prognostick that he will shut their Persons out of Heaven.

See the Priviledge of the Godly: they have Gods Ear, the Lord listened and heard, Psalm 34:15. His Ears are open to their cry: it would be counted a great happiness to have the Kings ear; but what is it to have Gods Ear! The Lord listened and heard. Believers have the Spirit of God breathing in them, and God cannot but hear the Voice of his own Spirit.

See what an encouragement here is to be conversant in the duties of Gods Worship: he takes Notice of the services of his People; he hearkens to them as to sweet Musick. Who would not come with their humble addresses to God, when he is so pleased with them? Proverbs 15:8.

But my deserts are nothing?

God bestows not his Favors according to our desert, but according to his Promise.

But I have prayed a long time and have no Answer.

God may hear Prayer when he does not Answer. He may lend us his Ear, when he does not shew us his Face. The Text says, the Lord listened and heard. 'Tis not said he gave an Answer, but he listened. It becomes suitors to wait. Faith stays upon God, Patience stayes for God, Psalm 123:2. As the Eyes of Servants look to the hand of their Masters, so our Eyes wait upon the Lord our God, untill he have Mercy upon us.

See the difference between God and men: God takes Notice of the good in his people; the Wicked pass by the good in the Godly, and take Notice only of their failings. If they can spy any indecency or blemish in them, they upbraid them with it; Like those children, 2 King 2:23. who reproached Elisha for his Baldness, but took no Notice of the Prophets Miracles. Erasmus speaks of one, who observed all the lame Verses in Homer, but passed over the good.

From this, the Lord listened and heard, Behold the folly of Idolaters: they worship a God who can neither hearken nor hear. The Cretians Pictured Iupiter without Ears. Idol-Gods have Ears, but hear not, Psalm 115:16. A life-less God is good enough for a life-less worship.

Let the People of God stand and Wonder. 1. At Gods Condescension, that he who is so high in the praises and acclamations of the Angels, should stoop so low, as to listen to the lispings of his children. The Lord listened and heard: Alas, God has no need of our Services; he is infinitely blessed in reflecting upon the Splendour of his own infinite Being: we cannot adde the least Cubit to his Essential Glory, Job 35:7. If you be Righteous what givest you to him? or what receiveth he at your hands? yet such is his sweet Condescention, that he does as it were stoop below himself, and take Notice of his Peoples Poor Oblations.

2. Wonder at Gods Love, that he should regard those services of his People, which are so mixed with Corruption, Isaiah. 64:6. Our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags. The Eucharistical Sacrifice, which was the highest, had some Leaven joined with it, Levit. 7:13. Our best duties have some Leaven of Imperfection in them; yet such is Gods love, that he has a liking to them, and accepts them, Song of Solomon 5:1. I have eaten my Hony-Comb with my Hony. Hony is sweet, but the Hony-comb is Viscous and bitter, and can hardly be eaten; yet such was Christs love to his Spouse, that he eat of her Hony-comb, her services mixed with Imperfection, and was pleased to take delight in them. Oh the Love of God! that he should have respect to our offerings that are interlarded with sin. Our best duties are as sweet Wine coming out of a Sowre Cask.

If God hearkens to us when we speak, let us hearken to him when he speaks. In the word preached God speaks to us. He is said now to speak to us from Heaven, Hebrews 12:25. That is, by the preaching of the word, as a King speaks by his Ambassadour. Does God hearken to us, and shall not we hearken to him? Be not like

the Deaf-adder which stoppeth her Ear. This the Lord complains of, Job 33:14. God speaks Once, yea Twice; yet man regardeth it not. If Gods word does not prevail with us, our prayers will not prevail with him.

CHAP. 14. SHOWING THE SECOND GOOD EFFECT OF THE SAINTS' PIETY



2. THE Second Good effect of the Saints Piety, was, God recorded it. A Book of Remembrance was written before him: The word in the Original for Book of Remembrance Signifies a Book of Memorials or Monuments. The words immediately foregoing recite Gods hearkening and hearing; but lest any should say, though God does at the present hear the Holy Speeches and Thoughts of his Children, yet may they not in time slip out of his Mind? therefore these words are added, a Book of Remembrance was written before him. The Lord did not only hear the Good speeches of the Saints, but Recorded them, and Wrote them down; a Book of Remembrance was written. This is spoken after the manner of men. Not that God has any book of Records by him, he needs not write down any thing for the help of his Memory, he is not Subject to oblivion. Things done a thousand years ago are as fresh to him, as if they were done but Yesterday, Psalm. 90:4. A thousand years in your sight are but as Yesterday when it is past. This book of Remembrance therefore, is a borrowed speech, taken from Kings, who have their Chronicles wherein they note Memorable things. King Ahasuerus had his book of Records, wherein were written the worthy deeds of

Mordecai, Esther 6:1, 2. So God bears in Mind all the Good speeches and pious actions of his Children. Gods curious and Critical observation is a Book of Records, where nothing can be lost or torn out.

God does Eternally remember all the Good designs, and Pious endeavours of his People, Hebrews 6:10. God is not unrighteous to forget your Work and labor of love, which you have shewed towards his Name. Eight things God writes down in his Book of Remembrance.

1. The Lord writes down the Names of his Saints, Philippians 4:3. Whose Names are in the Book of Life. This Book has no Errata's, Revelation 3:5.

2. The Lord writes down the good speeches of his People. When Christians speak together of the Mysteries of Heaven (which is like Musick in consort) God is much taken with it: When their Tongues are going, Gods pen is going in Heaven. They that fear'd the Lord spoke often one to another, and a Book of Remembrance was written.

3. The Lord writes down the Tears of his People. Tears drop down to the Earth, but they reach Heaven : God has his Bottle and his Book, Psalm 56:8. Put you my Tears into your bottle, are they not in your Book? Tears drop from the Saints, as Water from the Roses: they are fragrant to God, and he puts them in his Bottle. And besides this, he has his Book of Remembrance, where he sets them down; are they not in your Book? Especially God writes down such Tears as are shed for the sins of the times, Ezekiel 9:2. One was clothed with linnen; with a writers Inkhorn by his side:

this was to write down the Tears of the Mourners, and to set a mark upon the foreheads of them that sighed for the Abominations done in the midst of the City, ver. 4.

4. God writes down the Thoughts of his People. We can write down mens Words, but we cannot write down their Thoughts. It would pose the Angels to write mens Thoughts: but be assured, never an Holy cogitation comes into our Mind, but God writes it down. So in the Text, a Book of Remembrance was written for them that Thought upon his Name. Two things are silent, yet have a Voice, Tears, and Thoughts.

5. God writes down the desires of his People, Psalm. 38 9. All my desire is before you: That is, it is set down in your book. Desire is the Spiritual Appetite, or the Souls Anhelation and breathing after God, Psalm 84:2. In this Life we do rather desire God than enjoy him. Can we say we take our Souls *è Corporis Pharetra* out of the quiver of our Bodies, and shoot them into Heaven? do our Affections sally forth towards Christ? do we desire him superlatively and uncessantly? Every such desire is put down in Gods Register Book: all my desire is before you.

6. The Lord writes down the prayers of his People, Ionah 2:7. Prayer, though it be not Vocal, only Mental, is Recorded, 1 Samuel 1:13. Hannah spoke in her Heart. That prayer God did write down and Answer; God was better to her than her prayer; she prayed for a Son, and God gave her a Prophet. When the heart is so full of grief, that it can only groan in Prayer; yet a Groan is sometimes the best part of a Prayer, and God writes it down, Psalm 38:9. Lord, my Groaning is not hid from you. If we cannot speak with elegancy in Prayer, if it be only lisping and chattering, God puts it in his

Book of Remembrance, Isaiah. 38:14. Like a Crane, so did I chatter: yet that prayer was heard and registred, Ver. 5. I have heard your prayer, I have seen your Tears.

7. God writes down the Alms of his People. Works of Mercy must be done out of Love to God: as Mary out of love brought her Ointments and sweet Spices and anointed Christs dead body: so out of pure love we must bring our Ointments of Charity to anoint the Saints, which are Christs living body, Such Alms are not lost. Hebrews 13:16. With such Sacrifices God is well pleased. And that we may see how well the Lord is pleased with them, he has a Book of Remembrance for them, he writes them down. Item, so much lent to the Lord, Acts 10:4. Cornelius, your Alms are come up for a memorial before God.

8. God has a Book of Remembrance for the Sufferings of his People. The Saints Purgatory is in this life. But there are two things may bear up their Spirits. 1. Every Groan of theirs goes to Gods Heart, Exodus 6:7. I have heard the Groanings of the Children of Israel. In Musick when one string is touch'd, all the rest sound: when the Saints are stricken Gods bowels sound. 2. God has a Book of Records to write down his Peoples injuries. The wicked make wounds in the backs of the Righteous, and then pour in Vinegar: God writes down their Cruelty. 1 Samuel 15:2. I Remember what Amalek did to Israel. Amalek was Esaus Grandchild. A bitter enemy of Israel. The Amalekites shewed their Spight to Israel two ways. 1. They did lye in ambush; and as Israel passed by, fell upon their rear, and cut off the feeble in their army, 1 Samuel 15:2.

2. They did openly give Battel to them, and would have hindred them from going into Canaan, Exodus 17:8. Now God took Notice of Israels sufferings by Amalek. I Remember hat Amalek did to Israel, I have my Book of Remembrance, I write it down, Ver. 3. Go and smite Amalek.

CHAP. 15. SEVERAL COROLLARIES FLOWING FROM THE PROPOSITION



IT shews us that it is not in Vain to serve God. The Wicked who know not God, think him an hard-master, and say as they, Job 21:15. What profit should we have if we pray to him? But the Text shews us that God records all the Services of his People, a Book of Remembrance was written before him. Gods writing in a Book is, 1. An honor to the Saints the Romans wrote the names of their Senators in a Book, and in token of Honor they were called *Patres conscripti*: so Gods Book of Remembrance shews his high esteem of his People and their services, he writes them down. 2. Gods writing in a Book denotes the special favor God bears to his People; he Registers them and their services with an intent to Crown them. Tamerlain wrote down all the Memorable deeds of his Soldiers, whom he afterwards preferred to places of dignity. Gods service is most eligible; let us make Ioshua's Choice, Josh. 24:15. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. If we should desert Gods service, whither shall we go? when Christ asked his Disciples will ye also go away? says Peter, Lord to whom shall we go? John 6:68. As if he had said, if we leave you, we do not

know where to mend our selves. Let us adhere to God, he has his Book of Memorials to record our Allegiance. We may be losers for him, we shall not be losers by him.

See from hence that as God does Register the good works of his People, so he has a Book of Remembrance to write down the sins of the wicked, Isaiah. 30:8. Go, write it before them in a Table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come, for ever, that this is a Rebellious People, that will not hear the Law of the Lord. Mens sins are written in the book of Conscience, and the Book of Gods Omniscency. They think because God does not speak to them by his loud Judgements, therefore God does not know their sins; but though God does not speak, he writes, Jeremiah 17:1. The sin of Iudah is written with a Pen of Iron and the Point of a Diamond. God scores down every act of Oppression, Bribery, Uncleanness, Hosea 7:2. They consider not in their Heart, that I remember all their wickedness. King Belshazzer was carousing and drinking wine in bowls, and praising his Gods of Gold and Silver; but while he was sinning, God was writing, Daniel 5:6. In the same hour came forth fingers of a mans hand, and wrote upon the Plaister of the Wall of the Kings Palace, and the King saw part of the hand that wrote: then the Kings countenance was changed. We read of Gods Book, Revelation 20:12. The books were opened: and his Bag, Job 14:17. My transgression is sealed up in a bag. It seems to allude to Law-Courts where there are Indictments against such Malefactours sealed up in a Bag, and are produced at the assizes. When God shall open his black book wherein mens Names are written, and his bag wherein their sins are written: then their Hearts will tremble, and their knees smite one against another.

Every Lye a sinner tells, every Oath he Swears, every drunken bout, God writes it down in his book of Remembrance; and woe to him if the book be not crossed with the Blood of Christ.

3. See the Mercifulness of God to his Children, who blots their sins out of his book of Remembrance, and writes their good deeds in his book of Remembrance, Isaiah. 43:25. I, even I am he that blotteth out your Transgressions: 'tis a Metaphor borrow'd from a Creditor, who takes his pen and blots out the debt owing him; so says God, I will blot out your Transgressions. Or as the Hebrew carries it, I am blotting them out.

God in forgiving sin passes an act of Oblivion, Jeremiah 31:34. I will remember your sins no more. God will not upbraid his People with their former offences. We never read after Peter repented, that Christ upbraided him with his denial of him. O the Heavenly indulgence and kindness of God to his People! he remembers every thing but their sins. He writes down their good Thoughts and speeches in a Merciful book of Remembrance; but their sins are as if they had never been, they are carried into the Land of Oblivion.

If God records our services, then let us record his Mercies, let us have our Book of Remembrance. A Christian should keep two books always by him; one to write his sins in, that he may be humble; the other to write his Mercies in, that he may be thankful. David had his book of Remembrance, 1 Chron. 16:4. He appointed certain of the Levites to record, and thank, and praise the Lord God of Israel. We should keep a Register-book of Gods Mercies, though I think it is hard to get a book big enough to hold them. At such a time we were in straits, and God supplied us; at such a time under sadness of Spirit, and God dropped in the Oyl of gladness, at

such a time near death, and God Miraculously restored us. If God be mindful of what we do for him, shall not we be mindful of what he does for us? Gods mercies, like Jewels, are too good to be lost: get a Book of Remembrance.

It is Comfort to the Godly. 1. In case of friends forgetting them. Ioseph did Pharaoh's Butler a kindness, yet did not the chief Butler remember Ioseph; but forgat him. Genesis 40:23. 'Tis too usual to remember Injuries, and forget Friends; but God has a Book of Remembrance, where he writes down all his old friends. Near Relations may sometimes be forgetful: the tender Mother may forget her infant, Isaiah. 49:15. Can a Woman forget her sucking child? yea she may, but I will not forget you: a Mother may sooner be unnatural than God forgetful. Christ our High-priest has the Names of the Saints written upon his Breast-plate, and all their good deeds written in his Book of Memorials. Let this be as Bezar stone to revive the Hearts of Gods people; though friends may blot you out of their Mind, yet God will not blot you out of his Book.

2. This is a consolation to the Godly, the Lord keeps a Book of Remembrance for this end, that he may at the last day make a public and solemn mention of all the good which his Saints have done. God will open his Book of Records, and say as, Matthew 25:35. I was an hundred, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink, etc. God will make known all the memorable and pious actions of his People before men and Angels: he will say, here are they who have prayed, and wept for Sin; here are they who have been Advocates for my Truth; here are they who have laid to Heart my dishonours, and have mourned for what they could not reform. These are my renowned ones, my Hephzibahs in whom my Soul delights. What a Glorious thing will this be, to have God divulge

the Encomium of his Saints! when Alexander saw the Sepulcher of Achilles, he cryed out O happy Achilles who hadst Homer to set forth your praise! what an honor will it be to have the Names and worthy deeds of the Saints mentioned, and God himself to be the Herauld to proclaim their praises!

CHAP. 16. SHOWING THE THIRD GOOD EFFECT OF THE SAINTS' PIETY



3. THE third Good effect of the Saints Piety, was, God rewarded it, verse 17. And they shall be mine, says the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my Jewels. The reward is threefold. 1. Gods owning them; they shall be mine, says the Lord of Hosts: where observe.

- 1. The Person speaking, the Lord of Hosts. - 2. The Reward it self, they shall be mine.

1. The Person speaking, the Lord of Hosts. This is too great a word to be passed by in silence. God is often in Scripture stiled, Dominus exercituum, the Lord of Hosts, Psalm 46:11. Isaiah. 1:24. That is, he is the Supreme General, and Commander of all Armies and forces, and gives Victory to whom he will.

Why is this Name, The Lord of Hosts given to God?

Not that God needs any Hosts to protect himself, or Suppress his enemies. Earthly Princes have Armies to defend their Persons from danger, but God needs none to help him: he can fight without an army. God puts strength into all Armies; other Captains may give their Soldiers Armour, but they cannot give them Strength:

but God does, Psalm 18:39. You hast Girded me with strength to battel. Why then is God said to have Hosts and Armies if he needs them not.

1. It is to set forth his Sovereign Power, and Grandure: all Armies and Regiments are under his command.

2. It is to shew us that though God can effect all things by himself; yet in his Wisdom he oft useth the Agency of the Creature to bring to pass his will and purpose.

What are these Hosts or Armies of which God is the Sovereign Lord?

1. God has an Army in Heaven, Angels and Arch-angels, 1 King 22:19. I saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him. By the Host of Heaven is meant the Angels; they being Spirits are a Puissant Army, Psalm 103:20. Ye Angels which excell in Strength. We read of one Angel who destroy'd in one Night an hundred fourscore and five thousand, 2 King 19:35. If one Angel destroy'd such a vast Army, what can a Legion of Angels do? a Legion consisted of six thousand six hundred sixty six, says Hesychius: how many of these Legions go to make up the Heavenly Host!

2: The Stars are Gods Army, Deuteronomy 4:19. These were set in Battalia and fought against Gods enemies, Iudg. 5:20. The Stars in their courses fought against Sisera. That is, the Stars did charge like an Army, raising Storms and tempests by their influences, and so destroying the whole Army of Sisera. 2. God has Armies upon earth.

- 1. Rational. - 2. Irrational.

1. Rational, Hosts of men: these are under Gods command and conduct, they stir not without his Warrant: the Lord has the managing of all Martial affairs: not a stroke is struck, but God orders it: not a Bullet flies but God directs it.

2. Irrational, God can raise an Army of Flies, as he did against King Pharaoh, Exodus 8:24. An Army of Worms, as he did against King Herod, Acts 12:23. O what a Lord is here who has so many Hosts under his Pay and conduct!

Let us Dread this Lord of Hosts: we fear men who are in Power, and is not that God to be adored and feared who acts pro arbitrio. He does what he pleaseth in the Armies of Heaven and earth, Daniel 9:35. His Power is as large as his will, Job 23 13. What his Soul desireth, even that he does. The Ephori had Power over the King of Sparta; the Tribunes over the Roman consuls; much more has God a Sovereign Power over all. He poureth contempt upon Princes, Job 12:21. He threw the Proud Angels to Hell. God can with a word unpin the Wheelles and break the Axle tree of the Creation. Gods Power is a Glorious Power, Colossians 1:11. And herein it appears Glorious, it i never spent or wasted. Men while they exercise their strength, weaken it. But, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, Isaiah. 40:28. Though God spends his Arrows upon his enemies, Deuteronomy 32:23. yet not his strength. O then tremble before this Lord of Hosts, Remember (O hard-hearted sinner!) how many ways God can be revenged on you. He can raise an Army of diseases against you in your body: he can set the humours of the body one against another, he can make the heat dry up the Moisture, or the Moisture drown the heat; he can Arm every Creature against

you, the Dog, the Boar, the Elephant. He can Arm Conscience against you, as he did against Spira making him a Terrour to himself: O dread this Lord of Hosts.

If God be the Lord of Hosts, let us take heed of hardning our Hearts against God. It was the saying of Pompey that with one stamp of his Foot he could raise all Italy up in Arms. God can with a word raise all the Militia of Heaven and Earth against us: and shall we dare affront him? Job 9:4. Who has hardened himself against him, and prospered? Such as live in the open breach of Gods Commandments harden their Hearts against God; they raise a War against Heaven, Job 15:25. He strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. Like Warriors, who Muster up all the forces they can, to fight with their Antagonists: so the sinner harnesseth, and strengthens himself against Iehovah, Ver. 26. He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers. Bucklers anciently had one great boss in the middle with a sharp pike in it to wound the adversary. The flagitious sinner encounters the God of Heaven, and runs upon the thick bosses of his fury, which will wound mortally. The Wicked do as Caligula, who challenged Iupiter to a duel: but who ever hardened himself against God and prospered? will men go to measure Arms with God? Job 40:9. Hast you an Arm like God? God is Almighty, therefore can hurt his enemies; and he is invisible, therefore they cannot hurt him. Who can fight with a Spirit? God will be too hard for his Enemies at the long run, Psalm 68:21. God shall wound the head of his Enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. Julian hardened his Heart against God, but what got he at last? did he prosper? Being wounded in Battle he threw up his blood into the Air, and said to Christ, Vicisti Galilae: O

Galilean you hast overcome, I acknowledge your Power whose Name and truth I have opposed. How easily can God chastise Rebels? Exodus 14:24. In the morning-watch God looked to the host of the Egyptians through the Pillar of fire, and troubled their host. It needs cost God no more to destroy his Proudest adversaries, than a look, a cast of the Eye. 'Tis better to lye Prostrate at Gods feet, and meet him with tears in our Eyes, than Weapons in our hands: we overcome God, not by resistance, but by Repentance.

If God be the Lord of Hosts, let us be so wise as to engage him on our side, Psalm 46 11. The Lord of Hosts is with us. Great is the Priviledge to have the Lord of Hosts for us. 1. If the Lord of Hosts be on our side, he can discover the subtil plots of Enemies. Thus he detected the Counsel of Achitophel, 2 Samuel 17:16. And did not the Lord discover the Popish conspirators both in the Powder-Treason (that Catholick villany) and of late, when they would have subverted Religion and Laws, and like Italian Butchers have turned England into an Akeldama or Field of blood? If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may England say, when men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick.

2. If the Lord of Hosts be on our side, he can bridle his Enemies, and lay such a restraint upon their Spirits, that they shall not do the mischief they intend, Genesis 31:39. It is in the Power of my hand to do you hurt (said Laban to Iacob) but the God of your fathers spoke to me saying, take heed you speak not to Iacob either good or bad. Laban had power to do hurt, but no heart. When Balak called upon Balaam to curse Israel, God so dispirited Balaam

that he could not discharge his thunderbolt, Numbers 23:8. How shall I curse whom God has not cursed? He had a good mind to curse, but God held him back.

3. If the Lord of Hosts be for us, he can help us, though means fail, and things seem to be given for lost. When Gideons Army was small, and rendred despicable, then God Crowned them with Victory, Iudg. 7:2, 22. When the Arm of Flesh shrinks, now is a time for the Arm of Omnipotency to be put forth, Deuteronomy 32:36. The Lord shall repent himself for his Servants when he sees their Power is gone, and there is none shut up or left. The less of man is seen, the more of God.

4. If the Lord be on our side he can save us in that very way in which we think he will destroy us. Would not any have thought the Whales belly should have been Jonahs Grave? but God made the fish a ship, in which he sailed safe to shore. Paul got to Land by the breaking of the ship, Acts, 28:44. God can make the adverse Party do his Work; he can cause divisions among the Enemies, and turn their own Weapons against themselves, Isaiah. 19:2. I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians.

5. If the Lord of Hosts be on our side, he can make the Churches affliction a means of her Augmentation, Exodus 1:12. The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied. The Church of God is like that Plant Gregory Nazianzen speaks of, which lives by dying, and grows by cutting. Persecution propagates the Church: the scattering of the Apostles up and down, was like scattering of seed, it did tend much to the spreading of the Gospel, Acts 8:1.4.

6. If the Lord of Hosts be on our side, he can alter the scene and turn the ballance of affairs when he pleaseth, Daniel 1:21. He changeth times and seasons. God can remove Mountains which lye in the way, or leap over them. His Power is uncontrollable: he can bring Harmony out of discord. He who brought Isaac out of a dead Womb, and the Messiah out of a Virgins Womb, what cannot he do? The Lord of Hosts can in an instant alter the face of things. There are no Impossibles with God: if means fail he can Create. 'Tis therefore high prudence to get this Lord of Hosts on our side. Romans 8:31. If God be for us, who can be against us? And if we would engage God to be on our side,

1. Let us be earnest suitors to him, exercise Eyes of Faith, and Knees of prayer. Jeremiah 14:9. And in prayer let us use Joshua's argument, Josh. 7:9. What will you do to your great name? Lord, if the cause of Religion lose ground, how will your name suffer! Popish Enemies never prevail, but they Blaspheme.

2. Let us put away iniquity out of our Tabernacles, Job 11:14. Sin is not worth keeping: who would keep a Plague-sore? Let us discard and abjure our sins; And then the Lord of Hosts will be on our side, and as a Pledge of his favorable presence, he will entail the Gospel, that Crowning blessing, upon us and our posterity. So much for the Person speaking; the Lord of Hosts.

CHAP. 17. THE FIRST PART OF THE SAINTS' REWARD: GOD'S OWNING THEM



2. I Come now to the reward it self, the first part whereof is Gods owning them, they shall be mine.

Expositors here vary: I take the sence of it to be, they shall be mine in Covenant, Ezekiel 16:8. I entred into Covenant with you, and you becamest mine. This is no small favor to be in Covenant with God: therefore when God told Abraham that he would enter into Covenant with him, Abraham fell on his face; Genesis 17:2. as being amazed that the great God should bestow such a signal favor upon him. God never entred into Covenant with the Angels when they fell, but he proclaims himself God in Covenant with Believers, they shall be mine. This Covenant enriched with Free-grace, is a better Covenant than that which was made with Adam in Innocency. For

1. The least failing would have made the first Covenant null and void: but many failings do not invalidate the Covenant of Grace. I grant the least sin makes a trespass upon the Covenant; but does not rescind it. Every failing in the Conjugal Relation breaks not the Marriage bond.

2. The first Covenant being violated, allowed the sinner no remedy; all doors of hope were shut: but the new Covenant allows of a Remedy: it provides a surety, Hebrews 12:24. Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant.

See the amazing goodness of God to his People, to enter into Covenant with them, and say, Ye are mine, 2 Samuel 23:5. He has made with me an Everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure. The first Covenant stood upon the ticklish Foundation of Works. Adam had no sooner a stock of Original Righteousness to Trade with, but he broke: but this Covenant of Grace is confirmed with Gods Decree, and rests upon two mighty Pillars, the Oath of God, and the Blood of God. That ye may see how great a priviledge this is to be owned by the Lord federally, that he should be our God, and we his people, consider,

1. If we are in Covenant with God and he says to us Ye are mine, then all that is in God is ours. A person falling to decay marrying to a King, has an interest in all the Crown-revenues: God having entred into a near Relation with us, and saying ye are mine, we have a share in his Rich revenues. The Lord says to every Believer as the King of Israel said to the King of Syria, 1 Kin. 20:4. I am your and all that I have: My Wisdom shall be your to teach you, my Holiness shall be your to Sanctifie you, my Mercy shall be your to save you. What richer dowry than Deity? God is a whole Ocean of blessedness. If there is enough in him to fill the Angels, then sure he has enough to fill us.

2. If God says to us ye are mine, then he will have a tender care of us. 1 Peter 5:7. He careth for you. God to shew his tender anxiousness towards Israel, bare them as upon Eagles wings, Exodus 19:4. The Eagle carries her young ones upon her wing to defend

them; the Arrow must first shoot through the Old Eagle, before it can touch her Young ones. A Mothers care is seen in leading the Child that it may not fall: such is Gods care. Hosea 11:3. I taught Ephraim to go, leading them by their Arms. We may argue a minori ad majus, if God take care of the meanest Insects and Animals that creep upon the earth, much more will he take care of his Covenant-Saints. He is still consulting and projecting for their good; if they wander out of the way, he guides them; if they stumble, he holds them by the hand; if they fall, he raiseth them; if they be dull, he quickens them by his Spirit; if they be froward, he draws them with cords of Love; if they be sad, he Comforts them with his promises.

3. If God says to us, ye are mine, then he will intirely love us, Jeremiah 31:3. I have loved you with an Everlasting love. The Lord may give a man riches and not love him: his prosperity may be as Israels Quails sawced with Gods wrath. Numbers 11:32, 33. But when God says, ye are mine, he cannot but love; every one loves his own. If God has any love better than other, his Covenant-People shall have it; he will distil the Spirits of his love for them, he loves them as he loves Christ, John 17:24.

4. If God says to us ye are mine, then he will not suffer us to want. Believers are not only of Gods family, but of Christs body; and will the head let the body starve? Psalm 37:3. Verily you shalt be fed. God has not promised dainties; he will not satisfie his Peoples lusts, but he will supply their wants; if the Bill of Fare grows low, what they lack in chear, they shall have in blessing, Exodus 23:25. He will bless your bread and your water. God will

rather work a miracle, than any of his Children shall famish. The Raven that is so unnatural she will hardly feed her young, yet did turn Caterer and brought food to the Prophet Elijah.

5. If God says to us, ye are mine, then we have great immunities: 1. We are freed from the revenging wrath of God. We are not free from Gods anger as a Father, but as a Iudge. God will not pour his vindictive Justice upon us. Christ has drunk the Red wine of Gods wrath upon the Cross, that Believers may not tast a drop of it.

2. We are freed from the Predominancy of sin, Romans 6:14. Sin shall not have dominion, or as the word is, it shall not Lord it over you. Though Believers are not freed from the In-being of sin, nor from the Combate with it, yet they are freed from its Imperious command. As it is said of those beasts in Daniel, they had their Dominion taken away, yet their Lives were prolonged for a season, Daniel 7:12. So sin Lives in the Regenerate, but its Dominion is taken away. And to be thus freed from the jurisdictional power and tyranny of sin is no small blessing. A Wicked man is at the command of sin, as the Ass is at the command of the driver: the curse of Cham is upon him, Genesis 9:25. A Servant of Servants shall he be. He is a slave to his Lusts, and a slave to Satan. O what a privilege is it to have ones neck out of the Devils Yoak!

3. We are freed from the accusations of Conscience. The worm of Conscience is part of the Torment of Hell. But God being our God we are freed from the Clamors of this hellish Fury: Conscience sprinkled with Christs blood speaks Peace; a good Conscience like the Bee gives Hony; it is like the Golden pot which had Manna in it, 2 Corinthians 1:12.

6. If God says to us ye are mine, we shall be his for ever, Psalm 48:14. This God is our God for ever and ever. You cannot say you have health and you shall have it for ever, you have a Child and you shall have it for ever; but if God be your God, you shall have him for ever. The Covenant of Grace is Sacrum diploma, a Royal Charter, and this is the Happiness of it, it is eternized. The interest between God and his people shall never be broken off; How false therefore is the Opinion of falling from Grace! Shall any that God makes his own by Federal union, Fall finally? Indeed if Salvation has no better Pillar to rest upon than mans will (as the Arminians hold) no wonder if there be falling away▪ but a Christians stability in Grace, is built upon a surer basis, namely, Gods inviolable Covenant, Isaiah. 55:3. Once in Christ and ever in Christ. A Star may sooner fall out of its orb than a true Believer be pluck'd away from God.

7. If God says to us ye are mine, he will take us up to himself at death. Death breaks the union between the Body and the Soul, but perfects the union between God and the Soul. This is the Emphasis of Heavens Glory, to be with God. What is the Joy of the blessed, but to have a clear transparent sight of God, and to be in the sweet and soft embraces of his love for ever? This has made the Saints desire death, as the Bride the wedding day, Philippians 1:23. Lead me, Lord, to that glory (said an Holy man) a glimpse whereof I have seen as in a glass darkly.

Let this be a Consolatory to the Saints; there is a Covenant-union between God and them, God is theirs and they are his, they shall be mine says the Lord. Here is a standing cordial for the Godly, God looks upon them as having a propriety in them, they shall be mine. This is Comfort 1. In respect of Satans accusations,

he accuseth the Saints first to God, then to themselves; but if God says ye are mine, this answers all Satans Bills of Indictment. Christ will shew the debt-book crossed in his blood. It was a saying of Bucer, I am Christs, and the Devil has nothing to do with me.

2. It is Comfort in respect of Poverty? Believers are match'd into the Crown of Heaven, and all that is in God is theirs. The Philosopher comforted himself with this, that though he had no Musick or Vine-trees, yet he had the household Gods with him: So though we have not the Vine or Fig-tree, yet if God be ours and we are his, this Creates joy in the most indigent condition.

And that which may raise the comfort of the godly higher, and cause a jubilation of Spirit is, that shortly God will own his people before all the world, and say, these are mine. At present the elect are not known, 1 John 3:2. It does not yet appear what we shall be. The Saints are like Kings in disguise; but how will their hearts leap for joy, when God shall pronounce that word, these are mine; These the lot of Free-grace is fallen upon, these shall lye for ever in the Bosom of my love.

To all who are yet strangers to God: Labor to get into Covenant with him that he may say, ye are mine. Why does God woo and beseech you by his Ambassadors, if he were not willing to be in Covenant?

What shall a poor forlorn Creature do, to get into Covenant with God?

1. If you would be in Covenant with God, break off the Covenant with sin, 1 Samuel 7:3. What King will be in league with him that holds correspondence with his Enemy?

2. Labor for Faith; 1. Faith in the Mercy of God, Jeremiah 3:12. I am merciful, says the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever. As the Sea covers great Rocks as well as little Sands; so Gods Mercy covers great sins: Manasseh a bloody sinner was held forth as a pattern of Mercy. Some of the Jews who had an hand in Crucifying of Christ, yet their sins were forgiven.

2. Faith in the merit of Christ. Christs blood is not only but : not only a Sacrifice to appease God, but a Propitiation to ingratiate us into Gods favor, and make him look upon us with a smiling aspect.

CHAP. 18. THE SECOND PART OF THE SAINTS' REWARD: GOD'S HONORING THEM



2. THE Second part of the Saints reward is Gods Honouring them, in that day when I make up my Jewels: Here are three Propositions; 1. That God has a great honor for his People. 2. That Gods People are his Jewels. 3. That there is a day when God will make up his Jewels.

1st. That God has a great honor for his People. He speaks of them here with Honor, in that day when I make up my Jewels, Isai. 43:4. Since you were precious in my sight, you hast been honorable: Honor attends Holiness. That the Lord does highly honor the fearers of him, is evident by four demonstrations.

1. In that he prefers them before others. He chooses them, and passes by the rest, Malachi 1:2. Was not Jacob Esau brother? (says the Lord,) yet I hated Esau and loved Jacob.

2. In that God gives them frequent Visits. 'Tis counted an Honor for a Subject to have his Prince Visit him. 1 John 3:3. Our or Communion is with the Father and his Son Jesus. The Rabbins

say, Moses had an Hundred and fifty conferences with God, and died with a Kiss from Gods mouth. What greater Honor for a Person, than to have God keep him Company? Exodus 33:11.

3. In that God makes them Rich heirs; Romans 8:17., joynt heirs with Christ. For a man to adopt another and make him heir to his estate, is no small honor done to him. The Youngest Believer is an heir, yea, and an Heir of the Crown, 1 Peter 5:4. This Crown he has in promisso, in the Promise, Revelation 2:10. And in primitiis, in the first-fruits, Romans 8:23.

4. In that God sends his Angels to be their Servitors. Such as are Gods Servants have Angels to be theirs: Hebrews 1:14. Are they not all ministring Spirits sent forth to Minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvation?

Who would not be fearers of God? this makes God have an honorable esteem of them; all men (says Chrysostome) are ambitious of Honor : the true Honor comes from God, John 5:44.

If God does so Honor his People, let them Honor him; Malachi 1:6. Where is my Honor? let the Saints be God-exalters, let them lift up his Name in the World, and make his praise glorious, Psalm 66:2. But I only glance at this.

2ly. That Gods People are his Jewels, in that day when I make up my Jewels. Jewels are precious things; the Hebrew word for Jewels signifies a treasure. A treasure is made up of costly things: Gold and Pearl, and Rubies: such a precious Treasure are the Saints to God.

In what sence are the Godly Jewels?

1. They are Jewels for their sparkling quality. Their Holiness shines and sparkles in Gods eyes, Song of Solomon 4:9. You hast ravished my Heart with one of your eyes, that is, one of your Graces.

2. The Godly are Jewels for their Scarcity. Pearls are not common; so the Godly are scarce and Rare: there are but few of these to be found: there are many false Professors (as there are Bastard Diamonds) but few Israelites indeed; Matthew 20:16. Few are Chosen. Among the Millions in Rome, there were but few Senators: among the swarms of People in the World, but few Believers.

3. The Godly are Jewels for their Price. Queen Cleopatra had two Jewels that contained half the price of a Kingdom. Thus the Saints are Jewels for their Value: God esteems them at an high rate, he parted with his best Jewel for them; Christs precious blood was shed to ransom these Jewels.

4. The Saints are Jewels, for their adorning quality. Jewels adorn them that wear them: the Saints are Jewels that adorn the World. Their Piety mixed with Prudence honours the Gospel. Hypocrites Eclipse Religion and make it evilly spoken of: the Saints as Jewels render it illustrious by their Sanctity.

1. See the worth of the Godly, they are Jewels; they are a Royal diadem in the hand of God, Isaiah. 62:3. That is, they are eminent above others, as a Crown hung with Jewels is an ensign of the highest state and Honor. The Saints are Gods Glory, Isaiah. 46:13. As if Gods Glory did lye in them.

2. See then that which may bring Holiness into repute, and make us become Proselytes to it. It casts a splendour upon us, and makes God number us among his Jewels. Some are loath to embrace Godliness for fear it will be a stain to their Reputation, and bring them out of favor with great men: you see how it does raise a persons renown, it makes him precious in Gods sight, he is a Jewel. Believers in regard of their mystical union with Christ, have a preciousness above the Angels: the Angels are Morning Stars, Job 38, 7. Believers are clothed with the Sun of Righteousness, Revelation 12:1.

See the different Opinion that God has of the Godly and the Wicked: the one he esteems precious, the other vile, Nahum 1:14. I will make your Grave, for you art Vile: this is spoken of King Senacherib: though he was by Birth Noble, yet he was by sin Vile. The Hebrew word for Vile, signifies, of base esteem. Though the Wicked are high in dignity and worldly grandure, yet God slights them. A dunghil may be higher than other ground, but it sends forth noisom Vapours: Psalm 14:3. They are altogether become filthy. In the Original it is, they are become stinking. The Wicked are compared to Dogs and Swine, 2 Peter 2:22. to dross, Ezekiel 22:19. Dross is the filth of the Mettal. Sinners are compar'd to Chaff, Psalm 1:4. When a Wicked man dies, there is only a little Chaff blown away. A sinner is the most contemptible thing in nature; there is no worth in him while he lives, and no loss of him when he dies. A sinner is worse than a Toad or Serpent; A Toad has nothing but what God has put into it, but a Wicked man has that which the Devil has put into him: Act 5:3. Why has Satan filled your Heart to lye to the Holy-Ghost?

See what an high estimate we should set upon the Godly, they are Jewels, they are the Glory of the Creation: they are compared to Stars for their beauty, Revelation 1:20. to Spice Trees for their perfume, Song of Solomon 4:14. They are the Chariots and Horsmen of Israel, they are the excellent of the Earth, Psalm 16:3. The Lord would soon break up house in the World, but that he has some Jewels in it. Prize the Saints though they are humbled with Poverty: we esteem of a Pearl though it lye in the dust: John Baptist was girt with a Leathern Girdle; yet he was a Jewel, Matthew 11:9. He was the Morning Star, to usher in the Sun of Righteousness into the World. The Saints are precious, for they are Gods lesser Heaven, Isaiah. 57:15.

3. See the Saints Safety: they are Gods Jewels, and he will have a care to preserve them▪ A man is careful that he does not lose his Jewels. God often gives his people a temporal Salvation: if a storm comes he knows how to hide his Jewels. He hid an hundred Prophets in a Cave, 1 Kin. 18:4. The Angel is commanded before he poured his Vial of curses on the earth, to seal the Saints of God on their fore-heads, Revelation 7:3. Which was signum salutare a mark of safety: however God will look to the Spiritual safety of his Jewels, John 17:12. Not one of them is lost.

If the Saints are Gods Jewels, then how incensed and enraged will God be against those who shall abuse these Jewels? Theodosius counted them Traitors who abused his Statue: what will become of them who persecute Gods Saints, and tread upon his Jewels? It goes near to God to see his Jewels sprinkled with blood: what is done to them the Lord takes it as done to him self, Act. 9:4. Why persecutest you me? When the foot was trod on, the head cryed out. The Saints are Gods Royal diadem. Will a King en-

dure to have his Robes spit upon, or his Crown-royal thrown in the dust? Psalm 105:14. He reproveth Kings for their sakes. What Monuments of Gods Vengeance were Nero, Dioclesian, Gardner, and the rest of that persecuting tribe? Luke 18:7. Shall not God avenge his own elect? I tell you he will avenge them speedily. Persecutors stand in the place where all Gods Arrows fly, Psalm 7:13. He ordaineth his Arrows against the Persecutors. That is a killing Scripture, Zach. 13:12. And this shall be the Plague wherewith God will smite all the People, that have fought against Jerusalem, their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their Tongues shall consume away in their Mouth.

Here is Comfort to the people of God, in case of the Worlds disesteem of them, yet God values them as Jewels; and his Judgment is according to truth, Romans 2:2. The Wicked have low Thoughts of the Righteous, they beat down the price of these Jewels what they can, they think them the refuse and scurse, they disdain them, load them with slanders and Invectives: the Prophet Elijah was looked upon by King Ahab as the Troubler of Israel, 1 Kin. 18:17. And Luther was called a Trumpet of Rebellion; St. Paul was Judged a Pestilent fellow, Acts 24:5. The Wicked think of all things in the World the Saints may be best spared: 1 Corinthians 4:13. We are made as the filth and off-scowring of all things: but this is Vinum in pectore, a great consolation to Believers, that as low esteem as the reprobate world has of them, yet God has high Thoughts of them, he numbers them among his Jewels. They are compared for their preciousness to Gold and Silver, Revelation 1:20. They are the Coyn and Medals that bear Gods own Image. They are Princes in all Lands, Psalm 45:16. Christ engraves their

Names on his breast, as the Names of the twelve Tribes were set with Precious Stones in Gold upon Aarons Breast-plate. God will give whole Kingdoms to ransom his jewells, Isaiah. 43:3. The wicked think the Godly are not worthy to live in the world, Acts 22. 21. and God thinks the World is not worthy of them, Hebrews 11:38. Hence it is God takes away his Jewels so fast, and placeth them among the Cherubims.

To the People of God. Are you Gods Jewels? then I beseech you shine as Jewels: walk accurately, and Holily, Philippians 2:15. Among whom ye shine as lights in the World. Such as are Gods Jewels should let the World see they have worth in them. O Christians, let your Lives be an Imitation of the Life of Christ. Such a Jewel was Mr. Bradford, Martyr, so humble and Innocent in his carriage, that at his death, many of the Papists could not refrain from Weeping. Are you Gods Jewels? do nothing that may Eclipse or Sully your lustre. When Professors are Proud, Envious, Censorious, when they break their promises, or Cheat their Creditors, these do not look like Saints: What will others say? These are the Devils Lumber, not Gods Jewels. O I beseech you who profess to be of an higher rank than others, Honor that Worthy name by which you are called; shine as earthly Angels, 1 Peter 2:9. But ye are a Royal Priesthood, a peculiar People that ye should shew forth the Praises of him who has called you. Alexander would have the Grecians known not only by their Garments, but their Vertues. Gods people should be known by the sparkling of their Graces: shall there be no difference in behaviour between the Wicked and the Godly? between a clod of Earth and a Diamond? let it appear that you are Candidates for Heaven: you

who are Gods People, the Lord expects some Singular thing from you, Matthew 5:47. He looks that you should bring more Glory to him, and by your exemplary Piety make Proselytes to Religion.

It exhorts the Godly to thankfulness. God has taken you out of the rubbish of mankind, and made you Jewels, Psalm 113:7. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, that he may set him with Princes: let me allude, God has raised you out of the dust of a natural Estate, and ennobled you, that he may set you with Angels those Princes above. O admire God, set the Crown of your praises upon the head of Free-grace. A Gratulatory thankful frame of Heart is pleasing to God: if Repentance be the Joy, Praise is the Musick of Heaven. Bless God who has wrought such a change in you, and of lumps of Earth and sin has made you Jewels.

The Third Proposition is, That there is a time shortly coming when God will make up his Jewels; in that day when I make up my Jewels: Here are two Questions.

- 1. What is meant by Gods making up his Jewels? - 2. What is that day when God will make up his Jewels?

1. What is meant by Gods making up his Jewels? There is a difference between these two, Gods making of Jewels, and his making up of Jewels. Gods making of Jewels, is, when he works Grace, but what is Gods making up of Jewels?

Gods making up his Jewels implies two things.

- 1. Gods gathering his Saints together. - 2. Gods perfecting his Saints.

1. Gods making up his Jewels implies his gathering his Saints together. The Godly in this life are like scattered Pearls, they lye distant one from another, and are dispersed into several Regions:

but there is a day coming, when God will gather all his Saints together, as one puts all his Pearls together on a string. There must be such an aggregation or gathering together Gods scattered Saints,

1. From the near Relation they have to all the Persons in the Trinity: 1. To God the Father; he has chosen these Jewels and set them apart for himself, Psalm 4:3. and will he lose any of his Elect? 2. They are related to Christ; he has bought these Jewels with his blood, and will he lose his purchase? 3. They are related to the Holy Ghost; he has sanctified them. When they were a lump of sin, he made them Jewels; and when he has bestowed cost on them, will he lose his cost? will he not string these Pearls, and put them in his celestial Cabinet?

2. There must be a gathering together Gods scattered Saints, from the Prayer of Christ. It was Christs prayer to his Father, that he would make up his Jewels; that he would gather together his Pearls, that they might be with him in Heaven, John 17:24. That they may be with me where I am. Christ thinks long, till all the Elect Jewels lye together in his bosom. He thinks not himself complete, till all his Saints be with him.

Here is a Sovereign Comfort to the People of God in two cases.

- 1. In case of Scattering. - 2. In case of Dividing.

1. In case of Scattering. Gods people are scattered up and down in the World: and, which is worst, these Jewels lye among rubbish, they dwell among the Wicked, Psalm 120:5. Wo is me that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar. Kedar was Ishmaels Son. Woe is me (says David) that I live with an Ishmael-brood. The Wicked are still molesting the Righteous: Gods Jewels lye scattered among the un-

clean; but here is the Comfort, that shortly God will gather his People from among the Wicked, he will make up his Jewels, and all the Pearls and precious stones shall be by themselves in Bliss.

2. It is Comfort in case of Dividing. Gods People here are divided; their love is so little it may almost lye upon a knives point: they oft look strange one upon another: these divisions are unseemly, and are flaws in Gods Diamonds. Discords among Christians, brings a reproach upon Religion, advanceth Satans Kingdom, hinders the growth of Grace. Divisions are fatal, and do presage Gods Judgments coming upon us. *Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit Barbarus, has segetes? Enquò discordiacives Perduxit miseros.*—

But this is Comfort, God will shortly make up his Jewels: he will so gather his Saints together, that he will unite them together, they shall be, all of one Heart, Act 2:46. What an happy time will it be when the Saints shall be as so many Pearls upon one string, and shall accord together in a blessed Unity!

2. Gods making up his Jewels implies his perfecting his Saints. Then a thing is said to be made up when it is perfected; you make up a Garment when you perfect it; you make up a Watch, when you put all the Wheels and Pins in perfect order: so Gods making up his Jewels signifies his perfecting them. The Godly in this Life are imperfect, they cast but a faint lustre of Holiness, they receive but the first-fruits of the Spirit, Romans 8:23. that is, a small measure of Grace: the first-fruits under the Law were but an handful to the whole Vintage. This may humble us to consider if we are Jewels, yet imperfect: our knowledge is checker'd with Ignorance, 1 Corinthians 13:5. Our love to God is feeble. Behold here Clouds in the Diamond. This may take down our Top-sail of Pride, to con-

sider how incompleat we are: but when God shall make up his Jewels, and perfect his Saints, it will be a glorious time, and this brings me to the second Question.

What is that day when God will make up his Jewels?

1. God makes up his Jewels at the day of Death, then he makes the Saints Graces perfect.

2. He makes up His Jewels at the day of the Resurrection, then he makes the Saints Bodyes perfect.

1. God makes up His Jewels at the day of death, then he makes the Saints Graces perfect. Hence it is the Saints departed are called the Spirits of just men made perfect, Hebrews 12:23. Sin does mix and incorporate with a Christian, he cannot write a Copy of Holiness without blotting. Grace, though it does abate, yet not abolish Corruption: but at Death God makes up His Jewels; he perfects the Graces of his People. Will not that be a blessed Time, never to have a Vain thought more? never to be within the sight of a temptation or the fear of a Relapse? This me thinks may make death desirable to the Godly; then the Lord will make up his Jewels, he will compleat the Graces of his Children; they shall be as holy as they desire to be, and as God would have them to be. How will Gods Diamonds sparkle when they shall be without flaws? In that day of death when God makes up His Jewels, the Saints

- 1. Light will be clear, - 2. Love will be perfect.

1. Their Light will be clear. They shall be so divinely irradiated, that they shall know the, the deep things of God. They shall in this sence be, as the Angels, Matthew 22:30. Their Intellectuals shall be raised higher, and made more capacious than in Innocency.

Through the Chrystal Glass of Christs Humane Nature the Saints shall have Glorious transparent sights of God: they shall know as they are known, 1 Corinthians 13:12. A riddle too mysterious for us Mortals, if not for Angels to expound.

2. In that day the Saints Love will be perfect: Love is the Queen of the Graces, it out-lives all the other Graces. In this life our love to God is lukewarm, and sometimes Frozen; a Believer weeps that he can love God no more: but at the day of death when God makes up his Jewels, then the Saints love shall be Seraphical: the spark of Love shall be blown up into into a pure flame: the Saints shall love God *secundum actum* (as the Schoolmen speak) as much as they are able: they shall love him superlatively, and indeficiently, they shall be made up of love. O blessed day of death! when God shall make up his Jewels, the Saints Graces shall shine forth in their Meridian Splendour.

2. God makes up his Jewels at the day of the Resurrection, then he makes the Saints bodies perfect: these like sparkling Diamonds shall shine in Glory. At the Resurrection God is said to change the bodies of the Saints, Philippians 3:21. How will he change them? not that they shall be other bodies than they were before: the substance of their bodies shall not be changed, but the qualities: as wooll when it is died into a Purple color, is not altered in the substance, but quality, and is made more illustrious; so God in making up his Jewels will cause a greater resplendency in the Saints bodies than before. When God makes up the Jewels of the Saints Bodies at the Resurrection, they shall be perfect four ways.

1. In Amability or sweetness of Beauty. Here the Bodies of the Righteous are oft deformed; Leah has her blear Eyes, and Barzillai his lameness; but at the Resurrection the bodies of the Saints shall

be of unspotted fairness: and no wonder, for they shall be made like Christs Glorious body, Philippians 3:21.

2. When God at the Resurrection makes up the Jewels of the Saints bodies, they shall have Perfection of parts. Their bodies in this World may be maimed and dismembred; but in the day of the Resurrection they shall have all the parts of their bodies restored, Acts 3:21. Such as have lost an Eye, shall have their Eye again; such as want a Leg or an Arm, shall have their Arm again.

3. When God makes up the Jewels of the Saints bodies at the Resurrection, they shall be Velocious and quick in their Motion. Here the Bodies of the Saints move heavily: but then they shall be sprightly, and move swiftly from one place to another. Here the body is a Weight; in Heaven it shall be a Wing.

4. When God makes up the Jewels of the Saints bodies, they shall be Immortal: the Body once Glorified shall never be Subject to death, 1 Corinthians 15:53. This corruptible shall put on Incorruption. Heaven is an healthful Climate, no Passing-Bell goes there: this mortal shall put on Immortality.

Let us labor to be in the number of Gods Jewels, that when the Lord shall make up his Jewels, he may perfect our Souls and Bodies in Glory.

How shall we know that we are in the number of Gods Jewels?

Have we inherent Holiness? 1 Corinthians 6:11. But ye are washed, but ye are Sanctified. We are not Jewels by Creation, but Regeneration. If Holiness sparkle in us, it's a sign we are Jewels; and then when God comes to make up his Jewels, he will put Glory upon our Souls and Bodies for ever.

CHAP. 19. THE THIRD PART OF THE SAINTS' REWARD: GOD'S SPARING THEM



3. THE Third part of the Saints reward is Gods Sparing them. I will spare them as a man spares his own Son that serves him. The Hebrew word to spare signifies to use Clemency: In this Phrase is a Meiosis, there is less said and more intended; I will spare them, that is, I will deal with them as a Father does with his Son: the same tenderness that a Father shews to his Child, the same will I shew to them that Fear me.

God will deal with them that Fear him, as a Father does with his Son. Two things are in this Proposition.

1. That God is a Father. He is a Father, 1. By Creation, he has given us our Being, Malachi 2:10. Have not we all one Father? has not one God created us?

2. God is a Father by Election; he has culled out a certain number to be his Children, Ephesians 1:4.

3. God is a Father by special Grace, he stamps his impress of Holiness upon men, Colossians 3:10. All Gods Children resemble him, though some are more like him than others.

2. That God will deal with them that Fear him, as a Father does with his Son: 1. God will accept them as a Father does his Son. If the Child does but lisp and can hardly speak plain, the Father takes all well: so God as a Father will accept of what his Children do in sincerity: Ezekiel 20:40. There will I require your Offerings, I will accept you with your sweet Savor.

2. Such as Fear God, he will be full of Bowels to them as a Father is to his Son. There are in God

- 1. Bowels of Compassion. - 2. Bowels of Complacency.

1. Bowels of Compassion. A Father Compassionates his Child. Sozomen makes mention of a Father who offered to be put to death for his two Sons, who were sentenced to dye: God has soundings of Bowels, Isaiah. 63:15. The Compassions of Parents are Steel and Marble compared with Gods: Luke 1:78. Through the tender Mercy of our God: in the Greek it is, the Bowels of Mercy: these Bowels make God sympathize with his Children in Misery: he is touched in their wounds, Psalm 103:13. As a Father pitieth his Children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

2. In God are Bowels of Complacency. How dearly did Iacob love Benjamin; his life was bound up in him, Genesis 44:30. All the Affections of Parents come from God: they are but a drop of his Ocean, a spark of his flame; Gods love is a love that passes Knowledge, Ephesians 3:19. The Saints cannot Love their own Souls so intirely as God loves them. In particular,

1. God loves the persons of his Children: they are the Apple of his Eye, Zach. 2:8. He engraves them upon the Palms of his hands, Isaiah. 49:16. It alludes to them who carry about them graven on

the Stone of their Ring the Picture of some dear Friend whom they intirely affect.

2. God loves the places his Children were born in the better for their sakes: Psalm 87:2. God loves the Gates of Sion: ver. 5. This and that man was born in her; (i. e.) This and that Believer. God loves the very ground his Children go upon. Why was Iudaea (the Ancient seat of Israel) called a delightsome Land? Malachi 5:12. Not so much delightful for the fruit growing in it, as for the Saints living in it.

3. God so loves his Children that he chargeth the great ones of the World upon pain of death not to hurt them: their persons are sacred, Psalm 105:14. He reprov'd Kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed. By anointed, are meant such as have the anointing of the Spirit, 1 John 2:20.

4. God delights in his Childrens company, he loves to see their faces, Song of Solomon 2:24. Let me see your Countenance. If but two or three of Gods Children meet and pray together, God will be sure to make one of the company; Matthew 18:20. There am I in the midst of them.

5. God so loves his Children, that his Eye is never off them; Psalm 33:18. The Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him. But is this such a priviledge, to have Gods Eye upon his Children? Gods Eye is upon the Wicked too. Answ. It is one kind of Eye that the Judge casts upon the Malefactor, and another that the Prince casts upon his Favourite. Gods Eye upon the Wicked is, an Eye of Revenge; but his Eye upon his Children is an Eye of Benediction.

6. God sets a continual guard about his Children, to preserve them from danger. He hides them in his Pavilion, Psalm 27:5. He covers them with the Golden Feathers of his Protection, Psalm 91:4. God preserved Athanasius strangely, he put it into his Mind to depart out of the House he was in, the night before the Enemies came to search for him. No Prince goes so well guarded as Gods Child, for he has a guard of Angels about him. The Angels are a numerous guard, 2 Kin. 6:17. The Mountain was full of Horses and Chariots of fire: those Horses and Chariots of fire were the Angels of God, gathered together in the manner of an huge host to defend the Prophet Elisha.

7. God puts his Children in rich apparel: Psalm. 45:13. Her cloathing is of wrought Gold. Jacob loved his Son Joseph, and gave him a finer Coat to wear than the rest of his brethren, Genesis 37:3. He made him a Coat of divers Colors. God loves his Children and gives them a finer Coat, more curiously Woven, a Coat of divers Colors: it is partly made of Christs Righteousness, and partly made of inherent Holiness.

8. Such is Gods love, that he thinks nothing too Good for his Children, he enricheth them with the upper and nether Springs; he gives them the Kidneys of the Wheat, and Hony out of the Rock; he makes them a feast of fat things, Isaiah. 25:6. He gives them the body and blood of his Son, and delights to see his Children spreading themselves as Olive plants round about his Table.

3. Such as are Fearers of God, he will receive their Petitions from them as a Father does from his Son; they may come boldly to the throne of Grace, Hebrews 4:16. If they come for pardon of sin, strength against Temptation, God will not deny them. Three things

may cause boldness in prayer; the Saints have a Father to pray to, and the Spirit to help them to pray, and Jesus Christ as their Advocate to present their Prayers.

4. Such as are Fearers of God, God will bestow an Inheritance upon them, as a Father does upon his Son: this Inheritance is no less than a Kingdom, Luke 12:32. In it are Gates of Pearl, Rivers of Pleasure: and which is to be noted as a difference between Gods setting an Inheritance on his Children, and a Fathers setting an Inheritance: a Son cannot enjoy the Inheritance till his Father be dead; but every adopted child of God may at once enjoy both the Inheritance and the Father, because God is both Father and Inheritance.

5. Such as are Fearers of God, God will pass by many infirmities. That is meant by this expression in the Text, I will spare them as a man spares his own Son. What a wonder is this, that God did not spare the Angels! 2 Peter 2:4. Nay, he did not spare his natural Son, Romans 8:32. Yet he will spare his Adopted Sons: I will spare them, I will not use extremity as I might, but pass by many aberrations.

Not that the Sins of Gods Children are hid from him; but such is his paternal Clemency, that he is pleased to bear with many frailties in his Children. He spares them as a Father spares his Son. How often do Gods people grieve his Spirit by the neglect of their Spiritual Watch, the loss of their first-love; but God spares them! Israel provoked God with their murmurings, but he used Fatherly Indulgence towards them, Psalm 78:38. But he being full of Compassion, forgave their Iniquity, yea many a time turned he his anger away from them.

From this word, I will spare them as a man spares his Son, take Notice, that the best need sparing, Psalm 130:3. If you, Lord, should mark Iniquities, Lord, who shall stand? The Papists speak of Merits, but how can we merit when our best services are so defective that we need sparing? how can these two stand together, our meriting and God's sparing? what will become of us without sparing Mercy? we had need pray as Nehemiah, cap. 13:22. Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and spare me according to the greatness of your Mercy. Let us fly to this Asylum, Lord spare us as a Father spares his Son.

See Gods different dealing with the Godly and the Wicked; the Lord will not spare the Wicked, Jeremiah 13:14. I will not Pity, nor spare, nor have Mercy, but destroy them. 'Tis sad, when the Prisoner begs of the Judge to spare him, but the Judge will shew him no favor. Gods cup of wrath is unmixed, Revelation 14:10. Yet it is said to be mixed, Psalm 78:5. Gods cup of wrath he gives the Wicked is mixed with all sorts of Plagues, but it is a Cup unmixed, without the least drop of Mercy in it. God for a while Reprieves men, but forbearance is no forgiveness. Though God spare his Children, yet obdurate sinners shall feel the weight of his wrath.

If the Lord spares his people as a Father does his Son, then they should serve him as a Son does his Father: serve him willingly, 1 Chron. 28:9. Know you the God of your Fathers, and serve him with a willing mind. God does not love to be put to strain. Therefore Cains Sacrifice was rejected, because he brought it grudgingly, and against his Mind: it was rather the paying of a tax than a free-will Offering. That is the best obedience which is volun-

tary, as that is the best Honey which drops from the Comb. God sometimes accepts of willingness without the Work, but never of the work without willingness.

2. Serve God Vniversally. True obedience is Vniform, it observes one command as well as another, it sets upon duties difficult and dangerous. As the Needle points that way which the Loadstone draws: so a Gracious Heart inclines to those things which the word suggests; Luke 1:6. 'Tis the note of an Hypocrite to be partial in Obedience; some sin he will indulge, some duty he will dispense with, his Obedience is lame on one foot.

3. Serve God Swiftly: Beware of a dull temper of Soul; the loveliness of Obedience is in the liveliness: we read of two Women, Zach. 5:9. The Wind was in their Wings: Wings are Swift, but Wind in the Wings denotes great Swiftness; such Swiftness should be in our Obedience to God: If God spares us as a Father does his Son, we should serve him as a Son does his Father.

If God Spares us as a Father does his Son, let us imitate God. 'Tis natural for Children to imitate their Parents; look what the Father does, the Child is apt to learn the same. Let us imitate God in this one thing, as God spares us, and passes by many failures, so let us be sparing in our Censures of others; let us look upon the Weaknesses and Indiscretions of our Brethren with a more tender compassionate eye. Indeed, in case of Scandal, here we ought not to bear with others, but sharply reprove them: But if through Inadvertency or Passion they commit Indecencies, let us Pity and Pray for them: How much does God bear with in us! He Spares us, and shall not we be Sparing to others? perhaps they may be wronged, and false things may be laid to their Charge. Athanasius was falsely Accused by the Arrians of Adultery, Basil of Heresie.

'Tis usual for the World to misrepresent the People of God; therefore let us be sparing in our Censures: God spares us, and shall not we be sparing towards others?

Here is Comfort to the Children of God in case of Failings: The Lord will not be severe to mark what they have done amiss, but will Spare them: He passes by many Infirmities, Zephaniah 3:17. He will rest in his Love; in the Original it is, He will be silent in his Love. As if the Prophet had said, Though the Church had her Failings, yet Gods Love was such, that it would not suffer him to mention them: He will be silent in his Love. God winks at many oversights, Ezekiel 20:17. Mine eye Spared them from destroying them. I speak not of presumptuous sins, but Failings, as vain Thoughts, deadness in Duty, suddain Surprizals by Temptation: these being mourned for, God for Christs fake will Spare us as a Father does his Son.

This is one of the richest Comforts in the Book of God: Who is he that lives and sins not? how defective are we in our best Duties! how full are our Lives either of Blanks or Blots! Were it not for Sparing Mercy, we should all goe to Hell; but this Text is a standing Cordial; if our Hearts are sincere, God will Spare us as a Father does his Son: Hosea 11:9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine Anger. I know not a greater Rock of Support for a fainting Christian than this; God will abate of the Severity of the Law; though we come short in our Duty, he will not fail of his Mercy, but will Spare us as a Father Spareth his Son.

CHAP. 20. CONCLUDING THE CHAPTER



MAL. III. 18. _Then shall ye return, and discern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that Serveth God, — and him that Serveth him not.

HEre follows the close of the Chapter, which I shall little more than Paraphrase upon. These words are spoken to the wicked, as Piscator, Calvin, Grotius, and other learned Expositors assert: for though the Godly shall at last discern what a difference God makes between them and the Wicked, how Indulgent he is to the one, and how Severe to the other; yet this Text is chiefly spoken to the Wicked, verse 14. Ye have said it is vain to Serve God; and verse 15. Now we call the Proud happy, yea they that work Wickedness are set up: Well says God, though now ye call the Proud happy and the Godly indiscreet, yet when I have made up my Jewels, then you Wicked ones shall see clearly what a Difference I make between the Righteous, and the Wicked, between him that Serveth God and him that Serveth him not.

Then, when it is too late, when the day of Grace is past, and the Draw-bridge of Mercy is pulled up, then shall ye discern a difference between the Holy and the Prophane.

The Wicked at present have their Eyes shut, Deuteronomy 29:4. The Lord has not given you an Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear to this day. Natural men have the Sword upon their right Eye, Zach. 11:17. They see no difference between the Pious and the Impious, they see not but it fares as well with the Wicked as the Righteous; nay, it seems to fare better, the wicked flourish, Psalm 73:12. These are the ungodly who prosper in the World, they increase in riches; whereas they that Pray and Fast, are Oppressed. The Wicked bless themselves, and think they are now in a better condition than the Righteous; the matter is not to be wondred at, for the God of this World has blinded the minds of Sinners, 2 Corinthians 4:4. But at last their eyes shall be opened: and that brings me to the second;

That there is a time shortly coming, when Impious flagitious Sinners shall see a sensible difference between the Godly and the Wicked. Vertetur alea, the Tables will then be turned: Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked.

When is the time when the Eyes of Sinners shall be opened, and they shall see a difference between the Righteous and the Wicked?

There are two times when Sinners shall see a manifest difference between the Righteous and the Wicked.

- 1. At the day of Judgment. - 2. At the hour of Separation.

1. At the day of Judgment; That will be a day of Discrimination. Things will then appear in their proper colors; the difference will easily be seen between good and bad; the one being Absolved, the other Condemned.

2. At the hour of Separation; When God shall Eternally Separate the Reprobate from the Elect, as a Fan separateth the Chaff from the Wheat, then shall there be a visible discerning between the Righteous and the Wicked, Matthew 25:32. Before him shall be gathered all Nations, and he shall separate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth the Sheep from the Goats. Jesus Christ will take his Saints up with him into Glory, and will cast the Wicked down to Hell: He will make up the Godly as Jewels, and make up the Wicked in Bundles, Matthew 13:30. Bind them in Bundles and burn them. Now Sinners shall be convinced with a Vengeance, that the State of the Righteous and Wicked is different: They shall see the Righteous advanced to a Kingdom, and themselves cast into a Fiery Prison. O the dreadfulness of that place of Torment! — *Et vox et verba deficiunt*— Could men lay their Ears to the Infernal Lake, and but for one hour hear the Groans and Shrieks of the Damned, they would tell us that they now see what before they would not believe, the infinite difference between the Righteous and the Wicked. In Hell is Torment upon Torment, Blackness of darkness, Jude 13. Bonds and Chains, 2 Peter 2:4. These Chains are Gods Decree ordaining, and his Power binding men under Wrath; and that which does accent and put a Sting into the Torments of the wicked is, that they shall be always Scorching in the Torrid Zone of Gods Wrath, Revel. 14:11. The Smoak of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Christ said of his Suffering on the Cross, It is finished; But Sinners shall never say of their Sufferings in Hell, they are finished: no, imagine so many thousand Years the Damned have lain in Hell as there are drops in the Sea, Eternity is yet to begin.

This may inform all wicked men, that (how Blind soever they are now, yet) at last the Vail shall be taken from their Eyes: They now count themselves the only happy men, and look upon the People of God with Derision, they load them with Invectives, and Curse them with their Excommunications: Well, the time is not far off, when the Wicked shall clearly discern who belong to Christ, and who belong to the Devil; as Moses said to Korah and his Company, Numb. 16:5. To morrow the Lord will shew who are his: So at the day of Judgment the Lord will shew who are his, and who are not; nay, sooner than so; at the day of Death the Wicked shall guess how it is like to be with them to Eternity.

O that the Eyes of Sinners may be speedily opened, that they may in time see the difference of things, the Beauty that is in Holiness, and the Prodigy of madness that is in Sin.

Consolation to the Righteous. Though at present they are slighted, and have the Odium of the World cast upon them, yet shortly God will make a Visible difference between them and the Wicked; as it was with Pharaohs two Officers, the Butler and the Baker; at first there seemed to be no difference between them, but within a while there was a difference made; the chief Butler was advanced to Honor, but the chief Baker was Executed, Genesis 40:21. So though now Gods People are low and despised, and the Wicked Insult over them, yet when the Critical-day comes, there shall be a final Separation made between the Righteous and the Wicked: the one shall be Dignified, the other Damned, Matthew 25:46.

Be encouraged therefore, O ye Saints of God, to persist in a course of Holiness; though now ye seem to be lower-most, yet in the Resurrection ye shall be uppermost, Psalm 49:14. The

Righteous shall have Dominion over them in the Morning; They shall have Dominion over the Wicked in the Morning of the Resurrection. They shall then Laugh the Wicked to Scorn, Psalm 52:6. Then shall the difference be seen between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that Served God and him that Served him not.

CHAP. 21. GOD'S GRACIOUS DEALING WITH HIS PEOPLE: A CONSOLATION IN AFFLICTION



PSALM CXIX. 65. _Thou hast dealt well with your Servant,
O Lord.

— THE Psalms are the Marrow of the Bible, they are both for Delight and Use; like rich Cordials which do not only gratifie the Palate, but strengthen the Spirits. This Psalm is full of Divine and Spiritual matter: it was Composed, if not Sung by the Sweet Singer of Israel: The Words fall into two Parts.

- 1. Gods Kindness to David, He dealt well with him. - 2. David's grateful acknowledgment of this Favor, You hast dealt well with your Servant O Lord.

From Gods Kindness to David, observe

That God dealeth well with his People, Genesis 33:12. The Lord has dealt graciously with me. Gods People often walk unanswerable to his Love: but though they deal ill with God, God deals well with them.

Gods dealing well with his People ariseth from the Intrinsic goodness of his Nature; God is love, 1 John 4:16. From this flow all Acts of Royal Bounty.

Wherein does Gods dealing well with his People appear?

In enriching them with variety of Mercies; his Footsteps drop Fatness, Psalm 65:11. He Feeds, Adopts, Crowns them; and is not this dealing well with them?

But how does God deal well with the Saints, when he laies his hand so heavy upon them in Affliction? His pen is full of Gall, and he writes bitter things against them, Psalm 73:14. I am chastened every morning: how does God deal well with his People, when it fares ill with them?

It must be held as an undoubted maxim, that when the Lord severely chastizeth the Saints, he deals well with them: but we are ready to Question this Truth, and say as the Virgin Mary to the Angel, how can this be; therefore I shall demonstrate it, that when it goes ill with the Righteous, yet God deals well with them.

1. When the Lord afflicts the Saints yet he deals well with them, because he is their God. David was in the deep of Sorrow, Psalm 130:1. Yet he could say, the Lord was his Portion, Psalm 16:5. God is an exceeding great reward, Genesis 15:1. He is a whole Paradise of delight—*Bonum in quo omnia bona*—He who has God for his God, all his Estate lies in Jewels. If then God passes over himself to his People by a Deed of gift to be their God, here is enough to countervail all their troubles: what can God give more than himself?

2. When it goes ill with the Godly, yet God deals well with them, because while he is inflicting evil upon them, he is doing them good. That which the Text renders, you hast dealt well with your Servant, in the Hebrew it is, you hast done good to your Servant: Psalm 129:71. It is good for me that I have been afflicted: David does not say, it is Good for me that I have been in prosperity, but that I have been afflicted. God does his People good by Affliction Two ways;

1. The Godly grow wiser. Affliction is schola lucis; it discovers that pride, earthliness, unmortified passion which they could not have believed was in their Hearts, Job 36:8. If they be held in cords of Affliction, then he shews them their Transgression. Affliction cures the Eye-sight.

2. Affliction promotes Holiness : The more the Diamond is cut, the more it sparkles, Hebrews 12:10. That we may be partakers of his Holiness. When prosperity makes Grace rust, God scowres us with Affliction. The Godly are beholding to their Sufferings: God by the wholesome discipline of the Cross makes them more humble, more conformed to Christs Image: the sharp Frosts of Affliction bring on the spring Flowers of Grace: now if God while he is chastising is doing us good, then sure he deals well with us.

3. When God puts his Children to the School of the Cross, yet he deals well with them, because he does not leave them without a Promise, 1 Corinthians 10:13. God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. God knows our frame, that we are imbecil and weak; our flesh is not as brass, Job 6 12. And the Lord will not try us above our strength, he will not lay a Giants burden upon a Childs back. God will not stretch the strings of his Viol too hard, lest they break: if God strike with one hand, he

will support with the other, Song of Solomon 8:3. Either he will make our Yoak Lighter, or our Faith stronger. This Promise is Hony at the end of the Rod.

4. God deals well with his People when he afflicts, because Afflictions are Preventive. 1. They prevent sin, 2 Corinthians 12:7. Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given me a Thorn in the Flesh. Prosperity like Opium is ready to make men fall asleep in Sin, God awakens them by the Voice of the Rod, and so prevents a Spiritual Lethargy.

2. They prevent Hell, 1 Corinthians 11:32. We are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the World. Does not a Judge deal well with a Prisoner, when he laies some light penalty on him and saves his Life? Is it not goodness in God, when he laies upon us light Affliction, and saves us from Wrath to come? 2 Corinthians 4:17. What is a drop of Sorrow the Godly tast of, to that bottomless Sea of Wrath the Wicked must drink?

5. When God corrects he deals well with his People, because all he does is in Love. Afflictions are (as Gregory Nazianzen faith) sharp Arrows, but they are shot from the hand of a loving Father. As Gods not afflicting the Wicked is in anger: Gods hand is Heaviest when it is lightest, Hosea 4:14. I will not punish your daughters when they commit Whoredom: A Father gives over correcting a Child whom he intends to disinherit: so Gods chastizing the Godly is in Love, Revelation 3:19. As many as I Love I rebuke; when God has the Look of an Enemy, he has the Heart of a Father. As when Abraham lift up his hand to Sacrifice Isaac, he loved him; so when God Sacrificeth the Comforts of his Children, he loves

them. Was not God severe against Christ: yet it was proclaimed by a Voice from Heaven, This is my beloved Son, Matthew 3:17. Well then, if God only send love-tokens to us, he deals well with us.

6. God deals well with his People when he afflicts them, because he moderates his stroke, Jeremiah 30:11. I will correct you in Measure. 1. God does not smite his Children so much as he might, Psalm 78:38. He did not stir up all his Wrath: God does not make the Cup so bitter as he could. He useth Lenitives rather than Corrosives: he layes a lighter burden on, he might lay on an heavier. Does God take away a Child? he might take away his Spirit; Does he chastize the Body? he might torment the Conscience.

2. God does not correct his Children so much as they have deserved, Ezra 9:13. You hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve. Does God make us drink in a Cup of Wormwood? we have deserved to drink in a Cup of Wrath: does God cut us short? we have deserved he should cut us off, Ezekiel 47:3. The Waters were to the Ankles. Do the Waters of Affliction come up to our Ankles? we have deserved to be drowned in these Waters.

7. When God afflicts his Children, he deals well with them, because he keeps them from Sinning in Affliction, John 17:15. I pray that you keep them from the evil.

1. The Godly are kept from impatience. When the Wicked are under Gods black Rod, they either faint or fret, Revelation 16:9. Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God: but the Godly are silent under the Rod, Levit. 10:3. And Aaron held his Peace: 'twas a sore Tryal, both his Sons were con-

sumed with fire, but Aaron held his Peace. Gods People open their Ear to hear the Voice of the Rod, but shut their Mouth, they have not one word to say against God.

2. The Godly dare not use any indirect means to extricate themselves out of Trouble. Wicked men, like Malefactors, care not how they get loose, they will sin themselves out of straits: the People of God had rather lye in the Furnace to have their dross purged, than come out too soon: they will not purchase the liberty of their Persons by insnaring their Consciences. Does not God deal well with his Children in keeping them from sinning in Affliction? Affliction cannot do that mischief as sin does: the one is like a rent in the Garment, the other is like a rent in the Flesh. Affliction may deprive us of our Estates, but Sin deprives us of our God.

8. God deals well with his Children in Affliction, because though he Correct them, he does not forsake them. Indeed Sion said, the Lord has forsaken me, Isaiah. 49:14; But that was under a Temptation, Lam. 3:31. The Lord will not cast off for Ever. God may alter his Providence, not his purpose: he may change his dispensation, not his disposition, Hosea 11:8. How shall I give you up O Ephraim? It alludes to a Father who is about to disinherit his Son, but when he is going to set his hand to the deed, his bowels begin to Work; I am his Father, and though he be a Rebellious Son, yet he is a Son: how shall I disinherit him? Such are the Workings of Gods bowels to his Children; though he may give them a severe rebuke, yet he will not cut off the entail of Mercy.

9. God deals well with his Children in Affliction, because though their condition be sad, yet it is not so bad as others: the Lord puts a difference between the Chastisements of the Godly, and the Punishments of the Wicked: the Godly man has Pain in his

sickness, but the Wicked man has Wrath in his sickness, Ecclesiastes 5:17. The Lord shoots a single Arrow at the Godly, but a whole shower of Arrows at the Wicked: he punisheth them in their Body, Estate, Conscience. A good man has God to Pity him in his Sorrows, Isaiah. 63:9. But the Wicked have God to laugh at them in their Miseries, Proverbs 1:26. The Godly have Christ to pray for them, in their Afflictions; but the Impenitent when in Torment, are shut out of Christs prayer, Ioh. 17:9. I pray not for the World. Gods People are apt to say, Never did any suffer as they: yes, it is worse with the Wicked; their Sins and Sufferings meet together.

10. God in Affliction deals well with his Children, because if he take away one Comfort, he leaves more behind. God threatned Ierusalem to strip her of all her Jewels and leave her bare, Ezekiel 16:39. But you who belong to God, may Sing of Mercy and Iudgment, Psalm 101:1. If God has fleeced your Estate, he has raised you up Friends: If he has taken away one of your Jewels, he has left you more: if he has pluck'd one dear Relation from you, he has left other sweet Clusters behind, and can double your Comfort in them: is not all this kindness? But this is our Sin, we grieve more for one Loss, than we are thankful for an Hundred Mercies. Jacob was more troubled for the loss of Joseph, than he was Comforted with the Lives of all his other Children, Genesis 37:35.

11. When God Afflicts he deals well with his People, because he takes away nothing from them but he gives them that which is better. What dammage can it be to a man to lose his Farthings, and have Gold given him? If God take away Health, he gives Holiness: If he take away a Child, he gives a Christ; is not this better? God takes away a Flower and gives a Jewel.

12. When God Afflicts his Children he deals well with them, because he affords them his Divine presence, Psalm 91:15. I will be with him in trouble. God never Promised us a Charter of Exemption from trouble, but he has Promised to be with us in trouble. Better be in a Prison and have Gods presence, than on a Throne and want it. Gods presence gives courage, Act. 23:11. When Polycarp was near the Theatre and going to Suffer, a Voice came from Heaven, Be of good cheer O Polycarp. Was not Christ with the Three Children? did not he go with them into the fire? Daniel 3:25. I see four men in the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. He who is the Second Person in the Trinity, made the Fourth Person in the Furnace.

13. God in Afflicting deals well with his Children, because he gives them that which makes amends for their Afflictions; he drops in the Oyl of Gladness; he makes them gather Grapes of Thorns: John 16:22. Your Sorrow shall be turned into Joy. We see a Godly mans Sufferings, but we know not what Joy he feels: as we hear the roaring of the Sea, but we see not the Gold at the bottom. Philip Lantgrave of Hesse said, that in his trouble he felt the divine Consolations of the Martyrs: Here was Hony out of the Lion. The Saints have been sometimes so sweetly enlarged, that they had rather endure their Afflictions than want their Comforts, 2 Corinthians 1:5. As the Sufferings of Christ abound in us: so our Consolation also aboundeth by Christ. Saint Paul had his Prison-Songs, Act. 16 25. This Bird of Paradise could sing in Winter. God turns the Waters of Marah into Wine; He keeps his Cordials for fainting. When the Saints taste most of the Wrath of Men, they shall feel most of the Love of God: thus the Lord candies his Wormwood with Sugar.

14. When God Corrects his Children he deals well with them, because these Paroxysms or hot trials do not last long. — Post nubila Phaebus— 1 Kin. 11:39. I will Afflict the Seed of David, but not for ever: God will love for ever, but not afflict for ever; he will ere long give his people a Writ of ease. A Sinners best, and a Saints worst are but short; Affliction is called a Cup, Ezekiel 23:32. The Wicked drink a Sea of Wrath; the Godly sip only of the Cup of Affliction, and God will shortly say, Transeat Calix, Let this Cup pass away from them, Isaiah. 35:10. Sorrow and sighing shall fly away. As Affliction has a Sting to torment, so it has a Wing to fly.

15. When God puts his Children to the School of the Cross, he deals well with them, because these Afflictions are Manuductions to lead them to Heaven. Per crucem ad coelum. 2 Corinthians 4:17. Our light Affliction works for us a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory. Upon the dark Color of Affliction God layes the Golden Color of Glory. O you weeping Saint, what a blessed change shalt you shortly have! You shalt change your Pilgrimage for Paradise: You shalt have your wish. Are riches desirable? you shalt have Gates of Pearl: Is Honor desireable? you shalt have white Robes: Is Pleasure desireable? you shalt enter into the Joy of your Lord. O think what it will be to be sweetly immersed in the River of Life, and Bathe in the Hony-streams of Gods Love for ever: think what the Beatifical Vision will be: what it will be to wear a Garland made of the Flowers of Paradise: think what it will be to have the Soul thicker set with Jewels of Glory, than the Firmament is bespangled with Stars: O what a Compensation will this be for all a Christians Tryals! A sight of this bliss will make him forget his Sufferings. One Sun-beam of Glory will dry up the Water of his Tears.

If God deals well with us when he chastiseth us, then it becomes us to Cherish good Thoughts of God. We are apt in Adversity to think hardly of God; this ariseth from Pride. Such commonly as are of high Spirits are of high Passions; they think themselves better than others, and that they have deserved better at Gods hands, and now Pride vents it self in murmuring. O let us take heed of having hard Thoughts of God. The Patient has no cause to think ill of the Physician when he prescribes him a bitter Potion, seeing it is in order to a Cure. Gods afflictive Providences are the strokes of a Father, not the Wounds of an Enemy. God smites that he may save. Out of the bitterest Drug God distils his Glory, and our Happiness.

Let us Think well of God; nay, in all adverse Providences let us learn to bless God, 1 Thes. 5:18., In every thing give thanks: if in every thing, then, in Affliction: And good reason, because God deals well with us. Job blessed God in Affliction, cap. 1:21. The smiting of Jobs Body was like the striking upon a musical Instrument, he sounded forth Thankfulness. A gracious Soul should bless God that he will take so much Notice of him as to Visit him with the Rod; and is so kind as rather to Afflict him than lose him. This shews an high degree of Grace, not only to Iustifie God in Affliction, but Magnifie him. Believers are Gods Temples, and where should his Praises be sounded forth but in his Temples?

THANKS FOR READING



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