MEDITATIONES
IN DIEBUS DOMINICIS
DE VITA FUTURA, 1628.

Meditations of the life to come.

I.
Creation &
fall of Man.

Ord, when thou createdst Man as the last of thy noblest works, that thou mightest crown him as the end and perfection of thy work-
manship, Thou madest him a King at first, gavest him rule and dominion over all the Creatures of the Earth, Thou entertainedst him like a Prince by bringing him into a most stately Pallace, covered over with a glorious Arch, embossed with infinite studs and spangles of gold. Thou madest him a royall feast with all the varieties and dainties that were on earth. Thou placedst him in thy own Gar-
den where all his senses were satisfied with unutterable delights, there thou guardest him with innumerable Angells and permit-
A
Meditations of

ted f't him to walke in thy owne Walk as a companion for thy selfe. But that man might be taught an eternall lesson of humility. The commission of that one sinne in eating the forbidden fruit, cost him his life and the losse of all his happinesse together, and derived an everlasting curse and corruption upon all his posterity. But yet such was thy exceeding goodnesse, O God, that rather then thou wouldst loose the company of so noble a creature, thou devisedst a means to redeem him, and thereby to joyne him nearer to thy selfe in more glorious mansions and farre greater pleasures, both for duration of time and extention of delight.

Glorious things are spoken of thee: thou City of God, thou Mount Sion, thou Heavenly Jerusalem, thou City of the great King, for by divers such names art thou called. This is the place wherein the Ancient of daies hath chosen to dwell, whose most glorious presence so illightneth that Imperiall seate, that the darkest corner of Heaven (if I may so speake of such infinite brightness) is farre lighter then the greatest splendour of the Sunne.
Sunne shining in his full strength. There are the innumerable company of Angels, those celestiall quires with most melodious ayres continually lauding and praising him that sitteth upon the Throne. There are those innumerable numbers of the spirits of just and perfect men, out of all Nations, kindreds and people, standing before the Throne clothed with white robes, and palmes in their hands, giving glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power and might to God for ever and ever. When we but consider what company we shall meet with in Heaven, we neede not be curious to search after the exceeding joyes which God hath there provided for their entertainment: only let us content our selves with what we read in general and be ravish't in the reading of it, that eye hath not see'n, ear hath not heard, neither is the heart of man able to conceive the things which God hath prepared for those that love him. If the only delight we have here be in the communion with the Saints on Earth, how shall our delight exceed in Heaven, where we shall meet with innumerable Saints that there
there shall beare us company for ever.

But this is not all, for that which shall there most of all delight us, shall bee the sight of God, that beatifical vision which the Ancients so much speake of, to wit, the beholding of God face to face. That is to say, a plaine, full and familiar revelation of himselfe to us, so much as our natures are capable of, a figurative kinde of speech taken from the direct beholding of one man by another, whereby the beauty of the face is the better discoveered, and it is called the Face of God by a phrase taken from men, because the perfection of beauty in man or woman is in the Face, which chiefly delighteth the eyes, and therefore God in discovering his beauty to us tearmes it by his Face. Hence are those sweet descriptions by the Bride, or her heavenly Bridegroome throughout the Canticles by his Eyes, his Lippes, his Mouth, his Haire, his Teeth, &c which all concurre to beautifie the face of man, but yet all so farre short to represent unto us that which is signified by the Face of God, that if all the excellency of beauty in the faces of all the men and wo-
men in the world were united into one singular perfection; yet it would not so much as decipher unto us one ray of God's glorious countenance that shall shine upon us in Heaven. *In his presence* (saith the Psalmist) *is fullness of joy*; and it is the fullness that makes up the joy. Hence it is that in the earth the soul can have no true joy, because it can have no fulness, nothing in earth can fill the desires of it, for when we have heaped up never so many pleasures, never so many delights we still desire more. The reason is, the soul hath not yet attained those delights that will fill it, nor ever will, till it meet with him that fits heaven and earth, and then will it everlastingly fill itself. For beyond fulness there is no appetite.

But this is not all, our delight in Heaven that we shall behold, the inexpressible beauties of God issuing from his glorious countenance; but herein is the singularity of our joy, that we shall be wonderfully taken with his beauty, and our souls inwardly ravished with the things that we shall behold. Let us resume that former instance, which is the
oftnest used in Scripture to express the joyes of Heaven, viz. of the Bridegrome and the Bride. If the Bridegrome appeare never so lovely in comelinest of body and condition; never so amiable in the endowments of minde; yet if the affections of the Bride be not inflamed with a love of them, if she prize them not above all, if her heart be not thereby tied to him with a constant and perpetual tye; by how much she is deprived of these, by so much is shee dispoyled of her chiefest comfort. But here is the excellency of our state in Heaven, that we shall behold from the face of God most singular beauties beyond what we are able to speake or think. And which is more, our soules shall be continually ravisht with a delight of them; nothing shall bee able to make our joyes either to faint or to faile, for that nothing can separate betwixt God and the glorified soule, either to darken those beames of glory shining upon it, or to diminish its joyes in the fruition of them. For sinne which made all the bate betweene God and us we left behind us with our flesh, for it could not follow us into
into heaven, and together with sinne wee parted with all our miseries, all our griefes and feares, and other calamities the wretched fruits and effects thereof, which the Scripture tells us shall be there abolished, when it tells us that all teares shall be wiped from our eyes. There shall be no matter nor cause of griefe in Heaven, but only of joyes unspeakable and glorious.

And how can those joyes bee otherwise, when God from whom they flow is infinite in power to make them so, and everlasting in goodnesse and love to them who shall be made partakers of them. When Christ who hath purchased this glory for them, contractts with his Father that his children shall enjoy it, John 17.24. Father I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me. As we received from his fullnesse a measure of grace on earth, so shall we an exceeding measure of glory in heaven. We see when the Sunne shineth how it illightneth all parts of the world on which it shineth; how light then is heaven when every part
part of it is in itself farre brighter then the Sun; and when God whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter then the Sun there shines in perfect glory. And therefore excellently doth that beloved Disciple describe that place, Rev. 21. Ver. 23. The City, faith he, hath no need of the Sunne (admitting it to be meant of Heaven) neither of the Moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lambe is the light thereof. Every Saint shall shine there like a Starre, and shall contribute their light for the beautifying of that most glorious place. O, what light will there be in Heaven when we shall see so many Sunes, Nay, God would loose of the end of his creation of heaven, if the Saints did not there behold and enjoy infinite glory and delight. For he made it not for himselfe, (sith all places are alike to him who fils heaven and earth;) but therefore did hee make it with such infinite variety and perfection of beauty, that there his Saints might sit with him and sing his praises for evermore. When the soule of Saint Austin was carried up into the third heaven, in those his divine Meditations
the life to come.

ditations of the joyes thereof, considering
the unmixed pleasures of that place; that
rest was there without labour, dignity with-
out feare, riches without losse, health with-
out sickness, abundance without want, life
without death, felicity without calamity,
and eternity without vanity. But when he
had further brought into his ravished mind
those most melodious Ditties of the Angels,
and delicious Songs of the Saints, and such
other delicate Musicke that was in heaven,
he breakes forth into this celestiall rapture,
O how happy should I be, if I might but hear
some of those sweete Songs that are there sung in
honour of the blessed Trinity, but if I might be
vouchsafed to be one of those heavenly Quirist-
ers that might sing but one song to the Lord Iesus
Christ of the sweet Songs of Sion, it would be a fe-
licity too high for me.

Oh who would then fasten his delights
on any pleasure that can here be offered un-
to us, when as the greatest felicitie in this
world, if we should compasse Sea and Land
for the obtaining of it, is but like that of the
grasse, which in the morning flourisheth and
B groweth

Sed & nimiun
se'ix s i ego ipse
meruero canterae
cantici Dom-
nino Iesu Chri-
suo de dulcisbus
canticiis Sion.

6.
The vanity
of the plea-
sures of this
life.
Vanity of life. Job. 2. 4. 


Vanity of health. * Non est vive, sed vale, vita. 

growth up, but in the evening is cut downe and withered. Take a short survey of the glory of all the earth, and beginne with life itselfe the best of humane things. Skinne for skinne and all that a man hath (faith Job) will be given for his life, and yet what more * fraile and brittle! what tongue wanteth not words to express the vanity of it? A dreame, a shadow, a blast, a buble, a wind, a vapour, a tale, a post, a cloud (all of them phrases and similitudes of holy writ) yet cannot sufficiently express the vanity of mans life. 

As the cloud is consumed (faith Job) and vanisheth away, so he that goeth downe to the grave shall come up no more. He shall returne no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.

What is said of Life may bee said of * Health, the very perfection of life, how vaine and fickle that is, one example in holy writ will serve for a lively expression of the vanity of both, in that excellent story in the 2. Booke of Kings, Cap. 4. set out on purpose as it seemes to discover the vanity of all temporall happinesse. A great noble wo-

man
man of Shunem, who abounding (I conceive) in many outward felicities, yet wanting a child which shee esteemed above all, refused the Kings favour in respect of this blessing. It is likely the Prophet for the kindness she shewed him woulde have satisfied her desire in any thing, yet neither honour, nor riches, nor preferment, nor the favour of a King (which many thousands would have coveted) could content her, but shee secretly asked that question that Abraham asked of God, O LORD what wilt thou give mee since I goe childesse. The Prophet granted her a sonne, never woman bare him with more joy, when this sonne was growne up, and her joy encreased with his years; how quickly was this incomparable jewel snatcht from her, on morning he fell sicke in his head and dyed ere noone. All that pretinesse and beauty that was in the childe is now vanished, and all that wonderfull joy of the mother that was bound up in the life of her son, was now dissolved into more sadness and hearts griefe, then if she never had enjoyed the benefit.
What is said of life and health may be said of all things in the world besides. 

Love not the world (saith the Apostle) 1. John 2. v. 16, 17. nor the things in the world. And he gives the reason by summing up the things of the world, and dividing them into 3 parts, For all that is in the world (saith he) is either the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or pride of life, and then in the next words he heweth the vanity of them. But the world passeth away and the lust thereof, &c. But these generals will be better discerned by discovering the vanity of these 3 particulars, Beauty, Riches, Honour, being the lively characters and exact expressions of the lusts of the flesh, of the eye, and pride of life, and which are indeed the grand impostors, and bewitchers of the whole world, and oftentimes steal away the hearts of God's owne people.

For Beauty, we may at once see both the power and the vanity of it, in that it in snared and beguiled the holiest, the wisest, and the strongest of men: David, Salomon and Sampson, how deare did those delights cost them? with how many afflictions were those bitter pleasures
pleasures attended, insomuch as it cost the last his life, the other his Kingdom, and the first his contentment. For from that time to the hour of his death David was not quiet from warre, from rebellions, from treasons, from troubles brought upon him by his owne bowels. Nay, let a man behold the greatest beauty that can possibly bee in the person of any, let the face be never so amiable for colour and favour, let the body bee never so comely for feature and shape, let the skinne bee as white as the Lilly, and embroidered over with purple veins; adde to this, the most gracefull motion that ever was in any creature, yet were the mind of man by exemption of unruly affections, but permitted to be wise, and to pause upon this pleasant vanity, and but consider that if this faire body was smitten from God with the boyles and botches of Job, what an ugly spectacle it would be, or what by addition of some little more time it will be, when it shall be withered and rivelled together with age, or if that be not, when it shall be turned into a rotten carcasse. Certainly the soule
soule of man would never rest till it had sought out a farre more glorious delight both for the excellency of being and lasting-nesse of continuance, and therefore most true is that which the wisedome of truth hath uttered,  

_Favour is deceitfull, beauty is vanity, so vaine, that the least ague doth change it, a small sicknes doth wast it, a little time doth fade it, a little sorrow doth melt and consume it._

_When thou with rebukes (saith David) doest correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume like a moth._

For Riches, if in the obtainement of them wee doe but looke upon the ends of Judas and the Rich Glutton, it might make us very slow to covet them, much more to affect them. For besides their vanity, that they take to themselves wings and fly away, how many are the miseries that attend upon them, in the getting, keeping and parting with them? But if to these, they be gotten with an ill conscience, and enjoyed without godlinesse, they are snares and thornes, nay very plagues and Scorpions unto us; fuell to our lufts, lets to our prayers, and blocks in
in our waies of piety and devotion. No sin is such a canker to grace and holinesse, as is the sinne of covetousnesse. The Apostle Paul maketh it cleare by telling us, Tim. Cap 6. ver. 10. That the love of mony is the root of all evil, which while some lusted after erred from the Faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrowes. No tongue can express a worse effect, and from that effect greater misery then Apostacy from God, which is usually accompanied with fearfull sorrowes if not dispaire, witness the lamentable story of Francis Spira, who from this root of covetousnesse to continue his Offices and meanes of getting, denied the true profession of the Gospell, wherein he had greatly profited, and subscribed to Popery which formerly hee had renounced and so fell into that intolerable misery of despaire of his owne salvation.

For Honour and Ambition, if examples doe give instructions, as they then doe, when judgements are declared upon them, wee need goe no further for search of this vanity then
then in Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Darius, Alexander, Caesar, &c. what vast desires were in them all for inlarging their Kingdomes, even to the clouds, what infinite care and paines tooke they for the compassing of those desires to the hastning of their ends, and vorting out their lamps of life, and yet all their glorious Raignes are now shut up in vanity, their remembrance is as if they had never beene, nay let the desires of man be filled with all the earthly glory that is to be found in the whole world, and let his heart cheare in it as much as may bee, yet that it might appeare to fraile man, that the highest worldly happiness is not exempted from that condition of vanity, which God and nature hath inseperably tyed to it, some crosse or misery that the wisest man could never fore-see, shall ever attend high place to make it irksome and uncomfortable, if not to overthrow the horse and the rider, and cast downe the Ambitious man lower then the dust. Innumerable examples might be produced to prove this out of Histories in all kinds: I will take but one for
all out of the best of them, *The Booke of God*, Haman (wee know) wanted not for as much honour as could be heaped upon a man; Prince and people were all but as instruments to contribute to his happiness: and yet a (wonderfull thing) the want of a cappe from poore Mordecai, whose head he might have taken off at his pleasure marred all his mirth; a silly crosse one would thinke to vexe a wise man, yet God put such a thing into it, that it did not onely quite bereave this proud man of all his joy, but never left him til it cast him down from the top of all his honour so low, as that his place could no more be found. To proceed higher, and as farre as earthly felicitie can stretch unto, let honour and high place, and all the outward pompe of this world bee conferred upon a godly man, and let this man have abilitie from God to beare it, so that no whit of God's glorie bee lost, nor any of God's graces in him diminished, (which rarely happens to high place) yet that the most glorious state of man might still bee subject to that vanity, which is over all created felicity,
some Envy, suspicion, jealoufie, disdain, &c. or other accident shall alwaies attend earthly glory, to make it miserable. A better instance cannot be given then in holy Daniel, whom when that great Darius had advanced (meerely for his virtues without any suing or seeking of his owne) above all the Presidents and Princes in his Kingdome; this very thing wrought such envie and disdain in the hearts of the Princes against him, that although, as the Text faith, There was neither error nor fault found in Daniel, yet they never rested till they had cast him from the height of his happiness to the lowest pit, even a Denne of Lions. To summe up all in this one period, Give me a man endowed with all the excellencies that have bee in any since the Creation, let him attaine to the Learning, Wisedome, Riches and Glory, of King Salomon, let him be as wise for counsell as Abitophel, let him have the meekness of Moses, the courage of David, the strength of Sampson, the patience of Job, the innocency of Isaac, the eloquence of Paul, the beauty of Absolon, that from top to toe had no blemish in
in him, yet what is all this but admired vanity? All this pompe shall not follow him to the grave, the wormses and dust shall devoure both it and him! The Prophet David makes this Epitaph for him. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish.

How incomparably excellent then is the glorie of Heaven, where none of these changes shall be, where shall be wonderfull advancement, but without Injustice, abundance of glorie, but without Envie, infinite wealth, but without woe, admirable beautie and felicitie, but without vanity or infirmity. Here shall the patient sufferings of the Saints be amply rewarded, and all the rage and spite of their enemies on earth, shall instead of doing them hurt, adde much to their crowne of glorie, here shall all those scoffes, those bitter gybes and jests against the purity of Gods children, be turned with horrible amazements and terour into the bosome of wicked men, when they shall behold with anguish of spirit what they here jested at. That onely the pure in spirit

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spirit shall see God and behold his glory.


Then my soul, think by these few instances thou must take a scantling of the vanities and miseries of all worldly happiness, raise up thy desires to that blessed place where is fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore, to him in whom is no variety nor shadow of change; to that company which everlastinglingly sing and are never sad. Think with thyself when thou seest and delightest in the beautie of any creature, be it wife, children, houses, lands, &c. that these are but vanities under the Sunne; to put thee in minde, that true felicities reach as high as Heaven, and were they as glorious as the Sunne itself, yet they are not freed from clouds and darkenesse and many eclipses, which shew their emptinesse and infelicitude. Nay, wee know not when we behold them in their highest perfection, whether they will not turne to bitterness at the last. Hazael looked amiably upon Elizens, yet that good Prophet wept when hee saw him, as beholding the abundance of evil which that goodly person should afterwards execute. The eye is not satisfi-
sied with seeing, nor the eare filled with hearing, faith the wise man. The more a man covets and hunts after the things of this life, his desires are hereby more enlarged, but not his contentment; for the mind is not pleased in that it is not satisfied.

Get thee gone then, O my soule, and fly hence to those celestial mansions where only thou shalt finde rest, there, there shall all thy desires be filled, there shall the presence of God replenish thee with unutterable delights, there onely shalt thou heare the voice of joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away, divorce thy affections from sin and from all the pleasures of the world though never so deare to thee, and marry them to Christ, thy gaine shall bee great, thy glory greater, even life and happiness for evermore. Why should'ft thou stay and abide any longer here amongst the enemies of thy peace, amidst so many sorrowes and afflictions pursuing thee for thy sins? Who would not forgoe a cottage to gaine a Kingdom, who would not exchange a few frailt comforts of this life, for those permanent joyes

Eccl. 1. 8.

Conclusion.

In torrente illis voluptatis nil ultra appetet cumulata satietas tanta crit felicitas. Bern ibid.

joyes of blisse? why wilt thou any longer set-
tle thy heart upon that which is nothing?
what are the choihest delights here below be-
ing rightly ballanced, other then vanity and
 vexation of spirit. Cease then to admire any
outward excellencies and be wholly taken
with those resplendent beauties that are in
the face of thy Saviour, to whom ere long
thou shalt be married, and partake of that
great feast with which hee will entertaine
thee at that wedding day. Carke and care
only for those durable riches that shall
then abide with thee when thou shalt bee
here no more. Hasten and hunt after the ho-
nour and happiness of the Saints; there is
no preferment like being in heaven, possesse
thy selfe of him who hath beeene thy God
from thy youth, who hath many a time rai-
sed thee up with his comforts, when thou
haft beeene in the Valley of the Shadow of death,
who hath beeene the portion of thine inheritance,
and hath maintain'd thy lot: forsake him not
and hee will bring thee to honour at the last, to
such honours as all the glory of this world
cannot reach unto. He that made heaven
for his owne Children, can onely declare
the joyes of that place: *Returne then into thy
rest O my soule, from which thou haft long
wandered.* Be content to part with any
thing on earth which thou canst not keepe,
to gaine every thing in Heaven, which thou
canst never loose: drowne all thy delights in
those sweete contemplations of heavenly
blisse, presse hard to this marke, strive for
this victorie, fight for this Crowne, lay
hold on eternall life, and let nothing
in this world take away
thy Crowne.

* * *

FINIS.