

# SUPPLEMENT

TO

## THE MORNING EXERCISE.

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### SERMON I.

BY THE REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, LL.D.

HOW MAY WE ATTAIN TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR HEARTS,  
SOULS, AND MINDS?

*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.*—Matthew xxii. 37, 38.

It is fit this Exercise should begin with a general introduction, that may indifferently serve every sermon that shall be preached. I should be much mistaken, and so would you too, should we think this text unsuitable: let us therefore, not only in the fear, but also in the love, of God, address ourselves to the management of it.

This command you have in Deut. vi. 5: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This command is not found in Exodus, nor in Leviticus, but only in Deuteronomy; that is, "the second law of Moses," which, as some express it, bore a type of the second law, namely, the evangelical, to which this command is proper: for the old law was a law of *fear* tending to bondage, and therefore Moses mentions the incussion of terror in the giving of it; which when he hath dispatched, he begins the following chapter with *love*, noting that the Holy Ghost will cause the law of love to succeed the law of fear. And it is observable that the Jews read this place with the highest observation; and their scribes write the first and last words of the preface to it with greater letters than ordinary, to amplify the sense, and to note that this is the beginning and the end of the divine law; and they read this scripture morning and evening with great religion.\*

#### THE OCCASION.

The occasion of Christ's pressing this command upon them at this time was this: When the Pharisees heard how he had baffled the Sadducees, and stopped their mouths with so proper and fit an answer that they had no more to say, they consult how they may show their acumen

\* JANSSENII *Harmonia*.

and sharpness of wit, to diminish Christ's credit concerning his doctrine and skill in scripture; and therefore they choose out one of their most accomplished interpreters of the law, captiously to propose an excellent question. They call him "Master," whose disciples they will not be; *they* inquire after the "great" commandment *who* will not duly observe the "least;" they thought Christ could not return such an answer but that they might very plausibly except against it.\* If Christ should have named any one command to be the greatest, their exception was ready: "Why not another as great as that?" But Christ's wisdom shames their subtilty; Christ doth not call any command great, with the lessening of the rest; but he repeats the sum of the whole law, and distinguisheth it into two great commands, according to the subordination of their objects. "Thou shalt love,"† &c.

Though the excellency of the subject calls for the enlargement of your hearts, yet the copiousness of it requires the contracting of my discourse. To save time, therefore, let me open my text and case both together. The case is this:—

#### CASE.

*What is it to love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind; and how may we be able to do it?*

In short, *we must love God*, as near as it is possible, *infinitely*.

For directions in this case, I shall follow this method:—

I. Show you, what it is to love God with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the mind.

II. I shall endeavour to demonstrate, that it is our unquestionable and indispensable duty *so* to love God.

III. I shall acquaint you what abilities are requisite for the well-discharging of this duty, and how to attain them.

IV. I shall give you directions how to improve and augment all the abilities we can get, that we may have a growing love to God.

V. I shall close with the best persuasives I can think of, that you would be graciously ambitious of such qualifications, and vigorously diligent in such duties.

I. *What is it to love God with all the heart, soul, and mind?*

We must not be too curious in distinguishing these words: the same thing is meant, when the words are used *singly*; as David is said to follow God "with all his heart:" (1 Kings xiv. 8:) and *doubly*; Josiah made his people, as well as himself, to covenant "to walk after the Lord with all their heart and all their soul:" (2 Kings xxiii. 3:) and where *three words* are used; as, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might:" (Deut. vi. 5:) and when *four words* are used; as, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." (Mark xii. 30.)

Love to God must go through and possess our whole nature, and all the powers of it. The mind must think of God; the will must delight in God; in short, our whole strength must be employed to please him. We must love nothing more than God, nothing equal with God; we

\* CARTWRIGHT'S "Harmony."

† AUTHOR *imperfecti operis*.

must love God above all, and that for himself; but all other things in God, and for God.\* We must be willing to lose all, yea, life itself, rather than to admit any thing contrary to the love of God. All these expressions denote the intenseness of our affections, the unexpressibleness of our obligation, and the contemptibleness of every thing that shall challenge a share in our love. All these expressions admonish us of our infirmity, provoke us to humility, and set us a-longing after a better life.† It is a notable expression of one:‡ “The love of the heart is not understood, but felt; the love of the soul is not felt, but understood; because the love of the soul is its judgment. He that loves God as he is here commanded, believes that all good is in God, and that God is all that is good; and that without God there is no good. He believes that God is all power and wisdom; and that without God there is neither power nor wisdom,” &c.

But notwithstanding all that hath been spoken, no doubt but there is a singular emphasis in the words; and the Holy Ghost intends a more full declaration of the manner of our love by these several expressions. Though to be over-critical in the distinguishing of these words will rather intricate than explicate this great command; yet to follow a plain scriptural interpretation will give light into the duty.

Let us inquire therefore, 1. What it is to love. 2. What it is to love God. 3. What it is to love God in that manner here expressed.

#### WHAT LOVE IS.

1. *What is love?*—“Love is an affection of union, whereby we desire or enjoy perpetual union with the thing loved.” §

It is not a *carnal* love I am now to speak of. The philosopher could observe, that there can be no true love among wicked men.

It is not a *natural* love; for that may as well be brutish as rational; and divine love is transcendently rational.

It is not a merely *moral* love; for that consists in a *mean*; but divine love is always in an *extreme*.

Divine love is a compound of all the former; but it adds infinitely more to them than it borrows of them. Divine love is supernaturally natural; it turns moral virtues into spiritual graces. It engageth men to attempt as much for the glorifying of God as all the creatures besides, from the highest angel to the most insensible stone.

#### WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD.

2. *What is love to God?*—Methinks a lax description best suits my design. This divine love,—it is the unspeakable enlargement of the heart towards God; it is the ecstasy and ravishment of the heart in God; it is the soul’s losing itself in God; it is the continual working of the heart towards God. Every faculty of the soul is actually engaged; the mind is musing and plodding how to please God, and enjoy him; the will is graciously obstinate, the policy of hell cannot charm it off its object; the affections are all passions in their eager motions towards God; the conscience is a busy-body, necessitating the whole man to a

\* BUCERUS.    † GERHARDI *Harmonia*.    ‡ AUTHOR *imperfecti operis*.    § MARTIN LUTHER.

jealous watch. I said, this love—it is the enlargement of the heart towards God: when the “love of God is shed abroad in the heart,” it is as the breaking of a ball of lightning, it sets all on a flame immediately. It is the unspeakable enlargement of the heart towards God; the highest rhetoric is too flat to express it, as is obvious in that Song of Songs, that Song of Loves. I have no way to set this out unto you but by words: the plainest and most intelligible expressions I can give you shall be by several similitudes, which I shall pursue till they leave me to admiration. I shall borrow metaphors from things without life, from plants, from sensitive creatures, from man.

#### METAPHORS TO ILLUSTRATE WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD.

(1.) *The soul's love to God may be a little shadowed forth, by the love of the iron to the loadstone*,—Which ariseth from a hidden quality; though to say so, is but the hiding of our ignorance. The motion of the iron toward the loadstone is slow while at a distance, but quick when near: and when it but touches it, it clings so fast, that, unless forced, it will never part; and when it is parted, it will, to the farthest part of the world, retain the virtue of its touch. So the soul: while at a distance from God,—it moves slowly; but as the Father draws, it runs; and when once it comes to be graciously united, the apostle asks, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom. viii. 35;) not only, “Who shall hinder us from partaking of God's love?” but, “Who can take us off from our loving of God?” Christ gives the answer, their union with God, their enjoyment of God, is inseparable; (John x. 28, 29;) and though they may (as sometimes they will in their imperfect state) have some warping on their parts, and some withdrawing on God's, yet their love to God, in the lowest ebb, tremblingly hankers after him; the soul cannot forget its alone resting-place. (Psalm cxvi. 7.)

(2.) *Our love to God is like the love of the flower of the sun to the sun*.—It springs of a very little seed. It is not only our faith, but our love, that is at first like a “grain of mustard-seed;” it grows the fastest of any flower whatsoever. It is not only faith, but love, that “groweth exceedingly.” (2 Thess. i. 3.) It always turns and bows itself towards the sun. Our love to God is always bowing and admiring; always turning to and following after God. It opens and shuts with the sun's rising and setting. Our love, when it is what it should be, opens itself to God, and closes itself against all other objects. It brings forth seed enough for abundance of other flowers: love to God is the most fruitful grace, that when it “blossoms and buds, it fills the face of the world with fruit.” (Isai. xxvii. 6.)

(3.) *Our love to God is like the love of the turtle to her mate*.—God's people are his turtle. (Psalm lxxiv. 19.) I grant, they most properly resemble brotherly love; but why not our love to God? They never associate with other birds: the loving soul keeps fellowship with God, and, out of choice, with him only, and those that bear his image. The turtle never sings and flies abroad for recreation, as other birds; but they have a peculiar note for each other: the soul that loves God flutters not about for worldly vanities; no recreation so sweet as communion with God; the soul's converse with God is peculiar. When one dies, the

other droops till it dies, so that they do, as it were, live and die in the embraces of each other : so the soul that loves God,—his “loving-kindness is better than life ;” (Psalm lxi. 3 ; ) and there is nothing makes a saint more impatient of living, than that he cannot while he lives have a full enjoyment of God.

(4.) *Our love to God should be like, though exceed, Jacob's love to Benjamin.* (Gen. xlii. 38.)—He will starve rather than part with Benjamin ; and when hunger forced him from him, and he was like to be by a wife kept from him, Judah offers to purchase his liberty with his own, because his father's “life was bound up in the lad's life :” (Gen. xlv. 30 :) so the soul that loves God is not able to bear the thoughts of parting with him ; his life is bound up in enjoying the presence of God. I have been too long ; but O that I could affect your hearts as well as inform your judgments, what it is to love God !

#### WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH THE HEART.

3. (1.) Now then let us re-assume the inquiry, *What it is to love the Lord our God “with all our heart.”*—Some refer this to the thoughts,\* some to the vegetative soul,† some to the understanding, that it may be free from error,‡ others, as if he had said, “Lay up all these things in your hearts.”§ But the other words will take-in most of these ; and therefore, according to scripture, we must understand the will and affections ; and so the word is taken, Joshua xxii. 5 : “Moses the servant of the Lord charged you, to love the Lord your God with all your heart.” As out of the heart proceeds life, so from the will proceed all operations ; the will ought to be carried towards God with its whole force ; all the affections of a pure and holy heart are directed to the only love of God.|| Love riseth from the will. Now there is a two-fold act of the will : ¶ “that which is immediately drawn forth of the will itself,” the will's own act ; and such an act the will exerts in loving God ; and then there is “the commanded act of the will,” which is the act of some other power moved to that act by the will. Where the will is filled with the love of God, it moves the understanding to meditate of God whom we love, and to inquire after the excellency of the object loved.

#### WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH THE WHOLE HEART.

We must not love God only with the heart, but with the *whole* heart. Pray mark this : perfect hatred and perfect love know no such thing as the world *calls* \*\* prudence. If you perfectly hate any one, all things about him displease you ; whatever he says or does, though it be never so good, it seems to you to be evil : so if you perfectly love any one, all things about him please you. Some expound this totality by this distinction : We are to love God with the whole heart positively and negatively : *positively*, where all powers of the will are set to love God ; and this we cannot perfectly do while we are travellers, till we come to our heavenly country : but, *negatively*, thou shalt so love God, that nothing

\* AUGUSTINE. † GREGORY NYSSEN. ‡ ANSELM. § ORIGEN. || GERHARDI Harm. c. 156. ¶ *Elicitus et imperatus.* \*\* *Judicium rerum non cognoscit.*—

AUTHOR *imperfecti operis*. “It does not call into exercise that faculty by which we attempt to form a right judgment of things.”—EDIT.

contrary to the love of God shall be entertained in thy heart ; and this we may attain to a pretty tolerable perfection of in this life.\*

The *whole heart* is opposed either to a divided and dispersed heart, or to a remiss and a sluggish heart : God doth as much abominate a partnership in our love, as a husband or wife abhors any such thing in their conjugal relation. We must love nothing but God, or that which may please God. He that loves God with his heart, and not with his whole heart, loves something else, and not God.

As the *whole heart* is opposed to a remiss and sluggish heart, the meaning is this,—the care of our heart should be set upon nothing so much as upon the loving and pleasing of God ; we must prefer God alone before all other objects of our love, and there must be an ardency of affection : whatever we do, it must be for his sake, and according to his will.†

(2.) “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul.*”—I forbear to mention the different conjectures of those that try the acuteness of their parts to produce some peculiar interpretation which others have not. By comparing scripture with scripture, the sensitive life, or the sensitive appetite, is here meant. Thus : “His soul clave unto Dinah, and he loved the damsel.” (Gen. xxxiv. 3.) Again : “Thy soul” (thy sensual affections) “longeth to eat flesh.” (Deut. xii. 20.) And because “the soul” is in many places taken for “life,” as Exod. iv. 19 : “All the men are dead that sought thy life ;” (Heb. “thy soul ;”) so Exod. xxi. 23 : “Thou shalt give life for life ;” (Heb. “soul for soul ;”) and so we may take it here *intensively* for the sensitive appetite, and *extensively* for the life. The soul is here taken for the animal life, which comprehends both the vegetative and sensitive part. To love God with the soul is to subject all those works that pertain to an animal life unto the love of God. Plainly, and in short : it is not enough to love God in our will, but we must not admit any thing contrary to the love of God in our sensual delights. Whatsoever sensualists do for the gratifying of their lusts and desires, let those things be drained from the dregs of sin, and consecrate them all unto God. Whatever use wicked men make of their souls in a way of hatred of God, we must make the contrary use in a way of loving of God. And then,

#### WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL THE SOUL.

*Thou must love God “with all thy soul.”*—We must be ready to lay down our lives for God.‡ If any one should be asked what in all the world was most dear unto him, he would answer, his life ; for life-sake tender mothers have cast-off the sense of nature, and fed upon their own children. It is life that affords us being, sense, motion, understanding, riches, dominions. If a man had the empire of the world, he could enjoy it no longer than he hath his soul in his body : when that is gone, he presently becomes a horrid carcass, or rather a loathsome dunghill. Now then, if a man love his life so much, why should he not love God more, by whom he lives, and from whom he expects greater things than this life ? God is the soul of our soul, and the life of our life ; he is

\* CAJETAN.

† CHEMNITII *Harmonia*, cap. cv. &c.

‡ ORIGEN.

nearer to us than our very souls : “ In him we live, and move, and have our being.” (Acts xvii. 28.) He that doth but indifferently weigh these things, will acknowledge that it is no rashness to call that man a monster that loves not God : how, then, can we think of it without grief, that the whole world is full of these monsters ? Almost all men prefer their money, or pleasures, or their honours, or their lusts, before God. So oft as you willingly break any law of God to raise your credit or estate, you prefer the dirt and dust of the world before God. Alas ! what use does a wicked man make of his soul, but to serve his body ? Whereas both soul and body should be wholly taken up with, not only the service, but the love, of God. Then may you be said to love God with all your souls, when your whole life is filled with the love of God, when your worldly business truckles under the love of God : the love of the dearest relations should be but hatred when compared with your love to God. When you eat and drink to the glory of God, sleep no more than may make you serviceable unto God ; when your solitary musings are about the engaging your souls to God ; when your social conference is about the things of God ; when all acts of worship endear God to you ; when all your duties bring you nearer to God ; when the love of God is the sweetness of your mercies, and your cordial under afflictions ; when you can love God under amazing providences, as well as under refreshing deliverances ; then you may be said to love God with all your souls.

#### WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH THE MIND.

(3.) “ *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind.*”—Though Anselm take this for the memory, that we should remember nothing whereby we are hindered in our thinking of God ; yet generally this is taken for the understanding ; \* and so the evangelist Mark expressly interprets it, when he renders this command in these words : *Εξ όλης της συνεσεως*, “ With all the understanding.” (Mark xii. 33.) To love God with our minds, is to have the understanding moved and commanded by the love of God, to assent unto those things that are to be believed, and to admit nothing into the understanding which is contrary to the love of God.† The mind should let nothing go in or out but what pays tribute of love to God. There is one [who] interprets the word by the etymology of the word “ mind,” from “ measuring.” ‡ The mind must be so full of love to God, that love must measure all our works. When we eat, we should think how hateful it is to God that we should indulge our palate, and thence shun gluttony ; when we drink, we should think how abominable drunkenness is in the sight of God, and thence drink temperately ; (1 Cor. x. 31 ; ) so that “ whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” (Rom. xiv. 8.) Our life and our death must be measured by our love to God.

\* MUSCULUS. † CAJETAN. ORIGEN. *Nihil cogitantes, vel proferentes nisi ea que Dei sunt.* “ Thinking and speaking of nothing but of the things of God.”—EDIT.  
‡ *Mens dicitur a metiendo, &c.*—AVENDANUS.

## WHAT IT IS TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL OUR MIND.

*We must love God "with all our mind."*—We must always converse with God in our minds and thoughts; our thoughts must kindle our affections of love. Love to God makes the hardest commands easy; while our thoughts are immersed in love to God, love to enemies will be an easy command; the keeping under of our bodies by mortification will be an easy work; persecution for righteousness will be a welcome trial. Love will change death itself into life.

There is another word added by Mark, which, indeed, is in Deut. vi. 5; whence this is taken: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength.*"—Now, because this word doth not express any other species or power of the soul, but only notes the highest and most intense degree of love that flows from all the faculties of the soul, I will close this inquiry with a word of this. We are to love God with all the powers of our soul, with all the members of our bodies. Our understandings, wills, inward and outward senses, appetite, speech, whatever we have, whatever we are, must be all directed into the love of God, and into obedience flowing from love. You commonly hear that of Bernard, "The cause of loving God is God himself, and the only measure is to love him without measure." We must love God strongly, because with all our strength. Our love to God must get above interruptions; no threatenings, calamities, or discommodities whatsoever, must pull us away from God, but that all the powers of soul and body must be taken up into his service; that our eyes, beholding the wonderful works of God, the sun, moon, and stars, the clear evidences of his Divinity, we may be in love with him; that our ears, piously hearkening to his instructions, may be in love with him; that our mouth may love to praise him, our hands to act for him; that our feet may be swift to run the way of his commandments; that our affections may be withdrawn from earthly things, and delivered over to the love of God; that whatever is within us, "it may be bound over to the service of God." \* He that thus loves God, need not trouble himself how to order and dispose the several words here used,—his heart, soul, mind, will; whatever he is, hath, knows, understands, obtains, is, all due to God; neither is there any thing in the whole world to be valued before God. And thus I have given you a lame account, what it is to love God, &c.

## IT IS OUR INDISPENSABLE DUTY THUS TO LOVE GOD.

II. The second thing I undertook was, demonstratively to prove, that *it is our indispensable duty thus to love God.*—To love God is our great natural duty. Man would more naturally love God than himself, were it not for sin. Neither angels nor men were at first commanded to love God; nature wanted no spur to this duty. The law of love was implanted in nature. "Thou hast made me, O Lord," saith Augustine; "and my heart is unquiet till it come to thee." "O my heart," saith he, "every creature expels thee from them, and that not without shame,

\* *Id omne Deo obsequio mancipetur, &c.*—CHEMNITIUS.



that thou mayest go to God. They do, as it were, say, 'O miserable wretch! why dost thou adhere to me? I am not the good which thou requirest.' O my soul, why dost thou go thirsting among the creatures to beg some drops that will rather provoke than quench thy thirst? Why dost thou leave that everlasting Fountain, where thou mayest be perfectly satisfied? What canst thou desire that is not fully and perfectly to be had in God?" \*

#### THIS IS THE GREAT COMMAND.

I shall at present urge no other demonstration than Christ's reason in the following verse: "*This is the first and the great commandment.*"—Not that any command of God is small. The commands in scripture are like the stars in the firmament; which, though to ignorant persons they are but like twinkling candles, yet are greater than the whole earth: so these commands, that careless persons overlook as inconsiderable, are such as without respect unto them there is no salvation. I grant there is a difference in the commands; for example: the command about "paring the nails" is of lesser moment than that of having "no other God;" (Deut. xxi. 12; v. 7;) nay, in the same kind Christ threatens the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, that they were so exact in tything their gardens, and so remiss in looking to their hearts. (Matt. xxiii. 23.) But among the commands and the diversity of them, Christ tells us this is the greatest. The Jews (some of them) counted the command about sacrifice to be the greatest, as is hinted in the scribe's saying, This command of loving God is "more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." (Mark xii. 33.) Others counted that of circumcision to be the greatest; others, that of the sabbath.† Origen observes: "It is well that Christ decides the controversy; though the truth is, he that willingly breaks the least commandment will not stick to break the greatest." While only one sin makes us to forbear another, (for men's lusts cross one another,) when occasion serves, *that* sin will be ventured upon that is now forborne. But this, upon a manifold account, is "the great command."

1. *Ratione objecti*, "In respect of the object."—It is God, the Chiefest Being, the First and Chiefest Good: "What am I, Lord," saith Augustine, "that thou commandest me to love thee, and threatenest me with misery if I do not love thee?" This is no small aggravation of the devil's torments,—that he cannot love God. God may require many things of us; but he requires nothing like this of our love, because this is the only thing wherein we can answer God; "in other things we cannot, or we may not, render God like for like."‡ God created us, and gave us our being; but we can do nothing like this for God. God preserves us in safety, and daily confers innumerable benefits upon us: God delivers from innumerable dangers both of soul and body. There is none of all this to be done for God; God is infinitely above all such returns; and there are other things wherein we may not render God like

\* *STELLA De Amore Dei.*  
*ex æquo reddere.*

† "English Annotations."

‡ *Et vicem licet non*

for like. If God be angry with us, we may not be angry with him; if he reprove us, we must not quarrel with him; if God judge us, we must not censure him. But now God loves us, and through grace we are able to love him again; and he loves us, and God commands us to love him again. It is true, there is no equality between God's loving of us, and our loving of God. God's love does infinitely overcome ours; \* but yet our love to God speaks interest and union; the thing loved gives the name to the love. Love is but an indifferent passion, till it be united to the thing loved, and then it gets a denomination. For example: If the object be earthly, it is an earthly love; if sensual, it is a brutish love; if it be man, it is a human love; if God, it is a divine love: so that by our love we are changed and transformed into a thing more noble, or more vile. We therefore debase ourselves in loving any thing but God: there is nothing else worthy of our love. Whatsoever we love, we give it a kind of dominion over us, so that the will loseth its dignity and excellency when it loves inferior things; we are, as it were, married to that we love. "Suppose," saith Raymundus, "a poor man, of mean stock and no reputation, have six daughters: they are all equal by birth as to reputation and esteem, but they are all differenced by their marriage. The eldest marries a farmer, the next a citizen, the third a knight, the fourth a duke, the fifth a king, the sixth an emperor: by these marriages there is a very great inequality. So here, by the object of your love you are dignified or debased." But there is more yet in God's being the object of our love: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" *thy* God, and therefore thou must love him.

Give me leave to enlarge a little on this, and I will be the briefer in the other considerations, How this is the great command: "Thou shalt love the Lord *thy* God." Those things that are ours, though they are not always lovely, yet we love them; our own children, whether of our bodies or our minds, our own estates. We are more troubled at the loss of any thing wherein our own propriety [property] is concerned, than in all the world besides. A small thing of our own is a thousand times more to us than a thousand times as much of another's. We are more concerned for the cutting off our own finger, than the cutting off another man's head. Propriety [proprietorship] doth exceedingly heighten love. But then, when there is a speciality upon the propriety, that it is impossible to have the want repaired: for example, "my child, and mine only child." Whatever you say of God, you may put an *only* to it. God so loves every gracious soul, as if he had no other person to bestow his love upon; therefore thou must so love God, as if there were nothing else in the world to bestow thy love upon. Alas! what is thine to-day, as to outward things, may be none of thine to-morrow: thou canst not say so of God: God once thine, and for ever thine.

But perhaps you will say, "Were God mine, you should need to say no more to inflame my heart to love him. Propriety in God! could I attain this, I had enough. This is it I wait for, I pray for. I think nothing too much for it. I only fear I shall never attain it. The very comforts of my life are embittered for want of it."

• RAYMUNDUS.

To this I answer : We cannot shake off God's sovereignty over us, nor propriety in us : this you will grant. God is, and will be, thy God, thy Lord, thy Sovereign, thy Commander, let thy carriage be what it will. The vilest wretches in the world cannot sin themselves from under God's dominion. "But there is no comfort in this." Well, then, I will therefore add : Thou that mournest after propriety in God, God is thy God ; thy gracious God, and Father ; thy God in covenant ; thy God in mercy and loving-kindness. Dost thou unfeignedly desire to love God ? Then thou mayest be sure God loves thee ; for God loves first. (1 John iv. 19.) Dost thou not out of choice prefer the service of God before all other service ? Then you shall abide in the love of God. (John xv. 10.) Brethren, love God as if he were peculiarly yours, and you will thereby have an evidence that he is peculiarly yours. It is reported of one that [he] continued a whole night in prayer, and said nothing but this : "My God, and my all," or, "God is mine, and all is mine ;" repeating this a thousand times over.\* Let this be the constant breathing of thy soul to God : "My God, my all."

2. This is the "first and great command," *ratione ordinis et dignitatis*, "in respect of order and dignity."—This is the great command, because we must place this before all others in the very yelk [yolk] of the heart,† as the only foundation of piety. Whatsoever is taught in the law and in the prophets flows from this, as from a fountain ; grows upon this, as upon a root.‡ If I forget not, this is somewhere Augustine's metaphor : "This is to the other commands as the needle to the thread,—it draws all after it."

3. This is the "first and great command," *ratione debiti*, "in respect of obligation."—To love God is so indispensable, that, let me with reverence say, God cannot dispense with it. As God first bestows his love upon us before any other gift, and then, whatever he gives afterwards, he gives it in love ; so God requires that we first give him our hearts, our love, and then do all we do out of love to God. Sometimes God will have mercy, and not sacrifice ; divine duties shall give place to human ; nay, sometimes duties to God must give way to duties to a beast. (Luke xiv. 5.) But, however duties to God and men may be jostled to and fro, yet there is not any duty can warrant the intermitting of any love to God so much as one moment.

4. This is the "first and great command," *ratione materiæ*, "in respect of the matter of it."—Love to God is the most excellent of all graces. (1 Cor. xiii. 13.) Love among the graces is like the sun among the stars, which not only enlightens the lower world, but communicates light to all the stars in the firmament : so love to God does not only its own office, but the offices of all other graces. The apostle names four graces that are necessary to government,§ which love doth all their offices :—for example : "Beareth all things ;" that is, love parteth with something of its right, beareth the weaknesses of friends to preserve con-

\* *Deus meus, et omnia mea.*—AVENDANUS, p. 382.

† *In intimo cordis.*—ANSELMUS.

‡ MUSCULUS.

§ *Εννευκεια, candor, lenitas, patientia.*—MELANCTHON in loc.

"Equity or moderation, unsuspicious candour, mild amenity, and patient meekness."  
—EDIT.

cord :—"Believeth all things ;" that is, candidly makes the best interpretation of all things ; is not distrustful or suspicious upon light and frivolous occasions :—"Hopeth all things ;" that is, gently waits for the amendment of that which is faulty :—"Endureth all things ;" that is, patiently bears injuries, &c. (1 Cor. xiii. 7.) If you except, "This is spoken of love to men," I readily answer, that surely love to God, for whose image in men, and command concerning men, we love them, will do greater things.

5. This is "the first and great command," *ratione amplitudinis*, "in respect of the largeness of it."—This requires the whole man, the whole heart, the whole soul, the whole mind, the whole strength. Whatever else we entertain, some other room may be good enough for it : let the heart be kept for God's peculiar presence-chamber. God requires the whole soul : all the inferior powers of the soul, our whole life, must be spent in the love of God. This command reaches the whole mind ; God expects that we should in judgment reason down every thing into contempt that should pretend a loveliness to jostle out God.

6. This is the "first and great command," *ratione capacitatis*, "in respect of its capacity," because it contains all commands.—No man can love his neighbour, unless he love God ; and no man can love God, but he must observe all his commandments. Origen makes inquiry, how the commands about legal purification may be reduced to the love of God. Every command of God hath its peculiar obligation ; but this law of love hath a super-engagement over them all. For instance : men may accept and commend several duties to them that have not one drop of love in them. For example : if I give bread to one that is ready to famish, or physic to one that is dangerously sick, these things do good according to their own natures, and not according to the good-will of the giver. Alas ! man needs relief, and catcheth at it ; and never examines the heart, or end, whence it comes. But now God is infinitely above needing any thing from us ; it is his gracious condescension to receive any thing from us ; and therefore God never accepts of any thing we do but what is done out of love to him.

7. This is the "first and great command," *ratione difficultatis*, "in respect of the difficulties" of it, because through our infirmities (not to mention worse) we cannot presently love God.—The prime difficulty is, the spirituality of it. This "wisdom is too high for foolish sinners." (Prov. xxiv. 7.) Though it is most rational, yet it is the most spiritual, and, consequently, the most difficult, part of religion. Some commands may be observed without special grace ; as all the outside of religion. Yea, some commands may be observed without so much as common grace ; as duties merely moral. But this must have a great measure of the Spirit. It speaks much acquaintance with God through experience of his ways ; and much conformity to Christ in a well-composed conversation : in short, it includes the highest perfection possibly attainable in this life. Yet let not this difficulty fright you ; for through Christ our sincere love, though weak, is accepted ; and our imperfect love, because growing, shall not be despised.

8. This is the "first and great command," *ratione finis*, "in respect

of the *end*.”—All the commands of God are referred to this as their end and last scope, which was first in the mind of the Lawgiver.

9. This is the “first and great command,” *ratione perpetuitatis*, “in respect of the *lastingness*” of it.—“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God:” it is not only spoken after the Hebrew way of commanding,\* but it notes singular perseverance. Most of the other commands expire with the world, as all or most of the commands of the second table; but this remains and flourishes more than ever. When *repentance* and *mortification*, which now take up half our life; when *faith*, which is now, as it were, mother and nurse to most of our graces; when *hope*, which now upholds weak faith in its languors; when all these shall, as it were, die in travail, perfection of grace being then in the birth; *love to God* shall then be more lively than ever. That love which, as it were, passed between God and the soul in letters and tokens, shall then be perfected in a full enjoyment. Our love was divided among several objects, that cut the banks, and weakened the stream; henceforth it shall have but one current. Our love is now mixed with fear, fear of missing or losing what we love; but that fear shall be banished. There shall never be any distance, never any thing to provoke jealousy, never any thing to procure cloying, never any thing more to be desired than is actually enjoyed. Is not this, then, the “first and great commandment?” Is it not our privilege and happiness to be swallowed up in it? This may suffice to evidence it to be our duty; but then,

WHAT ABILITIES ARE REQUISITE FOR THE WELL-PERFORMANCE OF THIS DUTY, AND HOW WE MAY OBTAIN THOSE ABILITIES.

III. *What abilities are requisite to the performance of this duty, and how may we attain those abilities?*—This we must be experimentally acquainted with, or all I can say will at best seem babbling; and therefore let me at first tell you plainly, nothing on this side regeneration can capacitate you to love God; and it is God alone that giveth, worketh, infuseth, impresseth the gracious habit of divine love in the souls of his people. Our love to God is nothing else but the echo of God’s love to us. Through the corruption of our nature, we hate God. God implanted in our nature an inclination to love God above all things amiable; but by the fall we have an headlong inclination to depart from God, and run away from him; and there is in every one of us a natural impotency and inability of turning unto God. The grace of love is no flower of nature’s garden, but a foreign plant.† We may possibly do something for the merely rational inflaming of our hearts with love to God. For instance: God may be represented as most amiable, we may be convinced of the unsatisfyingness of the creature, we may understand something of the worth of our souls, and what a folly it is to expect that any thing but God can fill them: and yet this will be at the utmost but like a solid proof of the truth of the Christian religion, which may nonplus our cavils, but not make us Christians. This may make love to

\* *Futurum pro imperativo*. “The future tense instead of the imperative mood.”—EDIT.

† *Non secundum bona naturalia, sed secundum dona gratuita*. “It is not according to the goods of nature, but according to the gifts of grace.”—EDIT.

God appear a rational duty, but it will not of itself beget in us this spiritual grace. It is the immediate work of God to make us love him ; I do not mean immediate in opposition to the use of means, but immediate in regard of the necessary efficacy of his Spirit, beyond what all means in the world, without his powerful influence, can amount unto. It is the Lord alone that can "direct our hearts into the love of God." \* (2 Thess. iii. 5.) God is pleased in a wonderful and unexpressible manner to draw up the heart in love to him. God makes use of exhortations, and counsels, and reproofs ; but though he works by them and with them, he works above them and beyond them : "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." And again : "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing : therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live : that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him : for he is thy life, and the length of thy days." (Deut. xxx. 6, 19, 20.) "He is thy life ;" that is, effectively, and that by love, saith Aquinas. It is reported, that "it often happens among partridges, that one steals away another's eggs ; but the young one that is hatched under the wing of a stranger, at her true mother's first call, who laid the egg whence she was hatched, she renders herself to her true mother, and puts herself into her covey." † It is thus with our hearts : though we are born and bred up among terrene and base things, under the wing of corrupted nature ; yet at, and not before, God's first quickening call, we receive an inclination to love him ; and upon his drawing, "we run after him." (Canticles i. 4.) God works a principle of love in us, and we love God by that habit of love he hath implanted ; hence the act of love is formally and properly attributed to man as the particular cause : ‡ "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength ;" and, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice." (Psalm xviii. 1 ; cxvi. 1.) The soul works together with God in his powerful working ; the will, being acted of God, acteth. It is a known saying of Augustine, "The wheel doth not run that it may be round, but because it is round." § The Spirit of God enables us to love God ; but it is we that love God with a created love ; it is we that acquiesce in God in a gracious manner. What God doeth in the soul doth not hurt the liberty of the will, but strengthens it, in sweetly and powerfully drawing it into conformity with the will of God, which is the highest liberty : "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) It is a poor liberty that consists in an indifferency. Do not the saints in heaven love God freely ? Yet they cannot but love him.

As the only *efficient* cause of our loving God is God himself, so the only *procuring* cause of our loving God is Jesus Christ, that Son of the Father's love who by his Spirit implants and actuates this grace of love,

\* *Exoptat a Deo quod non ambigit posse præstari.*—AMEROSIUS. "He asks of God that concerning which he entertains no doubt in reference to God's ability to perform."—EDDIT.  
 † SALES "Of the Love of God," page 63. ‡ VOETIUS. § *Non ideo bene currit rota ut rotunda sit, sed quia rotunda est.*

which he hath merited for us. Christ hath "made peace through the blood of his cross." (Col. i. 20.) Christ hath as well merited this grace of love for us, as he hath merited the reward of glory for us. Plead therefore, dear Christians, the merit of Christ for the inflaming your hearts with the love of God, that when I shall direct to rules and means how you may come to love God, you may as well address yourselves to Christ for the grace of love, as for the pardon of your want of love hitherto. Bespeak Christ in some such, but far more, pressing language: "Lord, thou hast purchased the grace of love for those that want and crave it: my love to God is chill, do thou warm it! My love is divided, Lord, do thou unite it! I cannot love God as he deserves, O that thou wouldest help me to love him more than I can desire! Lord, make me sick of love, and then cure me! Lord, make me in this as conformable to thyself, as it is possible for an adopted son to be like the natural, that I may be a son of God's love, both actively and passively, and both, as near as it is possible, infinitely!"

Let us, therefore, address ourselves to the use of all those means and helps whereby love to God "is nourished, increased, excited, and exerted."\* I will begin with removing the impediments; we must clear away the rubbish, before we can so much as lay the foundation.

#### IMPEDIMENTS OF OUR LOVE TO GOD.

**IMPED. I. *Self-love.***—This the apostle names as captain-general of the devil's army, whereby titular Christians manage their enmity against God. In the dregs of the "last days," this will make the times dangerous: "Men shall be lovers of their own selves." (2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.) When men over-estimate themselves, their own endowments of either body or mind; when they have a secret reserve for self in all they do, self-applause, or self-profit; this is like an error in the first concoction. Get your hearts discharged of it, or you can never be spiritually healthful. The best of you are too prone to this; I would therefore commend it to you to be jealous of yourselves in this particular: for as conjugal jealousy is the bane of conjugal love, so self-jealousy will be the bane of self-love. Be suspicious of every thing that may steal away or divert your love from God.

**IMPED. II. *Love of the world.***—This is so great an obstruction, that the most loving and best-beloved disciple that Christ had, said, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;" (1 John ii. 15;) and the apostle James makes use of a metaphor, calling them "adulterers and adulteresses" that keep not their conjugal love to God tight from leaking out toward the world. He chargeth them, as if they knew nothing in religion, if they knew not this, that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God;" and it is an universal truth, without so much as one exception, that "whosoever will be a friend of the world," must needs upon that very account be God's "enemy." (James iv. 4.) The apostle Paul adds more weight to those that are even pressed to hell already: "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and

\* *Foveetur, augetur, excitatur, et exercitur.*

into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things," &c. (1 Tim. vi. 9—11.) When men will be somebody in the world, they will have estates, and they will have honours, and they will have pleasures! What variety of vexatious distractions do unavoidably hinder our love to God! When our hearts are hurried with hopes and fears about worldly things, and the world hath not wherewithal to satisfy us; how doth the heart fret under its disappointments! And how can it do otherwise? We would have happiness here. Sirs, I will offer you fair: name me but one man that ever found a complete happiness in the world, and I dare promise you shall be the second; but if you will flatter yourself with dreams of impossibilities, "this your way will be your folly," though, it is like, "your posterity will approve your sayings," (Psalm xlix. 13,) and try experiments while they live, as you have done. But where is your love to God all this while? It is excluded; by what law? By the law of sin and death; by the love of the world and destruction; for Christ tells us, all that "hate him love death." (Prov. viii. 36.)

**IMPED. III. *Spiritual sloth, and carelessness of spirit.***—When men do not trouble themselves about religion, nor any thing that is serious. Love is a busy passion, a busy grace. Love among the passions is like fire among the elements. Love among the graces is like the heart among the members. Now that which is most contrary to the nature of love must needs most obstruct the highest actings of it. The truth is, a careless frame of spirit is fit for nothing; a sluggish, lazy, slothful, careless person never attains to any excellency in any kind. What is it you would intrust a lazy person about? Let me say this, (and pray think on it twice, ere you censure it once,) Spiritual sloth doeth Christians more mischief than scandalous relapses, I grant, their grosser falls may be worse *as to others*: the grieving of the godly, and the hardening of the wicked, and the reproach to religion, must needs be so great as may make a gracious heart tremble at the thought of falling. But yet, *as to themselves*, a slothful temper is far more prejudicial. For example: those gracious persons that fall into any open sin, it is but once or seldom in their whole life; and their repentance is ordinarily as notorious as their sin, and they walk more humbly and more watchfully ever after: whereas spiritual sloth runs through the whole course of our life, to the marring of every duty, to the strengthening of every sin, and to the weakening of every grace. Sloth (I may rather call it unspiritual sloth) is a soft moth in our spiritual wardrobe, a corroding rust in our spiritual armoury, an enfeebling consumption in the very vitals of religion. Sloth and carelessness without an epithet, bare sloth without any thing to aggravate it, ordinarily doeth the soul more hurt than all the devils in hell, yea, than all its other sins. Shake off this, and then you will be more than conquerors over all other difficulties. Shake off this, and there is but one sin that I can think of at present, that you will be in danger of, and that is spiritual pride. You will thrive so fast in all grace, you will grow up into so much communion with God, that



unless God sometimes withdraw to keep you humble, you will have a very heaven upon earth.

**IMPED. IV. *The love of any sin whatsoever.***—The love of God, and the love of any sin, can no more mix together than iron and clay. "Every sin strikes at the being of God." \* The very best of saints may possibly fall into the very worst of pardonable sins; but the least of saints get above the love of the least of sins. We are ready to question God's love unto us, as Delilah did Samson's love to her, if he do not gratify us in all we have a mind to; but how could Delilah pretend love to Samson, while she complied with his mortal enemy against him? How can you pretend to love God, while you hide sin, his enemy, in your hearts? As it was with the grand-child of Athaliah, stolen from among those that were slain, and hidden; though unable at present to disturb her, ere long [he] procures her ruin: (2 Kings xi. 1, 2, &c. :) so any sin, as it were, stolen from the other sins to be preserved from mortification, will certainly procure the ruin of that soul that hides it. Can you hide your sin from the search of the word, and forbear your sin while under the smart of affliction, and seem to fall out with sin when under gripes of conscience; and return to sin as soon as the storm is over? Never pretend to love God: God sees through your pretences, and abhors your hypocrisy: "His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." (Job xxxiv. 21, 22.) Come, sirs, let me deal plainly with you: you are shameful strangers to your own heart, if you do not know which is your darling sin or sins; and you are traitors to your own souls, if you do not endeavour a thorough mortification; and you are wilful rebels against God, if you do in the least indulge it. Never boggle at the Psalmist's counsel: "Ye that love the Lord, hate evil." (Psalm xcvi. 10.)

**IMPED. V. *Inordinate love of things lawful.***—And in some respect here is our greatest danger. Here persons have scripture to plead for their love to several persons and things; that it is a duty to bestow some love upon them, and the mere†-stones are not so plainly set as easily to discern the utmost bounds of what is lawful, and the first step into what is sinful; and here, having some plausible pretences for the parcelling out of their love, they plead "Not guilty," though they love not God with all their hearts, souls, and minds: whereas they should consider that the best of the world is not for enjoyment, but use; not our end, but means conducing to our chief end. Here is our sin, and our misery, our foolish transplacing of end and means. Men make it their end to eat, and drink, and get estates, and enjoy their delights; and what respect they have to God,—I know not whether to call [it] love or service,—they show it but as means to flatter God to gratify them in their pitiful ends.

Having warned you of some of the chief impediments, I shall propose some means to engage your hearts in love to God, which you may confidently expect to be effectual through the operation of the Holy Ghost,

\* *Deicidium.* † In the old meaning of boundary-stones; *mere*, according to Kersey, being "a line or boundary, dividing ploughed lands in a common."—EDIT.

and you may likewise expect the operation of the Spirit in the use of such means.

#### MEANS TO ATTAIN LOVE TO GOD.

The means are either directing, promoting, or conserving.

1. *Directing*.—And that is spiritual knowledge : this is beyond what can be spoken in its commendation : a clear and distinct knowledge of the love and loveliness of God in the amazing, yet ravishing, methods of its manifestations, and the clear understanding of the heavenly privilege of having our hearts inflamed with love to God, this will do,—I would fain persuade you to try,—I am not able to say how much, to direct you in this case. Plainly, get and exercise this twofold knowledge :—

(1.) *The knowledge of spiritual things*.—Did we but perfectly know the nature of the most contemptible insect ; nay, did we but know the nature of atoms ; this would lead us to admire and love God. But, then, to know those things that no graceless person in the world cares for the knowledge of ;—for instance, the inward workings of original sin, and how to undermine it ; the powerful workings of the Spirit of grace, and how to improve it ; what are the joys of the Holy Ghost, and how to obtain them ;—would not such things insinuate the love of God into you ? Add then,

(2.) *The knowledge of ordinary things in a spiritual manner, so as to make the knowledge of natural things serve heavenly designs*.—Thus Christ in all the metaphors, in all the parables, he used. To value no knowledge any further than it is reducible to such an use,—this would lead us into the loving of God. Thus I name but one *directing* means.

2. *Promoting means are various*.—Not but that spiritual knowledge doth singularly promote the love of God, but its proper work lies in directing. The several things I shall name for *inward* means, your way of managing must make them so.

(1.) *Self-denial*.—This is so necessary that no other grace can supply the want of it. It is among the graces of the soul, as among the members of the body,—one member may supply the want of another ; the defect of the lungs may be supplied by other parts. The want of prudence may be supplied with gospel-simplicity, which looks like quite another thing ; but nothing can supply our want of love to God ; nor can any thing supply our want of self-denial in order to our loving of God. We can never have too low thoughts of ourselves,\* provided we do not neglect our duty and let go our hold of Christ. Those very things that not only we *may* love but we *must* love, it is our duty to love them, and our sin not to love them : yet all these must be denied when they dare to stand in competition with our love to God. “ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke xiv. 26.) Christ would have us count what religion will cost us before we meddle with it.

\* *Ego fatidissimus sum, ego horribilissimum stercus, et vermis nequissimus*.—BONAVENTURÆ *Stimul. Amor.* p. 153. “ I am a most disgusting object, nothing better than a filthy dunghill, a vile and wretched worm.”—EDIT.

(2.) *Contempt of the world.*—As love of the world is a great impediment, so contempt of the world is a great promoter, of our love to God: may not our contempt of the world be best expressed by our worldly diffidence? We have no confidence in it, no expectation of happiness from it. I take both the understanding and will to be the seat of faith: now, to have both these against the world, is to have our understanding satisfied that the world cannot satisfy us; to look upon the world as an empty drum, that makes a great noise, but hath nothing in it; and therefore the will doth not hanker after it, hath no kindness for it. That person is a good proficient in divine love that can make the world serviceable to devotion; by drawing arguments from his worldly condition, be it what it will, to promote piety. For example: "Have I any thing considerable in the world? I will manage it as a steward; blessed be God [that] he hath intrusted me with any thing whereby I may show my love to him, in my love to his! Have I nothing in the world? Blessed be God for my freedom from worldly snares! God knows I need food and raiment; and I am of Jacob's mind, if God will give me no more, he shall be my God; (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21;) and I will be content, whatever my condition be in the world: it is better than Christ's was; and O that I could love God as Christ did!"

(3.) *Observation of God's benefits to us.*—It is goodness and beneficence that draws out love.\* God is our infinite Benefactor. The very brutes love their benefactors: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but my people doth not consider." (Isai. i. 3.) Who can reckon-up the benefits he receives from God? The commonest of our mercies deserves a return of love; how much more our spiritual mercies? Those very mercies that are troublesome to us, deserve our love. For example: Trouble for sin, though to a degree of horror; hungering after Christ, though unto languishing; disappointments in the world, though without satisfaction any where else; lamenting after God, though with fear [that] we shall never enjoy him:—such-like throes of anguish make way for spiritual joy and comfort; and the soul that goes through such exercises grows in love to God every day. As for other kinds of benefits, I will say but this: God doth more for us every hour of our lives, than all our dearest friends or relations on earth, than all the saints and angels in heaven, can do, so much ~~as~~ once, should they do their utmost: and can you do less than love him?

(4.) *Watchfulness over our own hearts.*—When we love God, we are to remember that we love a jealous God. This will restrain the straggling of our affections. We should keep as careful a watch over our own hearts, as we should over a rich heiress, committed to our guardianship: we reckon she is undone, and we shall never be able to look God or man in the face, if she be unworthily matched through our default. Christians, your hearts, through the condescension of God, and blood and Spirit of Christ, are a match for the King of glory; several inferior objects not worth the naming are earnest suitors. We are undone, if any but God have our supreme love. If you be not severely watchful,

\* *Qui beneficia invenit, compedes invenit.*—SENÆCA. "He who finds himself to be in the receipt of additional benefits, discovers that he is bound with fresh fetters of gratitude."—EDIT.

this heart of yours will be stolen away. Be persuaded, therefore, to examine every thing that you have cause to suspect; call yourselves often to an account. Be jealous of your hearts, and of every thing whereby you may be endangered.

(5.) *Prayer*.—All manner of prayer is singularly useful to inflame the heart with love to God. Those that pray best, love God best. Mistake me not: I do not say, Those that can pray with the most florid expressions, or, Those that can pray with the most general applause; but, They that most feel every word they speak, and every thought they think, in prayer; they whose apprehensions of God are most overwhelming; whose affections to God are most spiritually-passionate; whose prayers are most wrestling, and graciously impudent; this is the man that prays best, and loves God best. I grant these are the prayers of a great proficient in the love of God; but you may pray *for* this frame, when you cannot pray *with* it. The soul never falls sick of divine love in prayer, but Christ presently gives it an extraordinary visit: so soon as ever Christ's spouse says she is "sick of love," the next words she speaks are, that "his left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." (Canticles ii. 5, 6.) Compare that with those words: "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." (Canticles vi. 5.) Christ speaks as of being overcome and conquered. Rouse up yourselves, therefore; give yourselves unto prayer. Pray for a more spiritual discovery of God's amiableness. Did you know God better, you could not but love him more; and none can discover God to us, as he discovers himself, so spiritually, so powerfully. Take no denial; God will never be angry with your being importunate for hearts to love him.

"O my God, it is thyself I love above all things; it is for thyself; in thee my desires are terminated; and, therefore, what wilt thou give me? If thou wilt not give me thyself, thou wilt give me nothing. If I find thee not, I find nothing; thou dost not at all reward me, but vehemently torment me. Heretofore, when I sought thee finally, for thyself, I hoped that I should quickly find thee, and keep thee; and with this sweet hope I comforted myself in all my labours. But now, if thou deny me thyself, what wilt thou give me? Shall I be for ever disappointed of so great a hope? Shall I always languish in my love? Shall I mourn in my languishment? Shall I grieve in my mourning? Shall I weep and wail in my grief? Shall I always be empty? Shall I always disconsolately sorrow, incessantly complain, and be endlessly tormented? O my most good, most powerful, most merciful, and most loving God, thou dost not use, so unfriendly and like an enemy, to-despise, refuse, wound, and torment those that love thee with all their heart, soul, and strength; that hope for full happiness in thee! Thou art the God of truth, the beginning and end of those that love thee; thou dost at last give thyself to those that love thee, to be their perfect and complete happiness. Therefore, O my most good God, grant that I may in this present life love thee for thyself above all things, seek thee in all things, and in the life to come find thee, and hold thee to eternity."\*

(6.) *Meditation*.—A duty as much talked of, and as little practised,

\* BRADWARDINUS *De Causâ Dei*, lib. i. pp. 118, 119.

as any duty of Christianity. Did you but once a day (in that time of the day which, upon experience, you find to be fittest for such a work) solemnly place yourselves in God's presence; beg of him the fixing and the flowing of your thoughts, that your thoughts might be graciously fixed, yet as graciously enlarged; let the subject-matter of them be something spiritual; endeavour to fill your heads and affect your hearts with holy musings, till you come to some resolution, which resolution close with prayer, and follow with endeavours; O how would this, even ere you are aware, engage your souls to love God! Though you cannot methodize your meditations to your mind, yet inure yourselves to a holy thoughtfulness about things above. Endeavour, as you are able, to tie your thoughts together, and so fasten them that they may not be lost, that your musing-time may not be reckoned among your lost time. I distinguish between meditation and study. Study is for knowledge; meditation is for grace. Study leaves every thing as we find it; meditation leaves a spiritual impress upon every thing it meddles with. Though I will not assert, I may inquire, whether meditation be not one of those duties of which the very constant performance speaks the soul to be gracious; that is, though I dare not say, they are not gracious that do not every day solemnly meditate, yet whether may I not say, they are gracious that do. Try, therefore, whether you may not say, with the Psalmist, "Whilst I was musing, the fire burned;" (Psalm xxxix. 3;) whether while you are musing, your heart may not be inflamed with love to God.

(7.) *Choice of friends.*—I dare appeal to all experienced Christians, whether ever they met with lively Christians, that carried it like Christians, without some warming of their hearts with love to God and godliness. The truth is, Christian conference hath the most speedy and effectual efficacy of any ordinance of God whatsoever. Do, therefore, in religion as you do in other things. For example: If you meet with a physician, all your discourse shall be something about your health. If you meet with a traveller, you are presently inquisitive about the places he hath seen. Why should not Christians, when they meet, converse like Christians, and presently fall into a heavenly dialogue? Christians, this you know,—there must be a forsaking of all wicked company, ere you can pretend the least love to Christ. Mistake me not: I do not mean that the bonds of family-relations must presently be broken; that husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and covenant-servants, must presently separate if one of them be ungodly. No, where the relation is such as cannot be dissolved without sin, then those that are godly must converse with the ungodly, as physicians with their sick patients. But this is it I say, You must not willingly and out of choice make God's enemies your familiar friends. Those that are always speaking well of God insensibly draw out our hearts in love to him. When Christ's spouse had told the daughters of Jerusalem what Christ was more than others, they presently offer themselves to seek him with her. (Canticles v. 9; vi. 1.) As "evil communications corrupt good manners," (1 Cor. xv. 33,) so good communication corrects evil manners. In short, you cannot but observe, that none is able to hear any one spoken against whom they love; and that every one delights to speak and hear of whom they love;

so that here you have a means to inflame, an employ to exercise, and a touchstone to try, your love to God.

(8.) *Thanksgiving*.—That person that makes conscience of thanksgiving will thereby grow in love to God. That person that takes every thing kindly and thankfully from God, cannot but love him; and, Christians, if we be not basely wanting to ourselves, we may by thankfulness make every thing a help to promote divine love. For example: I hear a man swear, and curse, and blaspheme God. "O what cause have I to love God, that he hath not left me to do so!" I am under the rebukes of God, I feel his anger in such a providence. "O what cause have I to love God, that he will take any pains with me, and give me medicinal correction, not giving me up to my own heart's lusts till I perish!" "Alas! I am not so spiritual as to make such inferences; yet, blessed be God, I really value it as a privilege to be able to put a good interpretation on all God's dealings. O that I could love God for the very means, and helps, and encouragements to love him!" I shall name no more (though I might many) promoting means. But,

3. *Sustaining and conserving means*.—Here several graces are singularly useful. I shall name only three.

(1.) *Faith, whereby we are persuaded that what God hath spoken is true and good*.—"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." (Mark ix. 23.) Now, then, take some particular promise,—why not that which hath already affected thy heart? You cannot press a promise as you squeeze an orange, to extract all that is in it; no; it is called drawing water out of a fountain: (Isai. xii. 3:) though you draw-out never so much, there is no less behind. Well, then, take that promise: "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." (Prov. viii. 17.) I may here, by my love to God, make out God's love to me, and so, by these clasplings of love, have my love inflamed and preserved. But, Christians, be sure to remember this: Whenever you lay one hand on a promise, lay the other on Christ: you will thereby get your objections answered, and your fears removed. For instance: "I am unworthy of Divine Love:" but so is not Christ. "I know not how to come to God:" our access is by Christ. "Though I come, I know not how to believe:" thy coming is believing. (John vi. 37.) O for more acquaintance with the life of faith! it is mostly with us in spirituals according to our faith.

(2.) *Hope, whereby we expect a future good*.—Hope is the daughter of faith. Many a time the weak mother leans upon the daughter. Hope (at least to our apprehensions) hath not so many obstructions and hinderances as faith. I dare say, "I hope" what I dare not say, "I believe." Though I must tell you, that which the over-modest Christian calls a *weak hope*, God often calls a *strong faith*: "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." (Psalm cxix. 49.) There is a prayer of hope; and here is a promise-answer to faith: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee," &c. (Isai. xxvi. 3.) So that, in a word, as to the present case, though I yet cannot love God as I would, I hope God will help me, that my love shall be always growing.

(3.) *Patience*.—"Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." (James i. 4.) And do but with patience go on with your work, and no necessary grace shall be wanting unto you. Look that you be patient in waiting, and patient in bearing. Do not misinterpret God's dealings with you. There are two passages I would have you take special notice of: that ground that brought such fruit as answered expectation, was "an honest and good heart, which kept the word, and brought forth fruit with patience." (Luke viii. 15.) The other is: "In your patience possess ye your souls." [Luke xxi. 19.] Patience contributes much to both fruitfulness and comfort. Let us make an essay:—Thou wouldest have God manifest his love to thee in a more ravishing manner: stay a while, thou wantest another kind of dispensation first and most, namely, to feel more of the evil of sin, that thou mayest be more watchful and more holy.—So soon as a trial comes, thou wouldest have it removed: stay a while; it hath not done the work for which God sent it. God in kindness binds-on the plaster, till he hath effected the cure.—Thou art at a loss; thou knowest not what God will do with thee: be it so, it is not fit thou shouldest; God doth not use to tell his children beforehand what he will do with them; God expects we should gather-up our duty from the precepts of his word, and from the hints of his providence. We read that when the prophet Elisha had given king Joash a promise, and a sign of deliverance from Syria, God expected that his own reason and faith should prompt him so to improve a second sign, as to pursue the victory to a conquest; but he understood it not, and so miscarried. (2 Kings xiii. 17—19.) Do you learn to hold-on in the use of all means for the engaging of your hearts more to God. "We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises;" (Heb. vi. 11, 12;) not expecting to obtain the promise till you have patiently endured. And the same apostle, in the same epistle, tells us that "ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." (Heb. x. 36.) Thus much for the *inward* means of loving God. *Outward* means for engaging our hearts to love God, are either *directing* or *exemplary*.

1. *Directing*.—The only directing means is the word of God; but seeing you shall in the following sermons have particular directions about both hearing and reading of the word, I shall only hint these few things:—

(1.) *Prize the word*.—Though our estimation of it will be exceedingly heightened by a further acquaintance with it, yet you will find it singularly advantageous to the inflaming of your hearts to get your hearts, as it were, graciously forestalled with the valuation of the word. When we can count the word sweeter than honey to the taste; better than gold for a treasure; more necessary than food for our sustenance; (Job xxiii. 12;) how can the soul choose but love God, whose love indited it? Shall filthy books provoke carnal love, and shall not the book of God provoke divine love? Endeavour to get but as spiritual a sense and

relish of divine truths, answerable to men's carnal gusts and feeling of other things: do but dwell upon truths till they affect you. Only here observe this necessary caution: Dwell not so upon difficulties as to hinder your further inquiry into things more easily understood, but wait in a course of diligence, and you will be able to master those difficulties which it is next to impossible suddenly to fathom. Do but steer an even course between a careless neglect, and an anxious perplexity, about what you read or hear; and you will certainly attain a deep knowledge of the things of God, and a high measure of love to God.

(2.) *Set immediately upon the practice of those things which you shall be convinced to be your duty.*—Let not your affections cool upon any duty pressed upon you. Do something like that of Nebuchadnezzar. God revealed to him something of moment; he had lost the matter, and understood not the meaning; but was, as others thought, unreasonably importunate to recover both, and that presently, before the impression wore off, and the heat went over. (Dan. ii. 8, &c.) So, my brethren, fix the word by speedy practice. Though the seed of the word is long in growing to perfection, yet it presently takes root in order to growth. Were I, therefore, now exhorting you to repentance, and could bring you to no nearer a resolution than to repent *to-morrow*, my exhortation were lost: so *now*, while I press you to love God, and demonstrate from scripture that it is your duty, offer you scripture-helps that may be effectual, provoke you with scripture-encouragements that may be over-coming, if you *now* put off all this till a fitter time, it is a thousand to one you put it off for ever. Read this over again; and then think, “Why should not I *now* believe this? And how can I say, I *now* believe it, if I do not *now* put it in practice? And how can I say, I practise it, if I omit any one direction?”

2. *Exemplary means.*—And here I shall give you as short a touch as may be of men, angels, and Christ himself. We are much drawn by examples. Examples,—they are not only arguments, but wings. They give us a demonstration that precepts are practicable.

(1.) *Men.*—Why should not we love God as well as ever Abraham did? God gives the word: “Abraham, take *now* thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest; and offer him for a burnt-offering. And Abraham rose up early in the morning,” &c. (Gen. xxii. 1—3.) Had he not loved God, so far as the creature can love God, infinitely, every word would have been as a dagger to his heart. As if he had said:

*Abraham*—I gave thee that name, from thy being “a father of many people;” but now be thou the death of that seed which I intended to multiply. God seemed to change his name to Abraham, as Solomon named his son Rehoboam, “an enlarger of the people,” who *enlarged* them from twelve tribes to two!

*Take now*—No time to demur upon it.

*Thy son*—So many years prayed for, and waited for.

*Thine only son*—All the rest of thy children are not worth thy owning.

*Isaac*—The son of thy laughter, now the son of thy sorrow.

*Whom thou lovest*—More than ever father loved a child, and that upon several justifiable accounts.



*And get thee into the land of Moriah*—Though no time to deliberate before thou resolvest, yet time enough for repentance before thou execute thy resolutions.

*And offer him there for a burnt-offering*—It is not enough to give him up to be sacrificed by another, but thou thyself must be the priest to kill thy lovely child, and then to burn him to ashes.

*And Abraham rose up early, &c.*—He quarrels not with God : “What doth God mean to give me such a command, as never to any one else in this world ?” He consults not his wife : “O what will Sarah say ?” He sticks not at what might expose religion : “What will the Heathen say ?” You may well suppose great strugglings between nature and grace ; but God seemed to press upon him with this question : “Whether dost thou love me or thy child most ?” Abraham doth, as it were, answer, “Nay, Lord, if that be the question, it shall soon be decided, how and where thou pleasest.”

Another instance we have in Moses, if you will compare two or three scriptures : Moses,—at first he inquires of God, as we do of a stranger, “What is his name ?” Upon God’s further discovery, he begs more of his special presence ; and upon God’s granting of that, his love grows bold, and he said, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” Upon his finding God propitious, he begs that God would remove the cloud, and show him as much of his glory as he was possibly able to bear the sight of. (Exod. iii. 13 ; xxxiii. 15, 18.)

Take one instance more ; and that is of Paul, who, thinking God might have more glory by saving of many than by saving of him, was willing to quit the happiness of salvation ; for not the least grace, much less grace in the height of it, could possibly choose a necessity of hating and blaspheming God, which is the venom of damnation ; but his love to God is greater than his love to himself ; and so he will reckon himself happy without glory, provided God may be more glorified.

And thus I have produced three examples,—of one before the law, one under the law, and one under the gospel. How will you receive it, if I shall venture to say ?—“We have in some respect more cause to love God than any, than all these persons put together.” What singular gleams of warm love from God they had more than we, are in some respects exceeded by the noon-day light and heat of gospel-love that we have more than they. What love-visits God was pleased to give them, are excelled by Christ’s (as to them) extraordinary presence among us. What was to them a banquet, is to us our daily bread. God opens the windows of heaven to us. God opens his very heart to us. We may read more of the love of God to us in one day, than they could in their whole life.

(2.) *Angels, that unweariedly behold the face of God.* (Matt. xviii. 10.)—They refuse nothing that may evidence their love to God. It is ordinarily the devil’s work to be the executioners of God’s wrath. It is said, “He cast upon them the fierceness of his anger, wrath, and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them ;” (Psalm lxxviii. 49 ; ) but the good angels will not stick at it when God requires it : “The angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assy-

rians an hundred fourscore and five thousand." (2 Kings xix. 35.) But now we have more cause to love God than the angels. God hath expressed greater love to us in Christ than he hath to them. "He took not hold of angels," &c.; (Heb. ii. 16;) not any one of them received so much as the pardon of any one sin. God would not bear with them in so much as the least tittle. So soon as they ceased to love God with a perfect love, God hated them with a perfect hatred. And, for the blessed angels, "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) But none of the saints are to minister to the angels in any thing. How should we love such a Master! But I have a pattern to commend to you above the angels.

(3.) *Christ*.—And O that the mention of Christ's love to his Father might transport us! Though Christ did nothing but what pleased his Father, (John viii. 29,) Christ suffered every thing that might please him. (Phil. ii. 8.) Christ obeyed every command, endured every threatening, that it was possible to endure, and that to the intensive extent of them; yet God dealt more hardly with Christ than ever he doth with any of us: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief:" (Isai. liii. 10:) whereas the church in the midst of her lamentations must acknowledge, "He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men," (Lam. iii. 33,) yet Christ prayed "that the world may know that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." (John xvii. 23.) Should not we then pray, and strive to love God, as near as it is possible, as Christ loved him? Christ had not one hard thought of God's severe justice; no, not when he endured what was equivalent to the eternal torments of the damned: and shall our love shrink at God's fatherly chastisements? Christ's love to God did not abate, while God poured out his wrath: and shall ours abate under medicinal providences? Whatever our outward condition is in this world, it is better than Christ's.

Thus I have endeavoured to acquaint you what abilities are requisite, and how to attain them, that you may love God, &c.

#### HOW TO IMPROVE AND AUGMENT OUR LOVE TO GOD.

IV. *How to improve and augment all our possible abilities to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength*.—And for this I shall give you one general, yet singular, direction, though I must inform, direct, and press several things under it; and that is, *set yourselves to love God*. Set upon it as you are able. Do for the engaging of your love to God, as you would do for engaging your hearts in love to a person commended to you for marriage. Here is a person commended to you whom you never saw nor before heard of. All the report you can hear speaks a great suitableness in the person, and consequently happiness in the match: you thereupon entertain the motion, and a treaty, to see whether reports be true and affections feasible; though at first you find no affection on either side, yet, if you meet with no discouragements, you continue converse, till, by a more intimate acquaintance, there ariseth a more endearedness of affection: at length a non-such love becomes mutual. Do something like this in spirituals. I now solemnly bespeak your highest love for God. Perhaps God and thy soul are yet strangers;

thou hast not yet met with him in his ordinances, nor savingly heard of him by his Spirit. Do not slight the overture ; for from thy first entertainment of it, thou wilt be infinitely happy. Every thing of religion is at first uncouth ; the work of mortification is harsh, and the work of holiness difficult ; but practice will facilitate them, and make thee in love with them ; so the more thou acquaintest thyself with God, the more thou canst not but love him, especially considering that God is as importunate with thee for thy love, as if his own happiness was concerned ; whereas he is infinitely above receiving benefit from us : but seeing he is so earnest with thee for thy love, beg it *of him for him* ; God is more willing to give every grace than thou canst be to receive it. “ Acquaint thyself,” therefore, with God, “ and then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee.” (Job xxii. 21, 26, 27.) What, though thou beginnest at the lowest step of divine love ; thou mayest, through grace, mount up to the highest pinnacle ! I willingly wave so much as mentioning the several methods proposed ; and shall, from a modern author, commend to you these five steps or degrees of love to God :—

#### DEGREES OF LOVE TO GOD.

1. The first degree, *is to love God for those good things which we do or hope to receive from him.*—To love God as our Benefactor. “ O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord preserveth the faithful.” (Psalm xxxi. 23.) Though I name this as the lowest degree of our loving of God, yet the highest degree of our loving God is never separated from the loving of God as our Benefactor. It is mentioned in Moses’s commendation, that he esteemed “ the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.” (Heb. xi. 26.) To love God for hopes of heaven, is not a mercenary kind of love ; it is not only lawful that *we may*, but it is our duty that *we must*, love God for the glory that is laid up for us. Where is the man that will own the name of Christian, who dare charge Christ with any defect of love to God ? while the scripture saith expressly, that “ for the joy set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. xii. 2.) Is it not (no question but it is) an infinite kindness of God to make promises ? And is it not grossly absurd to say, It is a sin to believe them ? When our love shall be perfected in heaven, shall we then love God ? And shall not we then love God, as well for our perfect freedom from sin, for our perfection of grace, for the society of saints and angels, as for himself ? If you question this, surely you will startle more at what I shall farther assert ; namely, to love God for temporal benefits does infallibly evidence us eminently spiritual ; nay, further yet, I shall commend to the consideration of the most considerate Christian, Whether our loving of God for the good things of this life doth not evidence a greater measure of love to God than to love God only for the gracious communication of himself unto the soul ? I speak of truly loving God, not of bare saying you love him. Now I evidence it thus : God’s gracious communications of himself

naturally tend to the engaging of the soul to love him ; but the things of the world do not so. God's gracious communications of himself speak special love on God's part, and that draws out love again ; but, alas ! common mercies speak no such thing. Now, then, that soul that is so graciously ingenuous as to love God for those lower kinds of mercies, that do not of themselves speak any love from God to us, that love of God looks something like,—though it is infinitely short of it, (for it is impossible to prevent\* God in his loving of us,)—but it looks somewhat like our being beforehand with God in the way of special love. To love God spiritually for temporal mercies,—how excellent is this love ! Though to love a benefactor may be but the love of a brute ; yet to love God thus, as our Benefactor, cannot but be the love of a saint. You see, therefore, that though you begin your love to God at below what is rational, it may insensibly grow up to what is little less than angelical.

2. The second step of our love to God, is *to love God for himself, because he is the most excellent good*.—You may abstract the consideration of his beneficence to us from his excellency in himself ; and then, when the soul can rise thus : “ Lord, though I should never have a smile from thee while I live, and should be cast off by thee when I die, yet I love thee.” Alas ! why is this named as the second step ? Surely there are but few can rise so high. Pray, Christians, mind this : there is many a gracious soul loves God for himself, who dare scarce own it, that he loves God at all : for instance, when the soul is in perplexing darkness, and cannot discern any covenant-interest in God ; but, as the church bemoans herself, “ God hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood. My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord. When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayers,” &c. (Lam. iii. 8, 15, 18, &c.) In short, it is the case of every soul that is under sore temptations or long desertions. Yet, mark you, while they thus “ walk in darkness, and see no light,” yet then a discerning Christian may see their love to God, like Moses's face, shine to others' observation, though not [to] their own ; as may be particularly thus evidenced : When God smites them, they love him ; for they are still searching what sin it is that he contends for, that they may get rid of it, not hide it, nor excuse it. When they fear God will damn them, then they love him ; for they then keep in the way of holiness, which is the way of salvation ; yea, they will not be drawn out of it, though carnal friends, like Job's wife, bid them “ curse God, and die ;” though Satan tell them they strive in vain ; though their discouragements are multiplied, and their diligence is disappointed ; yet they are resolved, like Job, who said, “ Though God hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty hath vexed my soul ; I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go : my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.” (Job xxvii. 2, 5, 6.) As if he had said : “ I will delight in the Almighty, or nothing ; I will always call upon God, though he should never regard me.” Or, though the soul under trouble will not own so much goodness in itself as to say thus, yet the conversation of such Christians speaks it plainly ; and can

\* In its old signification, “ to be beforehand,” “ to precede.”—EDIT.



love God, the same is known of him." (1 Cor. viii. 2, 3.) Higher yet : *for gracious qualifications that capacitate me for glory* : "I love grace the best of any creature, wherever I see it ; but it is for the sake of the God of all grace, without whom my grace is inconsiderable."

Once more, higher yet, and higher than this I think we cannot go : *To love those things that are not lovely, merely for God's sake, or out of love to God.*—For example : how many have you heard complain for want of afflictions, for fear God does not love them !—though, by the way, those betray their weakness who thus complain ; for did they but observe their want of evidence of divine love, and did they more sympathize with the church of Christ under the cross, they would find they need not complain for want of afflictions :—but, be it so : complain they do, and that for want of afflictions. Afflictions are no way lovely, we are no where bid to pray for them : but it is our duty to pray for preventing and removing them ; and yet the gracious soul is, through love to God, in some respect in love with them. Here is a notable degree of divine love, that the soul would upon any terms experiment the love of God ; and engage the heart in love to God again, and to love nothing but for God.

4. The fourth step of our love to God is, *for our highest love of every thing to be hatred in comparison of our love to God.*—The truth is, we can never so plainly know to what a degree we love God, as by weighing it against whatever stands in competition with it. Why should I so far debase my love to God as to weigh it in the same balance with love to sin ? But, alas ! why do besotted sinners so dote upon sin, as if love to God were not worthy to be compared with it ? Methinks, I may a little more than allude to that passage of Isaiah : "They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith ; and he maketh it a god," &c. (Isai. xli. 6.) They give out their gold by handfuls, without weighing, for matter of their idols ; but they will be good husbands in their expenses about the workmanship of them. Man cares not at what rate he loves his idols, those lusts upon which they bestow their affections, due to God alone ; though in all other things they are wary enough. But why should I waste time in speaking to these ? They have not yet gone one step towards the love of God ; and, therefore, are so far behind, that they are not within learning of what is spoken to good proficients in the love of God. Let me only leave with them this parting word : From a person's first sincere and ardent love to God, he can neither speak nor think of sin without abhorrency. From the first infusion of grace, there is a graciously-natural antipathy against sin. Sin receives its death's wound : it is too true, it may struggle for life, and seem to be upon recovery ; but grace will wear it out, and will never leave the conflict till it has obtained the conquest. But this is not the thing I intended to speak to in this particular : it is otherguess\* things than sin that the soul that loves God is afraid to spill his love upon. He prizeth those ordinances wherein he meets with communion with God, but is afraid his love should terminate there ; he values them but as windows to let-in the light : though something excellent may be

\* Or *otherwise*, that is, "other kinds of things."—EDIT.

written there, as with the point of a diamond, yet it is neither writing nor window [which] is prized, but the light; when that is gone, shut up the window as if it were a dead wall that is no more regarded till the light returns. It is the light of God's countenance that is better than life itself. Perhaps you will say, this comes not up to what I asserted, *that our highest love to every thing is to be hated in comparison of our love to God.* Well, let this be warily considered: One whose love to God is at this height, is exactly curious in the management of his graces; and while he is so, he is as curiously jealous lest grace should warp, to rob God of his glory. He loves inherent grace heartily. "O," saith he, "that my soul were more enriched with it!" But yet while he is breathing after perfection in grace, he admiringly prefers God's wise love in saving him by Christ, before salvation by inherent grace: he utterly renounceth the best of his graces, when pride would have them justle with Christ for the procuring of acceptance. In short, a soul that is overcome with God's method of salvation, is unable to bear any thing that darkens it. "Would God have me to be as watchful against sin, as if there were no Christ to pardon it?" "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." (1 John ii. 1.) Our first care must be *not to sin*. "O that I could perfectly comply with God in this! But, alas! I cannot! Would God have me to rest as entirely upon Christ after my utmost attainments, as that wretch who pretends to venture his soul with him out of an ill-spent life? O Lord, I trust no more to my good works than he can to his bad ones, for his meriting of salvation!"\* As I would not ungratefully overlook any thing the Spirit hath done in me, so I would not have any thing which I have almost marred in the Spirit's doing of it, to draw a curtain whereby Christ should be less looked on."

5. The most eminent degree of our love to God, is *ecstasy and rapture*.—We need not go down to the legends of the Philistines to sharpen our incentives to the love of God. I could over-match what can be said, with truth, of Ignatius [Loyola] and Xaverius, with several, whom many of you knew, whose unparalleled humility hid them from observation, whose communion with God was often overwhelming: but I forbear. Take a scripture-instance of this kind of love; compare but these three passages in the Song of Songs: "I am sick of love." (Canticles ii. 5.) This is upon Christ's first overcoming discovery of himself. "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." (Canticles v. 8.) This charge is from her spiritual languishment, through earnest desire of reconciliation, after some negligence and carelessness in duty. Canticles viii. 6: This is when she hath had the highest communion with God that an imperfect state affords; when she was, as it were, upon the threshold of glory; and then she saith, *Love is strong as death.* As if she had said, "I shall die

\* Let not this be mistaken, as if I made no difference between good works and evil. The apostle hath taught me better: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." And: "Let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." (Titus iii. 8, 14.) Good works—they are genuine fruits, though not meritorious causes of justification.

unless thou grant my desire ;” or, “ Let me die, that my desire may be granted.” *Jealousy is cruel as the grave* : “ That as the grave is never satisfied, so neither will my love without the utmost enjoyments of thyself.” *The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame* : “ My love burns up my corruptions, shines in holiness, and mounts upwards in heavenly-mindedness.” *Many waters cannot quench it* : “ The waters of afflictions are but as oil to the fire. *If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.* (Canticles viii. 6, 7.) She scorns all things that would force or flatter her out of her love to Christ. Now, if you except against this as spoken of love to Christ, and not of love to God essentially, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; I readily answer, We cannot see God lovely but in Christ. If any will be so curious as to assert they look upon Christ himself as but a means to bring them to God ; it is God essentially, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when Christ shall have given up his mediatory kingdom, (1 Cor. xv. 28,) that must be their complete happiness : the means is not to be rested in, in comparison of the end : this may well be compared to “ a sea of glass,” (Rev. xv. 2, 3,) slippery standing. O that I could but discover what my soul should long for ; namely, how to look beyond Christ to God, in whom alone is my complete happiness, and then to look in some respect beyond God to Christ, to give the Lamb his peculiar honour, when I shall be with the Almighty, and with the Lamb as in a temple ; when the glory of God and of the Lamb shall be the light, (Rev. xxi. 22, 23,) whereby I shall see that God, who dwelleth in such light, as no mortal eye can behold. (1 Tim. vi. 16.) That will be a blessed vision indeed. “ When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” (1 Cor. xiii. 10, &c.) We have yet but childish apprehensions of these things, to what we shall have when we come to “ a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (Eph. iv. 13.) Now we see “ darkly, through the glass ” of ordinances ; but then “ we shall see face to face.” Now we “ know but in part ; ” but then “ we shall know God,” according to our measure, as God knows us ; and then the greatest grace will be love, perfect love, that will cast out all fear ; fear of not attaining, and fear of losing, that joy of our Lord into which we are taken. But, alas ! all I can say in this matter is rather the restless fluttering of the soul towards God, than the quiet resting of the soul in God. Let me close the paragraph with that [which] I call a rapture of profound Bradwardine : “ O Lord my God ! thou art the good of every good ; good above all good things, a good most infinitely infinite. How, therefore, should I love thee ! How shall I proportionably love thee infinitely ? O that I could ! But how can I, that am so very little and finite, love thee infinitely ? And how otherwise will there be any proportion between thy loveliness and my loves ? My God, thou art super-amiable ; thou infinitely exceedest all other things that are lovely. Perhaps, Lord, I should love thee infinitely as to the manner, when I cannot as to the act. It pertains to the manner of loving, to love thee finally for thyself ; and no other good finally for itself, but for thee, who art the Chiefest Good, and the Beginning and End of all good things. But perhaps I may, in some sort, love



thee infinitely, as to the act both intensively and extensively; *intensively*, in loving thee more intensely, more firmly, more strongly, than any finite good, and when I love nothing but for thy sake; *extensively*, when I compare thee, Lord, with all other great and good things, and had rather they, and myself also, had no being, than once to offend my good God. But yet, most loving Lord! when I consider a proportion of love, I am greatly troubled. If love should be according to the worth of the object; by how much thou art better than I am, and more profitable to me than I am to myself, I should love thee more than thou lovest me; but that I never can. O Lord, I beseech thee, how much dost thou love me? Is it weakly and remissly, according to *my* goodness? That be far from thee, Lord! Thou lovest thine incomparably more than thou art loved of them; as thou art incomparably greater and better than they. But, O great and good God! that fillest heaven and earth, yea, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; why dost thou not fill my poor little soul? O my soul, why dost thou not open all thy little doors? Why dost not thou extend thy utmost capacity, that thou mayest be wholly possessed, wholly satiated, wholly de-ebriated with the sweetness of so great love? especially when, though thou art so little, yet thou canst not be satisfied with the love of any lesser good. Many questions might be proposed to expostulate my soul into a flame of love. But I see, Lord, it is easy to speak and write these things; but it is hard to do and perfect them in effect. Thou, therefore, most good and Almighty Lord, to whom nothing is difficult, grant, I pray thee, that I may more easily do these things with my heart, than profess them with my mouth," &c.\*

And thus, having, after my poor manner, put you upon practice, and pointed you the way from the lowest to the highest step of divine love, I am sensible that both good and bad have their exceptions ready against what I have delivered. The humble, trembling Christian,—he fears that if the lowest degree of love to God hath such heights in it, he shall never be able to reach it; and *he* is grieved *whom* God would not have made sad. On the other hand, those that *call themselves* Christians, though there is no reason for their usurping that title, without any consideration of either the duty or themselves, will bear you down, that they love God with all their hearts, souls, and minds, and that they have always done so, and [that] they are unworthy to live that do not love God; and if you inquire into any particulars whatsoever about their love to God, they will rather quarrel with you than give you any satisfying answer. If I could, therefore, propose any thing that would apply itself, that is, by its own evidence work itself into the conscience, I might hope to dissolve their self-flatteries. I cannot at present think of a more compendious way of undeceiving both these, and of further persuasively urging the love of God, than by plainly naming the infallible **PROPERTIES** and constant **EFFECTS** of this love: hereby those that despondingly fear they want it will find they have it; and those that groundlessly boast of it will find they want it; and both be instructed what must be done to evidence and exert it.

\* BRADWARDINUS *De Causâ Dei*, lib. ii. cap. xxxiv. pp. 627—629, *sparsim*.

## PROPERTIES OF LOVE TO GOD.

(1.) I shall begin with the PROPERTIES of our love to God.

And here, as in all the rest, I must study contraction; and therefore dare not particularly mention Gerson's fifty properties of Divine Love. I shall rather follow Voetius's method, who ranks the properties of Divine Love thus: They are, 1. Partly negative and privative; 2. Partly positive and absolute; 3. Partly comparative and transcendent. I shall speak briefly of each of these: your consciences may manage it as if it were a use of examination.

1. *Negative properties or adjuncts* are such as these; and these may prevent the mistakes of drooping Christians; and, alas! a great part of Christ's family are such upon one account or other.

(1.) *This divine love is not at all in the unregenerate, unless only in show and imitation.*—That soul that is solicitous about loving of God,—that soul loves him. This is proper and peculiar to all those, and only those, that are born of God, that are the adopted children of God. Let it be considered, whether the devil can counterfeit love to God, as he can other graces. Their faith works by fear, not by love: "The devils believe, and tremble." (James ii. 19.) It is true, he doth not only suffer, but promote, an hypocritical divine love in some,\* and he may appear in a "love-mask"† to others, as to Adam in Paradise: "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods." (Gen. iii. 5.) He pretends he hath more kindness for them than God himself, and the like to Christ; (Matt. iv. 3;) but did he himself ever pretend so much as to love God? I grant, wicked men pretend to love God; but the ridiculousness of their discourse plainly evidences, they neither understand what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

And whereas thou complainest that thou fearest thy love is not sincere, because it is selfish; be not discouraged: while thou studiest to please God, fearest to offend him, prizest his presence, mournest for his absence, thy love to God is infallibly sincere, though there be an ingredient of self in it; nay, let me say more, it could not be sincere, if thou didst not mind thyself. As in the very quintessence of conjugal love, it is impossible to abstract it from self-love; so the more we love God, the more we cannot but love ourselves, yea, even then when we most deny ourselves out of love to God.

(2.) *This divine love is far from perfection.*—It is subject to more sensible languishments and infirmities than any other grace, though it can never be totally and finally extinguished. What, though sometimes, to thy own apprehension, thou canst not tell whether thou lovest God at all? And what, though at all times thou complainest of fickleness and inconstancy? What, though the time of thy fear be longer than the time of thy love? Yet while thine heart can say, it is unquiet in this temper, and it is thy restless desire to love God more perfectly, these very complaints speak love: we never complain of want of love to those persons whom we do not already love. This, as well as other graces, is

\* *Μορφοῦν* ["a form or appearance"].

† *Larva amoris*.

here but in part ; (1 Cor. xiii. 10 ;) while we are in this lower world, our very graces will have their neap- as well as their spring-tides. We cannot yet be so wise as to foresee all our hinderances, nor so watchful as to avoid all Satan's ambushes, nor so perfect as to maintain a spiritual frame of heart. Though this grace is always in motion, yet it doth not always nor equally go forward.

(3.) *Our love to God shall never be abolished.*—"Love never faileth ;" \* the same kind of love, the same numerical love that was in gracious persons on earth, shall be continued in heaven, and receive its perfection presently after its delivery from the body of death. There will be a greater change in all our graces than in our love. A great part of our life is taken up in the exercise of those graces, that, I may in some respect say, die with us. The one-half of our life is, or should be, spent in mortification. The whole of our time needs the exercise of our patience. Our life, at best, is but a life of faith. Much of our sweet communion with God is fetched-in by secret prayer. But now, in heaven, there shall be no sin to be mortified, nothing grievous to be endured. Faith shall be swallowed up in enjoyment, and your petitions shall be all answered. So that now, Christians, set yourselves to love God, and you shall no way lose your labour. Other graces are but as physic to the soul,—desirable for something else, which when obtained, they are useless ; but love to God is the healthful constitution of the soul,—there is never any thing of it in any sense useless. Most of the graces of the Spirit do by our souls as our friends by our bodies, who accompany them to the grave, and there leave them ; but now love to God is the alone grace, that is to our souls the same that a good conscience [is],—our best friend in both worlds.

(4.) *This divine love is so unknown to the world, that when they behold the effects and flames of it, in those that love God in an extraordinary manner, they are ready to explode it as mere vanity, folly, madness, ostentation, and hypocrisy.*—When Paul managed his audience more like a sermon than a defence, Festus cries out upon him as mad. (Acts xxvi. 24.) Yea, when Christ himself, in love to God and souls, is more hungry after converts than food, his nearest relations think him crazed. "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him : for they said, He is beside himself." But were they any other but his carnal and graceless relations that did this ? See : "Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee." (Mark iii. 20, 21, 32.) No marvel, then, that enemies reproach you, friends forsake you, relations slight you, and the world hate you. (1 John iii. 13.) Christ tells us, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." (John xv. 18, 23.) But how can the world hate Christ, who in love to it came to die for it ? Christ tells his hearers the true reason : "I know you," (this is no groundless surmise, nor censorious rashness, but *I know you*,) "that ye have not the love of God in you."

\* 1 Cor. xiii. 8. *Non quoad formam, nec quoad modum tendendi in objectum.*—VOETIUS, *ibid.* "Love never faileth either with respect to its form, or to its mode of tending toward its object."—EDIT.

(John v. 42.) Let what will appear at the top, this lies at the bottom. And therefore judge, I pray you, who more fanatic,—those that hate God when they pretend to love him, or those that are counted frantic for their serious love to God? I shall neither name more, nor enlarge further, on this first rank of characters, but be brief also in the second.

2. The *absolute properties* of love to God are, among many, some of them such as these :—

(1.) *It is the most ingenious of all graces.*—In poor, inconsiderable loves, not worth the mentioning, how do persons contrive ways for the expressing and exciting of love! And there is no way to prevent it. O how much more, when the soul loves God? There is nothing meliorates the parts like grace. Divine love makes the best improvement of wit, parts, time. When a person loves to pray, though he can scarce speak sense to men, he can strenuously plead with God. A person that loves to meditate,—though he knows not how to make his thoughts hang together in other things, they multiply on his hand with a spiritual and profitable consistency. In short, to do any thing that may engage the heart to God, what gracious stratagems doth love abound with! That as he that beholds his face in a glass makes the face which he sees;—his very look is the pencil, the colour, the art;—so he that loves God sees such a reflexion of God's love to him, that a proud person doth not more please herself in her own fancied beauty, than this gracious soul is graciously delighted in the mutual dartings of Divine Love.\* Keep from will-worship and human inventions in the things of God, especially from imposing upon others your prudentials of devotion; and then I will commend it to you, to try all the experiments which the scripture will warrant, to increase the flame of your Divine Love.

(2.) *Love to God is the most bold, strong, constant, and during grace, of all the graces of the Spirit of God.*—"Love is strong as death:" (Canticles viii. 6 :) every one knows what work death makes in the world. It is not the power of potentates, nor the reverence of age, nor the usefulness of grace, can prevent its stroke: it conquers all. So doth love to God. Nothing can stand before it. What dare not love to God attempt? It designs impossibilities, namely, perfection; and is restless for the want of it. I may in some sense say, It would fain have contradictions true; namely, to be without the body, while in it; the body's being a clog is so wearisome. Love to God not only baffles Satan, but, through God's gracious condescension, it even prevails with God himself, that God will deny nothing to the soul that loves him.

(3.) *Love to God is the only self-emptying and satisfying grace.*†—Love,—it is self's egress; it is a kind of pilgrimage from self: he that loves is absent from himself, thinks not of himself, provides not for himself. But, O how great is the gain of renouncing ourselves, and thereby receiving God and ourselves! We are, as it were, dead to ourselves, and live to God; nay, more, by love we live in God: "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1 John

\* JOHAN. EUSEB. NIEREMBERGIUS *De Arte Volendi*, p. 114.  
*sec., sparsim.*

† Idem, p. 322,

iv. 16.) By faith we live *upon* God ; by obedience we live *to* God ; but by love we live *in* God. It is herein alone that we can give something like a carnal (though it is indeed a highly spiritual) answer to Nicodemus's question, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John iii. 4.) We have our souls immediately from the Father of spirits ; by regeneration we return to God again, from whom by sin we are estranged ; and by love we live in him, in some little resemblance to the child's living in the mother's womb. What the mother loves, the child loves ; what the mother longs for, the child longs for ; in the mother's health the child is well. The child lives there in a far different manner from how it lives in the world : though it cannot stir out of its enclosure, yet it never cries nor complains of its imprisonment. So the soul that entirely loves God hates what God hates, and loves what God loves ; its life is far above the life of others, and it desires no greater liberty than to be, as it were, imprisoned in God, to have no will of its own, no one motion but what God graciously concurs in : yet it is so far from esteeming this a restraint, that it counts it the highest happiness of its imperfect state. He feels a sweetness in that beyond what the Heathen that spake it ever thought of, "In God we live, move, and have our being."

(4.) *The love of God makes us anxiously weary of life itself.*—In this love there is one death and two resurrections : "I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) Christ lives, and the soul lives ; and both by love. I must acknowledge, all manner of love is apt to be extravagant and irregular ; our very love to God is, in this, blind, when it comes to any considerable height : it is apt to overlook (not in a way of neglect, but ecstasy) what is to be done and suffered, and would fain be at the enjoyment of God in heaven. By the way, let not doubting Christians be discouraged, because it is not thus with them. Though these properties be but in the bud, they may in time be full blown ; therefore believe and wait : heights of grace are ordinarily as well the work of time, as of the Spirit of God. Besides, you know, there is nothing more common than for lovers to dissemble their love ; so here, it is too common for gracious persons rather to belie the Spirit of God, than thankfully to own their love to God, because they are afraid of being mistaken, and they are afraid of boasting of a false gift ; and here, though love, when it is perfect, it casteth out fear, yet while it is imperfect, fear proveth our love.

3. Thus much of the positive properties : I will be very brief in the *transcendent properties* of our love to God.

(1.) *Love to God is the great general directing grace, containing all other particular graces in it, and most intimately goes through the acts of all of them.\** (1 Cor. xiii.)—Love in the soul is as the pilot in the ship, who steers the ship and all its passengers. Love steers the soul, and all its operations. Love is the needle in the compass, that is still trembling towards its divine loadstone. J. Eusebius Nierembergius compares other graces to bullion uncoined ; which, though it have an

\* VOETIUS, *ibid.*

intrinsic value, yet it is not that money that answers all things. What shall I say? Find out a thousand transcendent metaphors, love will answer them all.

(2.) *It is in a singular manner infinite.*—Among all the faculties of the soul, there is none but the will that can, in any sound sense, be said to be infinite: all the other faculties are more bounded than the will. Now love is the natural act of the will; and love to God is the supernaturally-natural act of the renewed will. Its desires, which is the love of desires, are to be united unto God, the Fountain of all blessedness. And here, those that love God least, so it be sincerely,—their desires are infinite. For example: desires are the feet of the soul: their love will creep when it cannot go. Desires are the wings of the soul: love will flutter when it cannot fly. Desires are the breathings of the soul: love will pant, and groan, and gasp, where it can do no more. Again: the contentment and satisfaction of the will, which is *the love of complacency*, is infinite, in as large a sense as that word can be ascribed to creatures. *Desires* are the motion and exercise of love; *delight* is the quiet and repose of it. My beloved, to have the heart to delight in God, or to ache and tingle with the discourse of the love of God, through reflection upon the want of it, as unable to stand under his own thoughts,—this infallibly shows great love; and this soul's satisfaction in God is in some sort infinite.

#### EFFECTS OF LOVE TO GOD.

(II.) EFFECTS of love to God,—they relate either *to God himself*, or *to ourselves*, or they are *mutual*. I will speak briefly of each.

1. *Effects that relate to God* are such as these; I do not only say *these*, but *these*, and *such as these*:—

(1.) *Hatred of and flight from all that is evil.*—Joseph may be our instance. His mistress would have inveigled him into sin; but though “she spake to him day by day,” yet he “hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her.” (Gen. xxxix. 10.) He that fears sin will get as far as he can out of the reach of a temptation. Hatred of sin always holds proportion with our love to God; our inward hatred of sin, with our inward love of God; our return to sin, with the decay of our love to God. The renewing of our repentance answers the reviving of our love to God. Every one that doth not love God, loves sin, plain, down-right sin, sin without any excuse; for instance, either some moral wickedness, or a resting in their own righteousness.

(2.) *The fear of God.*—A reverential tenderness of conscience, lest we sin against God. It is not only fear of hell, but fear of God's goodness. “They shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” (Hosea iii. 5.) The soul that loves God is troubled that he either does or omits any thing for fear of hell, and that he is no more affected with love-arguments. Though, pray take notice, by the way, that all fear of hell doth not presently argue a spirit of bondage: hopes and fears poise the soul while in this world. I would therefore leave this charge upon you; namely, be sure that you love God better than the blessed apostle loved him, before you censure any for want of love who are diligent in duty

upon this motive, lest they be at last cast-aways. (1 Cor. ix. 27.) But, to return : though God's gracious condescension be so great as to allow those that love him a non-such familiarity, yet that never breeds the least contempt. Sense of distance between God and the soul, between the holy God and a sinful soul, between the faithful God and the fickle soul, —O this causeth holy tremblings, and humble apologies in our most familiar pleadings with God. The father of the faithful, whom God honoured with the title of his "friend," (of whose love to God you have already heard,)—when he pleaded with Christ face to face in so familiar a way, (never any like him!) see how he then prefaced his prayer : "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes." Again : "O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak." (Gen. xviii. 27, 30.) "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him." (Psalm lxxxix. 7.) Methinks that passage of Christ to his disciples, with the circumstance of time when he spake it, just upon the most servile action of his life, may for ever keep an awe upon our hearts : "Know ye what I have done to you? ye call me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am." (John xiii. 12, 13.) When God deals most familiarly with us as with friends, let us carry it reverently as becomes servants.

(3.) *Obedience to the commands of God, and to those commands which would never be obeyed but out of love to God.*—"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments : and his commandments are not grievous ;" (1 John v. 3;) that is, to obey those commands that are unpleasing and troublesome, those commands that thwart our carnal reason, and so part with things present for the hopes of that we never saw, nor any man living that told us of them. "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." (1 John ii. 5.) Once more : hear what Christ saith : "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." And again : "If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 21, 23.)

(4.) *Resignation of ourselves to God.*—Whereby we devote ourselves wholly to God, to be wholly his,\* to be every way disposed of as he pleaseth. "The love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead : and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them," &c. (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) This resignation is like that in the conjugal relation : it debars so much as treating with any other ; it, as it were, proclaims an irreconcilable hatred to any that would partake of any such love. God doth not deal with us as with slaves, but takes us into that relation which speaks most delight and happiness ; and we are never more our own than when we are most absolutely his.

(5.) *Adhesion and cleaving unto God, in every case, and in every con-*

\* *Quoad κτησιν et quoad χρησην.* "Both as to possession and enjoyment."—EDIT.

*dition*.—"In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. My soul followeth hard after thee." (Psalm lxi. 7, 8.) Methinks we may say of the law concerning *birds*, (Deut. xxii. 6,) what the apostle saith of the law concerning oxen: "Doth God take care for birds? For our sakes, no doubt, it is written," to instruct us against cruelty; but may we not learn a further lesson? The bird was safe while on her nest: our only safety is with God. Now, to cleave to God in all conditions, not only when we fly to him as our only refuge in our pressures, but, in our highest prosperity and outward happiness, when we have many things to take-to whence the world expects happiness; this is a fruit of great and humble love, this demonstrates an undervaluing of the world, and a voluntary choosing of God; this is somewhat like heavenly love.

(6.) *Tears and sighs through desires and joys*.—When the spiritual, love-sick soul would, in some such, but an unexpressible, manner, breathe out its sorrows and joys into the bosom of God: "Lord, why thus loving to me, and why is my heart no more overcome with Divine Love? Those that never received so much from thee love thee more. O I am weary of my want of love! O I am weary of my distance from God! O I am weary of my unspiritual frame!" "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 4.) Here, when the heart is ready to die away through excess of love, it is passionately complaining of defects: "Dear Lord! what shall I say? What shall I do? What shall I render? O for more endearing communications of Divine Love! O for more answerable returns of love to God!" Thus much of effects as to God.

2. The only *effect* I shall name as to us, is, a *seeking of heaven and things above, with contempt of the world, and all worldly excellencies*.—One that loves God thinks he can never do enough in heavenly employments. A person that abounds in love to God is too apt to neglect secondary duties, which are in their places necessary: they are apt to jumble out one duty with another. For example: those duties wherein they have most sensible communion with God bear down lesser duties before them; whereas, could we keep within scripture-bounds, and mind every duty according to its moment, then this is an excellent effect of Divine Love: for instance, to be afraid of worldly enjoyments, lest they should steal the heart from God; yet, at the same time, not to dare to omit any worldly duty, lest I should prove partial in the work of Christianity: to make conscience of the least duties, because no sin is little; but to be proportionably careful of the greatest duties, lest I should prove an hypocrite: such a carriage is an excellent effect of Divine Love: this is fruit that none who are not planted near the tree of life can bear.

3. *Mutual effects* are these, and such like as these:—

(1.) *Union with God*.—Union is the foundation of communion, and communion is the exercise of union. *The Spirit of God* is the immediate efficient cause of this union, and *faith* is the internal instrument on our part; but *love* is the internal instrument both on God's part and ours. Christ "dwells in our hearts by faith, we being rooted and grounded in love." (Eph. iii. 17.) This union is most immediately



with Christ, and, through him, with the Father and Holy Ghost. It is an amazing and comfortable truth, that our union with Christ does much resemble the personal union of the two natures in Christ. I grant it is unlike it in more considerations, because of the transcendency of the mystery; but yet there is some resemblance. For example: the human nature in Christ is destitute of its subsistence and personality, by its union with and its assumption to the divine; so the gracious soul hath no kind of denomination but what it hath from its union with Christ: its gracious being is bound up in its union with Christ. Other men can live without Christ; but so cannot the gracious soul. Again: in Christ there is a communication of properties, that is, that which is proper to the Divine Nature is attributed to the human; and, contrarily, that which is proper to the human nature is attributed to the Divine: so here, in the soul's union with Christ, Christ is made sin for us, and dealt with as if he were a sinner; we are made the righteousness of God in him, and privileged as righteous persons. Christ's riches are ours, and our poverty his; yea, more, the offices of Christ are attributed to believers; they are "an holy and a royal priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ;" (1 Peter ii. 5, 9;) and Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto his Father." (Rev. i. 6.) Christ hath a stock of created grace: it was for us: "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." (John i. 16.) The apostle bids us "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. ii. 1.) What shall I say? Is Christ *the natural* Son of God? They are *the adopted*. Is Christ the beloved Son of God? Believers, in their measure, are so too. They are dead with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, sit together in heavenly places with Christ, fellow-heirs with Christ. In short, as there never was such another union in the world as the union of the two natures in Christ, so there never was, nor ever can be, such another union in the world as between Christ and the believer. It is beyond what any metaphors from art or nature can fully express. That of a foundation and building, of a vine and branches, of head and members, of soul and body, are but dark shadows of this union. But I must not enlarge.

(2.) *Communion with God.*—Communion consists in communication; \* when there is a kind of community of propriety [property]. I might run over the former particulars, and enlarge them; but the subject is not so barren, that I need name one thing twice. Christians, I beg of you that you would be careful of receiving, because I can be but brief in delivering, a few hints of the communication of divine love between God and us. For example: God communicates "the divine nature" to us through his fulfilling "exceeding great and precious promises." (2 Peter i. 4.) We make returns as those that are born of God, in obeying his commands. Because God loves us, he communicates unto us his communicable properties of holiness, wisdom, goodness. Seeing we have nothing to return, we prostrate ourselves at his feet, [and] ingenuously acknowledge our unholiness, folly, and badness. God and

\* *Cum res unius sit alterius.* "When that which belongs to one person becomes, by participation with another, joint property."—EDIT.

the soul hold communication in all gracious actions: God communicates strength to the doing of those things which he cannot do, but [which] we must: \* to repent, believe, obey God,—these are our actions through his strength. Again: we exercise our graces upon God for those his actions which we cannot do, but [which] we may, through his covenant-engagement, with humble thankfulness say he must. For example: for the pardon of sin, speaking peace to the conscience, giving-out of gracious influences, &c.; for these we admire God, we praise him, rejoice in him. Once more: in those things wherein we can make no return to God, but may to others for God's sake; our love to God necessitates us to do it. For instance: God pities us, is merciful and kind to us; God is infinitely above all such returns. Ay, but so are not the members of Christ, who are the best visible image of God in the world: I will give them not only my alms, but my very bowels, &c. In short, in this communication, God and the gracious soul have the same interest, drive on the same design, (the advancement of Christ and the gospel,) have the same friends, and the same enemies. They communicate secrets to each other: none but the loving soul knows the secrets of Divine Love; and none but God hears all the secrets of the soul without a reserve. Among the dearest friends in the world, there is some reserve. Some things we will rather speak to a stranger than to our dearest bosom-friend; we think them not fit to mention, or we are loath to trouble them: but there is none of this between God and the soul: God tells us all that may benefit, not overcharge, us: we tell God all the very worst of our own hearts, which we are ashamed to mention to those that most love us. God deals with us according to our capacities; our bottles would break should God over-fill them; but we deal with God according to the utmost of our active graces: God is both compassionate to pity and pardon what is no way acceptable, and even incredibly condescending to accept of what none but his infinite grace would accept.

(3.) *Familiar love-visits.*—When God makes sad visits to the disquieting of conscience, and the breaking of our peace; yet even then the soul, under trouble of conscience, would not change its spiritual trouble for the best of the world's peace, no, not for its former peace, with which it was so well pleased before conversion. The soul that loves God cannot construe that to be a visit which others count so. The soul never goes to God as we go to visit those we care not for, that we are glad at their being from home; so the visit be but paid, we care not. Pray compare some passages in that Song of Loves: one while you have the spouse inquiring of Christ, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" (Canticles i. 7.) As if he had said: "Tell me, O Lord, my love and life, where I may have both instruction and protection in an hour of trouble; lest through thy absence I be seduced by those that only pretend to love thee." Christ gives a present answer, and quickly after returns an invitation: "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me

\* Through his perfection, not defect.

hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." (Canticles ii. 14.) As if he had said : "O my mourning dove, that darest not stir out of thy secret place, stir up thy faith, hold up thy face with comfort, let me hear thy prayers and praises : though others censure them, I esteem them ; though others count thee deformed, thou art in my eyes beautiful." Here is something of affection ; but see more : "Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits." (Canticles iv. 16.) As if he had said : "O my Lord, what I have from thee, I return to thee : accept, I beseech thee, the fruits of obedience and praise." Christ presently accepts the invitation : "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse : I have gathered my myrrh with my spice ; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey ; I have drunk my wine with my milk : eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." (Canticles v. 1.) As if he had said, "Thou shalt no sooner ask, than be answered ; I accept thy graces and duties, thy bitter repentance and thy fragrant holiness : they are most sweet to me, notwithstanding their imperfections. And ye, O my friends, whether blessed angels, or gracious souls, do you cheer yourselves with the same spiritual dainties wherewith I am refreshed." This is much ; but there is more in the next expression I shall name : "Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me : " (Canticles vi. 5 :) as if he had said, "I am ravished and vanquished by thy fixed eye of faith." In short, see the spouse's closing request : "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." (Canticles viii. 14.) As if he had said, "As I began this song, my dearest Saviour, with passionate desires of thy first coming by the preaching of the gospel ; so, though I thankfully praise thee for all the communion I have had with thee, yet I cannot, my Lord, but more passionately long for thy glorious coming, to take me with thee from these bottoms of death and valleys of tears, to those eternal heights where nothing springs but life and glory ; that, instead of this song, I may sing a new one to the Lamb, and to Him that sits upon the throne unto all eternity." Thus, but in a far more seraphic manner than I am able to express, the soul-loving God, as the God-loving soul, are rejoicing in each other with joy, till they rest in each other's love. (Zeph. iii. 17.) In short, the soul that loves God is never so well as when most immediately with him ; and while there is any distance, many a love-glance passeth between God and the soul, even in the greatest crowd of business and diversions.

(4.) *A putting a love-interpretation upon all things.*—God looks upon the very miscarriages of those whom he loves as their infirmities, and puts a better interpretation upon them, than they dare do themselves. The disciples slept when Christ bade them watch : they wist not what to answer him : Christ himself excuseth it better than they could, in saying, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." (Mark xiv. 37, 38, 40.) And the loving soul is as loath to take any thing ill at the hands of God : when it is never so bad with the soul, he blesseth God that it is no worse. God and the loving soul do those things towards each other, which nothing but love can put a good interpretation upon : the truth is, without love it were intolerable. For example : God requires that service of the gracious soul that he requires of no other ; namely, to

bless God when persecuted, to rejoice in tribulations, to hope against hope, &c. God puts the soul that loves him upon those trials that he puts upon no other; namely, those chastisements from himself, those reproaches from men, those buffetings from Satan, which are peculiar to saints. But the soul heartily loveth God under all these. Again: the soul grows upon God in prayer; and the more it receives from God, the more insatiable it is, and God loves the soul the better for it. When afflictions are extreme, those that love God put the affliction upon the account of God's faithfulness: on the other hand, when the poor soul is foiled, and Satan runs with the tidings of it to set God against him, God pities the soul, and rates the accuser: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments: Take away the filthy garments from him," &c. (Zech. iii. 1—4.) Here is Joshua the high priest: while executing his office in offering sacrifices and prayers for the people, Satan arraigns him as a prisoner at the bar, and the accusation being true and vehement, Satan takes the upper hand; but now, Jesus Christ, as well the Patron as the Judge of saints, cuts him short with a vehement reproof, and tells him those sins could not make void that choice, which they could not at first hinder; and, farther, Christ, as it were, tells him they had been severely punished, half burnt and wasted by the heat of God's displeasure; and would he now re-kindle that fire? No, Satan, thy charge is, as it were, thrown out of the court: his sins shall be pardoned, his graces multiplied, and upon the well-discharging of his office he shall have "places to walk among them that stand by;" alluding to the walks and galleries about the temple. As if he had said, "Thou shalt walk with these glorious angels: they shall be thy companions and guardians, where Satan hath no place." So that Christ loves a soul the more, not the less, for Satan's accusations.

#### CONCOMITANTS.

To all these effects add these concomitants, or those things that have agreement with, or are near of kin to, Divine Love; which do not really differ from it, only express some part or manner of it. In short, it is love under some other form or notion. I shall only mention two concomitants:—

1. *Devotion, which is an absolute delivering up of ourselves to God's worship and service, so as by no flatteries or dangers to be diverted.*—"Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all." (1 Tim. iv. 15.) Herein lies the strength of religion, and the spiritual pleasure of it: herein the soul can say, with some kind of triumph, "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." (Isai. xii. 2, 3.) Christians, we must not only be barely frequent in religious actions; but we must act as those that are given up to God, we must mind the fervour of religion. We must be exceeding watchful over our thoughts, to keep them from vanity; and

over our affections, to keep them from entanglement. I would therefore commend it to you, to single out, every morning, some short passages of scripture, or some encouraging promise that hath affected you, to roll in your minds, or to lie upon your hearts all day, to maintain this holy fervour : nothing works and keeps such an impression upon the heart as scripture.

2. *The other concomitant is zeal, which is the most intense degree of desire and endeavour to please and honour God.*—It is the boiling-up of the affections to the greatest heat : this must be the companion of every grace. Now, zeal is expressed *against sin, or in duty.*

(1.) In the exercise of *zeal against sin*, I beg of you to observe this rule ; namely, *Whatever act of zeal you express toward others, double it first upon yourselves.* Whatever evil you reprove, or would reform in others, be doubly strict against it in yourselves. This is Christ's counsel : "Cast out the beam out of thine own eye ; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matt. vii. 5.) Mine eye is not capable of having a beam in it ; but a mote in mine own eye should be to me as a beam, in comparison of what it is in another's. Take a few scripture instances ; for this had need to be inculcated in the present age. In case of dishonour done to God and yourselves, compare Moses's carriage. "Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses ? hath he not spoken also by us ? And the Lord heard it ;" but Moses was as if he heard it not ; for he was "very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." (Num. xii. 1—3.) He was so indeed ; but it was only in his own cause : when the glory of God is concerned, you will find him of another temper : "As soon as he saw the calf, and the dancing, Moses's anger waxed hot. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord's side ? let him come unto me. And he said, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour," &c. (Exod. xxxii. 19, 20, 26, 27.) Here is one ice-cold in his own cause, fire-hot in God's. Take another instance, of Paul : "Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am ; for I am as ye are : ye have not injured me at all." (Gal. iv. 12.) As if he had said, "The wrong you have done me, I count as nothing." But to Elymas, that would hinder the entertainment of the gospel, he saith, "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness," &c. ; (Acts xiii. 10 ; ) and he strikes him blind. I instance in these now, because I mentioned them before, as singularly eminent for their love to God.

(2.) For *zeal about duties* I commend unto you this rule : *In every duty you take in hand, endeavour to do it above your strength ;* not only to the uttermost of your strength, but above it. I bottom this rule upon the commendation given to the churches of Macedonia : "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves." (2 Cor. viii. 3.) My brethren, it becomes us in every thing of piety to pant after the utmost perfection attainable : "Not as

though I were already perfect : but I labour after, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," &c. (Phil. iii. 12—14.) And David saith, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." (Psalm lxi. 9.) In a word, we must not only be sometimes zealous under pangs of conscience, but always in the whole frame of our conversation : "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing ;" (Gal. iv. 18 ; ) and not only when a minister or some other is present who may commend you.

V. The last thing I first proposed was, *to urge some persuasives to be graciously ambitious of such qualifications, and as graciously diligent in such exercises.*—And here I must pass-by more arguments than I can so much as mention. For the truth is, you can name nothing in the world, but it may be an argument to promote our love to God.

1. Consider, *God is our great Benefactor.*—I mention this twice, that it may be often in your thoughts. Who can reckon up the benefits we receive from God ? If love be to be recompensed with love, greater love was never shown than this, that God hath given his Son to die for his enemies. If love be to be purchased at any rate, who can give more for it than eternal life ? If love be to be bestowed gratis, who more worthy of it than God ? And canst thou, then, do less than love him ? It is commended as an expedient to overcome the worst of our enemies : "If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." (Rom. xii. 20.) O what hearts have we, that mercies will not melt them ! Reflect a little upon yourselves : we use to indent [bargain] with little children for their love : if we give them but an apple, or a plum, we presently ask, "Will you love me ?" And if they promise to love us, we then inquire, "Where will you love me ?" O dear Christians, turn-in upon your own hearts a little ! O how many, how great mercies do you receive from God ! Solomon tells us, that "a gift whithersoever it turneth, it prospereth ;" (Prov. xvii. 8 ; ) shall God's gifts be the only exception to that proverbial maxim ? For shame, Christians ! let us strive who shall be first in crying, "O come, let us worship and bow down : let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." (Psalm xcv. 6.) "Know ye that the Lord he is God : it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves ; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." (Psalm c. 3.) "O love the Lord, all ye his saints : for the Lord preserveth the faithful." (Psalm xxxi. 23.) God is pleased to give us in actual possession what his wise love thinks fittest for us ; and God is pleased to give us promises suitable to every condition we can be in in this world. For instance : in case of want, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat ? or, What shall we drink ? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed ?" Surely, if we may be solicitous about any worldly concern, it is about food and raiment ; but Christ chargeth us, upon our Christianity, not to be thoughtful about them : "For after all these things do the Gentiles seek." *But if we do not take care for food and raiment, we must starve.* Christ doth, as it were, say, "Nay ; there is no danger of that ; 'for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' " (Matt. vi. 31—33.) *Were this believed, men would lay aside their callings.* No warrant for that :

Christ layeth down *a rule* for our practice, as *the condition* of the promise: "Seek ye first," not only, but first, "the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and then, in a way of diligence, not negligence, "all these things shall be added unto you." This in respect of want. Take another in case of danger: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Prov. xviii. 10.) O how safe is that person that is, as it were, garrisoned in the divine attributes! In case of suffering: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time;" (Mark x. 29, 30;) an hundred fold more comfort in parting with all for Christ, than he could have had in keeping all, and denying of him. But why should I name particulars? There is enough in one scripture whence to form many incentives to love God: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. viii. 28.) . Pray mark this place.

*We*—It is not only the apostle, but all believers.

*Know*—It is not, "We only think or hope," but, we know.

*That all things*—All those afflicting providences which are most grievous to be borne; all those dark providences which we know not what to make of.

*Work together*—Though we cannot presently anatomize every particular providence, yet in their contexture we cannot but say they are gracious, and *for good*—for the spiritual and eternal good of all *them that love God*. "O, but here I stick, I cannot say I love God." Read on: the next clause is the best interpreter of this.

*To them who are the called according to his purpose*—That is plainly, to those that obey Christ's call in his word, to all that are converted, to all that are willing to be taught and ruled by Jesus Christ. And though thou dardest not own thy conversion, yet thou dardest not deny this evidence of it; namely, that thou wouldest fain comply with Christ in every thing.

2. *Love to God ennobles all other graces*.—I will not meddle with the controversy about faith's being informed by love, or love being, as it were, the soul of faith. The scripture tells that "faith worketh by love;" (Gal. v. 6;) and it is by loving nothing so much as God. Love is the most ingenuous grace, the most heavenly grace, the most god-like grace: all other graces are more or less excellent, as they are enlivened with love to God. Sales illustrates it thus: "The general of an army having gained some renowned victory, will have all the glory of it; for he ordered the battle, and led them on: we name the services of the several parts of the army, both the vanguard, the body, the wings, the rear. So here, some Christians are singular for faith, others for alms-deeds; some for prayer, others for humility; but love to God commands all these; love commands patience to bear, and hope to wait, and faith to believe."\* Elsewhere he compares love to scarlet, which is a royal cloth not for *the wool*, but for *the dye*; so a soul, as it were, double-dipped in love to God, is the most excellent Christian.

\* SALES "Of the Love of God," p. 670, &c. *sparsim*.

3. *Love to God rectifieth all other loves, and keeps them in due bounds.*

—The same author hath this other illustration; namely, “I may love my servant; but if I do not love my child better than I love my servant, I am defective in my love. Well, then, I must love my child; but if I do not love my wife better than I love my child, I am defective in my love. Well, then, I must love my wife; but if I do not love God infinitely more than I love my wife, I am defective in my love. You shall see,” saith he, “a mother so busy about her child, as if she had no love for any one else, as if her eyes were for nothing else but to look upon it, and her mouth for nothing else but to kiss it. But now, if she must lose her child or her husband, her love to her husband is so great as if she had no love for her child at all. So when God and those we most dearly love stand in competition, you may soon see the subordination of our love.” Though, let me add this for your encouragement: God never calls for the hating of other things for love to himself, but he doth most singularly make up in himself whatever any one parts with for him. When God requires the banishment of other objects, it is to communicate himself more fully, more clearly, more sweetly. Look over what Martyrology you please, I think you will scarce find so much as one dying for Christ any other way than triumphing; whereas many, of as eminent graces as they, die in their beds, little less than despairing. What encouragement may this be for the worst of times!

4. *Our love to God doth more sensibly quiet our hearts, than God's love to us.*—For though God's love to us be infinitely greater than our love to God; yet, till his love to us have drawn out our love to him, we do more abuse his kindness than other persons do whom he doth not so love. This is most evident in a person just upon the borders of conversion, but yet unconverted: God is abundant in his love of benevolence; he is now engaged upon the making of means effectual for his thorough regeneration. But now in this work there are several things to be done, which, though they speak greater love on God's part than ever he before showed him, yet while God is at work, the person quarrels with God more than about any former providences of his life. God, to tame him, brings him under great afflictions; upon which he either flies in his face, or lies sullen at his feet, and thinks he may well do so. Well, but God will not thus leave him: God follows him with terrors of conscience; “the arrows of God stick fast in him, and the poison thereof drinketh up his spirits.” But he will not yet yield; he holds fast his iniquity, which he is as loath to part with as his life, and rather hates than loves God for all this kindness: so that till he is brought to love God, God's love to him doth no way quiet him. By which you may plainly see, that, let God's love to us be never so great, we misinterpret all till we love God again; and then, let God do what he will, he is quiet; let his sufferings be next to hell-torments,\* he will not allow one hard thought of God. Therefore, be persuaded to get, increase, and exercise this love to God with all your hearts, souls, and minds.

\* *Da mihi, Domine, sanctum amorem tuum; et mitte me, si vis, in ignem inferni, &c.*—*STELLA De Amore Dei*, p. 314, &c. “Bestow on me, O Lord, thy holy love; and then, if that be thy will, cast me into the fire of hell.”—*EDIT.*



I have been too long already, and therefore will be as brief as may be in answering these two complaints :—

COMPLAINT I. “All that hath been said makes me fear, I have no true love to God at all : I cannot say, I love God more than the creature. I feel my heart more sensibly warping towards the world in the service of God, than springing towards God in my worldly affairs.”

To this I answer by these distinctions :—

DISTINCTION I. *We must distinguish between the estimation of our love and the commotion of it.*—The commotion may be greater, where the estimation is less. One whose love is fixed upon God, though he is so far from forsaking God, that he will forsake all things for God ; yet he may, till he recollect himself, be more moved with some petty loss. In short, he may have some violent gust of affection after other things ; but the constant breathings of his soul are after God.

DIS. II. *We must distinguish between the solidity of our love, and the flashiness of it.*—Between a superficial and a lasting joy. For instance : a covetous man may laugh more when he is tickled than when you give him a thousand pounds ; but he is a thousand times more joyful of his thousand pounds than of his being tickled. The soul's love to God is well-rooted. (Eph. iii. 17.) As a sick man is pleased with one that will sit with him, and alleviate his pains by diversion ; but he is more pleased with that man that shall cure him. While our souls are in a sickly frame, we are pleased a little with variety of diversions ; but we soon see their emptiness, and charge our souls to return unto God for a perfect cure.

DIS. III. *We must distinguish between our spiritual love and our sensible love.*—While we live in this world, such is our weakness through the remainders of sin and imperfection of grace, that our animal and vital spirits are more affected with sensible things than with spiritual. The things of the world are near to us, and we cannot live without them ; but yet he that loves God never says, upon the enjoyment of them, “Soul, take thine ease.” (Luke xii. 19.) O no ; he is angry, and grieved that he is at all pleased about such things.

COMPLAINT II. “I hope I am not wholly destitute of this excellent grace ; yet I am afraid to own that I have it. Is it impossible to get my heart above this uncomfortable uncertainty ? O that my heart were more raised and fixed above this anxious temper !”

I will close all with an essay to answer this complaint ; only premise, let not any thing that shall or can be spoken be wrested to give the least encouragement imaginable to any thing of sin. Take heed you do not, upon any account, gratify your sloth or indifferency of spirit, or any sins of omission. Keep off this rock, and then thy solicitude about thy fickleness gives thee grounds of hope to get above it. Take, therefore, these short directions, how to get and keep the most certain, constant, comfortable, spiritual frame of divine love that is to be had upon earth :—

1. *Keep a severe watch against all sins.*—Yet give not way to drooping fears, because of unavoidable infirmities. “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” (Psalm cxxx. 3, 4.)

2. *Observe your own temper.*—What it is that most draws out your love to any person or thing in this world, and improve that very inducement to love God: “He is altogether lovely;” (Canticles v. 16;) that is, imagine or name any thing that is most desirable, most worthy to be loved and admired; and that is he.

3. *Endeavour to love God out of duty, when, to your own apprehension, you cannot love him out of grace.*—I would commend this to you for all your gracious carriage towards God, and for all the kindness you would receive from God. For instance: repent, as it is *a duty*, even while you fear you want *the grace* of repentance. Believe, as it is *a duty*, while you think you cannot act faith as *a grace*. So justify God, (that is, acknowledge God to be righteous, though he condemn you,) when you fear God will not justify you. Sanctify God, (that is, celebrate God’s holiness,) when you fear he will not sanctify you; that is, not make you holy. So set yourselves to love God; that is, take heed you do not offend him; do all you can to please him; take up with nothing on this side himself. In short, let God find you in a way of *duty*, and you will find God in a way of *grace*.

4. *Study Christ.*—What divine love we either receive or return, it is through Christ. You may look for encouragement from Christ for every thing but sin. In every thing have recourse to Christ, for the performance of every duty, for the attaining of every grace; when you fear grace is withering, Christ will revive it. In a word: pray and strive that you may feel what it is for “Christ to be all in all.” (Col. iii. 11.)

Christians, practically mind these four directions, and they will be as the wheels of Christ’s chariot that is “paved with love,” to bring his beloved to glory. (Canticles iii. 10.)

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## SERMON II.

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HOW OUGHT WE TO LOVE OUR NEIGHBOURS AS OURSELVES?

*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*—Matthew xxii. 39.

THE apostle bids us consider Christ, “who endured *such*” (that is, *so great* \*) “contradiction of sinners against himself.” (Heb. xii. 3.) It was from a great spirit of this kind, that his adversaries used to propose so many captious questions to him. We find him no less than three times opposed in this one chapter: First by the disciples of the Pharisees,

\* Τοιαύτην *emphatikos* posuit, declarans magnitudinem αντίλογίας.—ARETIUS. “He has given an emphasis to the epithet *such*; thus declaring the magnitude of that ‘contradiction’ which Christ endured.”—EDIT.