

A
TREATISE
OF THE
Loves of Christ
TO HIS
SPOUSE.

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A
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LOVES OF CHRIST
TO HIS
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CANT. 4. 9.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse: Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes; with one chain about thy neck.



Text, which after wee have been some while in Heaven, wee shall bee able to understand.

Certainly none can speak fully to this Text, but they who have the full injoyments of this Love.

But things that are not possible to bee expressed, are not totally to bee omitted; and herefore wee will lanch into the main Ocean. And when wee re not able to apprehend this love, let us cast our selves in, and at it comprehend us.

Some things in the General wee premise.

1. For the *Author*, or Penman; it was *Solomon* inspired by the *pirit of God*.

2. For the *Title* of the Book; it is called *The Song of Songs*; or, most excellent Song. So it is called for the excellency; and submity. The doubling of the words declare the excellency. As when the Scripture speaks of base things; by doubling the words they are more debased; as it was said of *Cham*, Gen. 9. 25. *A servant of servants shall hee bee: that is, a vile slave*. So when it speaks

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of

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of good things by doubling the words, it declares the excellency of the thing, *Dent. 10. 17. The Lord your God, is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords.* Thus much for the Title.

3. As concerning the *Matter*; there is difference among Interpreters.

1. *Aben-Ezra* a Jewish Rabbín thinks it to bee an History of the Church of God from *Abraham* to *Christ*.

2. Another thinks it to bee an History of the Church from *Christ*, to the freedom of the Church by *Constantine*, a *Roman* Emperour, who lived in the beginning of the fourth Century.

3. Another makes it contain a propheticall History of the condition of the Church from *David* to the end of the World. And divides the book into these two parts. The Church

1. *Under the Law.*

2. *Under the Gospel.*

1. The Church under the Law, from *David* to the death of *Christ*, which is continued from the beginning of the Book, to the sixth verse of the fourth Chapter.

1. As it was from *David* to the Captivity, which saith hee, is contained in the first Chapter, and the two first verses of the second Chapter.

2. As it was in the Captivity, from the second verse of the second Chapter, to the fifteenth verse of the second Chapter.

3. As it was after the Captivity, till the death of *Christ*, the abrogation of the Church under the Law, which continues from the fifteenth verse of the second Chapter, to the sixth verse of the fourth Chapter.

2. And from that, to the end of the Book is contained an History of the Church Evangelical, till *Christ's* second comming. Of this mind is *Brightman*.

But to leave this, wee think (and with us goes the stream of Orthodox Interpreters) that the subject matter of this Book is a Parabolical History of the mutual loves betwixt *Christ*, and his Church, set down under the persons of the Bridegroom, and his Bride. And thus much of the Book in general. Wee will now draw neerer to our Text.

In the former Chapter we read, how the Church, the Spouse of *Christ* doth declare her exceeding love to *Christ*, and her high appreciations of him, with her earnest desire to enjoy him, whom her soul saw so precious, and that *Christ* might discover to her, how kindly hee took her affection.

In this Chapter hee doth again enter into a singular commendation of the excellency of the Church, declaring also his upfeigned love to her.

The whole Chapter contains these parts.

1. A singular commendation of the Church by *Christ*, which is set down allegorically from the first verse to the fifth, and from the tenth to the fourteenth verse.

2. A gracious profession of *Christs* love to his Church, from the fifth verse to the tenth.

3. The Churches reply, with *Christs* answer again to her, *vers.* 15, 16, 17.

In the Churches reply; 1. A commendation of her head and Husband, *vers.* 15. 2. An earnest desire, of further communication of his Spirit, and communion with himself, *vers.* 16.

In *Christs* answer there is contained a Promise of his gracious acceptance of such fruits as the Church shall yeeld him, *vers.* 17.

This verse which I have read to you is a branch of the second part. (*scil.*) *The gracious profession of Christ his love to his Church;* of which, if I read no more than this verse, wee see enough set down to astonish and amaze us all.

Thou hast ravished my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse. Quid mirum, si regnum celorum vim patitur, &c! What wonder if the Kingdome of Heaven suffer violence, when the King of Heaven himself suffers violence!

Christ doth here speak in the manner of a Lover, whose heart is exceedingly ravished, and taken with the beauties, vertues, and graces of his Spouse.

Give mee leave to explain the words, and wee come to Doctrine.

1. *Thou hast ravished.*] What is meant by that? The expression is great, that the God of Heaven should bee so taken, even to ravishment with his Church and people. And yet let mee tell you, the word speaks more than any expression can utter.

The word is in the Hebrew, *לִבִּי נִשְׁבַּח* of which these interpretations.

1. *Aben-Ezra* translates, *rapuisti animam meam*: Thou hast taken away, thou hast stolne away my Heart, my Sister, my Spouse.

2. *Rab. Sol. Traxisti animam meam ad te*: Thou hast drawn my heart to thee.

3. *Talmudici prisci. Copulasti cor meum cum tuo*: Thou hast coupled my heart to thee; thou hast One-ed my heart: as if hee should say, thou hast so joyned mee, as thou and I have but One heart.

4. Another, *Vulnerasti cor meum*: Thou hast wounded my heart, my Sister, my Spouse.

5. The seventy, *They Encephalozas, Excordinasti, Eripuisti cor meum*: Thou hast unhearted mee; thou hast taken my heart from mee. And here our Translators, *Thou hast ravished my Heart.* All which laid together, they are mighty expressions, setting down, to wonder and amazement, the exceeding love of *Christ* to the Church.

Thou hast ravished, wounded, stolne away, drawn my heart to thee.

2. My

2. *My Sister, my Spouse.*] Wee will joyn them both together: both are spoken of the same person, the *Church of God*, which *Christ* calls, *אחותי כלה*:

1. *Sister*, Because shee is the Daughter of his Father in Heaven, and fellow-heir of Glory with *Christ*.

2. *Spouse*, Because *Christ* had married himself unto her.

3. *With one of thine eyes: with one chain of thy neck.*] Not to postil on them.

1. *With one of thine eyes, with one chain, i. e.* with thy Graces, thy Wildome, and Knowledge, thy Faith, and other Graces: As if hee had said; *I need not to behold both thine eyes*: the beauty of one of them is so great, it takes my heart. And *I need not to behold all thine Ornaments*: even one chain alone hath taken my heart, and drawn my heart to thee. *Christ* hath an high account of the least of his peoples Graces.

Thus having explained the words, wee come to the conclusions, *Thou hast ravished my heart.*]

Doct. 1. 1. That the Heart of *Iesus Christ* is exceedingly taken with his Church and people. *Thou hast ravished.*

Doct. 2. 2. That which doth so indear the Heart of *Christ* to them; that which takes the Heart of *Christ*, is the beauties and graces of his people.

Doct. 3. 3. The least Grace of his Church, doth greatly take the Heart of *Christ*. *One Eye, one Chain.*

Wee think hee cannot love us, wee are so weak in Grace: but it is his own, though never so weak, and hee can love; wee will fall upon the first of these.

Doct. 1. That the Heart of *Iesus Christ* is exceedingly taken with his Church and People. In the prosecution of this wee will shew,

1. What is meant by his Heart being taken.

2. Wee will shew that *Christ's* Heart is thus taken.

3. Wee will shew upon what grounds his Heart is so much taken with his Church, and so come to apply.

For the first; What is meant by his Heart being taken?

And here I must tell you in the entrance, that wee cannot sufficiently expresse it. It is one of the highest expressions in the Book of God towards his Church, that the *Heart of Iesus Christ* should be taken with his Church.

An expression, which if wee but let lye upon our spirit, the weight thereof would sink us; shall I say, hee doth dearly and entirely love us; nothing is too much to do, nothing is too great to suffer, nothing too much to give to us, hee doth exceedingly love us.

Shall I say, his heart doth exceedingly delight in us, his soul doth exceedingly rejoyce over us, above all the World.

Shall I say, wee are exceeding precious in his eyes, wee are choice

choice in his esteem, *Iſa.* 43. 3, 4. ſuch as he will give the World for, ſuch as hee will give himſelf for, if hee can but gain us, hee esteems hee hath riches enough, and reward enough for it.

Shall I ſay, his deſires are towards us, hee in a manner deſires no more than us; ſhall I ſay hee thinks himſelf happy in the enjoyment of us, wee are reward enough for all his pains, and all his labour.

Why all this and more the Scripture ſaith, and all this is yet ſhort of this expreſſion, *his Heart is taken with us.*

This, the next particular will give us further inſight into.

2. *That the Heart of Jeſus Chriſt is exceedingly taken,* I may demonstrate to you by diſverſe arguments.

That which the thoughts are taken up withall, that the heart muſt needs bee taken withall.

This is plain, you know a man will buſie his thoughts about that which hee cares for: wouldſt thou know what thou loveſt, ſee what thy thoughts are upon. As if hee had ſaid, there can bee no better character to diſcover what your hearts are taken withall, than to examine what your thoughts are moſt taken up withall, for what the thoughts are taken up withall, the heart is taken withall. Now the thoughts of Chriſt are exceedingly taken up with his Church and people. Wee are ever upon his thoughts.

Vis noſſe quod amas, attende quod cogites. Bern.

There hath not been a moment from all eternity wherein wee have been out of the thoughts of Chriſt.

Before the World was, wee were on his thoughts, hee thought on us to everlaſting life, loved us with everlaſting love.

After wee had loſt our ſelves, wee were then on his thoughts, when hee interpoſed himſelf between God and us, to ſtay his wrath from us.

Before wee came into the World wee were on his thoughts, witneſſe all the Scripture, in which are ſuch expreſſions of his heart to us. After hee came into the World, you ſee wee were the whole of his thoughts, wee lay ever upon his heart; you ſee by his doings, ſufferings, prayer for us. Read the 14, 15, 16, 17. of *John*. See how his thoughts were taken up with us, when hee was to leave us, what love hee ſhewed, what care hee expreſſed to us, what earneſt prayers hee put up to God for us; read *Joh.* 17. 9. to the end of the chapter. Yea and what proviſion hee made for us, hee would not leave us comfortleſs, but ſend his Spirit to comfort us, to guide us.

And now hee is in Heaven, are not his thoughts on us? did hee not tell us hee went to prepare a place for us, hee went to do our work, to intercede for us, to plead for us.

The Church of Chriſt is never a moment off from the thoughts of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 49. 15, 16. And therefore *his Heart is exceedingly taken with his Church.*

That which a man doth affectionately and indearedly love, that the heart

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heart is much taken withall, bee it Husband, bee it Wife, Child, the World, whatever.

Now Christ doth exceedingly love his Church, wee are said to bee the dearly beloved of his soul, *Ier. 12. 7.* and read here, hee loves us beyond all expressions, *so God loved the World, Joh. 3. 16.* so Christ hee loves us beyond all conceptions, *Ephes. 3. 19.* it is a love which passeth knowledge.

In the former verse the Apostle went about to measure this love, height, depth, breadth, length.

But hee found his line too short, his measure would not reach, therefore hee concludes it a love beyond all knowledge.

A man may expresse much love, but hee may conceive of more than hee can expresse. Why this love of Christ is above all wee can conceive, above knowledge. It is an infinite love. It is, I say, an infinite love, which is more than if I should lay all the bowels in the Creature together, &c.

A greater love than all. Witness what is done, suffered, and yet love above all. And therefore *Christs Heart is exceedingly taken with his Church and People.*

That which a man doth glad his heart with, and which hee rejoyces over, hee must needs bee taken with.

A man will not rejoyce over the injoyment of that hee loves not. The rich Fool rejoyced over his full Barns, but it was because his heart was taken with his possessions.

Joy is a fruit of the hearts being taken with any thing; you rejoyce in your riches, Husbands, &c. in the possession of what ever your heart loves. Now the Heart of Jesus Christ doth exceedingly rejoyce over his Church and People; they are his by donation, God gave them to him; they are his by purchase, hee laid down his life for them; if wee lay down our life to compass a thing sure wee rejoyce in it.

Wee are his Riches, wee his Treasure, his *Ammites, Rahama's,* and *Hephzibah's*, his precious ones, his People, his Spouse; and therefore hee must needs rejoyce over us, *Isa. 62. 4, 5. Thou shalt bee called Heph-zibah, for the Lord delighteth in thee: yea as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, so shall thy God rejoyce over thee, Zeph. 3. 17. The Lord will rejoyce over thee with Joy, hee will rest in his love, hee will joy over thee with singing.* And therefore seeing Christ doth rejoyce. Ergo is the Heart of Jesus Christ exceedingly taken, &c.

That which a man doth delight to converse withall, that his heart is taken withall.

Now Christ doth delight exceedingly to converse with his Saints, hee loves to speak to them, and hee loves to hear them speak to him, *Cant. 2. 14. Oh my Dove, let mee see thy countenance, let mee hear thy voice, for thy countenance is comely, and thy voice is sweet.* When the Disciples are talking of him, Christ joynts himself

to his Spouse.

self to them. *Ergo is the Heart of Christ much taken.*

When the two were going to *Emmaus*, Luk. 24. 15. Christ comes and joyne with them, delights in their talk, *Mal.* 3. 16. when Gods people were gathered together, *the Lord hearkened and heard.*

5. That which a man thinks nothing to dear for, nothing too much to give for, to do for, or suffer for, that the heart must needs bee taken withall.

But thus it was with Christ to his Church.

1. Hee suffered in his Body, those spittings, buffetings, scourgings, &c. that was dear to him, which hee gave his heart blood for.

2. Hee suffered in his soul even the wrath of God for her.

3. Hee emptied himself of his own glory, took upon him the form of a servant, with all our infirmities, penal, not culpable, as it is said of *Jacob*, hee counted all his labours but little for *Rachel*, because hee loved her, *Gen.* 29. 20.

6. That which a mans soul is satisfied and contented withall in the injoyment of it, that a mans heart is taken withall.

If a mans heart were not taken with the love of a thing, hee would never think himself happy, never bee contented and satisfied with the injoyment of it. Whereas on the contrary, where the soul is filled with satisfaction in the injoyment of it (what ever it bee) the heart is taken with it.

Now you shall see that the Heart of Jesus Christ is fully satisfied and contented with the injoyment of his Church, though it have cost him so much pains, so much sweat and blood, yet the injoyment of it is reward enough to him. It is the reward which God promised him for his work, *Psal.* 2. 8. *Ask of mee, and I will give thee the Heathen, &c.* here, merit of mee, lay down thy life, and I will then give thee a Church, a People. And that which doth satisfy, *Isa.* 53. 11. *Hee shall see of the travel of his soul and bee satisfied,* hee shall see the fruit of his sufferings in the saving of souls, and shall bee satisfied with it. It shall bee reward enough to him for all pains that souls are saved, *Isa.* 62. 11. his reward is with him, and his work before him, hee is the salvation of his people.

And thus is that which some think is meant by the joy set before him, in *Heb.* 12. 2. *Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despised the shame.*

Which Joy (saith an holy and learned Interpreter) is nothing else but the fruit of his sufferings, the redemption and salvation of his Church and People, according to that in *Isa.* 53. 12. *Therefore will the Lord divide him a portion with the great, and hee shall divide the spoil with the strong, because hee hath poured out his soul unto death.*

And it is an Interpretation may bee backed.

Well then, seeing whatever the heart of man rests satisfied in the

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injoyment of, the heart is taken withal.

And that Christ doth rest satisfied in the injoyment of his Church and People, though it cost so much to obtain it. *Ergo* needs must it follow that *the Heart of Jesus Christ is exceedingly taken.*

That which a man is exceeding chary of, dear of, his heart must needs bee taken with, those things which take our hearts, wee are exceeding dear and chary of them.

If it bee the World, Husband, Wife, Child, a man is exceeding chary of them. *Deal gently with the young man* Absolom, **2 Sam. 18. 5.** his heart was taken with him, and hee was chary of him.

Now Christ is exceeding chary over his Church: Oh! it is dear to him, therefore hee gives charge to the World, touch not one of these, you touch the apple of mine eye, offend not one of these little ones, they are dear to mee, hee is chary over them.

Yea hee doth not only charge, but menace too, and threatens men if they shall hurt any of his little ones.

It had been better for you, that a Millstone were tyed about your necks, and cast into the middle of the Sea, than to offend any of these little ones.

Christ is exceeding chary over his Church and People, they are dear to him.

Take a taste of it, *Joh. 18. 8.* when hee himself was in that Agony, and when hee suffered himself to bee haled before the Judges, and to dye, yet you see how chary hee was over his Disciples; why saith Christ, *I am hee you seek for, if therefore you seek mee, let these go their way:* As if hee had said, I am hee whom you seek, and against whom your malice goes forth, do what you will with mee, but spare these, let these go (what have these done?) with *Jonah*, cast mee into the Sea, that the storm may cease, nail mee on the Cross, fling mee into the grave, do with mee what you will, that these may escape.

Oh! Christ must needs bee chary of them, when hee would put his back between his Church and the stripes, interpose his soul between the wrath of God and them.

Drink of that bitter cup that they might not taste of it, bee wounded that they might bee healed, bear the curse, that they might carry away the blessing, as there was no sorrow to his terror, so no love to his love, all loves are lost, nay, seem hatred in comparison of his.

Another place, *Joh. 7. 9.* to the **16.** see there when he was to go from them, how chary hee was over them, he commends them to his Father, and desires him to keep them whom hee had given him. As if hee had said, Father they are mine, and I love them dearly, I have done much for them, but I will do more, therefore preserve them, therefore keep them.

I am no more in the World, but these are in the World, holy Father, through thine own name keep those whom thou hast given mee; thus you

you see how chary Christ was over them. And therefore his heart is exceedingly taken with his Church.

Hee will keep them from trouble, hee will buy out their trouble with the troubles of the whole World, and their lives with the lives of thousands; you have a place for this, *Isa. 43. 3, 4. I gave Egypt for thy ransom, I gave Ethiopia and Seba for thee: God will give whole Kingdoms for his Church to preserve them from trouble. I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.* As if hee had said, I stand not at it to give the heads of a thousand men, the lives of ten thousands to save thy life, to preserve thee. The Rame to save *Isaac*, hee is chary of them; if not to keep them from trouble, yet to support them in trouble.

Hee is chary of them, hee will deliver them out of trouble, hee will not suffer the rod of the wicked to rest.

Though for a time, yet, &c. many are the troubles of the Righteous, but hee knows how to deliver his, and reserve the wicked. If Christ do not deliver thee from trouble, yet hee will deliver thee in trouble; and at last hee will deliver thee out, who knows how to deliver his; when thou not, &c.

That which a man thinks all too little, nothing too much, too dear to bestow upon, that the heart of a man is exceedingly taken withall.

Where all the expressions that a man can lay out, do still fall short of his affections to it, it is a sign the heart is much taken with such a thing.

When a man thinks not riches, nor labour, nor his blood, his life too dear, this shews the heart is much taken with it.

Now the Church is so dear to Christ, that hee thinks nothing too dear, nothing too much for it.

It was not his blood within his veins, nor his life within his breast, which hee counted too dear for her.

Hee can bestow any thing on her.

Hee will bestow temporals on her, at least so much as is necessary for her. All things necessary for life, godliness; if hee give himself, how much more all things *Rom. 8. 32.* will hee give the greater, and deny the less: no. That love which gave the greater, will not deny thee the less; if it were good for thee, so much hee hath engaged himself by Covenant to give thee as to bear thy charge to Heaven, and then there is no want.

The Lions shall hunger and suffer want, &c. Hee bestows Grace on thee, and Faith is more precious than Gold: Hee might bestow out words on thee, and yet his heart never taken with thee. *Dives* had more wealth; uttered more eloquence, *Saul* more command, *Agrippa* more glorious apparel, than those his heart is taken withall.

Hee may give Wealth to a *Dives*, Command to a *Saul*, Eloquence to a *Herod*.

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But hee never bestows Grace on any, but it is an evidence his heart is taken with a man.

As *Abraham* gave portions to the sons of the *Concubines*, but *Isaac* had the inheritance.

Hee will bestow his Spirit on thee, to enlighten, renew, &c. Hee will bestow himself on thee, the collectioner of all other blessings; God cannot extend his love further in giving, nor wee ours in desiring. And that which a man bestows himself upon must needs bee precious in his eyes. Christ doth bestow himself on thee.

Who is the *summum genus* of gifts, the gift of gifts. The gift which doth intitle us to all other gifts, all is yours, if you bee Christs.

The gift which sweetens and sanctifies all other: Like the Unicorns horn takes away the venome and poison of all other. There is a curse with all other gifts if Christ bee not given.

A curse to your Gold, your Silver, your Prosperity, your Meat, Drink, Health, and Strength.

But where Christ is given, hee takes off the curse, sanctifies all; hee doth not only turn comforts into blessings, but crosses into blessings.

A blessing in sickness, in poverty, in death, &c. Christ bestows himself upon his Church, hee doth pass over himself, and all his by deed of gift, hee and all his is yours: As you and all yours are his, your sins, and sorrows all his.

And all his are yours, his merits, his Spirit. As Christ said to the Father, so may yee to Christ; all thine is mine; his merit, cloathing, his blood drink, flesh meat. Hee is meat, drink, cloaths. Christ doth not stay here, but hee bestows Heaven upon his Church. It is the Mannor house which hee hath reserved for his Spouse. Father, I will that those whom thou hast given mee, may bee where I am, &c. *Joh. 17. 24.*

They are married together, and co-habitation is a marriage duty, &c.

As *Abasuerus* had two houses for his Spouses.

And therefore seeing Christ thinks nothing too dear to bestow upon his Church: hence must needs follow, That the Heart of *Jesus Christ* is exceedingly taken with his Church.

1. Those which Christ hath made all things for, to serve for the good of them.

2. Those whom hee hath prepared Glory for, Heaven for.

3. Those which hee hath shed his blood for, must needs bee dear to him, his Heart much taken with them.

If a King should build a stately house, for one with whom hee would solace himself all his life; and should at last give life too, you would think sure hee loved him.

1. God made all for thee, the Sun, Moon, Stars, Creatures; all

all this frame of the World; sure you are dear to him.

2. God prepared Heaven for thee, a place of Glory; Happiness; where thou shouldest for ever enjoy him, and solace thy self with his love.

3. Christ shed his blood for thee, which was more dear to him than ten thousand Worlds. What is all the World, and ten thousand Worlds in comparison of one drop of his blood: and therefore they whom hee shed his blood for, must needs bee more dear to him than all the World; his Heart is taken with them.

Thus far now wee have gone in the breaking up the *Rich Cabinet of Christs Love*, the sent whereof hath cheared and revived us. Wee will now proceed to the further discoveries of it, and that is, to the third thing wee propounded, *Why the Heart of Christ is so much taken with his Church and People.*

Wee will but give you these three grounds, all which are taken not from us, but from himself, his own mercy. In brief, Either

From his own Grace to us, Or

From his own Grace in us.

The first Ground or Reason, why the Heart of Christ is so taken, is,

1. Because wee are his. Propriety you know is the great ground of love. Wee love our own; our own Husbands, Wives, Children: They are ours, wee have propriety in them. So here; wee are His; Hee hath propriety in us, and therefore loves us, *Cant. 7. 10.* The Spouse makes the same argument. *I am my Beloveds, and hee is mine: therefore his desire is towards mee; therefore his heart is taken with mee; therefore his soul loves mee.* And wee are his, in the dearest and sweetest relations.

1. Wee are his People, his subjects. Christ is the King of Saints, whose throne is in our hearts, and will brook no Rival: whose Scepter is his Word, and whose Word is our Law. Nay, least this bee too little.

2. Wee are his Friends. Henceforth I call you not Servants, but Friends. Wee are his Friends and Favourites. Nay,

3. Wee are his Children, begotten again, and born again to everlasting life, *1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.* Being born again, &c.

4. Wee are his Spouse, such as hee hath married to himself in faithfulness and truth, and such as hee delights in.

5. Wee are his Members. The Church is his Body, his fulness, and every one Members in particular, as the Apostle speaks.

6. Wee are his Jewels, his Treasure, *Mal. 3. 7.* In the day that I make up my Jewels, they shall bee mine. And therefore his heart must needs bee taken with us. Christ hath the same argument. *Where the Treasure is, there will the heart bee also.* The Heart, and a mans Treasure lye together. Now wee are his Jewels, his Treasure, his Portion, his Inheritance; that which his Father left him; and hee

Amat Deus
non aliunde
hoc habet; sed
ipse est unde a-
mat; et ideo ve-
hementius a-
mat, quia non a-
motum tam ha-
bet, quam hoc
est ipse. Bern.

Cant. 7. 10.

Ubi thesaurus
tuus, ibi cor
tuum. Bern.
must

must dearly earn it too. And therefore the Heart of Christ is exceedingly taken with his Church and People. So you see this is the first ground, why, because wee are his, and his in the dearest, nearest, choicest of Relations.

To be brief, wee are his these four wayes. Wee are his

1. By Choice.
2. By Purchase.
3. By Donation.
4. By Covenant.

1. First, Wee are his By Choice. Hee set his heart on us from everlasting, which was his first love, and that which hath carried God through all the expressions of his mercy towards us, to this day, even to admiration of Angels, and astonishment of men. These were his primitive, his bosome-thoughts to us, his first love, which is most dear and precious. As the first love of the Creature to the Creator is most precious in Gods esteem: the Virgin-love of the soul to God; those affections the soul hath, when first enamoured with God. Therefore hee tells the Children of Israel: *Hee remembred the time of her Espousals, the kindness of her youth.* That will not out of his mind, *Jer. 2. 2.*

So the first love of the Creator to the Creature; his bosom-thoughts, they are most precious. Oh! these take the heart; these are the fullest, these are his freest thoughts towards us,

Amor Dei non invenit, sed facit amore dignos. Bern.

Non quia nos delectationis Deum, sed quia ipse prior dilexit nos, denique dilexit, etiam non existeret, sed & resisteret, juxta Pauli testimonium, quoniam cum adhuc inimici essemus reconciliati sumus Deo, per mortem Christi filii ejus. Bern. in Cant. viv ex eo quod

2 Tim. 1. 9.

All the World stood before him, from the first man to the last. And why hee should chuse us, and pass by others; others finer peeces of Clay than wee are: others of greater parts, greater abilities: which if it had pleased God to have conquered to himself, might have brought him far more glory, done him more service. Here was only his free mercy. There was no ground to make him chuse us, before hee loved us: but there is some ground to cause him to love us, now hee hath chosen us. Wee are his, and his by free choice, chosen and singled out of a world of men. And therefore will hee love us.

2. Wee are his By Purchase. Hee hath bought us, and that at a dear rate, with the price of his own blood, Gal. 4. 5. Christ was made under the Law, that hee might buy out those, who were under the Law. Hence, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *You are bought with a price.* And what was the price? It could not bee too little for the meanness of the commodity, not worth owning when hee had it. But it cost him his dearest Hearts-blood; as 1 Pet. 1. 18. *Wee were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, without spot.* So then wee are his by Purchase; wee are the fruits of all his pains; of all his doings and sufferings; wee are the commings in which Christ had for his Blood; wee are his Purchase.

God did covenant and bargain with Christ, that if hee would lay

lay down his life and blood for a people, hee should have them: which you see in *Psal. 2. 8. Ask of mee, and I will give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance*, that is, faith one, merit of mee, lay down thy life and blood, and thou shalt have a people: as you see in *Isa. 53. 11, 12. Hee shall see of the travel of his soul.*

That if hee would dye, wee should live: if hee would bear the curse, wee should have the blessing. If hee would bear that wrath our sins deserved, and interpose himself between the Justice of God and us, the quarrel should bee taken up; God would bee at peace. If hee would purchase us, hee should enjoy us. And Christ hee undertook this. Hee loved us; and seeing hee could not have us, except hee did buy us; and could not buy us, except hee gave his blood for us, and as it were sell himself to the justice of God, that hee might buy us out: *Hee was content to do it.* Hee redeemed us, not with silver or gold, &c. And now being purchased by him, his by *Purchase*, and so dear a *Purchase*; his heart must needs bee taken with us. Indeed hee bought us, because hee loved us: and now hee loves us, because hee hath bought us. If wee did lay down our blood, our life for the purchase of a thing, and could after live to enjoy it, how exceedingly would our hearts delight in it! Christ hath given his blood, and laid down his life for the purchase of his Church and People; and hee lives to enjoy his purchase; and therefore the Heart of Christ must needs bee taken with it.

Shall I tell you? You are all the delight which Christ hath in the World: Hee delights to see you, hee delights to bee with you; hee delights to converse with you; and all the delights of Christ are taken up with you; hee hath nothing worth beholding but you, in the World.

3. Wee are his *By Donation*. God hath given us to him, *Joh. 6. 37. All that the Father hath given mee, shall come unto mee, Joh. 17. 9, 11, 12. I pray not for the World, but for them whom thou hast given mee.* -- *Holy Father, keep through thy own name those whom thou hast given mee.*

Wee were so bought, as yet wee were given: else where is Gods *Mercy*? and so given, as yet wee were bought: else where is his *Justice*? Gods armes are equal; in the length of the one, you have the measure of the other: and therefore hee did so express his *Mercy* to man, as withall hee did preserve his *Justice*. They were so given, as yet bought; and so bought as yet given.

And being his by *Donation*, God having made them over to Christ by *Deed of Gift*, being the full desire of Christ, hence the Heart of Christ is taken with them.

4. Wee are his *By Covenant*, *Ezek. 16. 8. Then I entred into Covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.* Christ became ours, wee his: Hee is our King, and wee his People - hee is our Husband, and wee his Spouse: hee hath given himself to us, and wee have

have re-given our selves to him: wee his delight, hee ours. And being his in Covenant, in mutual stipulation, and bargain, the Heart of Christ is taken with us.

2. Because thee is adorned with his beauties. Shee is beautifull, Cant. 4. 1. Cant. 6. 4, 10.

There is a twofold beauty which Christ doth communicate to his Church, which makes the Church lovely in his eyes.

1. The beauties of his Righteousness.

2. The beauties of his Holiness and Graces.

But these are not communicated the same way.

The one is communicated to us

By Imputation.

The other

By Emanation, or Infusion.

The one a Beauty,

Imparted.

The other,

Imputed.

1. Christ doth communicate to his Church his Imputed Beauty, then 2. His Righteousness, wherewith hee cloaths our souls. Hence Hee is called *Jehovah-our-Righteousness*. And is said to be made *Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*. And wee to put on Christ.

Now this Righteousnesse Christ doth communicate to us by Imputation making it ours, as if we in our own persons had wrought it. And it is as truly ours to save us, to justify us, as it is his to glorifie him. And God looking upon us through Christ, and Christ looking upon us in himself, as clothed with his Righteousness, hee beholds us beautifull. *Hee sees no iniquity in Jacob, nor transgression in Israel*. Not but that there was iniquity in Jacob; but God did not see it; God looked on him as clothed with the Righteousnesse of Christ, and so is said, not to see it.

As the Sun shining through a red glasse upon a wall, the wall looks red: not that this colour is inherent in it, but relucet upon it: So God looking on us through Christ, doth behold us Righteous in his Righteousness; not that this is inherent in us, or beheld in us; as the Papists charge us, but *quoad gratiosum Dei conspectum*, wee are rather beheld in it.

I am not ignorant, there are some, besides Papists, that deny the imputation of Christ's Righteousnesse, and say too much with them, *Justitiam Christi imputari commentum est*, and call this imputative Righteousnesse, an imaginary and fancied Righteousnesse.

I wish they would consider that wee say.

Wee say there is a twofold Righteousnesse in Christ.

1. His essential and personal Righteousness, as God.

2. His Mediatorial Righteousness, wrought as Mediator.

Justitiam putativam.

The first of these cannot bee imputed to us; it is essentiall, but the latter of these (*Justitia Mediatoria*) his Mediatory Righteousness, or that Righteousnesse hee wrought for us as *Mediator*, whereby hee did subject himself to the *Precepts*, to the *Penalties*, *Commands*, and *Curses*; answering both Gods *vindictive* and *rewarding Justice*; This is communicated to us, and made ours, by vertue of which wee stand *recti in curia*, justified in Gods sight, which is the first beauty *Christ* adorns his Church withall.

2. A second beauty wherewith *Christ* adorns his Church, and makes her lovely, is, The *Beauties of his Graces*; which may bee called the *Beauties of Holiness*, and set forth to us by those *Bracelets*, and *chains*, Ezek. 16. 9. and here by one *Chain*, &c. which is communicated to us, by way of *Infusion*, or *Emanation*, whereby *Christ* by his Spirit, doth derive from himself as the *universal Principle*, and *common stock of Grace*; *Grace for Grace*, according to that, *Ioh. 1. 16. Of his fulness wee have all received Grace for Grace.*

I know there are many interpretations of this, *Chrysostome*. The *Gospel for the Law*, because it follows, *The Law came by Moses.*

Others, *Gratiam, super Gratiam*, or *Gratiam gratia accumulata*, one grace to another, or abundance of Grace.

But this I conceive the meaning. For every Grace that is in *Christ*, there is some Grace communicated to us answerable to it, in some proportion. As the Child in Generation receives from the Parents member for member; or as the Paper from the Presse, letter for letter; or the Glasse from the face, image for image; or the Wax from the Seal, stamp for stamp: so wee from *Christ*, *Grace for Grace.*

There is no Grace in *Christ* appertaining to our sanctification in general, which is not in some weak degree fashioned in us. And hence the work of Grace and Regeneration is called a *forming of Christ* in the soul. And whiles wee behold him, wee are said to bee *changed into his likeness*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. And wee are said to have the *same Spirit in us*, that is in *Christ*, Rom. 8. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, hee is none of his.* And the *same Mind* is in us, that is in *Christ*, Phil. 2. 6.

There is a bastardly holiness, a painted false beauty, which is spun out of our selves, wrought out of our own Principles, with which wee shall lye down with sorrow at last. Sparkles of our own kindling.

But the true holiness flows from *Christ*, and is imparted from *Christ* to his Church, whereby shee is beautifull with his beauties, adorned with his Graces. And being thus, the Heart of *Iesus Christ* must needs bee taken with her.

Thus you see the second Reason, why the Heart of *Christ* is so much taken. *Because shee is adorned with his Beauties, cloathed with his Righteousness, adorned and beautified with his Graces*; which ingageth the Heart of *Iesus Christ*.

Hee that loved us in our own blood, cannot chuse but love us, as

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wee have his beauty put upon us; hee cannot but love himself, and delight in himself, where-ever hee doth behold himself: why these beauties are peeces of himself, part of his beauty, his rayes wherewith hee himself is adorned. And hee cannot look upon any soul clothed with his Righteousness, and beautified with his Graces, but his heart is exceedingly taken with them, *cant. 6. 4, 5. Turn away thine eyes from mee, for they have overcome mee. Christ* seems as not able to bear the view of such a beauty. *Turn away thine eyes, &c.*

2. Because they are the persons, upon whom God intended to advance the great design of glorifying the *Riches and Freeness* of his *Grace and Mercy*.

Now those whom God hath intended for so great purposes, as these are, which are the *greatest Purposes* that ever came upon his heart, his heart must needs bee taken withall. You know the more glorious and excellent the *End* to which any thing serves, the more precious is that *thing* in our eyes. Now wee serve for no other *End*, but the expression of his *Mercy*, the advancement of the *Glory* of his *Free-Grace*, which are *Ends* as high as himself, *Purposes* as great as himself.

And therefore God is not only taken with the expression of it, but with the persons upon whom hee doth expresse it. Therefore I say is the *Heart of God so exceedingly taken with his Church*.

Indeed God may single out some men for the purposes of expressing the glory of his *Power* and *Justice*, the advancement of them; and yet God hate the men, as you see it plain in *Pharaoh*, who for this cause was set up to advance his *Power*. But God never singled out any to bee the subjects on whom hee doth intend to advance the *Riches of his Grace and Mercy*; but his Heart is exceedingly taken with them.

Those, who serve to such high purposes as these, and are designed to such high ends as these; *The advancement of the Glory of his Grace and Free-Mercy* (which is the most precious attribute of God, and which some think is called his *Glory*, *Exod. 33. 18. Let mee see thy Glory*;) and if the 19. verse may interpret it, that *Glory* was his *Mercy*, and his *Mercy* his *Glory*; and therefore such must needs bee precious in his esteem.

Now his People are they, whom God hath singled out for these great purposes, for the *Expression* of more *Mercy*, than wee can *express*, nay, than wee can *conceive*, nay, than wee can *believe* at all times, but weakly at best.

And therefore the *Heart of Jesus Christ must needs bee taken with them*.

My Brethren, If God had not singled out some to express himself thus upon, God had not been *known in the World*; for there is nothing so much reveals God to bee God, as his *Mercy and Grace*.

And therefore God singled out a few upon whom hee would ad-

advance the riches of his Grace, that his Mercy, and in that himself might bee made known in the World.

As *Paul* saith of himself, *1 Tim. 1. 16.* that *hee obtained Mercy*, that hee might stand up a *Pattern of all long-suffering*. As if hee had said. Wee should not have known how patient God is, wee should not have apprehended how long-suffering God is to sinners, if hee had not had such an example of patience, such a pattern of all long-suffering, as I was: So wee should not have known how *Mercifull*, how *Good* God is, if the choicest attribute of God had been lost to us; like as if a great River had run under ground not discerned; if God had not singled out some, upon whom hee might have expressed the *Riches of his Mercy*.

And those whom God doth intend to bee the subjects upon whom hee may advance so high designs, so great purposes, must needs bee exceeding precious to him.

My Brethren, you that are the *People of God*, are such as hee hath intended to advance his *Mercy*, and *Glory of Free-Grace* upon; You are they hee sent *Christ* to dye for, the greatest work that ever was wrought in the World. You are they whom hee reared the fabrick of Heaven for. You are they in whom hee intends to delight, and with whom hee will solace himself for ever.

And God looks upon us now, not as wee are, but what he intends to make us. Hee sees to the utmost of his design on you, to eternity, and loves you now with that love.

If God should look upon us, as wee are, hee might see enough in us, to withdraw his heart from us: or if not, yet enough to cool and quench his affections towards us; being there is so much blacknesse with our beauty, so much deformity with our comliness, so much corruption with our Graces: Nay, so much blacknesse, and so little beauty, and so much corruption, and so little Grace.

But hee looks upon us, not as wee are in our selves, but as wee are in *Christ*, and not what wee are for present, but what hee intends to make us in *Christ*. Hee looks to the end of his design, even to that which hee hath designed us to. -- When wee shall bee presented *without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: holy, and without blemish*, Ephes. 5. 27. -- When wee shall bee *satisfied with his likeness*, Psal. 17. 15. -- When wee shall bee *ἰσάγγελοι*, like to the Angels; nay, like unto God, *Glorious* with his *Glory*, as now *Gracious* with his *Grace*.

And therefore God having intended us to such high purposes, and looking upon us for present, what hee purposes to make us, and what hee hath designed us to; needs must the Heart of *Jesus Christ* bee taken with us.

Thus having shewed you, what it is to have the Heart of *Christ* taken with the Church; and proved unto you that the Heart of *Christ* is thus taken with it; and given you the grounds and reasons

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tons of it; I will now descend to application;

It is to bee, that *the Heart of Jesus Christ be taken with his Church and People*: Then from hence wee may deduce these *Conseſſaries*.

1. Conſeſſary.

1. This then may bee a ground for us to expect, and hence our Faith may bee strengthened in the expectation, that *Christ* will yet do more for his Church and People, than yet hee hath done.

Indeed hee hath done much for *our Nation*, for *our English* *Ston*.

Hee might have *ruined* us, for a Generation of such as provoked him. Wee have been a *Provocation of his Anger* to this day. Hee might have *suffered our carcases to have fallen in the Wilderneck*, and kept our posterity to have entered into *Canaan*. Wee have looked toward *Egypt*, toward *Babylon*. Hee might have laid the foundation of purer times in our bloud, raised up a purer Church upon the ruines of us.

But God hath seemed to over-look our great unworthines: And to the terror of our enemies, and even to the astonishment and wonder of us all, hath begun, set forth, and gone forward in a way of mercy, such wayes as have been untrodden in former times.

And that which God hath given us in hand, is an earnest of what wee have in hope: that wee have in possession bids us but look to what wee have in promise.

And expect the performance of it, because God loves the Church: *the Heart of Christ is taken with the Church*.

Hee loves his Church, and therefore hee will purifie his Church, and take away her dross and tinne.

Hee loves his Church, and therefore will hee reform his Church.

Hee loves his Church, and therefore will hee take away whatsoever doth offend, all *soul-burthens*, all *conscience-burthens*, which oppress the spirits of his own People.

1. The Church is his *Fold*, and hee will destroy the *Wolves*, which have gotten in to devour the sheep.

2. The Church is his *Field*, and hee will weed out the *Tares*, and binde them in bundles to burn them.

3. The Church is his *House*, and hee will sweep it.

4. It is his *Floure*, and hee will fanne, and blow away the chaff.

That love which made him ingage himself to his Church, in precious promises, will not suffer him to rest, till hee hath made good those promises to it.

That love which moved him to begin, will not suffer him to rest, till hee hath made an end.

You

You see in *Ezek. 37. 27.* the whole Chapter is but an addition of Mercy to Mercy.

When God begins to go forth towards a people, in a way of mercy, hee knows no stop, hee can make no end. I will *do this*, and also *this*, as you see in that Chapter. God adds *Mercy*, to *Mercy*.

And the reason is, because Free-love begins, and that knows no end.

The proceedings of Gods *Mercy*, towards his Church and People, do arise from himself, his own *Free-Grace*.

His *Justice* is from us, but his *Mercy* is from himself.

If, when hee threatned to punish *Israel*, hee saith, hee will adde *Judgement* to *Judgement*. *This*, and *this* also will I do, *Amos 4. 12.* How much more then when hee promisetith to shew *Mercy* to *Israel*, will hee adde *Mercy* to *Mercy*.

God hath *Also's* of *Mercy*, as well as of *Judgement*. See in *Ezek. 37. 27.* *My Tabernacle also shall bee, &c.*

Well then: Is the Heart of *Christ* taken with his Church and People? Then will wee with confidence beleeve, and with patience wait and expect, that *Christ* will yet do more for his Church and People, than ever hee hath done, because hee loves them?

Let us but joyn *Supplication* with *Expectation*, *Praying*, with *Waiting*, and wee shall see it, to the joy of our hearts.

I never read, that ever God bestowed any great *Mercy* and deliverance upon his Church and People, but he first stirred up the hearts of his people mightily to pray unto him.

And never did God mightily stir up the hearts of his People to seek him, but hee wrought some great *Mercy* and deliverance for them.

God loves to make his People as thankful as they were prayerful: As happy Injoyers, as they were humble Seekers. When Trouble sends us to Prayer, then Deliverance shall send us to Praises.

Let us then joyn our *Supplications* to our *Expectations*. Times of great *Expectations*, should bee times of Great *Supplications*: whether they bee

1. *Expectations* of Hope, the Object whereof is Good.
2. Or, *Expectations* of Fear, the Object whereof is Evil.
3. Or, *Mixed Expectations* between Hope and Fear, as our times are; they are times of *Expectation*, and therefore they ought to bee times of *Supplication*. Wee are now big with *Expectation*; let us now bee mighty in *Supplication*. Great Stones are not to bee turned over without great strength. Great Mercies are not to bee gotten without great strivings. The Man-child of Deliverance is not to bee brought forth without pangs.

Let us then bee mighty in Prayer. That will make all our present throws and pangs subservient to deliverance: And then let us stand still and wait.

1. *Wait for performance of Promises.*

2. *Wait for performance of Prayers.*

There are many thousand *Prayers* registred in *Gods-book*, and many thousand *Tears* put up in *Gods-bottle*. Let us wait when all these shall come down upon our heads in a *warm shower of Mercy*.

Wait when the great renew of *Prayers* will come in. The longer the stay, the greater will bee the harvest. Wee say, *great Engines move slowly*. Small things they are quickly wheeled about; but great *Mercies* they are long in conception, long in the womb, and long in the birth.

Magnarum rerum tarda molimina.

This is all our comfort: *God will not bring to the birth, and afterward not bring forth: nor will hee bring forth, and afterward shut the womb again*, as hee saith, *Isa. 66. 9.*

Hee is *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *Beginner*, and the *Finisher*; where hee laies the foundation, there hee will lay the roof upon it.

2. *Confectary.*

If the *Heart of Christ* bee once taken with his *Church* and *People*: *Then hee will never take his heart off from them*. His heart once taken, shall never bee taken off. Men may love to day, and hate to morrow: but *God cannot*: whom hee loves once, hee loves to the end, even to all *eternity*.

As there was nothing in us, that was the ground of his planting his love upon us: so there is nothing that shall bee able to overturn the thoughts of his love, when once they are fixed on us.

Indeed our behaviour may bee such, as may cause *God* to bee angry with us, and correct us sharply; yea, and make us to know, wee had better never to have tryed conclusions with him: But there is nothing shall cause him to hate us, and cast us off. Hee may correct his *Spouse*, but hee will not divorce her. The *Israelites* were so hard-hearted, that for every trivial fact they would put away their *Wives*: But the *Lord hates putting away*, *Mal. 2. 16.*

If sin fore-seen were not able to hinder him from planting his heart on us: but though hee saw what wee would bee, yet hee loved us: How then shall it bee able to overturn the thoughts of his heart, when once they are fixed on us?

Men indeed are not able to see to the utmost of things; they are not able to discover and fore-see all the inconveniences and evils that may arise: and therefore that being discovered after, which was not fore seen before, may bee a ground to alter their affections, and change their thoughts, when fixed. The less *Judgement* and fore-sight in men, the more *sicklenesse*, and changeableness in men.

But now *God* hee fore-saw all. Hee fore-saw all that, which thou now thinkest is a ground for him to alter his mind to thee.

And, if all that fore-seen could not hinder him from fixing his love

love on thee, neither shall it be able to move him to take off his heart, when once his heart is taken with thee.

Hence hee is said to *make an everlasting Covenant with us*, and hee will *never depart from us*. Nay, *Hee will put his fear into our hearts, that wee shall never depart from him*, Jer. 32. 40.

And Isa. 54. 9, 10. saith the Lord (speaking of the Covenant of Grace, which hee will make with his people.) *It shall bee as the Waters of Noah unto mee: for as I have sworn that the Waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth: so have I sworn that I will not bee wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.* As if hee had said, this is as sure as the other: the one as firm as the other. You have experience of the one, beleeve the other. I give you the same pawn, he same seal of Heaven to confirm it.

If Men were as bad as Devils, they should never bring a second flood upon the World; because God hath sworn never to destroy it. And as hee hath sworn to that, and is therefore stedfast and immutable. So hee hath sworn to the other, that *hee will never leave you, nor forsake you*, and therefore God will not.

Object. But alas! *Do wee not see that God doth sometimes forsake his Church and People?*

Answer. Now for the answer of this, wee will premise these three *Distinctions*.

1. There is a *seeming*, and there is a *real* forsaking.
2. There is a *Temporary*, and an *eternal* forsaking.
3. There is a *partial*, and a *total* forsaking.

From these wee will lay down three *Conclusions*, in answer to the Objection.

1. Conclusion.

God doth sometimes *seemingly*, when hee doth not *really* forsake his people. God doth not *really* neglect his People, when hee seems to neglect them.

Deus bonus
non negligit,
cum negligit

Hee seemed to neglect and forsake *Job*, *Heman*, *David*, *Christ* himself, when hee cries, *My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken mee?*

It was *Dissimulatio*, *non indignatio*, as one speaks. Hee feigned himself to be gone, but was not gone.

The Cloud may take the Sun from our sight; but not rent it from the Skie. God may seemingly be gone, when hee is really there.

Hee seemed to be gone from *Job*, but hee was really there. therwise *Job* could not have trusted in him, in that great difficulty.

The same I may say of *Heman*, of *David*. Though God seemed to be gone, yet hee was really there. Otherwise they could not have prayed, exercised their Faith, and sought after God, as they did.

So

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So alto was it with the Church in the *Canticles*, cap. 3. 1. cap. 5. beg. And that is the first Conclusion, God may seemingly, when not really forsake his People.

2. Conclusion.

God may partially forsake his People; but hee doth never totally forsake them.

I say, God may in part forsake his People, which may bee occasioned on their part, by some fresh and new-acted sin. As you see it was with *David*, Psal. 51. 1. *David* had sinned: God had withdrawn himself. God was gone, comfort was gone, light was gone for a time. *Works of Darknes*, and *walking in Darknes* went together. Hee did not follow the *Direction*, and therefore wanted the *Consolation* of the Spirit.

But though hee doth partially sometimes, yet hee doth never totally forsake his people.

For the clearer understanding of this Conclusion, you must know there is a *threefold Presence* of God

1. *Quickening.*

1. *Comforting.*

3. *Supporting.*

1. God may forsake a man in part, in respect of his *Quickening* presence, and leave a man to the barrenness, flatness, deadness of his own spirit for a time, that the soul cannot pray, hear, meditate, do any thing, as formerly it hath done. As it was with *Sampson* when his locks were cut, his strength was gone; and therefore though hee thought to go out, and do as hee did in former times, yet hee found there was no such matter; hee was become even as another man: so it is here; *our strength lyes, not in our hair, but in our head.* When God is gone, our *Locks* are cut, our strength is gone. And though wee may think to go upon duties, as at other times, and meet with those lively and vigorous workings of spirit in duty: yet wee shall finde no such matter; wee are even become as other men.

Indeed so much of his *Quickening Spirit* God leaves in the worst of times, as usually, to keep up the heart to duty. The soul will pray, will read, &c. but hee gives not so much, as to carry the soul through the duty, with that life and vigour of affection, which formerly it had.

Time was, that the soul never came to prayer without an inflamed heart, never upon the duty, without a quick and enlarged soul. But now the spirit is dead in duty, cold in duty, heartless in the performance of those things, wherein the heart was so much taken.

2. God may forsake a man in respect of his *Comforting* presence. Though

Though man is not able to rob us of our comforts, and take away our joyes, they are such as the armes of men are not long enough to reach; yet God hee can. Hee may eclipse our joyes, and damp our comforts, and withdraw the beams of his Countenance from us, and leave us in darknes and trouble. I say, hee may turn our *Day* into *Night*, our *Light* into *Darkness*, our *Comforts* into *Discomforts*.

Thus you see it was with *Job*, with *David*, with *Heman*, *Psal.* 88. who, although they had the *Quickening-presence* of God, yet they wanted his *Comforting-presence*.

And indeed of the two, it is better to want the *Comforting*, than the *Quickening-presence*. Better to want *Comfort* than *Life*; *Foies* than *Graces*, or the lively exercise of them. The one is the *Esse*, the other but the *Bene Esse* of a Christian. A man may live, and serve God, and obey him; and yet want his *Comforting-presence*; as you see, *Isa.* 50. 10. But hee cannot live without his *Quickening-presence*.

3. God may forsake a man in part, in respect of his *Quickening-presence*, and hee may more forsake a man in respect of his *Comforting-presence*: But God doth never forsake us in respect of his *Supporting-presence*.

In the saddest condition, in the darkest night, in the stormiest day, the soul hath still support from him.

David, *Job*, *Heman*, they wanted the *Comforting-presence* of God for a time; but yet they had his *Quickening*, and they had his *Supporting-presence*.

As hee told *Paul*, so hee did for all. *His strength was seen in their weakness, and his Grace was sufficient for them.* Sufficient to bear them up in the tryal, and sufficient to bring them out of the tryal. So much for the second *Conclusion*.

3. Conclusion.

God may forsake his People for a time, not for ever.

It is but a *Temporary*, not a *Final*, not an *Eternal* forsaking, *Isa.* 54. 7, 8, 9, 10. *For a moment have I forsaken thee; but with everlasting kindness will I gather thee, have mercy on thee. For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills shall be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee.*

And thus much shall serve for the answer of the Objection. And notwithstanding that, the *Conclusion* is firm. *That if the Heart of Christ be once taken with his Church and People, hee will never take it off; hee will never clean forsake them.*

And, as God will not forsake his Church, as *Forsaking* hath relation to *Spiritual cases*, *Soul-distresses*: So I might shew you at large, to prevent another Objection.

The Loves of Christ

That hee will not forsake his Church, as Forsaking hath relation to temporal and outward distresses.

You may take his word for it, *Josh. 1. 5. I will not leave, nor forsake thee.*

It is true, it was a promise made to *Joshua* in particular; but belongs to the whole Church of God in general.

General promises may have particular applications, and particular general.

As general promises belong to every particular Member: so particular promises may belong to the whole body. And therefore though it was a promise to *Joshua*; yet the Apostle (who knew the mind of God makes it ours, as well as his. Hee brings it into the *Common-stock*, and shews it part of our riches, *Heb. 13. 5. Let your Conversation bee without Covetousness; for hee hath said, Hee will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* In brief; Hee will not forsake his Church;

1. *Either hee will protect them from danger*
2. *Or hee will deliver them out,*
3. *Or hee will support them in,*
4. *Or hee will sanctifie all to them.*

Which is the third Conclusion which flows from this Doctrine.

3. Confessary.

If the Heart of Jesus Christ bee taken with his Church: then all the passages of Gods providence in the World, are for the good of his Church and People.

All the dealings of God in the world, not a step God takes in the World, but hee walks towards his people in it.

1. *All the passages of Gods Providence to the Church in general.*
2. *All the passages of Gods Providence to any member of the Church in particular, they are all for good.*

1. For the first, All the passages of Gods providence to his Church in general, they are for good. Bee they sad, or bee they joyfull, they are all for good. Are they sad? it is to *humble* them, to *quicken* them, to *purge* them, to *purifie* them, to blow away their chaff.

This is certain. Whatever is done in the World, is done either by Gods Permission, or by Gods Approbation. God must either permit, or allow of what ever is done in the World.

And assure your selves, God would never permit, much less would hee ever allow, and approve of any thing to bee done in the World, which should not bee for the good of those hee loves so dearly.

Whatever wind blows, bee it North, or South, good or evil; all is for the Churches benefit. As the Physitian ordereth poisonous

nous and destructive ingredients unto usefull services, the health of the Patient: So God turneth those things which in themselves are evil, and destructive, to the good and comfort of his Church and People.

Hence is it, that *Christ* turneth the saddest and forest perplexities that ever the World shall see, into an use of Comfort to his Church, *Luk. 21. 25, 26, 27, 28. There shall bee signs in the Sun; and Moon, and Stars, distress of Nations, with perplexity, &c. Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the World; for the Powers of Heaven shall bee shaken; and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a Cloud, with Power and great Glory. When these things begin to come to pass -- then look up, and lift up your heads: for your Redemption draweth nigh.*

One would think this were a strange consequent deduced from such an Antecedent. A Consequent so comfortable, from an Antecedent so terrible. It seems strange, that such a terrible Doctrine as this, should afford an use of Consolation. Yet so it is. Bee the Premises what they will, the Conclusion is good. Bee his Providences what they will, his Promises are good: and those Promises shall turn all his Providences to good at the last.

2. As all the passages of Gods Providence to the Church in general: So every passage of his Providence to any Member of it in particular, is for the good of the Church.

1. *All your Injoyments, they are love.* You may read the Heart of *Christ*, the image of a friend, ingraven upon all you have. You may behold the impress of love, the good will of God circled about you do injoy.

All that wicked men do injoy, is but from the *Hand of God*, *Ex largitate* at is the highest tenure they can shew; even his general Providence, which causeth the Sun to shine upon the good and bad. And this tenure may bee cut off at pleasure.

But all that you do injoy, is from the *Heart and good will of God*. They are expressions of his good will to you, and you may read love in all.

Nay, they are the *Earnests of further love*. You may see and read *Heaven and Glory* in all you have.

Wee may well say, whatever the People of God do injoy, they are

1. *The fruits of Prayer.*
2. *The performance of Promises.*
3. *Expressions of Love.*
4. *Incouragements to beleewe.*
5. *Inablements to obey.*
6. *Earnest pennies of Heaven and Glory.*

2. *All your wants*, as well as all your injoyments are mercy, are grace. There is an *Expedient* in all the sad passages of Gods providence to you. They are *Expedient to try you, Expedient to humble you,*

you, to exercise you, to winne you, to wean you, &c.

Whatever thy condition is, it proceeds,

1. *From the best God.*

2. *From the best of God; his Heart and good will.*

3. *It is the best for thee.*

Wicked men have a *curse* hid in their *best* things: a *curse* in their gold, a *curse* in their silver, a *curse* in their health. But Gods people have a *blessing* hid in the *worst* things. You have a *blessing* in poverty, a *blessing* in sickness, a *blessing* in crosses, a *blessing* in death it self.

Riches are not in the *Promise*, but *Mercy* is in the *Promise*. Though *Poverty*, yet *Mercy*; though *Afflictions*, yet *Mercy*; And you can all tell mee, *A cross* in *Mercy*, is better than a comfort in *wrath*. *A loss* in *love*, better than an *injoyment* in *displeasure*. More dye in the *Flood*, than in the *Ebbe*. Though prosperity bee more *cordial*, yet afflictions are more *physical*. Wee often surfeit of *Cordials*, when *Physick* doth us good. And a *sanctified cross* is better than an *unsanctified comfort*, &c.

4. *Consefatory.*

If the Heart of Christ bee taken with his Church and People;

1. Then see what a *feareful thing sin* is, which doth cause God oftentimes to deal *hardly* with that, which his soul loves so *dearly*.

God doth oftentimes afflict and punish his Church sharply and severely: which yet his heart is much taken withall. And sin is the cause. And therefore what a *feareful thing is sin*!

How grievous would it bee to you, to bee forced to take hard courses with a *Child* your heart is taken withall: though it bee to do him good.

Why God is taken with his Church, and do you not think it moves God to afflict and chastise it?

Wee would fain do all the good wee can to the persons wee love. Oh! wee can never do enough for them. Why so it is with God to his Church: Hee loves his Church, and willingly would hee do any thing for it. And it is the grief of his soul, that hee must take contrary courses with us, to do us good: that hee must bee forced to afflict and chastise them hee loves so dearly: to bring them to *Life* by *Death*, to *Good* by *Evil*, to a *Crown* by *Crosses*.

When God parted with the *ten Tribes*, you see what a conflict there was in him: how his bowels stirred, and were moved towards them, notwithstanding all their sins, *Hof. 11. 8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim! How shall I deliver thee, Israel! How shall I make thee as Admah! How shall I set thee as Zeboim! My heart is turned within mee, my repentings are kindled together.*

How loath was God to seal to a *Bill of Divorce*! His heart loved

loved her, though shee was an *Adulteress* to him.

And when *Judah* did justify the sin of her Sister *Israel*, exceeding her in Idols, what trouble was it to God to cast her off! How willing was hee to receive her after all her adulteries? *Fer. 3. 1. Thou hast plaid the Harlot, &c.* And when shee would go on in her adulteries: yet how unwilling still was hee to give her up? till at last it grew so high, that there was no Remedy, *2 Chron. 36. 16.* hee must needs do it.

And when hee had done it, how exceedingly was Gods heart moved, that hee must bee forced to deal so hardly with them hee loved so dearly? read *Fer. 12. 7, 8, 9, &c.* See how God laments over the los of that which their sins would not give him leave to keep. -- *I have forsaken mine house! I have left mine heritage! I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hand of her enemies!* And what was it that forced God to deal so hardly with them hee loved so dearly? Why it was sin, *2 Chron. 36. 15, 16.* Hee sent Messengers, because hee had compassion on them: *They mocked the Messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets; until the wrath of the Lord arose against his People, till there was no Remedy.* And which of these hath remained to bee done among us? How hath our Sun been darkened, the Stars lost their light! How many burning and shining lights have been taken out of our Candlesticks, and planted in others! How many blown out by the rage of wicked men!

Did wee not justly fear, by reason of that *Idolatry, Superstition, Prophanation of Sabbaths, Persecution of the Saints, and Messengers of God*, that our day was gone, our night approaching?

Did wee not fear, that wee were come up to this, that there was no remedy? That God should have opened the Sluces of his wrath, and let in a Sea of his displeasure upon us? made us an *Aceldema, a field of Blood*, long before this?

Ah, my Brethren! Never Nation, never Church from whom God hath shewed himself more unwilling to depart and leave, than *England.*

Look upon the passages of us to God, and his wayes towards us, and see how unwilling hee declared himself. God hath upheld us, as if hee himself should fall, if wee did not stand: as if his *Glory* could not stand, if wee fall; as if his *Glory* had depended upon our preservation.

And how can wee better answer Gods dealings towards us, than to abandon that, cast out that which was our fear, and gave God just occasion to destroy us? Let us now do by our sins as the *Israelites* did by their *Leaven*. There was

1. *Inquisitio fermenti.* There was search made for it. So let us search out that *Leaven of sin, Superstition, Idolatry*, which have sowed our Kingdome, and laid us open to the stroak of Gods wrath. Search your houses, search the land, search your hearts.

2. *E-*

2. *Ejectio fermenti.*

3. *Execratio fermenti.*

And let all bee found in us, if ever wee would have a Pass-over.

Otherwise our *Preservations* from former, will bee but *Reservations* to future, and worser evils: sin will cause God to punish those hee loves.

5. *Consecratory.*

If the Heart of *Christ* bee so much taken with his Church; Then let this discover to you, into what you way resolve all the passages of Gods love to his Church and People, even into his *own Love*. His *Grace* is the rise, and his *Glory* is the end.

There are two main streams, in which the goodness of God doth run to his Church,

1. *The higher, and*

2. *The lower.*

But both these streams have the same *Head*, the same spring from whence they come, even his *own Love*.

1. For the *higher, or upper streams*, and these are four.

1. *Election.* 2. *Justification.* 3. *Sanctification.* 4. *Glorification.*

And all these arise from the great *Abyss*, and *Sea* of his mercy toward his Church.

His heart is taken with us; and therefore

1. *Hee chose us*, Deut. 7. 7, 8. *The Lord loved you not, nor chose you, because yee were more in number than any people: but because the Lord loved you.* So God did not set his heart on us, because wee were better than others; for there are others in the World who might have been made more lovely.

His heart is taken with us; therefore

2. *Hee justifies us.* Wee could do nothing to strike off any former score: for all wee did, set us further in debt: it was but an adding of sin to sin, guilt to guilt: the sin of our righteousness, to the sin of our unrighteousness, *covering a blot with a blot*; as *isa.*

30. 1.

No, it did arise from this. *His heart was taken with us*, therefore did hee *justify us*, Tit. 3. 7. *Wee are justified freely by his Grace.* The like, Rom. 3. 24. Rom. 4. 5. All which shew, that into this, all the expressions of his love are resolved.

His heart is taken with us; therefore

3. *Hee did sanctifie us.* Our holiness is not wrought out of our own Principles; spun out of own bowels; compass by our own strength and industry: but freely imparted and given of God.

As our *Righteousness* is freely imputed: so our *Holiness* is freely imparted.

That

Operamur ex
Justificatione,
non in Justifi-
cationem,

That thou art not a killing *Cain*, a self murdering *Saul*, a despairing *Judas*, a prophane *Esau*, a drunken *Baltazar*, a filthy *Sodomite*, it ariseth from this, *meer Mercy*.

But that God hath not only *restrained* thee; but *renewed* thee; not only *chained up* thy spirit, but *changed* thy spirit: This is *Free-Mercy*. And so the Scripture tells us, *1. Pet. 1. 3. Blessed bee the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again. -- Not only Mercy, but abundance of Mercy. So James 1. 18. Of his own free-will begot hee us. And that in John 1. 13. Wee were born again, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man: But of God.*

Not of blood] Nor great men, nor good men can do it. *Regeneration comes not by Generation.*

Nor of the will of the flesh] Our will is but a fleshly will, and cannot beget a spiritual nature.

Nor of the will of man] It is not all the indeavours of holy men, who labour to do us good, can do it.

But the Will of God] It is a mercy wee give least concurrence to, of all other. When wee have *Grace*, then wee are helpers for the growth, and increase of *Grace*; but who shall *give Grace*?

When the Candle is lighted, it will burn; but none but God can light up the Candle.

In after *Sanctification* wee *concur*: There is no concurrence in *Regeneration*.

This is the freest Mercy of all other. When God hath wrought *Grace*, there is some ingagement for God to go on; but there is nothing to move him to bestow *Grace*. Here is the ground; *His heart is taken; therefore hee sanctifies us.*

His heart is taken with us; therefore

4. *Hee glorifies us.* As our *Justification*, so our *Sanctification*, and *Glorification* arise from the same ground: *His heart is taken with us.*

The *Papists* indeed would have us to *merit* Heaven. And the *Council of Trent* denounce a curse upon those, who say, *A Justified person cannot merit Heaven.* But alas! What are all our *deserts* to this *Glory*? If a man should serve God, and suffer a thousand years, what were this to merit eternity in *Glory*?

Quid sunt omnia opera ad tantam gloriam? Bern. Si homo mille annis serviet,

No, here is the ground of all. His heart is taken with us, and therefore *hee glorifies us.* And so the Scripture speaks plain, *Eph. 2. 5. By Grace yee are saved.* And lest hee should never make it firm enough, hee adds, in the 8, and 9. verses, *By Grace yee are saved -- not of works.*

So that you see into what to resolve the higher streams of his Love: his *choosing us*, his *justifying*, his *sanctifying*, and his *glorifying us*. His heart is taken with us -- therefore hee *chose us*; therefore hee *justifies us*, &c.

2. As you may see into what to resolve all the higher: So the lower streams of his love to his Church. All into this. *His heart is taken with his Church.*

His

The Loves of Christ

His heart is taken with us; *therefore hee doth protect us.*

His heart is taken with us; *therefore hee will preserve us.*

His heart is taken with us; *therefore hee will support us.*

His heart is taken with us; *therefore hee will deliver us.*

All the good wee have in *Hand*, and all the good wee have in *Hope*: All the *Mercies bestowed*, and all those which God is *bestowing* on us: Look upon all as a *continued threed* spun out of the bowels of *Free-Grace*, and *Mercy*.

God hath done great things for us; and from this they have arisen: His Heart is taken with us, his Love towards us, *Jer. 31. 3, 4. I loved thee with an everlasting love; -- therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.*

Alas! If God had looked upon us, and taken either *ground* or *motive* from any thing in us, to do this for us, wee should never have enjoyed it.

1. There was no ground, no foundation of desert in us. (*Wee abhorre the thoughts of it*) for God to raise such a *fabrick* of mercy upon, as hee hath done.

If any thing in his Church were the foundation of the structure of mercy, which wee expect God to raise, wee might look for a *mean building*. Such weak foundations must have as weak a structure. A building must be proportionable to the foundation. But seeing Gods own heart is the foundation, his own mercy and good will towards us, which is so strong, so firm, so full a foundation: Hence it is, that wee may expect a structure of mercy suitable to the foundation.

And, as this is the foundation of all those *great and stupendious things*, which God hath done for us: So it is a ground for us to expect, that God will yet do *greater things* for us, than ever hee hath done.

Indeed, when wee look upon our selves, wee are at an end in our thoughts, and think God is at an end in his *Mercy*: but when wee look up toward God, and see there the ground of what wee have, this keeps up our hearts from sinking, and causes us to look upon all wee have, as an *earnest of more*.

Men that are at the top of an high place, if they look downwards, their eyes dazle, and their heads grow dizzy: but if they look up towards Heaven, they recover themselves again. God hath raised us up to some height of mercy; and if wee look downwards, if wee look *upon our selves*, wee are driven past the utmost of our thoughts: but let us look up to Heaven, whence this mercy wee have, hath its spring and foundation, and wee shall quickly recover.

Though there be nothing in us, yet there is something in God; and that which is in God is the ground of this mercy, and therefore will hee go on in the wayes of his own mercy.

I have often thought within my self, how far God at this time hath

hath out-gone his people in Mercy.

Hee hath not only out-gone the *deservings* of his People, but out-gone the *desires* of his people, the *prayers* of his People. And consulting below, I am ready to think *God is at an end of his Mercy*.

But, when I recover my self, and look upon the *ground of Gods* doing good to his Church and People: *Not to be any goodnes in the Church: but meerly his own goodnes*: This doth revive mee again; put heart into mee that God will yet *do greater things* for his Church, than yet hee hath done.

As I said before; when God doth execute *Judgements* upon his Church, hee adds *Judgement to Judgement*: so much more; when hee comes in a way of *Mercy* to his Church, hee adds *Mercy to Mercy*.

God is oftentimes weary in going on in a way of *Judgement*, because the exercise of his *Judgements* are drawn out by us, our sins. Hee is said *not to afflict willingly*: and his *Judgements* hee calls *his strange work*. It is not so natural to God, and therefore he is quickly weary of it.

But God is never weary of the exercise of his *Mercie*, and therefore hee goes on to adde *Mercy to Mercy*. Wee say, *the Bee gives Honey* naturally; the *sting* only, when shee is forced to it: So God, it is natural to him to shew *Mercy*, but hee is provoked to exercise *Judgement*.

Hence hee is called *the Father of Mercies*, begets *Mercy*. *Mercy* is the *Issue of God*, most natural to God; and being so, hence *Mercy* pleaseth him. *Actions of Nature* are *Actions of Delight*. God is never so well pleased with any carriage towards his Church, as those which are in the wayes of mercy.

Nay, if hee do afflict his Church, it is to *shew Mercy*. *Mercy* is the end of all his dealings towards his Church; and therefore *Mercy* being so natural, so pleasing, and that the *Mercy of God* is the ground of his expressions of love to us, as it is: though our sins may draw out the expressions of his *Justice*, yet his *Mercy* doth arise from himself: Hence wee may have a ground to expect yet *greater things* than ever.

6. Consecratory.

If the heart of *Christ* bee so much taken with his Church. Then see with what *confidence* wee may *pray* for the good of the Church of *Christ*. *Christs* heart is taken with it.

A man may *pray* for himself, and doubt of hearing; because hee is not able to make out his particular interest in *Gods Love*. But if a man *pray* for the good of the Church, hee is sure to have hearing, because the heart of *Christ* is taken with it.

Let us then make use of all our interest and acquaintance in Heaven, in the behalf of the Church at this time.

The Loves of Christ

1. *It is a thing, which God commands.*
2. *A thing, which God expects.*
3. *A thing, which God rewards.*
4. *A thing, which God threatens the neglect of.*

Much might bee said to move you. *Your good, and your evil* lies in the Churches. As *Jeremy* used this as an argument, why, to pray for the civil estate of *Babylon*; because in the peace thereof they should have peace: if theirs in *Babylons*, how much more ours in *Sions*?

7. Confectary.

• If the heart of Christ bee so much taken with his Church, *Then* what will become of those, who are enemies to his Church and People!

Is the heart of Christ so much taken with his Church and People. Then woe bee to them that offend his Church. *If you touch them, you touch the apple of his eye.*

Gods People are dear to God. They are *his Sponse, his Children, his Members*, purchased with the price of his blood; *his inheritance, his Portion*, all his commings-in. Those hee dyed for, shed his blood for, one drop whereof is worth a thousand Worlds. And therefore those whom hee was content to shed his blood for, certainly hee doth more esteem than all the World besides.

Wee say, whiles the Iron is in its own nature, you may handle it, and meddle with it; but if once the nature of fire bee added unto it, if you touch it, it will burn you: So whiles the Children of God, are but the Children of men, you may deal with them as with other men; but if once the nature of God bee stamped on them, the Image of *Christ* bee drawn upon them, it will bee dangerous for you to meddle with them, least fire break out of their mouth to devoure you.

• Wee read, *Zach. 12. 3.* God said, hee would make his Church a burthensome stone, &c.

St. Jerom on that place saith, it was a Metaphor taken from the custome of the *Jews*, who to try their strength, had at the gates of the City great stones; if they could lift them, well and good; but if not, they crushed themselves with them: So God will make his Church a burthensome stone. Whoever lieth at it, shall crush himself; whoever seeks to hurt it, shall ruine himself. You see it in *Pharaoh, Haman, Achitophel, Julian.*

Haman lifted so long at this stone, that it fell on him at last, and crushed him.

Pharaoh followed the Children of *Israel* so long, that hee could not return at last, but was overwhelmed in the Waters.

Julian attempted it so long, till at last himself was overthrown.

Hee

Hee that shoots in a *Peece over-charged*, strikes down himself, or that which hee aimed at. Hee who intends evil against the Church, shoots in a *Peece over-charged*, and is sure to bee struck own with his own recoil.

Wee see it in *our* *dayes*. They who have digged pits for us, ave fallen into them themselves. They who laid snares for us, them is their own foot taken. They have but made *Rods for their own backs*, paved a way to their own destruction, digged raves to bury themselves, in seeking our ruine.

The *Scepter of Christ* hath been too strong for the *Principality of Satan*, hee hath a Rod of Iron, a Scepter of Power, an arm of strength, to crush in peeces all his enemies. And therefore as *Pittes* wife said of *Christ*; *Have nothing to do with that just man*: O I to thee, see'st thou a godly man? beware of having any thing to do with him, by way of offence. For their Angels alway behold the face of their heavenly Father.

8. Consecratory.

If the heart of *Christ* bee so much taken with his Church, then see here the *Ground of Acceptation of the services of his people*. God being taken with the *Persons*, is taken with the *performances* of his People. Hee had respect to *Abel*, and then to his *Offering*. *Christ*, his heart was taken with the person, and then with his performance.

Hence *Christ* saith to his Church, *Cant. 2. 14. Let mee see thy countenance, let mee hear thy voice: for thy Countenance is comely, & thy voice is sweet.*

Indeed, if *Acceptation* should arise from the *worthiness* of our ties, wee should never look to bee accepted. There is so much evil in our services, so much evil in our good, so much coldness in our best heats, so much formality in our chiefest power, so much rudeness in our best life, so much of the World, so much of our earth in our employments for Heaven. And if *Acceptation* should rise from any *worth* in them, wee should bee sure to miss of it: it arising from *his good will and Mercy* to us, his heart being first taken with us, is taken with our performances. Hence the Assurance of *Acceptation*.

Nay, and not only of our *purest and perfectest services*; but even of our *poor and imperfect duties*, such as wee throw away for naught, and cast prayers, *Cant. 5. 1.* Hee drinks the *Milk* as well as the *Wine*.

Wee look upon a prayer accompanied with deadness, distraction, as a cast prayer. Oh! say wee, how can God accept of such impure, imperfect services!

But hence it ariseth not from the *excellency of your prayers*, but from the *indulgency of his Grace*. It is the voice of his *Spouse*,

though never so weak. It is the cry of a *Member* of his, though never so faint. And hee can put his *odours*, his *incense* to them, though never so impure, and make them *acceptable*, Rev. 8. 4.

Use of Examination.

But now, my Brethren, it will bee a great matter of inquiry, *whether wee have an interest in this love.*

As one said when hee looked upon the Rainbow, and in that read *Gods Covenant*, never to drown the world again. Ah! but saith hee, what is this to mee, *If I bee drowned*, I may bee drowned, though the World bee not drowned.

So may you say, You tell us of the *exceeding love of Christ to his Church*. But what if *I bee not of his Church*? what if I have no interest in his *Love*? what's all this to mee?

But then I suppose you are desirous to know whether you have an interest in this love. It concerns your everlasting good to have an interest, and your present comfort to know you have an interest.

Now in this inquiry I would have you

1. *To examin your hearts thoroughly.* Deceits lye low. A false evidence is the fruit of a slight and superficial search.

2. *In your inquiry let not any thing which is compatible with any, who have no interest in this love, bee a bottom,* on which your soul resteth.

I have told you sometimes, and tell you again. Whatever another man may have and do, and yet have no interest in this love of *Christ*, cannot bee a sufficient evidence for thee, that thou having or doing that, hast an interest. -- Acquaint thy self with the most clearing and proving evidences.

3. *Take thy evidences from the carriage of the Spirit:* neither at the *best*, nor at the *worst*, but the *middle way*, which is most thy self.

If thou look upon thy self at the *worst*, thou mayest bee *discouraged*. If at the *best*, thou mayest bee *deceived*. Many have had such affections in an *Heat*, which in *cold blood* have nothing of them.

4. *Judge not of thy self by particular actions and carriages:* but look upon the *universal frame and bent of thy spirit*. No certain rule is to bee established upon a particular instance, whether good or bad.

I might lay down other rules to observe in your inquiry. But wee will come to the inquiry it self.

Wouldst thou know whether thou art one with whom Christs heart is taken? See whether thou art of his Church. Art thou one, who art taken out of the World? Art thou one, whom God hath called? one whom hee hath justified? one whom hee hath

regenerated? sanctified? Art thou one, who art washed, purged, renewed?

These might bee in the *general*, but are too obscure. But I will name you but one, and it is a plain one, and none more *demonstrative*.

Wouldst thou know whether the heart of Christ bee taken with thee? why then see,

Art thou one, whose heart is taken with Christ? If *Christ* bee taken with thee, thou art taken with *Christ*. It is a mutual, a reciprocal taking. Whatever God doth to the soul, it makes an impression in the soul of the like to God. God delights in us, and thereupon wee come to delight in him. God knows us, and thereupon wee know him, *Joh. 10. 14.* God apprehends us, and thereupon wee apprehend him. Hee chuseth us, and thereupon wee chuse him. Hee loves us, and thereupon wee love him, *1 Joh. 4. 19.* His heart is taken with us, and thereupon our hearts come to bee taken with him. Our love to him is nothing else but *radius amoris Dei erga nos in Deum reflexus*: a beam of Gods love reflected back upon God. So that this now is a true *character of Christs* heart being taken with thee, if thy heart bee taken with *Christ*.

Quest. But you will say, *How shall I know whether my heart bee taken with Christ?*

Ans. For the answer of this, because upon this foundation I will lay the whole weight of this discourse, in this *Use*,

1. A heart taken with *Christ*, is a heart which knows *Christ*, and hath tasted of *Christ*. Are you such as know *Christ*? For knowledge of *Christ* precedes the love of *Christ*. Hee who doth not know, cannot love. Things unseen may, but things unknown cannot bee loved, *1 Pet. 1. 8.* *Whom having not seen yee love, but never not known.*

Invisa possumus amare; incognita nequam.

All love to *Christ* doth arise from discoveries and manifestations of *Christ* to the soul. Either from the discoveries of those beauties, those attractive excellencies that are in him, or with that, from the discovery of his heart and good will towards us.

Now *blind men* cannot discern of beauties, nor ignorant men of the beauties of *Christ*. *Christ* is to them as a *Mine of Gold* covered over with earth and rubbish: as a *Bed of Pearl and Diamonds* hid with an heap of sand: as a *glorious Messiah* under a contemptible outside. And wanting eyes to see through the *Veil of his Flesh*, through the bark and outside of his *Humanity*, they can behold no beauty in him. As *Isaiah* speaks of carnal men, *Isa. 53. 2.* *When you behold him, you see no beauty in him, that shall make him desired.*

Now then, art thou one who knows *Christ*? did ever God reveal him to thee in a promise? what apparitions hath *Christ* made to thy soul? what manifestations? what discoveries that may evidence to thee, that thou knowest him?

There

There are *four manifestations*, or discoveries of *Christ* to the soul, which do exceedingly take the soul. Indeed every apparition of *Christ* doth take the heart: but at these times the heart is not only wooed and won, but overcome with his sweetness and glory.

1. *After the soul hath long lyen bedrid in sorrow*, been overwhelmed in the deeps of *Legal Humiliation*, and have been broken and shattered in peeces with consternation, and apprehensions of sin, and Gods wrath for it. Then a discovery of *Christ*, and apparition of *Christ* to the soul, is a resurrection from the dead.

When *Christ* comes by a promise into the soul, and displaies his glory, the *Riches*, and *Greatness*, and *Freeness* of his *Grace*, as to *Moses*; *The Lord God*, gracious and mercifull, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin, *Exod. 34. 6. 1, I am hee who forgiveth thy iniquities, &c. Isa. 43. 25.* Then is the soul beyond expression, enamoured with him; now it is overcome with his beauties and excellencies, and even ravished with his love. And this is the first eminent taking of the heart with *Christ*.

2. *When the soul hath been upon the stormy Sea of temptations and desertions*; hath long laboured under the sense of Gods withdrawings and absence from the soul. And *Christ* returns again, breaking the dark and thick cloud, and shining into the soul. Who can then expresse the warmth, the comfort, the revivings, the holy heats and flames of love and affection to *Christ*.

You see how it was with *Job. I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear: But now mine eyes see thee.* And certainly the sight of his beauties did take him: those eyes which saw him were like a burning-glasse to the heart, to kindle the flames and fervors of holy affections towards him again.

You see how it was with the Church, *Cant. 3. 4. Christ* had withdrawn himself: Shee makes inquiry after him, but could not hear of him. At last after all her trouble, *Christ* appears to her soul. And you may read there, how exceedingly her heart was taken with his return. *I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, untill I had brought him into my Mothers house, Cant. 3. 4.*

3. *When the soul doth sit down to contemplate*, and read over the beauties and loves of *Christ*: when it is in the contemplations of those surpassing excellencies, and admired sweetness which is in *Christ*. And *Christ* (whiles the soul is busy in feeding on these thoughts) doth make a discovery of himself to the soul: makes the soul to see a vision of his glory: *Oh! how is the heart taken with him!* it is even drowned and sunk in a Sea of glory. *Ah! what clasping, what embraces! what loves are there then betwixt Christ and the soul!* It is impossible for mee to expresse: or for mee, or you to conceive. It is a vision of glory, the porch of Heaven.

4. *When*

4. When the soul is under outward pressures, afflictions, prison, sickness, upon death-bed. Then a visit of Christ, a discovery of himself doth exceedingly ravish and take the heart. Here is kindness indeed, riches for the poor, liberty for a prisoner, a cordial for the sick: Here is all in Christ's manifestation.

Well then, wouldest thou know whether thy heart bee taken with Christ? dost thou know Christ? didst thou ever see the face of Christ in a promise? what apparitions hath Christ made to thee? what manifestations within thee, in the work of Grace? what manifestations to thee, in the beginning of glory? You who know not Christ, cannot love Christ.

2. Sign.

An heart taken with Christ, is not excessively taken with any thing else.

The sweetness of Christ doth overcome all the sweetness in other things, in the Creatures. Vincit dulcedo dulcedinem.

As it is nothing but ignorance which makes men admire any thing here on earth: if men knew the excellencie of other things, they could not admire such trifles as they do.

So here, it is nothing but ignorance of better things which makes us dote upon things here below. Did wee see his beauties, all the World would bee blackness. Did wee see his fulness, all the World were but emptiness.

I say, did wee but know the excellencies and beauties of Christ, and the satisfying-sweetness of his love, Nothing should have a room in our hearts, save hee only. The higher wee ascend toward Heaven, the lesser will the things on earth appear.

If you go to the top of the Mountains, men would appear but small: but if it were possible to go up to the Sun, the Mountains would appear nothing.

The love of Christ hath a raising-power, working our hearts as high as Heaven, and being there, all things here below are of no account and esteem to the soul. So saith Paul, a man on fire with the love of Christ. *Yea doubtless I count all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ -- And do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,* Phil 3. 8.

Well then, they whose hearts are taken with the Creature, taken with the World, taken with sin and vanity: These are too gross to bee taken with spiritual loves.

3. Sign.

What the heart is taken withall, the soul seems to live more in it, than in it self. Do but examine it in any thing the heart is taken,

taken withall; whether your comforts, your delights, your happiness lies not in them. The Worldling hee lives in his possessions. The Voluptuous man in his pleasures. And can no more live out of them, than the *Fish out of the water*, the *Salamander out of fire*. So here. If thy heart bee taken with *Christ*, then thou livest more in *Christ*, than thou doest in thy self. *I live, yet not I, but Christ*, saith the Apostle, *Gal. 2. 20*. Thou canst no more subsist without him, than the *Beam without the Sun*: than the *spark without the fire*. Nay, no more live without him, than the *body without meat*, nay, the *body without the soul*. *Christ* is to the soul, as the soul is to the body. Now as the body cannot live without the soul: So the soul cannot live but in *Christ*, who is *Anima Anima*, the Soul of the Soul, for mee to live is *Christ*.

I say, if thy heart bee taken with *Christ*, thou livest in *Christ* more than in thy self. Thy life, thy comforts, thy happiness, they are all folded up in him.

As *Judah* said of *Benjamin*. *Jacobs life was bound up in the Lads life*, *Gen. 44. 30*. So the Soul of *Christ*, my life, my joyes, my comforts, they are all bound up in thee. *All my fresh springs are in thee*; saith God of his Church, *Psal. 87. 7*. And, *whom have I in Heaven but thee! and in earth in comparison of thee!* *Psal. 73. 25*. saith the enamoured soul of God, his heart was taken with God, and hee lived in God more than in himself.

It was the speech of *Luther*, who (being in a great distress and spirituall trouble) had writ about the walls and table in his study, in great letters, *Vivit*. A friend comes to him, and demands the reason. Hee replies, *Vivit Christus; & si non, non optarem unam horam vivere*. -- His life was in *Christ*. Hee lived more in *Christ* than in himself.

Which makes the life of a Christian so safe, none can hurt him, and so sweet too, being a life in *Christ* out of himself. The best of others lyes in themselves: but the best of a Christian, those precious things in him, lies out of himself, and lies in *Christ*.

4. Sign.

What the heart is taken withall, that the comforts of the life are upheld by from day to day. Wee have many a weary step to go, and can no more go without comfort, than *Elijah* without food. Comfort is to the soul, as the soul is to the body. As the body without the soul is dead, so is the soul of men without comfort.

Now would you know what your heart is taken withall: see what the comfort of your life is upheld by from day to day.

Is *Iesus Christ* the comfort of your life? is hee the joy of your hearts?

Ex quo vis son-
te.

Wicked men have variety of springs. If one bee drye, they go to another.

But

But the Saints have but one : *Christ*. And if hee bee gone, all is gone.

5. Sign.

An heart taken with *Christ* hath *high appretiations and valuations of Christ*. It values and esteems him above all the comforts and contentments in Heaven and Earth, *Psal. 73, 25. whom have I in Heaven, but thee ! and in the Earth, in comparison of thee !* Here is the breathing of a soul taken with *Christ*. Hee prizeth *Christ* above all the comforts and contents in the World.

For the better unfolding of this sign, there is

1. *Something considerable in the Act.*
2. *Something in the Object -- Christ prized.*
3. *Something in the Measure -- above all the comforts, contents, &c.*

1. In the *Act* of *prizing Christ*, that wee do not mean a bare and naked Estimate of *Christ*, in the Understanding: but such an one as prevails with the soul, and commands the spirit of a man to do actions consonant and agreeable to that rate the Judgement set on *Christ*. I say, by *prizing of Christ*, wee do not mean a bare acts of *Dijudication*, what a man in his Judgement may conclude *Christ* to bee worth. Many bee, that will tell you, they conclude *Christ* to bee worth a World: who yet will not part with any thing for *Christ*.

But I mean such an act of the understanding, as brings up the Heart, and the affections to close with *Christ* in that height which the Understanding rates him at.

I say, such an *Act of Appretiation* as prevails with a man to do actions consonant and agreeable to the rate it pretends to set on *Christ*. As you see the wise Merchant. Hee did not barely judge that the Pearl was worth all hee had: but hee did Actions consonant and agreeable to it. Seeing hee could not injoy the Pearl without parting withall hee had to compass it, hee sells all to compass the Pearl.

That is the first. A soul taken with *Christ* doth not only barely judge and esteem *Christ* worth all; but will part with all for the compassing of *Christ*.

2. *Here is something considerable in the Object. Christ prized.*

1. Wee do not restrain and limit this only to the Person of *Christ*. There is something in the Person of *Christ*, which may prevail with an Unbeliever, to esteem of him. The dignity of his Person being *God-Man*, having all beauties and excellencies in him. This may raise up a kinde of esteem of *Christ* in the hearts of unbelievers.

2. Neither do wee limit it only to the Benefits of *Christ*, and the great things which hee hath done for man in general, in

The Loves of Christ

his humiliation, death, passion, &c.

But wee are to take *Christ* in the extent of *Christ*: *Christ* in his whole *Latitude*: *Christ* in his *Holiness*, *Christ* in his *Laws*, *Christ* in his *Government*, *Christ* in his *Truth*, *etern Christ*, the whole of *Christ*. Hee that prizeth not *Christ* in his whole latitude, and extent, doth not prize *Christ* at all as hee ought to do.

As wee say of *Faith*, it doth not *figure Objectum*, it doth not chuse its Object, single out what it will esteem, and what not: but prizeth of *Christ* fully in the latitude and extent of *Christ*, of *Christ* in his *person*, *Christ* in his *Beauties*, *Christ* in his *Laws*, in his *Holiness*, *Truth*, *Government*: And so highly, that they sold themselves to gain a *Truth*, lost themselves to save a *Truth*: They have made this brave adventure, thrown away themselves, that they might keep up a *Truth*; as you see it in *Queen Maries* Cities, in point of *Transubstantiation*. So that is the second. The soul taken with *Christ* is taken with *All-Christ*. As all in him is lovely: so the soul loves all; and prizes and esteems of all of *Christ*.

3. That which is considerable in the Measure is, That a soul taken with *Christ*, doth prize *Christ* above all comforts and contents in *Heaven* and *Earth*.

This *Christ* commands, *Mat. 16. 24. If any man will come after mee, let him deny himself. If any* It is set down indefinitely. Not only you, who are poor, and have little to lose, and deny your selves in: but they, who have most. You that are rich, you that have lands, possessions, have *Crowns* and *Scepters*. If any poor, any rich, any beggar, any Prince, &c.

Hee must deny himself] Not only in things unlawfull, but lawfull. Hee must yeeld up his sins as a snare, his comforts, estate, and all as a Sacrifice for *Christ*, if hee call for them, *Mat. 19. 37. Hee that loves Father or Mother more than mee, is not worthy of mee.* These relations are expressed: but under these are comprized all the comforts and contents on earth.

And this was not only commanded, but it is practised by those, whose hearts are taken with *Christ*. You see in *Abraham*, who left all, in *Moses*, who prized more of the reproach of *Christ*, than all the treasures in *Egypt*, in *David*, *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee! or in Earth, in comparison of thee!*

As the World would bee nothing else but *Engie stabulum*, a noisome sink, a prison to a godly man, were it not that hee enjoys something of *Christ* here: So Heaven it self were but a gaudy, Pageant, *Vanity*, if God and *Christ* were not there.

The *Heaven*, which carnal men do fancy is a *Turkish-Heaven*, an heaven of pleasures, delights, comforts, but fleshly, outward. They conceive of it, according to their *Principle*.

But the *Heaven* of a godly man, it lies in God, it lies in *Christ*. Indeed

That is not Heaven, which is by God; but that is Heaven, which

which lies in God, to a godly man.

It was the meditation of one: Not *Heaven, O Lord, but God, and Christ*. Rather ten thousand times *Christ* without *Heaven*, than *Heaven* without *Christ*. Non cælum
Domine, sed
Deus & Chri-
stus.

Thus doth the soul, that is taken with *Christ*, prize *Christ* above all the comforts, contentments of *Heaven* and *Earth*.

6. Sign.

An heart taken with Christ, the thoughts are taken up with Christ.
Such a man hee thinks *Christ*, and hee speaks *Christ*, hee lives *Christ*.

You know whatever a mans heart is taken with, it is never off his thoughts, never off his heart, hee is never well but thinking and speaking of that hee loves. The *thoughts* are the *character* of what the heart is taken withall. If thy heart bee taken with *Christ*, thy *thoughts* are taken up with him. *Christ* is alwayes upon thy thoughts; hee lies next to thy heart; when thou goest to bed hee is with thee, *Cant.* 1. 13. and when thou awakest hee is with thee; as *David* saith, *Psal.* 139. 18.

Indeed Gods people may have swarms of other thoughts; but they are not entertained, they are not welcome to them; they are their burden, and trouble. They come in as Intruders, and are not entertained as *Guests*. A wicked man entertains them as *Guests*, as friends; but they come into a godly man, as intruders, never invited, nor finde they welcome. This is that *Jeremiah* speaks. *How long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* in a wicked mans heart they are *Lodgers*, and entertained as *Guests*; hee keeps doors open, spreads a Table for them, makes them a bed, bids them welcome: But in a godly man they crowd in, and finde no entertainment. Jer. 4. 14.

And as the *Thoughts* are taken up with *Christ*, so the *Tongue*. Hee thinks, and hee speaks *Christ*. When *Christ* is in the heart, the tongue will discourse and speak of him. Whatever is in the heart, and the heart is taken withall, that a mans discourse is most taken up withall. As *Psal.* 37. 30. *The mouth of the Righteous speaketh wisdom, and his Tongue talketh of Judgement.* And why? because the *Law of his God is in his heart*, ver. 31. So here on the same ground. Thy talk shall bee of *Christ*, of his beauties, his love, &c. because *Christ* is in thy heart. What the heart is taken withall, the *Tongue* will discourse on.

1. And indeed wee cannot have a fuller Subject to discourse on. Other Subjects they are empty subjects, quickly barren. Talk of what you will, you will bee quickly at an end. The bottome of other things are quickly founded. But *Christ* is a full Subject. (Whatever you fall upon, is fulness in *Christ*.) An everlasting Spring, which affordeth fresh supplies of matter. New and uncon-

ceivable discoveries do arise afresh to bee matter of supply to all eternity.

2. You cannot have a sweeter subject. *Christ is All-sweet: A Rose without prickles. A Rose, for sweetness: without prickles, for content.* And nothing is so but *Christ*. All the things of the world since the fall, have been *Roses beset with thorns*. Though there bee many sweets in the World; yet they are not *all-sweet*; they are beset with thorns: crosses with comforts, and afflictions with affections. *Christ is All-sweet*, and nothing but *sweet*. *Tota pulchra*, as hee said of his Spouse. *Thou art all-fair. Beauty without spot. Sweet without prickles.* Hee is a *Garden full of flowers, full of sweets*. You can light of none but you may *laid your thighs*, and go home satisfied.

3. You cannot have a more *delightfull* subject. *Christ* is the delight of all both in Heaven and Earth. Hee is *Gods delight*; his heart is taken with him; hee lies in his bosome. And *his Son*, in whom hee is *wel pleased*, hee is the *delight of the Angels*, whose delight it is to study *Christ*, and desire to learn and hear further discoveries of *Christ* by his Church, as *Peter* hath it, *1 Pet. 1. 12.*

4. You cannot have a more *profitable* subject. A subject which in conversing upon, wee are *transformed into his Glory*, *2 Cor. 3. 18.* into the glory of him, who is the subject of the discourse. Have you not been kindled with heavenly fire? have not your hearts burned in the converses of him, as well as in the converses with him? Indeed wee cannot converse of him aright, but in some measure wee converse with him.

Doth it not sometimes fetch up your souls to glory, and leave you in Heaven?

Do you not finde it profitable to quicken you? to raise you? to comfort you? to inflame you? to humble you? to melt you? to transform you?

Doth not a discourse of his love quicken you, when you are dead? comfort you, when you are dejected? raise you, when faine? humble you, when proud? inflame you, when cold? Inlarge you, when straitned, and pent within your selves?

Oh! That such *worthless* subjects should so often take up our Tongues and Thoughts! And *Christ*, so full, so sweet, so *delightfull*, so *profitable* a subject, which shall bee matter for our souls discourse to all *Eternity*, shall bee thrown aside, as if not worth taking up!

You, whose hearts are taken with *Christ*, declare it to your own comfort, and the good of others. In this let your thoughts bee taken up with him, let your discourses bee more of him, shew your selves to love him, by thinking *Christ*, speaking *Christ*, living *Christ* more.

6. Sign.

An heart taken with *Christ*, thirsts after communion with, and nearer conjunction to *Christ*. You know whatever your hearts are taken withall, you desire, and thirst after communion, and converses withall. So it is here betwixt *Christ* and the soul. The soul taken with *Christ* longs to bee with him, and thirsts after communion with him.

1. In Grace here.

2. In Glory hereafter.

1. In Grace here. Oh! How the soul once taken with *Christ* desires converses with him, in prayer, in hearing, in meditation, *Ist. 26. 8, 9. The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea with my spirit within mee will I seek thee early.* And this is the *Genius* of a soul taken with *Christ*: that duty doth not content him, if hee finde not *Christ* in duty. If the end of a duty have left him on this side *Christ*, it hath left him so far short of comfort.

Others indeed, though they do a duty, yet as their hearts seek not *Christ* in the duty, so their souls can rest content without him, when the duty is done: but it is otherwise with a right-born-soul.

'Twas the speech of *Bradford*, that hee could never leave a duty, till hee had found communion with *Christ* in the duty: till hee had brought his heart into a duty-frame. Hee could not leave confession, till hee had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for sin; nor *Petition*, till hee had found his heart taken with the beauties of the things desired, and carried out after them: nor could hee leave *thanksgiving*, till hee had found his spirit enlarged, and his soul quickened in the return of praises.

And it was the happiness of *Bernard*, a Heaven upon Earth, that hee saith of himself, *I never went from thee, without thee.* Hee found God in every duty: hee had communion with God in every prayer, which indeed is *Heaven on this side Heaven.*

Nunquam abs-
te, abiq; te re-
cedo. Cælum
extra Cælum.

Thus hee, whose heart is taken with *Christ*, thirsts after communion with him, and no duty contents him, wherein hee hath not found either his quickening, or his comforting-presence: either communion with his Grace, or communion with his comfort.

2. As hee thirsts after communion with him here in Grace: so loth hee desire communion with him in Glory. To bee with the Lord, is the *Apostle*.

Whiles the soul is here, it sees the distance too great betwixt *Christ* and it, that shee cannot injoy that sweet communion with him. As the *Apostle* saith. *Whiles wee are present in the flesh, wee are absent from the Lord.* And therefore the soul breaths after him, desires to bee with him, *Cupio dissolvi*, saith the *Apostle*, *I desire*

to bee dissolved, and to bee with Christ.

The like of David, *Psal. 42. 1, 2.* As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks; so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God! Hee had tasted the sweetness of Christ, and did not fear the bitterness of death.

Vitam in Patientia; mercedem in Delictis.

Hee had Life in Patience; Death in Desire; because by death hee should bee carried to more sweet and intimate conjunction with Christ.

Eia Domine, mori ut te videam, ut loquar tibi, vivere, Volo mori.

It was the speech of *Augustine.* Lord, I will dye, that I may enjoy thee. I will not live, but I will dye. I desire to dye, that I may see Christ; and refuse to live, that I may live with Christ.

And this disposition you see in the Sponse here. Her heart being taken with Christ, shee could not brook the distance betwixt Christ and her; and therefore cries out, *Cant. 8. 1.* Make haste, make haste my beloved.

Though in one sense it is true, hee that beleeves makes not haste; yet here hee that beleeves most, and loves most, makes most haste.

The more the soul beleeves, and the more the heart is taken with Christ, the greater are the desires to bee with him.

Till *Simeon* had gotten Christ into his armes, hee was unwilling to dye: but after hee had Christ in his armes; Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for my eyes have seen thy salvation.

Indeed here are but the *Esponsals* between Christ and the soul. Some *Broken-Rings*, *Contracts*, *Esponsals*, betwixt Christ and us. But then is the great *Marriage-day*, the *Solemnization* of our *Nuptials*, to all eternity.

Here wee do see him but dimly and darkly, at the best, and there are oftentimes clouds come in, and interpose themselves, between Christ and us: but then wee shall see him face to face, and never shall there cloud come between Christ and us to all eternity. There wee shall see him in his *Glory*, his full discoveries.

Here wee enjoy him but in part. The distance is great betwixt him and us. All which distance doth arise from that within us. Were it not for sin wee might bee in *Glory*, even in *Grace*. But then wee shall enjoy him in fulness.

Heaven is the place, which God hath intended to set forth himself to his People in his *Glory*, to all eternity. Where there shall bee no fears, no sin, never smock of distrustfull thoughts shall arise more. Where there shall bee no sorrow, no tears. All sighing and sobbing shall pass away, and nothing but joy shall keep the house.

Wee are now the *Sons of God*. But it doth not yet appear what wee shall bee; for wee shall see him as hee is.

2. Sign.

A heart taken with Christ, thinks nothing too much to do, nothing too much to suffer for Christ.

You know Love cannot be pased. Wee say, there is no difficulty in Love. Things impossible to others, are easie to them who love. And things burthensome to others, delightfull to them who love. If once thy heart bee taken with Christ, thou wilt think nothing too much to do, nothing too much to suffer for him.

As Christ thought nothing too much for us, because his heart was taken with us; neither shall wee think any thing too much for Christ.

Wee read how prodigal the Saints have been of their Riches, their Blood, their Lives for Christ, because they loved him.

1. They have not accounted their estates too dear for him, Heb. 10.

34. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.

2. They have not accounted their lives too dear, Rev. 12. 11. They loved not their lives to death for him.

If they must dig in Mines, or be cast to bee devoured by Wild-Beasts for Christ, as it was the usual sentence of Christians, in the primitive times, they were willing to do and suffer it.

Christians sold
their houses and
possessions.

See this in the Virgin of whom Basil speaks, who was condemned to death, because she would not worship Idols.

And the like of old Polycarp and others.

This is certain: A soul taken with Christ, knows no difficulty in its love. It loves him with an unlimited, an uncircumscribed love, which no duty, no difficulty can pose.

3. Sign.

A heart taken with Christ is exceedingly cast down with the withdrawings and absence of Christ.

The comforts of the soul are laid up in Christ: and when hee is gone, all is gone. Comfort gone, Joy gone, the Heart gone with him.

As Aephiboseth said, Take all, now my Lord is come back: so the soul saith, Take all, take the World, take Riches, take Heaven, and Glory, so far as Heaven and thou are two things. That my Lord may return with my soul. Darknes is terrible to the soul, and this is thick darknes, and therefore saith with Absalom, let mee see his face, mea non profunt sine te, nothing besides thee, can either satisfie or profit mee.

10.9. Sign. 4

A heart taken with Christ is fully content and satisfied with the enjoyments and possession of Christ.

The possession of the thing beloved doth content the soul so far as there is satisfaction and contentment with it. The reason why wee do not meet with full contentments and satisfactions here in the possession of our loves, is because they want of *fulness*.

But now it is not so with *Christ*. Hee is able to brim the soul, to satisfy the spirit to answer all the desires of the heart; and therefore the heart taken with him, needs must rest satisfied and contented with him.

Such a gulf of desire is in the soul of men, that if God should cast in a *thousand* worlds, there would bee no contentment, except *Christ* bee cast in. And *Christ* is so full contentment, that if God bestow him, they will neither need nor desire any more.

And thus much shall serve for the use of tryal, wee will now come to an use of *Exhortation*, and conclude this.

Use of Exhortation.

1. To them of his Church.
2. To them who are not of the Church.
1. To them of his Church.

Is it so that the heart of *Christ* is so much taken with his Church and People?

1. Walk suitably to this love. Dignities, and suitable walkings to dignities must go together.

Now this suitable walking wee will express in these five things.

1. Walk chearfully. 2. Walk thankfully. 3. Walk humbly.
4. Walk watchfully. 5. Walk obediently.

1. Walk chearfully. Walk as Heirs of such a Mercy. Here is a truth speaks comfort, when all the world speaks nothing but terror.

2. Beware of abusing this love. Precious things are committed to us by a word of *Caution*. This is a precious Truth; and therefore let mee adde to it this word of *Caution*. Beware of abusing this Love of *Christ*.

Christ's Love are his bowels, and hee will never indure to have his bowels injured, his love abused. You know a man will not have his *Love* injured; the abuse of his power, of his wisdom, greatness, doth not touch a man so nearly, as the abuse of his *Love*. This is an injury men cannot indure.

So to speak after the manner of men; *Christ* can least indure his

1. Direction
to them of the
Church.

1. Direction
to them of the
Church.

his Love should be abused. There is no abuse like it. Therefore beware of it.

Now this Love of Christ is injured these wayes, and beware

1. *When wee slight the intreaties, reject the tenders, cast aside the offers and beseeches of his Love.*

When love stoops to you, when the mercy and goodness of Christ doth as it were, come on its knees to you, and intreats you to do this, or not to do that.

And yet you will stop your ears, pull back your shoulder, slight the intreaties. This is an abuse.

2. *When the Love of Christ doth slacken our hearts to duty, loosen our engagements, makes us more remiss to or in service.* This is to abuse his Love.

Wee should reason from *Mercy to Duty*; and not from *Mercy to Liberty*. Abundance of *Grace* calls in for abundance of *Duty*.

The Love of Christ should constrain us; as the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5.

This should make us live more humbly, more actively, more studious to please, more diligent to obey, more carefull to serve him.

This should make us live at higher rates for Heaven, more spiritual, more heavenly minded. It is a Cord let down from Heaven, to fetch our souls up thither.

And doth this cause us to be more remiss, more careless? Doth this, which should quicken, slacken our hand to duty? *Oh base ungrateful neglect of Love!*

3. *when wee take heart to sin thereby. Grow more loose, careless.* This is an high abuse of this Love.

Because God is Good, wilt thou be *Evil*? because hee is *Merciful*, wilt thou be *sinful*? because hee is *Gracious*, wilt thou be *impious*? What fearful abuse of Love is this! This is to wound Christ in the house of his friends.

To return good for good, is but *Humane*.

To return evil for good, is *Wicked*.

To return good for evil, is *Christian-like*. But

To return evil for good, and the greatest evil for the greatest good, *sin for Love*; this is *devilish*.

Were you his enemies, hee knew how to deal with you; hee could revenge himself, and the abuses of his love upon you: but you are his friends, and those bowels which you wrong, are stirred in him, when hee goes about to punish you. *Oh Ephraim! How shall I give thee up! how shall I deliver thee, Israel! my bowels are turned within mee. My repentings are kindled together, Hos. 11. 8.*

The greatness of God prevails with wicked men; that awes them often, that they dare not sin against him. But the goodness of God; this should prevail with us, *There is mercy with thee*; therefore thou art to be feared,

It is set down as the Principle in such, with whom the heart
(N) of

of Christ is taken, *Hof. 3. ult. They shall fear the Lord, and his goodness, in the latter dayes.*

None but venomous spirits will suck poison from such a sweet, as thence to draw encouragements to sin, from that which is the great encouragement to service.

The Love of Christ had so prevailed with *Chrysostome*, that hee used to say, *Ego sic censeo, sic assidue predicabo.*

And *Anselme*. That if on the one hand hee should see sin, and on the other, the torments of Hell: hee had rather chuse to fall into Hell, than fall into sin.

4. When wee stagger and doubt, give way to misgiving thoughts of Christs Loves, and unbelievings of our own hearts: wee abuse this Love.

What is it possible that Christ should do or suffer more than hee hath done and suffered to perswade your hearts of his Love?

If Christ should ask the question of you, who doubt most of his Love. *What shall I do to answer your scruples: to satisfie your souls for ever, in this, that I love you?* could you rationally desire more than what hee hath expressed in his words, and to your heart, and if notwithstanding all bee in vain, may hee not justly say as *David of Nabal*. *Surely in vain have I done all this, when this all commeth to nothing.*

1 Sam. 25. 21.

3. Direction
to them of the
Church.

3. *Bee much in the contemplation of this Love of Christ. Dwell upon this.* This Love of Christ will bee matter of eternal pursuit in Heaven. Wee shall do nothing but read over this Love. Oh! let us not bee strangers to it now.

View it in the

1. *Fulness.*

2. *Freeness.*

3. *Bounty.*

4. *Perpetuity thereof.*

1. Measure it in the *Fulness* of it. It is a Love which reacheth to every necessity.

A love able to make you holy, and able to make you happy. Thou art under guilt and sin; thou art terrified by the one, and ashamed and confounded because so loathsomely defiled by the other. Why

It is a pardoning, a purging, a sanctifying Love; it is a Love as large as himself, though the persons beloved bee finite.

2. Read it over in the *Freeness* of it.

1. *It was an undeserved,*

2. *It was an unsought-for Love.*

1. *It was an undeserved Love.* Wee may provoke him to anger, but wee cannot tempt him to love. The former doth arise from our sins, the latter from himself.

Amat Deus,
non aliunde
hoc habet,

His chusing, justifying, adopting, saving love, all are free.

2. *It was an unsought-for Love.* Never a prayer put up for it. *I am found of them that sought mee not, Isa. 65. 1.*

3. Read

3. Read it over in the *Bounty* and *Expressions* of it,

1. *What hee did.*

2. *What hee suffered.*

3. *What hee hath given to his Church.*

4. *Look upon it, in the Perpetuity, Permanency, and continuance thereof.* A Love which reaches from *Eternity* to *Eternity*. From *Eternal chusing*, to *Eternal glorifying*. An unchangeable Love.

Let us then peruse this Love. Read it over in all the *Dimensions*. Dwell upon the thoughts of it till your hearts bee

Humbled, melted, inabled, in-nobled, winned, quickened, comforted, &c.

The Thoughts of this Love are

1. *Soul-humbling Thoughts.* Nothing layes the soul lower than Love. The consideration of this will vile a man to Hell, *Ezek.* 36. 25, to 33. where you may read some expressions of love, how it affects.

These would bee

2. *Soul-melting Thoughts.* They will not only *humble*, but *melt*; not only *break*, but *dissolve the heart*. Nothing doth melt the soul more than Love.

The *Law* may break us; but it is as the breaking of a flint; every dust retains hardness: but it is the Gospel that melteth us.

The thoughts of *Gods Justice* do stone the heart; make it more hard: but the thoughts of *Gods Mercy* do melt the heart.

You know you never mourn indeed, till *Love*, till *Mercy* do melt you. Every drop of tears sticks like an hailstone; and congeals in the eyes: but when Love comes in, then all the springs are opened, and a man is dissolved into waters.

So much apprehensions of this Love of *Christ*: so much godly sorrow. They are like the *Fountain* and the *Stream*, whereof the one doth rise no higher than the other.

The thoughts of this Love have

3. *A Soul-inabling Power.* It will not only ingage us to service; (as the *Apostle*. *The Love of Christ constrains mee.*) But it will *inable* us to service; make us pray, and pray with affections; pray with life; make us hear, and hear with strength. This puts us upon work, and puts life, vertue and vigor into our actions.

No actions stronger than those that come from Love: Things incredible and impossible to others, are yet easy to them who love.

See what the Saints have gone through, what they have *done*, what they have *suffered*. Let but the thoughts of this love lye on your spirits a little, and you will finde that Love is strong as death, *Cant.* 8. 6. and will mightily carry us through that, which otherwise may seem impossible.

They will bee

4. *Soul-innobling thoughts.* They will make you like themselves. Whatever the soul feeds on, the soul is digested into the nature of it. So here, feed on the thoughts of this love, and your spirit will be digested into it. *Whiles wee behold as in a glasse the glory of the Lord; wee are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord,* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

In nature the meat is digested into the nature of the eater. Here the eater is turned into the nature of the meat. The *contemplation of his Glory* makes you glorious.

They will be

Amor amoris
Magnes.

5. *Soul-winning Thoughts.* Love you know is of an *attractive nature*. Nothing wins more than Love. Love is the *Loadstone* to draw Love again.

As the Sun shining upon a Glasse begets a reflection of the beams back again: so the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, begets a reflection of love back again toward God. You see *Mary*. Much was forgiven her; shee had tasted of much love from God; and shee returned much love again to him. *Shee loved much.*

The Power of God doth shake the heart:

The Majesty of God doth dread the heart:

The Justice of God doth awe the heart:

But it is the *Mercy of God*, the *Love of God*, which doth perswade, win, and draw the heart. Nothing wins a mans heart to God but his Love.

The fear of God, dread of God, may bring a mans feet into his wayes: but it is the *Love of God*, which brings his Heart into his wayes.

They are

6. *Soul-quickenings.* 7. *Soul-comforting thoughts.*

Oh then! that wee were but wise to improve this Doctrine, this truth, to the good of our souls!

I tell thee *Christian*, if thou wouldest give this truth but scope in thy heart, it would help thee, and relieve thee of all the burdens under which thou groanest.

1. *Dost thou labour under a proud heart?* this would humble thee.

2. *Dost thou labour under a dejected heart?* this would raise thee.

3. *Under a dark heart?* this would comfort, revive thee.

4. *Under a dead heart?* this would quicken thee, and put the Spirit of Heaven into thee, whiles thou art on earth.

5. *Under an hard heart?* this would break thee. Nay this would melt thee, dissolve thee into waters.

I say, the more thou gets up (with *Elijah*) into this Chariot of love, the more would the mantle of sin and corruption depart from thee.

6. *Under a worldly heart?* This would dead thy heart for ever to the World, and set thee all on flame with the fire of heavenly affections.

I am

I am confident of it; whatever a Christian desires to enjoy; whatever a Christian desires to bee rid of, if hee can but dwell upon this truth, and bee able to manage it: Hee shall have it more fully, hee shall have it more quickly than any other way.

Wouldest thou bee rid of a proud heart? wouldest thou have an humble heart? wouldest bee rid of a dead heart, and desirest a quick heart? wouldest bee rid of an hard heart, and have a broken heart? wouldest bee rid of an unbeleeving, of a doubting, of a dejected heart, and wouldest bee mighty in Faith, full of comfort? Why, do but let thy soul bee carried captive with this Truth: bee but content this Truth should master thee; bee but willing to entertain it, beleeve it, imbrace it. I am confident on it, all this will bee done. I may set down a *probatum est*, to it. Oh! That wee were wise to manage this Truth!

There are many look upon this but as a pleasant dream, a *Chimera*, a fiction.

And some beleeve it; but slightly; there wants depth of earth.

And some there are (poor souls!) to whom the comfort of this truth belongs, who think *this is too good news for them*. They think, if they should own it, it would bee but *too great a sale for too small a Boat*; rather overturn them, than do them good; rather ruine them, than help them. And therefore they must feed upon black thoughts, upon Hell, upon justice, upon sin, upon their corruptions.

Ah! *Poor souls!* Satan deludes you; you take a way to undo your selves. Either to *discourage you*, to say there is no hope; or else to *break you*, that you shall never bee able to do God service.

Look as long as you will into Hell: pry as long as you will into the dark vaults of your souls: rake as long as you will into the kennel of your hearts. You shall finde nothing in Hell, but Hell, in your hearts but sin; and having found it, run from him.

That man looks too much on sin, who shutteth his eyes from a mutual interview of love between God and his soul.

And hither you must come at last. *Free-Grace must bee owned; Free-Mercy must bee acknowledged, and advanced by you; if ever you would bee saved; if ever you would bee comforted.*

You may think what you will; but sure I am,

1. *There are no Christians more chearfull.*
2. *None are more thankfull.*
3. *None are more humble.*
4. *None are more beleeving.*
5. *None are more active.*
6. *None are more couragious.*

7. *None more serviceable and usefull toward God and men,*
than they, who lye continually at the breast of the promise; than they,
who

who set up Gods Free-Grace; and own that good which God makes out to them.

Thou mayest bee a Christian; but thou wilt bee a *sad* Christian, an *uncomfortable* Christian, a *dark* Christian, a *deserted* Christian, a *dead* Christian, an *unserviceable* Christian: if thou dost go on to feed upon black thoughts; and wilt not own that comfort which *Christ* tenders; imbrace that good which *Christ* speaks, and beleeve the *Riches of his Grace and Mercy to poor sinners*.

Do but sit down, and from the sight and sense of thine own unworthiness, take but occasion to advance Free-Grace and Mercy. Let there bee place for that to come in. Let those thoughts finde entertainment. And thou shalt quickly finde a strange change in thy spirit.

1. Thou, who couldest not mourn before, shall now bee able to poure out tears, as if thou wert all turned to water.

2. Thou, who before couldest not beleeve, couldest not bee comforted, wilt even think it a wonder, that ever thy heart should bee so dark, so doubtful.

3. Thou, who before wast dead, shalt now finde a spirit of life come into thee, and make thee active in the work of the Lord.

Make but the *Experiment*, and thou wilt converse more with the promise, with the Love of *Christ*, with the Free-Grace of God, whiles thou livest; if you would but remove your *unbelief*.

But who shall remove this stone? *God* alone must do it. But if this were done, this truth would let in a flood of mercy upon you; and even sink and over-whelm you in a Sea of mercy and glory; where now you go drooping, and hang down your heads, because you will not own that portion, which *Christ* hath left you; nor that comfort which *Christ* doth tender and speak to you.

4. Direction to them of the Church.

4. Direction to them of the Church.

4. Labour for a reciprocall affection, a mutual taking between *Christ* and us. Is *Christ's* heart taken with you? Oh! let your hearts bee taken with him. Doth *Christ* love you? Oh! do you love *Christ*. Are you dear? are you precious to him? let him bee dear and precious to you.

Whatever God doth to the soul, it makes an impression in the soul of the same to God. Hee loves us, and thereupon wee love him; so his heart is taken with us, thereupon our hearts are taken with him. You see here the *mutual Indeerments betwixt Christ and his Church*, Cant. 5. 16.

Paul's heart was so much taken with *Christ*, that hee was ever in his thoughts, ever upon his tongue. Hee names him sixteen, or seventeen several times in one chapter, 1 Cor. 1. 1. as *Chrysostome* notes.

Peter did but let a word of *Christ* fall, and it is a door to open to further discourse of him. Hee takes occasion upon the naming of him,

him, to enter into discourse concerning him. As you see, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7, 8. So greatly were their hearts taken with *Christ*, that they could think nothing but *Christ*, speak nothing but *Christ*. No sentence compleat, wherein *Christ* was not part of it.

Hee was *the one* of their esteems; *the one* of their affections; *the one* of their desires; *the one* of their delights. And so ought hee to bee of ours.

Get your hearts taken with *Christ*, this will make you *Christians* indeed; this will make you humble, active, chearful *Christians*.

An heart taken with *Christ* is *Heaven on this side Heaven*. An *Heaven on Earth*. *Glory in Clay*.

It is the *Paradise*, where *Christ* delights to walk:

It is the *House*, where *Christ* delights to dwell.

It is the *Throne*, where *Christ* sits in his glory.

It is the *Habitation* of the *blessed Spirit*.

It is the *Delight* of all the *blessed Trinity*.

An heart taken with *Christ* is the humble soul indeed, is the active soul, the living soul, which breathes forth nothing but love and desire after *Christ*.

It is an heart dead to the world, for the World can never take that heart which once is taken with *Christ*. All is empty to him, whom *fullness* fills. All is *blackness* where *beauty shines*.

Oh! then get but an heart taken with him, and thou livest a *Life of Glory*, and a *Life of Grace*. This is the *Porch of Glory*, the *suburbs of Heaven*.

I told you before, there were four speciall times in which the heart was taken with *Christ*. I might adde a fifth, which I hope is *our times*. -- When *Christ* goes forth in his glory, for the redemption and deliverance of his Church, and punishment of his enemies: Then is the heart taken with him.

1. Taken with his *Wisdom*.

2. With his *Justice*.

3. With his *Power*.

4. With his *Mercy and goodness*. Which are the visible attributes *Christ* doth manifest in the deliverance of his Church.

You see this, *Isa.* 25. 9. when God went forth in his *Glory*, to deliver his Church, the Saints were taken with him, even to admiration, and speak glorying. *Loe, This is our God, wee have waited for him, and hee will save us. This is the Lord, wee have waited, and will bee glad in his salvation.*

Here was a *Triumphant song* of the Church. *This is our God, This* who appears so glorious, so full of Majesty. *This, This is our God,* not yours. And good reason.

1. *Christ* never appears in his *Glory* to his Church; but hee makes his Church *glorious*.

You see, when God delivered his Church from *Babylon*, hee did appear in his *Glory*. *Psal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord shall build up*

up Lion, hee shall appear in his glory.

And you see, as hee appeared in his *Glory*, so hee made the Church *glorious*, Isa. 54. 11, 12, 13. (speaking of the same time.) Behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. I will make thy windows of Agates, and thy gates of Carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

2. Christ now comes in, with the *Performance of Promises*; and needs then must he be *glorious*; and the Church be taken with him.

If Christ were so glorious, when hee made those promises: what is hee, when hee comes in to make good those Promises? Christ hath reserved abundance of his *visible Glory* to be seen by his Church; now at the end of the World.

Our Fore-Fathers have seen him but an *obscured Christ*, a persecuted and kept-down Christ. Though *glorious*, yet *humble-glory*. But it will not be long before the Church see him in his *Glory*, when hee comes to destroy that man of sin with the brightness of his coming.

Blessed be God for what our eyes see. Let us follow him with admiration with the Church. *This is our God*; follow with spiritual triumph. *This is our God*. And let our hearts be taken with his goings forth; who is set forth in his glory now to redeem, and so deliver his Church and People.