

THE
CASE
AND
CURE
OF A

Deserted Soul:

O R,

A Treatise concerning the
Nature, Kinds, Degrees, Symptoms,
Causes, Cure of, and Mistakes about
Spiritual Desertions.

By JACOB SYMONDS, Author of *the* *Practical*
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THE PREFACE.

Accesses and Recesses are not proper to Him that by His immense Presence filleth all, and cannot be where He is not, nor cease to be where He is. True Motion is found in such Things only as are subject to local Circumscription: God is said to come or go, to be present or absent, 1. In Respect of Manifestation, as the Father speaks, He cometh when he is manifested, and goeth when he is hid. 2. In Respect of Operation. So God is said to be, where he worketh; as we say the Sun comes into an House, where it shines into it. Time was, when God was with all Men, both by gracious Manifestation and Operation, and this was Man's Happiness: But sin hath separated betwixt God and Man, and they are departed each from other. The Division began from Man, yet the Divine Goodness tenders Reconcilement, but Man will not. In this, Man is become unhappy, that he hath lost his God, and knoweth it not, yea, he counts his Loss Gain, and his Gain Loss, he would be Happy, but he erreth in his Choice; he is ever moving, never at rest, willingly absent from the greatest Good, unwillingly labouring with the greatest Evil, Though other Things are quiet in their Place, and rest in their End, yet Man's Place where he is pitched is strange to him, and his End vexeth him. All his Life is
a Labour

Labour, - and his Motion is but a tedious Shifting from Vanity to Vanity, from Evil to Evil, from Bad to Worse. The Soe cryeth for healing, and that which he thinks to find Lenitive, becomes a Corrosive: While he thinks to cure the Wound, he makes it deep, and is his own Tormenter.

The Heathen blundered in confused Ghesse how to redi- the State of Man. They saw an Unhappiness, but neither knew the Cause, nor Cure, yet something they assayed - when they propounded those two Rules to repair the Breach

1. To reduce Things to the first Principles of Nature.
2. To live according unto Nature.

These Rules are useful, if rectified and rightly used.

First, Reduce Things to their primitive Originals, and let them again in the womb whence they spring: This Experiment would profit much. Look into the world, and you shall see a confused Mixture of good and evil, but you must divide them wisely, and pursue them to their Beginnings. Ascend to the scattered Beams of Happiness in the World, to the Sun of Righteousness from whence they flow, and descend by the black and bitter Streams of Misery, to the poisoned Spring that sends them forth, and you will see two Origins of both, Good the Fountain of Life, and Sin the Root of Death. In the Way of Reduction of Things to their Causes, a Man may, as in a Glass, what he was, and what he should be, what made him Miserable, and what would make him Happy. It is Mens unhappiness of two Guides to choose the worse, but it is declining Reason to be led by Sense seeing, enjoying, and suffering things, without Inquisition into their Parentage. It is true Folly to dwell in the Surface of Things, not penetrating into their inmost Nature, inmost End, foremost Rise. A Man seeth things quite thro' from first to last. He asketh the Questions of the things he meets with, What are you? What do you? Whence come you? He lives not like a Subject to a World, but as a Lord, he examineth and judgeth all Things. He suffereth no Vagrants, but keeps all in Order, hath the Genealogies of all Things, and reduceth them to their several Tribes. There is a certain Voice in Things naming them and proclaiming the Cause to which they owe their Being.

they carry a Tie in which they are linked to their Principles, and by this Line Men might have Conduct through the Labyrinth of the Universe, to the first Cause.

Secondly, Another Rule is given, Live according to Nature. This sounds harsh, but it is, because it is in their Mother-Language, who never heard of Christ: But a good Interpreter will easily help the Business. There is in all Men an implanted Inclination to Happiness, and an home-born Pilot to carry this in a right Course, but it is true, tho' the Former be not lost, yet the Latter is, a Man is another Thing than he seems, the Soul is quick of Foot, but dull of Scent, her Sails are strong, but her Compass is marred. The practical Judgment, the Soul's Steers-Man is dim sighted, and takes Rocks for Harbours, Sea for Land, West for East, Earth for Heaven. But herein is Man's great Unhappiness, God hath opened a Way to renew those blurred Characters of Knowledge, which yet remain as the Light in the Air after Sun-Set, but Man regardeth not. The Scriptures are given by Inspiration of God to make wise unto Salvation, but Men are so far from due Seeking to lighten that glimmering Snuff of natural Understanding at this Fountain of Light, that they are in Love with their own Darkness: They hate the Light, because their Deeds are evil. Finding the Power of Conscience, a Check to their Lusts, they resist it, whereas they should rectify Conscience by the Word, and Affections by Conscience, they conversely cast off Conscience to give Way to Sin, you, of a grave Counsellor, they turn it into a base Flatterer, to applaud their greatest Folly and Wickedness.

But what will the End be? Shall God come again with Tenders of Mercy, and a new League of Friendship, and shall Man hang off? Let those especially consider this, to whom God hath come with many gracious Visits, and potent Workings, yet they come not in. I did propose and promise in the Beginning of this Treatise, to speak of God's leaving such, but I want Opportunity at present.

I say no more now to them, but this, It is dangerous to despise Grace, and to resist the Spirit, if he depart, we are lost: Your latter End will pay you for your Folly and Stourness.

3. The

stourness
(Scottish, largeness
bigness → pride)

The Day is coming, in which God will follow after foolish Man no more, wonder at his Patience that hath waited on the World some Thousands of Years already, but this long last ing Patience hath fixed its Period, then blessed are they that enjoy him: As for all the Rest, adieu for ever: then God will depart fully and eternally; it shall no more be said, Come, but then, Go ye Accursed into everlasting Fire.

You have now your Choice, here is God and the World, But this is Folly, Men take that in a disjunctive Sense, which is offered in a Conjunctive: It is not said, God or the World, but God and the World. In some Consideration indeed they are divided, but Most make the worst Choice. Here begins that vast Distance between the Saints and the Wicked, they set out at first from one Point, but more diverse, yea adverse Ways, according to the Difference of their Ends. A godly Man when first he chooseth God, becomes an happy Man, for his Choice is his Guide, which sets all the Wheels in a right Motion: Love is as the Wing to the Bowl, or as the Oars to the Boat, which move it and order it.

When this is done, God and Man is brought together: This sweet Meeting and amiable Conjunction is a great Part of the Plot of that eternal Love of God, who chose us that we might be enhappyed by answering his Choice of us, with our Choice of him, that he may dwell in us, and we in him.

It thinks, this World is like the King's Court: Children here are taken with Pictures, and feed their Eyes and Fancies with Hangings and fine Things, but the wise and grave Statesmen pass by these, their Business is with the King. Most Men stay in the Out-rooms, and low Things of the World, and so are mean, but blessed is the Generation, whose Eye, Desire, and Way are unto God.

The Creature is not capable of an higher Blessedness, than to have God for his God. They that dwell in God have a true Dwelling, Men who live upon the Creature, do not dwell, out roll as Ships at Sea, or travel as wandering Vagrants: In God there is quiet Abode, and perfect Rest, for here is no Evil, nor Want of God, here is enough, and such as may fit all Times, all Conditions, all Occasions, Soul and Body fully. Here, in these Depths are Wonders for the Mind

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Mind to feed on. Here also is Sea-Room of Goodness for the vast Appetite of Man to float in; add the Satiety of the Appetite breeds all Repose and Joy. Oh the Delectableness of this Condition! In this is a Depth of Riches, deep Riches that cannot be sounded, and rich Depths that cannot be exhausted: The Man CHRIST is the blessed Channel betwixt the Fountain and the Cistern, through which Grace, Life, Peace, Strength, Glory come by a gracious and a glorious Convoy, every Vessel shall have its Fulness to all Eternity, sometimes indeed (while this Life lasteth) the Streams come fuller, and sometimes slower - Sometimes CHRIST stayeth the Current that we may thirst, that after Thirsting, we may drink again with redoubled Pleasure.

This is the Main of a godly Man's Unhappiness, that he neither hath a full, nor a fixed State of comfortable Communion with God in the World, After sweet Meetings come sad Partings. Nothing is fixed, there is a Flood and Ebb as well on Land as in the Sea, and as well in Things spiritual, as in Things natural, even those that are strongest knit, have a Time of Parting. Nothing in Nature is more conjunct than its own Frame, yet this compacted Composition admits a Dissolution: Man, the Epitome of the World, is in this Case; Soul and Body one Day will shake Hands, yea, and the Body will fall asunder from it self, those four Elements that came in, in a vital League, will go out again with a deadly War. The Tie betwixt God and the Soul is the firmest Thing in the World, the Bond of Grace is stronger than the Bond of Nature, yet even here is a Kind of Parting also; but as the Conjunction is stronger, so the Separation is less. But sometimes it is so great, that the Saints by Enforcement of Sorrow cry out, My God hath forsaken me, my Lord hath forgotten me.

This sad Condition is the Subject of this little Treatise, concerning which I would have put here some Advertisements, but my Pen hath deceived me, and hath led me out into a large, and another Way than I intended in this Preface. Nothing more is now to be done, but to leave this small Help in the Hands of such, whose Souls long after the Return of God, with quickning and comforting Influences upon them.

J. S. M.



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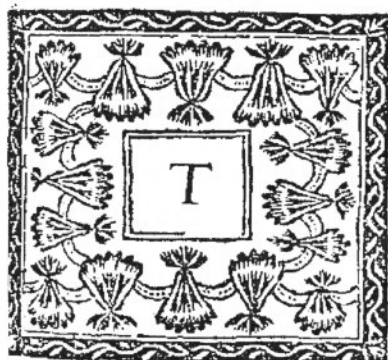
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T H E

THE DESERTED SOUL'S CASE and CURE.

CHAP. I.

That the Godly are sometime deserted.



Though most Men, since God and they parted in *Adam*, live without God in the World, *Ephes.* 2. 12, 13 and are so far from him, that they neither enjoy him, nor know him, yet there is a Generation of Men whom God hath made nigh by the Blood of *Christ*, with whom he hath renewed that old Acquaintance and Amity, which at the first he had with them, and they with him; which blessed Estate, as it is not here perfected, so it's often interrupted, their Comforts are sweet always, but short often. There are but few (if any) whose Joys in a comfortable Communion with God, are not sometimes clouded with Sorrows in a doleful Elongation from him, so that if you lay but your Ear to the Door of their Closets, you shall often hear the Daughters of *Sion* (as Heirs of their Mothers Miseries)

A

ries) complaining in their Mothers Language, *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me, Esa. 49. 14.* If you fix your Eyes upon them, you shall see *Sion's* Tears in their Eyes, her Paleness in their Faces, her Sorrows in their Souls. In Consideration of, and Compassion to these Mourners, I spent some Thoughts upon this sad Subject.

Desertions then are either *Common*, or *Special*.

These which I call *Common*, are such as all Men share in by Nature, God having forsaken and withdrawn himself from *Adam*, and all his Posterity, with Apostate Angels.

The *Special*, I shall handle as they concern the *Godly*, or *Hypocrites*.

Desertions, as they concern Men truly regenerate, are God's withdrawing himself In respect of quickning, quieting, or comforting of the Soul,

Desertions, as they concern Men seemingly regenerate, are Gods withholding of those Influences, by which they had a Kind of *Life* and *Comfort* spiritual.

To begin then with Desertions as they concern the *Godly*: I shall first, speak something in general of them, and then descend to the more specials. That which I shall say in the general, I will comprize in two Things

1. That there is such an Evil as spiritual Desertion.
2. How they are deserted.

That there is such an Estate, it's almost lost Labour to prove, yet because, as all in Christians is hidden and secret, so nothing more than their Comforts and Discomforts. I will, and that in two Words, make it good; we will call in two Witnesses to give Evidence to the Truth.

The Experience of the Saints. Ask *Sion*, you have her Verdict, *Esa. 49. 14.* And *Sion* saith, *the Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me.* You see here the Church clad all in black, bewailing her Widowhood, as one bereft of her dearest Husband, every Word of her Speech is bedewed with Tears, and beareth a Drop from

Case and Cure.

3

from her bleeding Soul. The Lord, *Jehovah*, he whose Power and Fidelity hath been to me as the Pillars of the Earth, he hath forsaken me, he hath cast me off. *My Lord*, he who was mine in Covenant, mine in Communion, he who was the Joy of my Life, the Life of my Joy, the Strength, the Stay, the Spring of my Life, he hath *forgotten* me. He hath cast me not only out of his Arms, but out of his Heart, I am quite out of his Love, not only forsaken but forgotten.

And in this *Sion* is not alone: Ask *David*, and you shall hear him as soon as you come near him, sighing, sobbing, crying, roaring; but what saith he, what ails him? he telleth you, *Psal. 22. 1. My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?* See how well their Testimony agreeth how can a Man look upon *David*, and not count him as a poor Orphan, that is left in woful Case, friendless, helpless, comfortless? but yet we will hear a greater than *David*, that is, the Captain of our Salvation, the first and Head of the whole Order, and what he saith, and we will go no further to ask of others. *David* was here a Type of Christ, and as himself was but the Shadow of Christ's Person, so was his Sorrow but a Shadow of Christ's Sorrow. *David* did but taste of the Cup which Christ afterward drank more deeply of, when in the Anguish of his Soul upon the Cross, he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* *Matth. 27. 46.*

And this Cup hath gone round ever since, so that few have ever tasted of the Waters of Life, but they have drunk also of these Waters of *Marah*, The Experience of all the Saints almost contributes to the Evidence of this Truth. Where shall we find a Man that hath not met with these Rocks and Sands, and hath not seen some gloomy Days, and winter Storms, passing through many Changes, sometime rejoycing, as the Plants in the Spring, in the Sight and Sense of God's gracious Presence, sometimes again mourning for his Loss of God, sometimes lift up to Heaven in his Soul, and

A 2

mounting

Mounting as it were on Eagles Wings; sometimes again depressed to the Depths of Hell, and held as with Chains of Brass or Iron, now quickned, but growing dull again. Few can say they have once found God, but may say they have often lost him.

Add to the Experience of the Saints, the Witness of God himself, *David*, and *Heman*, and *Job*, and *Zisa* might speak much out of Distrust, Impatience, Passion, &c. but when God himself shall come in, and confirm their Evidence, it is past doubt, but God doth so. For doth *Sion* bewail her self as a Widow forlorn without an Husband? God saith it was so. *The Lord hath called thee as a Woman forsaken, and grieved in Spirit, and a Wife of Youth, when thou wast refused, saith the Lord* Esa. 54. 6. God saith he had in a Sort divorced her from him - yet, and whereas *Sion* complained that God forsook her, it's no more than God saith himself *vers. 7. For a small Moment have I forsaken thee*, so that this is sometimes the sad Portion of the Saints, to be deserted.

And this I have the rather spoken, that the Mourner in *Sion* may see this uncomfortable State may consist with Grace, it is a Comfort to know that thy Depths are passable, and thy Case cureable, others have walked in this heavy Way, and are now in Heaven, others have been in these Storms, yet have safely arrived at the Land of Promise. *None other Affliction hath befallen you but that which is common to Men*, therefore be not overwhelmed in Grief, give not thy self for lost. Disquietness will hurt, but it cannot help, rather stir up thy self to take hold of God, repent, pray, believe, wait for God is Faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will, with the Temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it 1 Cor 10.

C H A P. II.

How, or in what Sense the Godly are said to be deserted.

THE second Thing follows, How, or in what Sense they are said to be deserted.

1st, Sometimes only in Appearance, not in Truth Men are in nothing so much deceived, as in themselves Man's Heart and Ways, yea his Judgment and Thoughts are subject to many Variations and frequent Mistakes are found in Mens Opinions about these great Questions, Am I truly changed? or am I an Hypocrite? do I believe, or not? is God my God, or not, &c? And the Errors of Mens Judgments arise from Ignorance, Unbelief, Passion, false Rules of Judgment, &c. of which Principles of Error I shall speak hereafter, but through such Impediments Men are often puzzled, and think they are evil, when they are good, and worst when best, and furthest from God, when nearest to him.

But as Desertions are sometimes in Appearance only, so sometimes they are real, God truly withdrawing himself, and denying that Fulness of Communion which his People were wont to have with him. But though he desert them really, yet not totally, *The Lord will not forsake his People, for his great Names sake.* 1 Sam. 12. 22 His Truth is engaged in it, *For he hath said I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,* Heb. 13. 5. the Words are Emphatical, Οὐ μὴ σε ἂν, οὐδ' αὖ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλείω, here is to be observed a Duplication of the Subject of the Promise, I will not leave, I will not forsake and a Multiplication of Negatives, there are five Negatives in the Promise, by which he intimateth, that he will not, yea, he will not, surely he will not forsake his Servants, he will never wholly reject them, nor utterly leave them.

To clear this Point a little. I will lay down three Limitations, or Distinctions, by which we may the better understand in what Sense this is a Truth that the Godly are sometimes forsaken of God.

A 3

God

God leaves them for a Season, not for ever. If he go from them, it is but as one that goeth from Home, to return again: *I will not leave you Comfortless, or as Orphans, But I will come again, John 14. 18.* When Sion was in this uncomfortable Case, God said unto her, *For a small Moment have I forsaken thee, but with great Mercies will I gather thee; in a little Wrath have I hid my Face from thee, for a Moment, but with everlasting Kindness will I have Mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. Esa. 54. 7, 8.* He may frown, but he will smile again, though his Compassions may be restrained, yet they cannot be extinguished, his Anger endures but a Moment, in his Favour is Life, *Weeping may endure for a Night, but in the Morning Joy comes, Psalm 30. 5.* In his Favour is Life, weeping may endure or lodge as a Passenger, to be gone in the Morning; but Joy comes in the Morning as an Inhabitant, and enjoyeth his Habitation to himself. As the Sun sets to rise again, and as the tender Mother layeth down the Child to take it up again, so Deser-tions are but short Interruptions of a Christians Comfort: God will not stay long, when his People cry unto him, he will return, and exchange their doleful Winter, into a joyful Spring. Though the River hath her Ebbings, yet it hath her Flowings, the Tide of Comfort will come in again.

There shall be a Day of their joyful Meeting with their Beloved, they shall see their God, enjoy his Presence, and be Embraced in the Arms of his Love, and when this Day shall come, there will be more Joy in meeting, than there was Grief in parting; God will pour in Comforts upon them, as they have poured out Tears for him; and will recompense their Love, with Kindness, their Desires, with Fulness, their Mourning, with Gladness, their short Heaviness, with everlasting Consolations.

Desertions are not the Interruption of God's Love, but of the Acts of his Love, his Affection is the same, but the Expression is varied. Not that there is a two-fold Love of God, or a two-fold Consideration of the same. There

There is the Love of *Benevolence*, and the Love of *Beneficence*, or, as some call it, the Love of *Intention*, and the Love of *Execution*. The former to the faithful, from Eternity to Eternity, and is Immutable, and incapable of any Intention, Remission, Augmentation, Diminution, or any Alteration, it is like God himself, unchangeable. But the latter, the Love of *Beneficence*, or of *Execution*, which is his Love as it expresseth it self in doing good to us, may be in a Degree suspended and restrained for a Season. As in the Summer there is a *Lux* and *Lumen*, Light inherent in the Sun, and Light fluent from it, that is ever perfect and permanent, but this may suffer changes, it may be obscured and lessened, yea, extinguished, and quite cut off, as in the Night it falls out.

A Father may have a dear Affection to his Child, yet shew but little in his Carriage. *David* shut in his Love from *Abfalem*, not ceasing to Love him, but forbearing the wonted Acts and Expressions of his Love: A Fountain may have her Streams cut off, or dammed up, though it self have the same Fulness and Aptness to pour it self out as before. The Root doth not always give so much Sap, as to make Branches bud and blossom at all Times, yet when she is most sparing in her Beneficence, her good Will is the same she sticks as close to them as ever.

We often keep back Mercies from our selves, and God would more abundantly pour in himself, but that we open not unto him; and so as that blind Woman complained the House was dark, when she her self was blind, so we often complain, as if God had restrained Mercy, when we our selves restrain it. And it is as true, that sometimes God is provoked by our Sins, and keeps in his Mercy, that he comes not with such gracious Visits as before, yet his Love is not shortned, though the Fruits of it are; Behold, the Lord's Hand is not shortned, that it cannot save, nor his Ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your Iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your Sins have hid (or made him hide) his Face from you, that he will not hear, *Esa. 59. 1, 2.*

Though

Though God may vary in the Operations of his Love, yet his Love in it self is the same, and shall be the same for ever, it is an everlasting Love, Jer. 31. 3. *The Hills may be removed, and the Mountains may depart, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee, Esa. 54. 10.* This was spoken to the Church in the Day of her Sorrow, he tells them, he loved them, though he afflicted them: and that Speech of God to David is full for this Purpose, *I will visit their Transgressions with Rods, and their Iniquities with Stripes, nevertheless, my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail, my Covenant will I not break, &c. Ps. 89. 30, 44.*

When God deserts his People, he withholds those Acts of Love only, that are for our well Being, not those which are for our Being. Though a Christian may want that without which he cannot have Peace, yet not that without which he cannot live, whatsoever is necessary to his Constitution, Life, Completness, and Stability, that is never denied, no such good Thing will God withhold from them that walk uprightly, Ps. 84. 11. He will ever hold their Souls in Life, not leaving them in weak Beginnings but continually leading on unto Perfection. As he is the Author, so he is the Finisher of our Faith, Heb. 12. 2 *we are confident of this very Thing, that he that hath begun the good Work in you, will finish it until the Day of Jesus Christ, Philip. 1. 6* The Saints shall have of him, whatsoever is so necessary, as without it they cannot hold their State, or attain their End, but that which is rather for their Ornament, than Supportment, for the Sweetness of their Way, than Sureness of their End, for Comfort, rather than Necessity, may be, and is often in great measure cut off and decayed.

This then is the Thing when God leaves his People, he doth not so leave them to the Will of the Flesh, the Temptations and Snares of the World, the Power and Tyranny of the Prince of Darkness, as never, or not at all

all to look after them, but his Care is over them in these Times, and he is with them by a *secret* and *powerful* *Manutenency*, both *guiding* and *upholding* them, and is often most in *Power*, when least in *Appearance*. The Metals that ly deep under Ground, and see not the Heavens in their *Light*, yet partake of their *Influence*: Yea ordinarily, the most precious Operations of God's gracious Power are there, where is least Sense and Feeling of them, and they *have* most of God, when they *see* him least. As when God covered *Moses* his Face in the Cleft of the Rock, *Exod.* 33 22. then he passed by, and gave *Moses* to see his Glory so the Clouds and Veils that cover our Eyes, are often Forerunners of the clearest Light, and sweetest Sight of God.

And when God seems to be turning a Man into a desolate and ruinous Heap, yet even then is he building and preparing him to be a more excellent Structure. The Gardiner digs up his Garden, pulls up his Fences, takes up his Plants, and to the Eye, seems to make a pleasant Place, as a Waste, but we know he is about to mend it, not to mar, to plant it better, and not to destroy it: So God is present even in Desertions, and though he seem to *annihilate*, or to reduce his new Creation into a confused Chaos, yet it is to repair its Ruins and to make it more beautiful and more strong. *The Glory of the second Temple was greater than the Glory of the first, Hag.* 2 9 In the repairing of an House, we see how they pull down part after part, as if they intended to demolish it, but the End is to make it better. It may be some Posts and Pillars are removed, but it is to put in stronger. It may be some Lights are stopped up, but it is to make fairer Lights. So though God take away our Props, it is not that we may fall, but that he may settle us in greater Strength. He batters down the Life of Sense, to put us upon a Life of Faith, and when he darkens our Light that we cannot see, it is but to bring in fuller Light, as when the Stars shine not, the Sun appears, repairing our loss of an obscure Light, with her clear, bright

bright shining Beams. So then we see, that though God do forsake his People, yet *not totally, not for ever, not ceasing the Affection of Love, but the Acts*, and not those which concern our *Being*, but such as concern our *well Being*: As abundant Quicknings, and Aid of Grace, victorious and triumphant Power over Sin, the clear and satisfying Testimony of his Spirit, &c.

C H A P. III.

Four other Considerations about Desertions.

HAVING premised these Things in the general, I shall now come to the Specials, to speak of these Desertions in their several Kinds, and first as they befall the Godly.

Desertions as they befall the Godly are of two Sorts.

Withdrawing of $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ Influence of Grace.} \\ 2 \text{ Of Comfort,} \end{array} \right. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1 \text{ Inward.} \\ 2 \text{ Outward.} \end{array} \right.$

For all the Complaints which the Saints do make of Gods hiding and withdrawing himself, arise from one of these three Grounds, or all.

1. That God doth not carry on their spiritual Life as he was wont.

2. That he gives not that Peace, Joy, Comfort, Assurance as he was wont.

3. That he brings them into outward Straits, and doth not deliver them

Before I come to speak *directly*, and particularly of these, I will propose four *brief Observations* about them.

1. That a Man may *miss much of God's external Presence* in the sweet and comfortable Way of his Providence providing, protecting, and ordering all Occurents to Contentment, yet may *enjoy inward Communion* with him his Soul may be most abundantly *animated*, and *quickned* with the Spirit, when he hath most *Discouragements* without yea, God is wont, when he gives *least in the World* to give *most of himself*, and his People seldom have much of

of the *Fatness below*, and of the *Springs above* at once, as the Sun and the Stars appear not together. But when he shuts up all *Doors of Hope and Help* in the World, then he sets open the *Doors of Heaven*, so Saint Stephen, when he saw nothing but Death in the World, then saw *Heaven opened, and Christ sitting at the right Hand of God. Acts*

7. Such Mercy found *Jacob*, when he was a poor Pilgrim in a strange Land, then he saw that heavenly Ladder, and the *Angels ascending and descending*, as a Pledge of God's Care, and their readiness for his good, *Gen. 28.*

12. The abundance of the Spirit both of *Grace and Peace*, is usually poured forth in a Day of Sorrow, as when the Dough which the *Israelites* brought from *Egypt* was spent, God gave them Bread from Heaven.

And there are two Causes of it. 1. *God's tender Love*, which is such, that he will not add *Affliction* to his Peoples Sorrow. When therefore he is pleased in his Wisdom to put a Cup of *Affliction* into their Hands, he is wont to give them also the Cup of *Consolation*, when he casts them into outward Straits, he doth recompense it with inward Enlargements. The Church had never such full predictions of Christ, and precious Promises of great Mercy, as when the most dreadful Evils hung over her head, as appears in the Prophecies of all the Prophets, and the Faithful usually find their worst Days, their best days, and when they meet with Troubles, they find most ease. Thus the Apostle witnesseth, *As the Sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our Consolation also aboundeth by Christ, Cor. 1. 4. And though our outward Man perish, yet our inward Man is renewed Day by Day 2 Cor. 4. 16,*

2. The Capacity of the Soul is widened, and enlarged in affliction, heavenly Communion with God is sweetest in a evil Day, and the Soul longs after God, that in him it may find all supplied, which it wants in the world. Now the more God stirs up Desires of himself, the more the Soul is prepared to Communion with him, and the more it is part of him, the Hungry Man eats most, and he that is most athirst, drinks most. When the Life of Nature and
Sense

Sense is cut off, the Soul seeks a *Life in God*, and is much in all Endeavours of enjoying God, now she seeks him in Prayer, she enquires for him in the Word, and by all means reacheth hard after him. So *David*, when he was in the Wilderness, panted and breathed after God he prayeth, he cryeth, his Thoughts are with God all the Day, yea in the Night he meditates upon him, and (saith he) *My Soul followeth hard after thee, Psa 63 8*

2 One may want inward Comfort, yet not be deserted in respect of the Influence of Grace, the Tenor of Grace and Peace is not the same, a Man may lose the *Sense of Grace*, and yet retain the *Life of it*, though he be more *Happy* that hath Grace and Peace, yet he may be as *Holy* that hath Grace without Peace. Yea, and as the clouded Summers Sun yields more Comfort to the Earth, than a bright shining Winters Sun, so when the Soul is most clouded, it may be most quickned, when the Light of Gods Favour is hid, the quickning Heat of the Spirit may most abound.

3. He that loseth Gods quickning Presence, loseth also his comforting Presence. Though a Man may have Grace living and stirring without Peace, yet he cannot have Peace, without the Life of Grace. Peace and Comfort are Fruits of the sanctifying Spirit, and as there may be a Root without Fruit, but there cannot be Fruit without the Root, so though there may be the Spirit quickning and sanctifying without Comfort, yet there cannot be true Comfort without the quickning Spirit.

One of these two Evils befall a Man from whom God is departed, and to whom the Workings of the Power of God is denied

Either he falls into a *spiritual Lethargy*, being as one asleep, whose Spirits and Senses are bound up, so that he is in a Shadow of Death, neither hearing, nor seeing, nor tasting the Things of God, and so is bereft of all spiritual Joy and Comfort. When a Man is in a State of Deadness, he is dead to all things that are spiritual, and they also are as dead things to him. The Promises that are Fountains of Life to a living man, are as dry and

and empty Cisterns unto him. Yea Christ, and Heaven, and the Love of God, though they are the Food, the Strength, the Life of a Man in a healthful State, are to the languishing Soul, as Meat to a sick Stomach: The glorious Things of the Gospel are to him as a withered flower, or as a sealed Book, he hath no Use of them.

2. *Or a spiritual Frenzy.* In the Day of strangedness of God, a Man is often much disquieted, now the Remembrance of his former blessed Days torments his Soul with Grief, and the Fears of utter Apostacy, and irrecoverable Declination from God, do vex it with Fears and Horrors. Yea, Conscience may pronounce sad Judgment upon him, and he may conclude himself an Hypocrite, an Apostate, and one under Wrath. So that either through *Insensibleness*, or *Unquietness* of Spirit, he that hath not his former *Vivacity* and Vigour of Grace, cannot have Comfort in such a State.

4 *All these may possibly befall a Man at once:* He may have outward Straits, and inward Troubles at once, and this is the lowest Pitch of *Misery* that a Believer can fall into.

CHAP. IV.

Of the first Sort of Desertions, the withholding of assisting Grace.

THe first Sort of Desertion, is in Regard of spiritual Life and Grace: And it is either *Real*, or in *Appearance only*.

Concerning this Malady and Sickness of the Soul as it is real, I will treat in this Order: Handling 1st. *The State.* 2dly, *The Symptoms and Consequences* 3dly, *The Causes.* 4thly, *The Cure.*

First, *Of the State*, which may be thus described: Then we are deserted of God, *when he suspendeth or withholdeth the arbitrary and wonted Influence of the Spirit of Grace.*

That I may more perspicuously express the Thing, I will take this Description in Pieces, and explain it in the parts of it. In the Description are *two Things* that require opening.

B

1. *The*

1. The Act. 2. The Object.

The Act is God's suspending, it is a *negative Act*, a not giving, or putting forth that which was wont to be, it is not the taking of any Thing from a Man which was inherent, but a denying of Something that was assistant it is not a taking out, but a not putting in As when a Cock is stopped or turned, there is no Diminution of Water in the Vessel under it, but only no Addition, the Vessel is not made emptier, but not fuller. Or, as a Child, when he is set down out of his Father's Arms, is weaker, yet not by any Loss of his personal Strength, but by the withdrawing of his Father's Help The Father takes not away any of his Child's Ability, but denieth his own Aid so God, when he deserts his Servants, withdraws himself and his Spirit, yet so, as that we must conceive it, not to be a spoiling them of what he had planted in them, but a not conferring of that assisting Grace which he was wont to give, this will be a little more clear in the next Thing.

The next Thing in the Description is the Object, or the Thing which is withholden from a Man in this Case which is the arbitrary or wonted Influence of the Spirit of Grace. Here are three things in the Object to be observed.

1. It is the Influence of the Spirit of Grace. The Presence of the Spirit is one thing, and the Influence is another, there may be the former, without the latter. The Influence may be abated, but the Presence never faileth. As the Soul in the Body is ever equal in her Habitation, but not in Operation, her Power not acting, yet her Presence continuing.

2. It is the arbitrary Influence of the Spirit which is suspended, there is a twofold Influence of the Spirit.

First, Necessary and Constant.

Secondly, Arbitrary and Inconstant.

The necessary Influence of the Spirit, is never denied and it is that which God affords his People,

To Life, And so Growth.

1. God is ever present to uphold his Saints in Life, though

though Diseases may molest them; yet *their Feet shall not be moved*, they shall not sink, *Pf. 66. 9.* As that Hand of Power which wrought in the Creation, works still in the Preservation of all Things, *John 5. 17.* so the Spirit works still, and by a divine Power supports the new Creature, so that it shall not fall back into its first Nothing. David found this Hand of God, staying him in the midst of all his Weaknesses; *Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right Hand, Psal. 73. 23. Psal. 17. 5.*

2. So that Life being wrought by the Spirit of Life never dieth, and as the Spirit worketh alway to the Conservation of spiritual Life, so it worketh ever to the Growth of Grace, a Christian is ever growing, he groweth when he seems to himself and others to stand at a Stay, yea to decline, he groweth alway really, though not apparently, nor equally, as there are Seasons in Nature, so in Grace. Grace hath her Springs and Autumns, but as Nature is ever tending to Perfection, so Grace is ever ripening and increasing, yea even in Temptations and Desertions, when God seems to leave his People, he is about the Work, perfecting the new Man. As in the lopping of a Tree, there seems to be a Kind of Diminution, and Destruction, yet the End and Issue of it is better Growth; and as the weakning of the Body by Physick, seems to tend to Death, yet it produceth better Health, and more Strength. And as the Ball by falling downward, riseth upward, and Water in Pipes descends, to ascend, so the new Man when it seems to decay, is still carried on by the hidden Methods of God to Encrease. The Plants are as well profited by the nipping Blafts of Winter, which cause not only the Fruits, but the Leaves to fall, as by the warm Beams of the Sun in Summer. A Christian is a Member of a thriving Body, in which there is no Atrophy, but a continual issuing of spirits from the Head, *Eph. 4. 16. Col. 2. 19.* every Part supplied by the effectual Working of the Spirit of Christ, so that the Influence that tends to Life and Growth, is necessary, and certain. B 2 But

But there is another *Influence* of the Spirit which I call *Arbitrary*, which is given, and withheld according to the Pleasure of God.

This is *assisting Grace*, or God's gracious Concourse with that habitual Grace which he hath wrought in his People. I call it *arbitrary*, because, though all Grace depend upon, and flow from his good Pleasure, yet, in this, God is free, he hath more absolutely promised to *conserve* and *encrease* Holiness, than to *quicken*, *actuate* and *excite* that Principle of Life. This he doth with great *Variations* according to his good Pleasure, being more mightily present by the working and actual Aid of his Spirit to *some*, than to *others*, yea, more to the *same Man* at *some* Times, and in *some* Conditions, than in *others*; Sometimes the same Christian is as a *burning and shining Light*, sometimes as *smoking Flax*, *the Spirit bloweth where it listeth*, *John 3*. Sometimes he fills the Soul with fuller Gales, sometimes again she is becalmed. A Man hath more at one Time, than at another.

This assisting Grace is to *actuate, regulate, & corroborate*. *Actuating Assistance* is that by which God carrieth his People, to *Action* and *Fruitfulness*, causing that *inward Seed* which he hath sown, to *bud* and *bear*.

This God worketh, first, by *exciting* and blowing up that latent Spark of Grace in the Heart, Grace is an active Thing, yet needs to be *excited*, because of the *Indisposedness* of the Subject in which it is. As Fire tho' it be apt to burn, and is very active, yet when it is in wet Wood, it needs blowing up, because it meeteth with strong Opposition in the Subject, Wetness of the Wood, which gives Check unto the active Spirit of the Fire, and (besides this *Contrariety* in us, in whom the Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, so that without Assistance we cannot do the Good that we would, *Gal. 5. 17*) there is an *external Impediment*, Satan assailing with all possible Quench-coals, that he may cast a Damp upon the Soul.

Therefore we need to be quickened by a continual Influence; and this God is pleased to give to his Servants,
Jerem.

Jeremy found this Working of the Spirit to quicken and stir up his Graces which began to flag, Impatience and Passion began to stifle his Zeal and Readiness in his Ministry, but God came in to help him, and blew up the Spark, so that (saith he) *It was in mine Heart as a burning Fire shut up in my Bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay,* Jer 20. 9. When this is denied, there is much Deadness, and Dulness, and Slumber in the Soul that a Man shall see it is not with him as in former Days, when the Lord was more graciously present, and assistant to him.

2. By enabling to act. It is not enough that God hath given habitual Grace, or that we be excited and come to the Bud and Blossom of holy Desires, holy Dispositions, and holy Resolutions, but we need still the Help of his Power that these Blossoms fail not, but that we may bring forth the Fruit of Action, as in a Tree, there is a seminal Virtue of bearing, yet, except it be helped by the Influence of the Heavens, it cannot bring forth Fruit. It is God that giveth not only to will, but to do, Phil. 2. 13. There is a Power of God which worketh in those that believe Eph. 1. 19. Col. 1. 18. and according to the Working of this Power, is a Christian's Fruitfulness when God is pleased to put forth his Hand to take hold of him, to draw him, and enable him, he runs with Joy and Speed in the Ways of God, his Affections are enflamed, his Heart is prepared, and he is apt to do Good, and reverence God, and walks with Delight with God, but when God shuts in his wonted Mercy, then he walks heavily, and now his Soul is full of Complaints, *I would, but cannot* there are Desires, and good Inclinations, but they come not to Perfection, the Soul conceiveth, and travaileth with Purposes, and saith, I will look to my Ways that I offend not, I will pray more, and mourn more, and do more, but it wants Strength to bring forth: therefore the Godly cry for Help, which they need not, if they had a Sufficiency in themselves.

3 Assistance is to regulate and order a Man in doing Good.

Good. This is necessary, for often there is much Readiness, and Life, and Aptness to do Good, but yet much **Failing in the Manner** of it the same Spirit therefore that directs to *what* we should do, teacheth *how* to do it. How often are the Godly in that Case, that they would fain humble their Souls, and afflict themselves, yet know not how to do it? How often bent to other Duties, yet know not how to do them, in a spiritual Manner? What the Apostle saith of one Duty is true of all, *we know not how to pray as we ought, Rom. 8. 26.* Therefore the Spirit *helpeth our Infirmities*, and by a gracious Conduct, leads us, that we walk aright. As the Master guides the Hand of a young Writer to write according to his Copy, and as the Father, in leading his Child, *draws him*, because he is unwilling, *helps him*, because he is weak, *guides him*, because he is apt to lose his Way, so God is said not only to *draw*, Cant 1. 4, John 6. 44. and to *help*, Rom, 8 26. but to *order*, and *direct* his People, Psal. 37. 23 Psal. 119. 133 2 Thes 3. 5. A Ship may be *rugged*, and have a Fitness to sail, yet it wants a Wind to *move* it, and a Pilot to *guide* it.

4. *Assistance is to corroborate*, and fortifie in some eminent Difficulty As suppose a man mightily assaulted by some strong Lust, armed with Occasion, Opportunity, and Satan's strong Power, in such a Case God is wont to *underprop* and *shoar up* the Soul with strong Aid Also, how should a bruised Reed stand against such a Blast? As a Father when he seeth his Child like to be devoured by some ravenous Creature, makes Supply of the Child's Weakness by his own Strength. The Apostle Saint Paul was in some great Temptation, Satan had shot some Arrow at him, but God suffered him not to fall, but held him up, *His Grace should be sufficient for him*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. At another time Satan took up other Weapons, assailing him with the Terrors of Troubles and of Death, he brought in an *Emperor* against him whose Power and Majesty he thought might have *overcome* him, but God was a Pillar of Strength to him, he was *not moved*, all

all Men left him, but God did not leave him, *The Lord stood by me, and strengthened me, 1 Tim. 4. 17.* In Afflictions also this Assistance is wont to be afforded, and in hard Seasons. The same Apostle also found God here, he was put to many a hard Shift for his Living, he passed through Nakedness, and Hunger and Thirst, and Want, which was able to have broken the Heart of a Man, but saith the Apostle, *I am able to do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me, Phil. 4. 13.* Thus God is wont to stand by his Servants in hard Brunts, but when he comes not with Supplies and Aid, they fail and faint, Temptations overcome them, Distresses overwhelm them, Difficulties daunt them. Thus we see what that arbitrary Influence of the Spirit is: But there is another Thing to be observed, that Desertion is a Suspension of the arbitrary Influence *which we were wont to enjoy.* For note, there is a twofold Influence, or Assistance 1st, *Extraordinary*, 2^{dly}, *Ordinary*

The *Extraordinary* is, when in some extraordinary Case God comes in with more abundant Help, leading the Soul in Triumph over all Assaults, mightily corroborating, not only valiantly to withstand them, but also gloriously to conquer them. This as it cometh upon extraordinary Occasion, so it ceaseth usually with it And the Ceasing of it is not Desertion.

The *Ordinary* Assistance, is that which usually a Man hath in the Course of his Life; when this is abated and withdrawn, then a Man is *deserted*. When a man is not what *he was wont*, not so cheerful, ready, constant in doing Good, when he doth not, nor can do, as he was wont, as Time has been, when he lived more with God, but now his Heart is fallen from that heavenly Communion with him, he could formerly mourn bitterly in the Remembrance of his Sins, but now the Heart is frozen, and cannot relent, he could have prayed with much Affection, and holy Boldness, but now the Heart is cooled, weakened, straitned, indisposed, &c. when it fares thus with a Man, he is *Deserted*.

But here I will add a few *Advertisements* to guide the Judgment

Judgment in this Point of God's withdrawing his Assistance

1. *God never denyeth it wholly* to a faithful Soul Though some Degrees of divine Help be denied, so that the Soul languish in a sort, and sink into a State of Deadness and Dulness, yet there is Life, and that both habitual and actual. God's clock never stands, there is no such *deliquium Gratiae*, no such Swoon of the new Man in which all Acts do cease. It may be so ill with a Christian, that he may fall from his first Love in the Acts of it, in a great Measure. *Apoc 2. 4, 5* He may be much impaired, that there may seem to be but the Remains of what was before, and these Remains also may be ready to die, *Apoc 3. 1, 2*. But God will not quite depart, he will keep the Root, and the Seed of God shall remain in him, 1 *Joh. 3. 9*. Yea, and the Husband-Man is ever in some Measure dressing, and pruning, and watering the Branches of his Vine. *Joh. 15. 2. Esay 27. 3*. So that though they may bear *less* Fruit sometimes, yet at all Times they bear *some*, a Christian may do less, but still he doth something, for though he may lose *some* Help from God, yet *not all*.

If he cannot *believe* with that fulness of Assurance, and Joy as before, yet he can *pray*, or if he cannot *pray* as he hath done, yet he can *sigh*, and *groan*, and mourn. As a Spring under Ground, if it be stopped in one Place breaks up in another, so the Spirit of Grace, if it be stopped in some Parts, yet it sheweth it self in others. Though the Sun yield not an *equal* Comfort to the Plants, yet a *constant* Comfort, it retires sometimes in part, never wholly; yea God often withholds his quickning Virtue from some *one* Grace, for the perfecting and quickning of *another*. He sometimes leaves *Faith* in a poor Estate, so that it may be much darkned and clouded with Unbelief and Atheism, to raise up *Fear*, to awaken to Watchfulness, to enrich with spiritual *Poverty*, that the Soul may mourn more seriously, and seek more earnestly after God. Sometimes he takes off

his Hand that held down some *present Lust*, and suffers it to shew it self in monstrous Shape and Rage, to pull down *Pride*, and advance *Humility*, and put the Soul more to seek to be strong in God.

2. *It is not every Degree of Suspension* of assisting Grace, that layeth a man in this forlorn Estate, as one forsaken of God, but *Desertion* is an *eminent Abatement* of it. So that there is an *eminent Decay* of Affection and Fruitfulness, and an *eminent Increase* of Darkness and Lust. As a Child cannot be said to be forsaken of his Father, when he abateth somewhat of the Height and Fulness of his Maintenance, but when he keeps from him Things necessary, suffering him to wander up and down, to go ragged and torn, pinched and wasted with Hunger and Cold, and not relieving, though the Son sue and entreat him to pity him, then you may say God hath deserted you, when he leaves you under the Pressures of Unbelief, and the Power of Corruption, and yet though you cry and call, Supples are restrained, and you are suffered to walk in the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*.

3 *Desertion* is not to be judged by an *Indisposedness*, and *Deadness partial*, but *universal*. Not all Suspension of Grace makes this mournful State, for as I have shewed, sometimes God hides himself from one Part, for the quickning of another, and may be most abundantly *present*, where he seems in great Measure *departed*, as I shall shew hereafter. But when a Man is overgrown with *Deadness*, which spreads over the *whole Man*, that a Man is now less in *Affection*, less in *Action*, yea unmet, unwilling, unapt to *all Good*, and the Means of Good, being abated in all his former Life and Lustre, then he is deserted, there may be *Indisposedness* to some Duties, from sundry Causes, but when a Man is less in *all*, then he is in this woful State.

4 *Not every Interruption of Communion* with God, nor every present Distemper and *Indisposedness* argueth God to have withdrawn himself. There may be cold Blasts, stormy Weather, troubled Air, dark Clouds in the

the Spring, yea in the Summer Season. A Man cannot conclude from some present Chilness, or Benumbedness of Spirit, or from some Storms of impetuous Lusts, that he is deserted. The Deadness of a deserted Soul is not a *transient*, but an *abiding Deadness*, not a *Slumber*, but a *Sleep*; not a *Fit*, but a *State* of spiritual Benumbedness. As a Mother is not said to forsake her Child, that goeth away and returns quickly, so Deser-tion is not a present short Abatement of God's quickening Presence, but a continued Cessation for some Space of Time. It may be long.

C H A P. V.

That a Man may be deserted, and not know it, with the Causes and Evil of it.

I Have done with the *State* of a Deserted Soul, the next Thing is the *Symptoms* and *Consequences* of it, which will give some Help to a Man, to know whether he be in this State or not. And it is needful to declare the Signs of it, for often Men are in this lamentable Case and know it not, as in another Sense, it is said of *Sampson*, when he awaked out of that Sleep in which he lost his Hair, *that he wist not that the Lord was departed from him*, *Judges 16 20*. So it is true of many, God is departed from them, and they miss him not till they awake out of their Sleep.

Quest. But is it possible that that Man should be so besotted, that falling from a blessed Course of sweet Communion with God, into so grievous an Estrangedness from him, he should not perceive it? can a Man fall from such an Height into such a Depth, and not know it?

Ans. Yea, certunly, and there are diverse *Causes* of it. As 1, There may be a great Flush of Spirit, and much *Activities* from false Principles, so that a Man may seem to be the same, and to enjoy God as he did, when if it be observed, he hath lost much, and the greatest part of his Life stands upon other Pillars, as Vigour of Nature, Strength

Strength of Parts, Enforcement of Conscience, Respects to Men, false Joys, fanatick Dreams, superstitious Rules, &c. these Winds often fill the Sails, these Weights move the Wheels, even there, where there is little of God.

2. *God's Departure is gradual* As he comes not all at once, but by Degrees, so he departs not suddenly, but gradually. As the Sun riseth by Degrees and sets by Degrees, and so Night creeps often upon Men before they are aware, so God by *Degrees* estrangeth himself, and leaves the Soul to wither by Degrees. As in a Body languishing in a Consumption, there is not such an Apprehension of the going out of Life, and the coming in of Death, as in him that receiveth a sudden mortal Hurt, and as he who wasteth in his Estate by *little and little*, is not so sensible of his Decay, as he that loseth *all at once*, so if a Man should fall from a heavenly Converse with God, and from a flourishing spiritual State, into a lifeless and barren Condition on a sudden, he would be more affected with it, but now his *Fall is gradual*, therefore less seen. A Hill is sometimes drawn out into such a length, that the Descent of it doth scarce appear. In God's Way, a Man may descend daily, yet because his Decay is as it were broken into so many small Parts, he hardly seeth it. Old Age, and gray Hairs come slowly and thily, they come by Stealth, one gray Hair creeping after another, and *here and there upon them they know it not.* Hosea 7. 9. A deceitful weak State steals upon Men, their Souls being like draining Cisterns which empty themselves by Drops, and so Emptiness overtakes them before they see it *while they think they are Rich, they become Poor,* Apoc 3. 17.

3. Men lose much of God and know it not, because *they rest too much upon other Things* that do deceive them, some Things without them cause them to mistake: As 1. A *Pride* and Conceitedness raised by comparing themselves with others worse than themselves. 2. The *Testimony* and Applause which others give them, especially if by many, by the Godly, by the Wise, Praise blinds

blinds them, and holds them in a sweet Dream of an imaginary Excellency. 3. *Transient and fleeting Gales*, God now and then breaking in with potent Workings, and that rather to Exercise of Gifts for his Office, and for others Sakes, that they may be built up, when themselves indeed wither.

4 They *consider not*, nor examine their Estates, they lay down their Watch, and hold not continual Sessions for Judgment of themselves; therefore Changes befall them, and they know it not when Men cast not up their Estates, they may grow Poor and not see it. Conscience is the Soul's *Watchman*, yea, *her Judge*. Now if there be a Vacation, and the Judge sits not, a Man may be spoiled of much of his Estate, and not be righted. Except we judge our selves frequently, we cannot know our selves fully, but may lose and not see it.

You see then that one may be Deserted and not know it. But it much concerns a Man to be vigilant, that he may discern God's *Accesses* to him, and *Recesses* from him.

For, 1. Else though he enjoy God, he cannot be *thankful*. It is not the *Presence*, but the *Evidence* and Sense of Mercies that riseth Thankfulness. He that receiveth not, and he that knoweth not that he receiveth, is alike unthankful. When a Man lyeth long out of the Balance of Judgment, he knoweth not whether he be better or worse. God may be present in many gracious Counsels, Checks, Incitements, Impulsions, and yet have little Thanks for his precious Mercies, except they be observed. If a Prince come in Favour to visit thee, and stand knocking, and be not known, thou canst not acknowledge that high Favour with Thankfulness. And tho' Christ stand at the Door and knock, that thou mayst open, *that he may come in and sup with thee, and thou with him*, if thou knowest not this day of Salvation, and this Season of Grace, it cannot affect thee. What a Sin is this? God is with thee, by secret Workings of his Spirit; he is with thee, in thy Way, and in the Means of Grace, and thou observe not.

not; But it is with thee, as with *Jacob* in another Case, who sleeping, knew not what had befallen him, but when he awaked, then he said, *God was in this Place, and I knew it not*, Gen 28. 16.

2 Except you know how it fares with you, if God be departed, you will lie still and not enquire after him. He that is sick and knoweth it not, seeks not for Cure, *The whole*, that is, such as think they are well, need not the Physick, but the Sick. Such as feel their Sickness and Pain, *Matth. 9. 12.* They that are rich in their own Opinion, seek not for Supply, but say, *They want nothing*, *Apoc. 3. 17.* He will neither beg nor work for Bread that is full. He that thinks all is well, and seems to be something, when he is nothing, *Gal. 6. 3.* is at rest, as one that needs not. It is said, that the *Pharisees need no Repentance*, *Luk. 15. 7.* that is, they know no Need, because they see not their Sin. No Man seeks that he thinks he hath, therefore look well to thy self, lest thou be deceived. A Man may go on with an Opinion of a good Estate, and be mistaken. *As the hungry Man dreameth, and behold he eateth, but when he awaketh his Soul is empty: and as the thirsty Man dreameth, and behold he drinketh, but when he awaketh, behold he is faint: Isa. 29. 8.* So you may be in a beggerly Condition, while you content you are rich. Except you search your selves, and till you awake out of your Dream and behold your Misery, you will not seek for Remedy. What brings the Beast to the River, but Thirst and Heat? That Man will not seek for the Well of Life, that feels no Want. Necessity is the Mother of Industry, and Indigence breeds Diligence.

3 It is a Contempt of God not to observe what Interest you have in him, and what Communion with him. If Friend, much more if a King come to thy House, and thou take no notice of his coming in or going out, will he not take it ill, and count it a great Neglect of him? Is it not a Sign his Company is not valued, whose presence is not accepted, and whose Absence is not regarded?

garded? Things that thou prizest thou keepest with Care, possessest with joy, and lovest with Grief. A small Matter may be lost, and not missed, but if a Jewel be lost, it is soon missed.

Consider, if an Husband had Occasion of Departure for a Season, and the Wife should not be loath to part with him, nor grieved to want him, would not all say, She loves him not? When you make a Feast, you sit not down till the Chief Guest come, and when he comes, you meet him with all fit Respect and kind Entertainment: If then you sit down to make merry with the Creatures, when God is not come in to sup with you, *Apo. 13. 20.* or when you entertain your Pleasures, and Delights, and Profits, and other worldly Contentments, and give but slender Heed and Respect to God, so that his Presence or Absence is not much to you, it is a Sign he is not your Chief, but you despise him. Therefore be careful to observe diligently how God is with you, that you may not lose him, and not see it, for this is to contemn him. Add this, that God's withholding himself, is a Sign of his Displeasure, and it is a great Provocation, to slight it.

CHAP. VI.

Rules to judge when one is deserted. The First is the Consideration of his Graces. First, their Affinity is abated.

SINCE Men may be deserted, and not know it, and since it so much concerns all to know how it fares with them in this Case, I will propound some Rules for their Helps in Judgment of themselves in this Point.

These Rules are three Considerations, or the View of three Things. 1. Their Graces, 2. Corruptions, 3. Means of Grace.

First Rule. Consider your Graces which you have received; for when there is a Variation of divine Influence, there will be a Change in the new Man. As you may read in the very Face and Countenance of the Earth, what her Receipts are from the Heavens, whether

ther the Heat and Rain be liberally, or sparingly afforded. So, when the Sun of Righteousness shuts in himself, it will soon appear in the Change of your Spirits.

In Times of Desertion there will be a Change in your Spirits, in Respect of 1. *Activity*, 2. *Light and Sight*, 3. *Affection*.

That Decay of spiritual *Activity* appeareth, and sheweth it self in two Things 1. *Unfruitfulness in Good*, 2. *Indisposedness to Good*.

1. There is *less* done, there are fewer Fruits: You are not so frequent, and so abundant: Duties are curtailed, and clipped, God hath not his Services in that Number and Measure as before: You do not so much Good by Counsels, Perswasions, Reprehensions, and such other Offices of Christian Love, but are become more useless and fruitless.

In this Abatement of Action, there are three Things considerable.

1. *It is voluntary*. There is an Abatement sometimes (for a Season) out of Necessity, as in Case of bodily Infirmity, or other inevitable Occasions, but this is not sinful, where the Affection and Desire to Duties, is not quenched, but held up in Strength: But when Men do voluntarily lay down their Strength of holy Endeavours, in the Ways of God, and move more slowly and negligently, either much omitting, or slightly performing the Duties of Godliness, it is a Sign that it is not with them as it hath been, *Apoc.* 2. 4, 5.

2. It is an Abatement especially of such Acts of Grace, as are *internal*, and most proper to a godly Man, as mourning for Sin, rejoicing in God, Self-judging, heavenly Improvement of the Promises and Providence of God, Desire of Christ's Appearing, &c. There may possibly be an Holding up of Duties *external*, as Hearing, Prayer; &c. but if these inward Actions and Motions of the new Man cease, it is a certain Argument that a Man is upon the losing Hand. External Duties may be upheld

by the Power of Conscience, and other Causes, but those inward Acts cannot spring but from an inward Root. Here Grace *inherent* is the Womb, and Grace *assistent* is the Midwife, the one gives *Disposition*, the other *Action*, so that when a Man is less in these, he hath less of God.

3. In the Abatement of external Acts; there will be less done in *personal* and *secret Duties*, than in more *publick Duties*, which are with and before others. Pride and other civil Respects may enkindle a false Fire in a frozen Heart; the Breath of Applause may fill the Sails, and move the Ship, which otherwise would ly still, or move another Way: A *Pharisaical Spirit* will be much quickned with Praise and Glory, and a *servile Spirit* will be much provoked by Fears: Men are content to do more than they would, sometimes through *Hope* of the Favour of Men, sometimes through *Fear* of Disfavour. But such are moved not by the Spirit, that is *from Above*, but by the Spirit, that is *in the World*: Therefore judge your selves by secret Acts, follow your selves into your Closets, and retiring Places, and observe your Diligence, Endeavour, and Spirit in your hidden Ways, and secret Duties, for what you are in them, that you are indeed: As then you may best take your Height, when you remove all Advantages, for if you stand upon any Thing, you will seem higher than you are, so you may best see the Temper of your Spirits, when all external Enforcements are absent, when you are your selves, without the Ingredients of Respects to Men, to intermingle with your Spirits.

As there will be less done in a Time of Desertion, and an Abatement of Fruitfulness, so you may discern an *Indisposedness*, and *Unmeetness* to Duties.

1. Less *Willingness*, you may do Good, but it is rather as a *Task*, than a *Delight*, and you are not carried to it so much out of *Liking and Contentment*, as by a *compulsory Judgment*, which layeth a Necessity on you, that you do it as a *Debt and Due*, which the Law ex-

acts

acts upon Pain of Imprisonment, but not as a *free-will-Offering*, and Eucharistical Sacrifice. When the Heart is filled with God, its Delight is with him, and he yields Obedience in Love, and counts his Work Wages. An evil Heart is hardly drawn to Good, it quarrels with the Rule, and is loath to be bound. *David*, when he was in Distemper, and left in the Rage of his Corruption, was not willing to be limited by the Law of God, but when he was himself, then *he loved it*, Ps. 119. 129. Gold and Silver was *not so precious*, he chose it, vers. 137. He took it as his Portion, vers. 57. *Psalm*, Ob Lord, this is my Portion, I will keep thy Words.

When a Man enjoyeth God, his walking with God, is his Life, he is much affected with Converse with him, partly through Love and Surtableness to God, in Respect of which, he is the Centre to which he tends, and in which he rests, partly through Respect to the Recompence which he hath in Hope, and partly for the Sense of Sweetness which he hath in his Converse, God meeting his Servants with satisfying Comforts, sweet Embracements, and blessed Conversions, and Beams of Mercy and Loving Kindness, so that they say in their Hearts with *David*, It is good for me to draw near to God, Psal. 37. 28.

Yea, Love mightily commandeth and enclineth the Heart to Duties, but when a Man is in greater Distance from God, then the pleasant Ways of Holiness, which were to the Soul as a delightful *Paradise*, are become as the Way of a Desert, a Way of Thorns and Briars, a wearisome and unpleasant Path.

2. That Zeal and Fervency which you had, will be much weakened. When God is with a Man by powerful and plentiful Supplies of the Spirit, he musters up all the Powers of his Soul, and calls in all his Abilities to wait on God, and to do him Service, So *David*, Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name, Psal. 103. 1. Observe with what Contentment and Strength you were wont to do what you did ;

For if now you put less to it, and go on in a Way of spiritual Laziness and Sloath, it's sure there is a Diminution of heavenly Influence: This seemeth to be the Case of the Church in the greatest Part of it, which caused the Prophet to complain, *There is none that calleth upon thy Name, or stirreth up himself to take Hold of Thee,* Isa. 64. 7.

CHAP. VII.

When a Man is deserted, his Light is darkned.

THE second Change, which you may discern in your selves, is in your *Light and Sight*. The Eye of the Soul, that Gate of spiritual Life and Death, suffers, and this being weakned, a Man is like *Sampson*, when his Eyes were put out, brought into great Misery and Bondage.

There is a four-fold Evil when God hides himself
1. *Obscurity*, 2. *Inefficacy*, 3. *Vacuity*, 4. *Incredulity*.

1. *Obscurity*. God shines not into the Soul with such abundant Light, as before, but withdraws himself from the intellectual Part, and this causeth a Withering and Dying in the whole Man, For as our Light is, so is our Life, *Psal.* 119. 144. Here is the Root of the main Difference betwixt Christians *true* and *false*, *strong* and *weak*, one seeth Things as another seeth not. A wicked Man that is learned, though he seem to have *Light*, yet is in *Darkness*, for his *Light* is not the same *Light*, with the *Light* of the Saints, and the Saints, though they see by a true *Light*, yet because it is weaker in some than in others, therefore there is such Difference in themselves, and in their Lives. Yea, in the same Man there is great Difference, according as his *Light* varieth. It's *Light* makes Men to be what they are. This *Light* in the Saints is *two-fold*, as the Moon hath a *Light* in *her self*, and a *Light* from the *Sun*, so the Godly have a *Light* fixed and set up in them by the Spirit, as dwelling in them

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and a Light which floweth from the Spirit of Light, as from an external Cause, as he pleaseth, and when he pleaseth to confer it. And as the Moon is very obscure, if the Streams of the Sun's Light be cut off from her, so their habitual Light is dim and dusky, if the communicated Light from Heaven cease. The Godly, as they are made Light, and are taught of God by receiving opened Understandings, so are still in Learning, the Spirit revealing more and more the Mysteries of Godliness.

By the Way I will in a few Words, explain a little this enlightning Work of the Spirit.

There are four Things in it : 1. *Removing Impediments from the Eye*, 2. *Manifestation of the Object*, 3. *An Application of the Eye to the Object*, 4. *Holding it to the Object*.

1. *Removing of Impediments of Sight*. There may be Light without in the Air, yet a House may be dark within, because the Light may be kept out by Shuts. And the Sun may shine brightly, and make all Things clearly conspicuous, yet the Eye, through the Impediment of some Humour or Film oppressing it, may see but darkly, if either external Light be dammed or cut off in the Medium, or internal Light be hindered in the Organ, there can be no clear Sight : Now as he that draweth aside the Shuts from before the Windows, is said to make the House light, and he that removeth the Humour or Film from the Eye, to give Sight, so it is in this Case which we have in Hand. When the Saints are first translated out of the State and Kingdom of Darkness, into a State of Light, *They receive a Mind to know God*, 1 Joh. 5. 20. and they that were blind receive a seeing Eye. But many Films of Lusts, and Mists of sinful Distempers are wont to darken their Light, therefore God is graciously pleased to help their Infirmities, and by his Power to cure their Distempers, as by a precious Eye-Salve, Apoc. 3. 18.

2. *Manifestation of the Object* : Shewing himself unto the Soul. For as the best Eye cannot see except Things shew forth themselves, so except he pre-
sents

sent himself, and Jesus Christ, and the Things of his Kingdom, we cannot know them

There are three Ways, or *Media*, of spiritual Sight, *The Creatures, Word, and Sacraments.*

Now doth not Experience shew, that you see more of God in these at one Time, than at another ? and one main Cause of this Difference and Inequality in apprehending God, is the different Manifestation of himself. The same Sermon is as a *clear Vision* unto one, unto another as a *Riddle*, God shining to one in his Ordinance, and not unto another. Unto some *the Gospel is hid*, and the Light of it doth not shine unto them, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. But unto others in the Preaching of the same Gospel, God that commands Light to shine out of Darkness, shines in their Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ, ver. 6. Yea, and as he manifests himself by an *habitual* Light, so by an *actual*, by which his People see all Things more clearly at one Time than at another, it's sometimes Day with them, and sometimes Night.

3 In this Enlightning, there is an *Application of the Eye to the Object*. The Spirit, as in other Parts of the new Man, so in this, gives both habitual Principles, and inward Dispositions, and also draweth those Dispositions into Act, both a *seeing Eye*, and the *Seeing of the Eye*, both the *Power* and the *Act* are from the Spirit. As in the Body the Eye hath a *Fitness* in it self to see, but yet the *Faculty* or *Power*, and the *Act* of Seeing is from the Soul, for the Soul actuates every Part. All our Conceptions and Apprehensions of spiritual Things are formally the Acts of the renewed Mind, but *originally* they are from the Spirit, which stirs up and strengthens the Mind to work, and directs it in Working.

4. *Holding the Eye to the Object*, that it may not slip and wander from it: Naturally our Thoughts are very vain and scattered, and never more unsettled, than when they are pitched on that which is good: And this

this Giddiness and Unstableness of our Minds is a great Impediment to our full Comprehension and Understanding of spiritual Things, as I shall have Occasion more to declare anon. Now the Spirit comes with Assistance to the tottering and straying Spirit of his People, and holds their Eye, and stayeth their Thoughts upon their Objects, that the Soul may drink down Knowledge more fully, *transient Views let in but little Light.*

Thus you see what this Influence of the Spirit is upon the Mind of the Godly, and by this you may better conceive, how Darkness and Dimness befalls the Saints in the Time of *Desertion*. There must needs be an Abatement of Brightness of Understanding, where the Mind is left clogged with Fogs, and Mists of Lusts; Lusts do darken the Mind, as Mud doth the Water, and as Dust doth the Air, and as Glass, the fouler it is, the less Light it hath in it. *Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God*, not only hereafter, but here in the World, *Matth. 5. 8. The Secret of God is with them that fear him, Ps. 25. 14. Pro. 3. 32. A good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments, Psal. 111. 10.* But when the Heart is infected with pernicious Lusts, they corrupt the Mind, seducing, deceiving, and diverting also from all serious Study of, and Inquiry into Things spiritual.

In like Manner, When God doth not present himself, and Things spiritual, how can it be, but a Man should be in much Darkness? nothing can reveal God but himself, as the Sun is not seen but by her own Light; and when God hideth himself, all Things are hid, he seeth less in Sin, in Grace, in Christ, in the Gospel, in all Things, that seeth Less of God. As when the sun is clouded, all Things are proportionably clouded and obscured.

Again, if God actuate not, and stir not up the Mind to enquire after him, and to behold him, it will be but as the Eye of the Body in the Time of Sleep, which seeth nothing till it be awakned. And

And lastly, Except God fasten and fix the Mind upon himself, and other spiritual Objects, it will be wandering ; and he that goeth from the Sun, goeth into Darkness. This is the First of those Evils forenamed, which befalls the Mind in a Time of Desolation, it is darkened, though it have Light still, yet not so much, though it see as much as it did, *extensively*, yet not *intensively*, as a weak Eye may see as many Things as a better Eye, yet it seeth not so fully and clearly, you may know all Things that you have known, but yet not in that clear and spiritual Manner, yet note that habitual Light is not impaired, but those Beams of Light which God is wont to cast into the Soul, are lessened. And when it is thus with you, that you have declined in your Acquaintance with God, and in your Apprehension of the Sinfulness of Sin, the Beauty of Holiness, the Excellency of Christ, the Preciousness of the Covenant, you have Cause to sit down and weep, for you have not so much of God in you, as you have had.

CHAP. VIII.

The Light and Notions of a deserted Man have not their former Efficacy, to affect, impel, repel, and humble the Heart.

THe second Evil that befalls the Mind is Inefficacy. The Understanding by its Light, should be as the Compass in the Ship, to guide and order Men, and as the Sails and Winds, to set all in Motion, and as the Anchor, to hold up in all Stresses, but when God leaves a Man to himself, how weak is this Light, and unable to discharge its Office ? It hath not those effectual Operations that it had upon the Soul.

1. A Man is not so affected with the Things that he knoweth, as in former Days, Time was when the Apprehension of God's Love did work mightily, melting to Repentance, quickning to Obedience, encouraging to Confidence, filling the Heart with Gladness and Glorifying, and the Mouth with Praises and Songs.

Songs of Rejoycing, but now the Thoughts of divine Love do not so raise the Heart, so Time was, when the Sight of Sin was a Wound to the Soul, casting Shame into the Face, and causing Grief in the Heart, but now you can behold your Sins, and cannot say, as in the Days of Old, *Mine Eye hath wounded my Heart*, Lament. 3. 51. This Weakness and Inefficacy of Knowledge is a Sign you are in an ill Case.

2 A Man is not so impelled to Duty Where God is present with much assistance and besetting Influences of his Spirit, there he rules and holds his subjects in a strict Obedience. The scepter by which he ruleth, is the Word, but not the Word as it is written with Ink, and lyeth in the Letter, but as it is engraven in the Heart, and as it is in the Throne, seated in the Understanding, yea, and as it is swayed by that invisible Hand, which *worketh mightily in those that believe*, Ephes. 1. 19. When God holds back the Working of this Power, spiritual Truths ly bound Hand and Foot, and put not forth themselves in their former Regal Power, which they did exercise as God's Vicegerents and Viceroyes to command and govern, but the Heart enjoys a woful Liberty and Toleration, in a barren and unfruitful Conversation. The Majesty and Mercy of the great, and gracious God, doth not consume, as it doth in those who enjoy God, 2 Co. 5. 14. But as if the Heart had none to fear, and nothing to hope for, or none to judge it, it is dull, careless and heedless. In former Days, the Mind, which is God's Statute-Book, and the Monitor in a Man, was often suggesting Counsels and Perswasions, crying as that Voice, *sa 30 21 This is the Way, walk in it, when ye turn to the right Hand, and to the Left*. That is, in all your Ways, but now it is silent, and become like those Idol-Shepherds, that had Eyes, and saw not, and Tongues, but spake not. It was as a Law, having an Obligatory, and binding Power, Rom. 7, 23. so that there was no Peace but in holy Walking, but now that
Light

Light is become weak, and the whole Man is out of Order.

3. A Man is not *so restrained* as he was, this is one Office of an enlightned Mind, to be as a Bridle to Corruptions, and a Check to impetuous Lusts, there is a great Power in the natural Man's Conscience, when God awakens it, and sets it on, to limit the boundless Spirits of men unregenerate, as we see in *Balaam*, who though he had a good mind to pleasure *Balak* in hope of Profit, yet durst not; the Light within him curbed him, and held him so strongly back, that a House full of Silver and Gold could not draw him. But when God, for the hardness of Men Hearts, ceaseth to quicken this Light, it becomes weak, and Men are let loose to all Evil, as those, *Rom. 1. 26.* because they *imprisoned the Truth* which would have ruled in them, therefore God gave them up *to a reprobate Mind.*

So in the Godly, there is a *renewed Conscience*, an Understanding enlightned with saving Light, which while God by continual Pulsations and Motions keeps waking, becomes a strong Bank to preserve the Soul from the overflowing Rage of Sin, but when God ceaseth to Work in it, then the Heart is left like a Ship in a Storm, when her Cables break or fail. *David* in his grievous Foil which he suffered, knew that Adultery was a Sin, yet God not adding his Influence to this Light, it became too weak to raise up Resolutions sufficient, and to chain up that Monster in his Soul, *2 Sam 11.* And *Aza* had Light enough to convince him, what a Sin it was to rob God's Treasury, to make a Present to send to the King of *Syria*, that he might curry Favour with him. Yet he adventures upon this Sacrilege, his Knowledge could not hold his Hands from doing Evil, no not from imprisoning the Prophet, who did his Duty *2 Chron. 16.* So that if you be less restrained by your Knowledge, it is a Sign that the Power of God is not so much put forth in you, as heretofore.

4. A Man is not *so humbled.* The practical Understanding

standing being renewed, is the Count-Palatine, next to God, in the Palace of the Soul, the Power of Judgment is in its Hands, it hath Power to send out Writs to summon Men to its Bar, and to examine Causes, and to pass Sentence, and when God is with it, it will afflict and chastise the Soul for Sin. So it is said, *That David's Heart smote him*, 2 Sam. 24. But when Conscience groweth careless, and Men judge not themselves, when they condemn not, and afflict not themselves for Sin, but the Sword lieth still in the Scabbard, and Execution is not done, but Crimes are winked at, the Offender is justified or spared, it is a Sign of a Sleep fallen upon them, and that God hath withdrawn himself. Or if you be judged by the Light, yet art not humbled, if you can shift and ward off the Blows of Conscience, so that it cannot wound you, the Efficacy of it is weakened, and God is departed: *David* was in this Case, his Conscience was too dallying and indulgent, it did not arrest him, nor seize upon him with her wounded Majesty, because God suffered him to lie for a Time, as he permitted him to fall, but when the Spirit came in the Ministry of *Nathan*, then Conscience was armed with a stronger Power, and laid Hands on him, bound him in Chains, and laid him up in Prison, and now *David* humbleth himself, confesseth his Sin, weeps, and sighs, and mourns Night and Day, and could have no Quiet till he had his Pardon, and was reconciled to his God, *Psal.* 32.

C H A P. IX.

When a Man is deserted, the Mind is more vain, and abated in Frequency, Complacency, and Consistency in holy Things.

THE third Evil that befalls the Mind is *Vacuity* and Emptiness, when God withdraws himself, it becomes like an empty House without Inhabitant, when the Cloud of divine Presence fills his Tabernacle, and the Soul receives Oracles from his Mouth, then a Man hath sweet Converse with him, and walks with him,

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as a Man with his Friend, as it is said of Noah, Gen. 6 9. and Enoch, Gen. 5. 22. God is his Centre, and he is much in Pursuit of him. *My Soul thirsteth after thee, and I will remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-Watches; my Soul followeth hard after thee*, Psal. 63. He was much in the Thoughts of God, God was with him, and he with God, when he went to sleep, yea, when he awakned, his Heart was towards him, *When I awake, I am still with thee*. Psal 139 18. Yea, *I am continually with thee*, and what was the Cause of it? *Thine Hand upholdeth me*, Psal. 73. 23. An awakned Heart hath God ever in Sight, *I have set the Lord always before me*, Psal. 16. 8.

As Water striveth to ascend as high as the Head-Spring from whence it cometh; so an heavenly Christian, as he springs from above, is ever streaming thither; but there are Times when the Mind becomes vain, and very empty of God, and full of Vanity, either being like a Watch that stands still, or like a Conduit-Cock that runs at waste; either sleeping, and not acting, or pouring out, and spending it self upon Things that profit not.

In this State, the Soul hath lost much of a three-fold Excellency which it had 1. Complacency, 2. Frequency, 3. Consistency in holy Thoughts.

First, Complacency. Time was, when the Thoughts of God's Glory, and Mercy, and Works, and Word, and of Christ and other spiritual Things, were as Honey, feeding and delighting the Soul. Meditations were great Refreshments and Recreations, they were wont to fill the Heart with sweet Content and Comfort, adding much to all spiritual Life, both of Grace and Peace. *How precious are thy Thoughts to me?* Psal. 139. 17. David reckoned his Recourse to, and Converse with God, among his chief Treasures. And indeed, what is better to Man in a right Temper, than from the Nebo of a spiritual Meditation, to behold Canaan? And by a heavenly Mindedness, to walk with Christ, and Angels, and Saints.

n Heaven, to have that in a Kind of Presence, by this Prospective, which is yet so distant? This I say, per-adventure, was your Happiness, but now you are changed, and fallen from this Glory, your Souls creep on the Dust, and savour not the Sweetness of the Things above, they hunger not so much after that Bread of Eternal Life, but feed upon Vanities, and worldly Things. You are not so delighted in slipping out of the World, and returning your selves, that you might be with God, nay happily, it is become a Burden, to fix your Thoughts on that which was your Food and Life before, your Minds are become heavy, the Earth hath got into your Hearts, and weighed them down, so that you find it hard and tedious to pulley and wind them up to such spiritual and settled Meditations, in which formerly you have had Delight. If it be thus, it is a Sign that God hath much withdrawn himself from you.

2 *Frequency*, It may be it hath been the daily Course of thy Soul, to visit Heaven, soaring on the Wings of an heavenly Mind, and taking her Flight to God and Christ, as the *Eagles that flie to the dead Bodies*, Matth. 24. 18. Thou wast wont to find in every Place a Passage to thy God, and wert often improving that Quickness of thy Mind, which is able to step from the deepest Dungeon to the highest Heavens in a Moment. The Mind is so quick of Foot, that it is swifter than the Sun, and can move further in a Moment, than the Sun both in a Day, and thou wert wont to send this winged Messenger, and it returned unto thee, like *Noah's Dove*, with Olive-Branches of Peace and Comfort in its Mouth. Indeed a Christian drives two Trades in the World, one is seen, the other is secret, and in this he is busie when he seems to be yacant, and is least alone, when most alone, when he is mured up within his Chamber, or walking in a solitary Way, he is conversing with such Companions, as the World is not acquainted with, he is speaking with God, and hearing God speaking to him Words of Wisdom, making him *wiser than the*

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Ancients,

Ancients, Words of Reproof, piercing like a Sword, yea not to hurt, but heal; and Words of Comfort, stronger than Death, and sweeter than Life, yea, when he seems to be in the Depths of Affliction, he is mounted above all Sorrows, and his Soul is above the Clouds, when he seems to be affrighted with Terrors, he is drinking in the Waters of Life, *In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul*, Psal. 94. 19. Consider this, Hast thou been thus filled with God, so conversant in heavenly Thoughts that thou wast never long from Heaven, but often looking up to the God of thy Life? And how is it now with thee? Art thou become a Stranger to these Ways in which God and thy Soul had formerly so many blessed Meetings? Art thou grown mindless and forgetful of him? I may be drawing near in some heartless Approach to him in the Morning, but then living without him throughout the Day. Many Guests come in, but God is shut out; there is Room for Profits, for Pleasures, yea, for sinful Thoughts and evil Suggestions, but none for God, If it be thus, thy Case is more miserable and thou art deserted: For if God were so present by his Spirit, as he was, *He would be thy Remembrancer, and bring such Things still to thy Mind as before*, John 14. 26. He would be jogging and provoking thee to heavenly Mindfulness.

3. *Consistency*, When our Delights are not with God, as the Remembrance of him is not so pleasing, so not so frequent, and not so consistent, I say, there will not be that Stableness of an heavenly Mind, that hath been. Thoughts now are but passant and fleeting, not fixed nor abiding; yea, tho' Conscience spur the dull Mind to the heavenly Work, yet like an unwilling Servant, it stayeth not at it, but is soon gone.

CHAP. . X.

Great Incredulity in a deserted Soul, with the Causes of it.

THe fourth Evil that befalls the Mind, in Time of Desolation, is, *Incredulity*, when God withdraweth

draws himself, the woful Fruits of Unbelief spring up; Doublings, Disputes, Objections, strange Reasonings about spiritual Truths, insomuch that the Soul is greatly perplexed and snared in the Diversity, Crossness, Subtility, Ambiguity of her own Reasonings; now it questioneth the Authority and Variety of the Scriptures, doubting whether they be the Word of God or no, or whether they be not the Invention of Men; yea, it is full of Suspicions and Doubts of divine Providence, whether all Things be ordered by an Hand of infinite Power and Wisdom, yea the Foundation and first Stone is often shaken in such a Time, the Soul calling this in Question, whether there be a God or no. Who is able to reckon the strange Thoughts and Reasonings of the Soul, when it walks in Darkness? And who can utter the dreadful Effects of such an Evil? What Mazes of Confusion, what Floods of Fears, what Thickets and Labyrinths of fore Perplexities is a Man led into by this Unbelief? Yea, What Deadness and Barrenness break in upon him! How exposed to violent Assaults of Satan, having not the Use of the Shield of Faith! This Unbelief and Atheism is a Rock which the Saints (the most Part of them) do strike upon at one Time or other, but it's a dreadful Evil, like a Torrent, it bears down, in a great Measure, the Props and Pillars of Christian Hope, Joy, Patience, Obedience, yea, it is of that destroying Nature, where it comes with Strength, as it doth in many of the Saints, that it annihilates, in a Manner, all spiritual Things in their Eyes, so that they cannot see God, Christ, Promise, Heaven, or any Thing, or if they see them, it is as with so much Obscurity and Uncertainty, that the Life which these Things were wont to yield, is much impaired. And, as it is pernicious, so it's hard to cure. A Man would never, without the Conduct of a divine Hand, find the Way to get out of these Perplexities. Unbelief hath a great Strength in all, and were it not checked, it would more appear.

Quest. *What is the Cause, that Unbelief doth so quickly and strongly, upon God's withdrawing of himself, put forth itself in the Godly?*

Ans. First, *The Inevidence of the Object of Faith* It is Evidence in any Thing that settles and sways the Judgment, and when Things ly hid in Darkness, and carry no convincing and satisfying Evidence of Reason, the Mind will not receive them with a full Assent, yea, it proportions her Credit which she gives, to the Strength of Reason which she discerns for it, so that in some Things she fully embraceth them, and hath an Acquiescency and Rest in her Assent, being fully answered in Point of Reason, in other Things she goeth not further than to one Opinion, which is an imperfect Assent founded on Arguments only probable, in other Things she goeth not so far, but stands doubting, and in Suspense, being equally charged with Reason both ways, having Arguments why she should believe this or that, and Arguments why she should not, by which Encounter of contrary Reasonings, she is like the River, which, by the Meeting of two contrary Streams, becomes a still Water, or, like the Scales in the Balance, which having equal Weights in them, stand in Equipoise.

This we find in Men, in Matters of Religion and Godliness, that all believe not alike, because there is not the like Evidence of spiritual Truths to all, some believe fully, others believe, but not with a settled Assent, others doubt. The Former are like the Scales, whereby the Weight in one prevailing, there is a Setting. The Second, like the Scales wavering, and turning sometimes this Way, and sometimes that Way. The Third, like the Scales standing. But still it is the Evidence in the Object, which begets Faith, yea, commands it.

Now the *Inevidence of the Object of Faith*, by which Unbelief stands fast, is in Respect of, 1. *The Object itself.* 2. *Subject of Faith.*

3. *The*

1. The Object is, in it self, sometimes *hidden* and strange to Reason, and therefore hard to be believed. Such Things are all those supernatural Truths, as the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. The Resurrection of the Body. The Incarnation of the Son of God. Redemption by the Satisfaction of Christ. Justification by Faith, &c. These Truths, and the like, are above Reason, such, the Mind of it self cannot believe, what though they be revealed, and are made so conspicuous, in a Sort, by the Word, yet (if there be nothing but the Testimony and Authority of the Word) except the Power of the Spirit set in, there will be no Faith.

2. The *Inevidence* is sometimes in Respect of the Subject, and that is, when Things are clearly brought to the Understanding, but through its Weakness it is not able to see the Reason of them, the Object is clear, but the Mind is dark, as though the Sun shine, and make all Things evident in themselves, yet if the Eye be blind, it seeth not, Things are hid, but this Vail is not on the Things, but on the Eye: Or, suppose a Man come with a fair and full Testimonial of his Worth, yet if he to whom it is brought, cannot read it, he will not believe him, or accept him. Now God hath revealed himself by the Creation, *Rom* 1. 19, 20. All the Creatures are as so many Witnesses to Reason it self, that there is a God which made all, but Reason is deaf, and hears not *that Sound that is gone through all the World*, *Psal* 19. or hears it so weakly, that it cannot settle and quiet it self in this Truth, that God is, and that he made the Worlds, so that our Faith even in these Things, is not only from the Light of Nature, but also and especially, from the Light of the Spirit, and according as this Light is afforded more or less, so doth our Faith vary in its Operation, by the Weakness and Blindness that remains upon the Understanding though it be renewed. The Mind is disabled to answer these various and snarling Objections, which are conceived in this fruitful Womb: How many Reasonings

sonings and strange Disputes, doth the carnal Mind when it is left to it self, forge against the Truth, which do so cloud and puzzle the Soul, that it is often strangely foiled. As those *Gentiles* being left of God, became vain in their Imaginations, Rom. 1. 21. So the Saints themselves, when God shutteth in the Light of his Spirit are full of dangerous Reasonings and entangling Thoughts. The Psalmist beholding the Manner of God Dealing with the Wicked, and with the Godly, that they prospered, and these were afflicted, from hence argues so strangely, that he had almost been foiled, but that God did *guide him with his Counsel*, and upheld him by his right Hand, *Psal. 73*.

So *Moses*, though God had told him what he would do for the Provision of his People, consulting with Reason, had this Answer from it, *Can God prepare a Table in the Wilderness?* Num. 11. I need not insist upon Instances of this Nature, the Mind is very active and quick in Working, and is able to lose it self in Doubts and perplexing Reasonings, but it is not so able without divine Assistance to untie her Knots, and to free her self,

2. Cause is *Satan*, whose Work it is to molest the Saints, he is full of all Knowledge, so that he knows how to weave the most subtle Nets to toyl the Soul, and he hath a Way into a Man by the Phantasy, where he is able, both to keep the Thoughts working upon some strong Imagination, and ensnaring Reasoning, and to suggest new. Hence it comes about, That a Man is so mightily and uncessantly pursued with Doubts and strong Workings of Unbelief, That there is scarce an Article of his Faith so rooted in him, but by these blustering and tempestuous Winds, it is at one Time or other much shaken. These then are the Causes of the new and strong Working of Incredulity and Atheism, which, as it seemed by former Force and Power of supernatural Light, to have been buried, doth in a Time of Desertion rise up again, to the great Affrightment and Disturbance of the Heart.

C H A P.

C H A P. XI.

*If the Change and Alteration of Affections in Case of Deser-
tion, where is spoken of Love, Hope, Hatred, &c. with
their sad Abatements.*

THe third Change which a Man deserted may find in himself, in Respect of his Graces, *is in the Affections*. These are the Pulses of the Soul, by which Judgment may be made of the State and Temper of the Soul; the Affections are but several Acts and Motions of the Will, according to the Quality, Distance, and Absence of Objects presented to it. And the Will is the principal Subject of Holiness, herein the Graces are most situated and planted, this is the Throne wherein they reign and rule, so that the Affections do much discover the State of a Man, Grace hath its Birth in the Understanding, but her Seat, in Respect of the greater Part, in the Will, it is feminally in the Mind, actually and formally in the Will especially: Therefore, as I said, the Will is much to be observed in its Tempers, and Inclinations, and Motions, which are the Affections of the Soul, as we call them.

Now these Affections I refer, (That I may instance in Particulars,) to two Heads, according to the principal Objects of them, which are 1. *God, and Things spiritual*, 2. *Sin, and Things carnal*.

As the Heavens are moved upon her two Poles, so the Affections are conversant about these two Objects. First of the *Affections which look upward*, and have God and Christ, and heavenly Things, for their Object: These Affections are all comprized in Love, as among the *Disliking Affections*, Hatred doth virtually contain the Rest, as Grief, Fear, Anger, &c. So in the *Likeing Affections*, Love doth comprehend the Rest of that Kind, as Desire, Delight, Joy, Hope, &c. these being but the *Children of Love*, or several Acts of Love. Now the

Acts

Acts of Love, towards God and Things above, are principally three, 1. *Desire*, 2. *Hope*, 3. *Delight*.

By *Desire* and *Hope*, Love extends it self towards God, as *absent* By *Delight*, she enjoys him, as *present* *Desire* is Love in Motion, *Delight* is Love in Rest, *Hope* is Love having Motion in her Rest, and Rest in her Motion And in Expectation, there is neither perfect Rest, nor perfect Motion.

1. *Desire*. There will be a great Change in this, when God denyeth his wonted Influence, for what is *Desire*, but the Soul's Following of God, and there is a Decay in this, proportionable to the Abatement of God's Drawing. For so far only as God draweth, we follow. *Cant.*

1. 4. *Joh. 6 44.*

The Abatement of *Desires*, will shew it self in two Things :

1. *There will be less Prayer* and Endeavour to enjoy God. Prayer is the presenting of our *Desires* to God, and he that is full of *Desires* is full of *Prayers*. The Soul that longs after God, breathes out many Sighs, and Prayers, and Tears, unto the Throne of Grace, and is ever reaching after him, that it may apprehend him, *Phil.*

3. If God be *present*, it hangs upon him, with humble Entreaties not to depart from him, if *absent*, it flieth after him with mournful Complaints and Cries, that he would return to him, he cannot be answered or quieted, if he find not the Losses and Ruins of his Spirit to be repaired. But where the Heart is still and silent in her Evils, over-run with Darknes, Deadness, Earthliness, and other like doleful Evils, and yet puts not up her *Prayers*, or, if *Prayers*, yet not *Cries*, being either *no Suiter*, or at least *no Beggar*, but quietly contents her self in her Way. Her *Desires* after God are then very low.

The Like may be said of all Endeavours *Desires* are active. If you are become more slack and slight in the Use of Ordinances, in which you were wont to find the Lord, doubtless you have fallen from your first Love, with that backsliding *Ephesus*, *Apoc. 2. 4.* And it is Time

Time to consider *whence you are fallen, and to repent,* lest God come against you with Terrors to awake you.

2. *God less intended* in all Endeavours. When God is the *End* of a Man in Hearing, Praying, &c. it is a Sign that he desires him in Truth, and the more he is *intended*, the more he is *desired*: God may be the *Object* of his Action that loves him not, but he is the *End* only of such as love him. Observe this, A Man may do as much as he hath done, yet there may be a Decay of his Desire, appearing in this, that God is not his *End*.

Quest *How may I know when God is my End?*

Ans. The *End* may be considered, in Respect of its Place, Power.

The *Place* of the *End* is in the *Intention and Affection*, here it sits as in her Throne, and useth her Authority and Power; the Soul intends and minds that which is her *End*, as the Archer hath his Mark in Eye to which he shooteth. Judge then your selves what you intend? Is God in your Eye? So far as you *intend* him, you *desire* him, and no more.

In the next Place consider the *End* in her Power, the *ultimate* *End* hath the *greatest* Power in a Man of all Things, this Power is four-fold, to draw, rule, hold, quiet.

1 *It draweth to it*, having, as it were, a *magnetical* *Virtue* to attract: When it gets into the Understanding, it sets the Will and Affections, and all the Powers of Men on Action: So they that make Riches their *End*, are strongly enclined & mov'd to them, willingly & diligently labouring, patiently enduring, & constantly endeavouring to attain them, and where Riches are the *Term* to which the Heart tends, it is the Principle of Motion, and the Reason of all Endeavour, so that if it be asked, What a covetous Man seeks, and for what he studies, plots, sweats, toils, moys? The Answer in all is, Riches. Do you find God thus drawing? When you pray, receive, hear, consider what moves you, what sets you on Work; for, not the *Motion*, but the *Mover*, not the *Endeavour*, but the *Ground* of it discovers the *End*, two Men may walk
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in one Way, yet their End may be different, one may walk for his Health, the other for his Profit So in the same Duties of Godliness, the End of one may be *Pride*, of another *Peace of Conscience* only; but the best End is God. Note this, That there is a three-fold *Discharge of Duty*, *hypocritical*, when a Man intends not what he doth, but something else, some worldly Advantage, *conscientious*, when Good is done as a Duty and Task, *spiritual*, when Good is done for this End, that we may please and enjoy God.

2. The *End* rules As it is the Ground, so also it is the Rule of Action, as it draws to it with Power, so with Order, it draweth to it, in the due and direct Way, That is, It puts upon 1. *Inquisition of fit Means*, 2. *Due Use of them*

First, It puts the Mind upon a studious Deliberation and *Inquisition about the fittest Means*. Hence come those many Prayers to God, which David put up to be directed, led, instructed, taught in the Way that he should go, *Psal. 119* Hence came his Study in pondering on the Law the *Light of his Feet*, and *Lantern of his Paths*, hence the People being stirred by John's Ministry, to seek Eternal Life, and to enquire after God, came to him and consulted with him, *What shall we do?* So did the Publicans and Souldiers, *Luke. 3. 10, 15.* Hence also came that Cry of the Jews and the Jaylor newly awakened from their Sleep of Death, *Men and Brethren what shall we do?* *Acts 2. 37. Chapter 16. 30.*

Secondly, It puts on the *due Use of Means*, when they are found out, and this is necessary for as a Man may come short of his End, by *wrong Means*, so also by *not using or misusing of right Means*. Note here therefore two *Operations of the End* about the Means, 1. It puts upon the *Use of them*, so that if God be a Man's End, the minding and affecting this, will urge and press to the Use of such *Means* as God hath appointed and discovered, yea of one as well as another, he that either useth none, or not all, intends not God as he ought. Where

Where a Man desires God, and makes him his End, he finds, in himself, a Disposition to the use of all Means proportionable to the Desire of his End, which he fully seeks. 2 It puts upon the due Use of them, that is, so to use all the Ordinances, as that in them he may come to God, the Promise of God's Approach to Man in Grace and Mercy, is not made simply to the Actions of Godliness, but to the right Performance of them, as, not he that prayeth, but he that prayeth with Fervency, Faith, Sincerity, shall obtain Not the Hearer, but the wise, hungry, humble, obedient Hearer shall find the Word effectual. Therefore that Spirit that directs the Heart to pitch on, and pursue after the right End, doth also lead the Heart in the Way to it, working such Dispositions as may fit it to a wise and effectual Use of all Means. He therefore that loseth in the Means, loseth in the End, for, *the End is in the Means.*

3 *The End holds the Heart with it* As it hath an attractive Power, so it hath a retentive Power, and its Bonds are so strong, that nothing can dissolve them, and draw away the Heart. The last End is a Man's chief Good: And therefore, where it is so apprehended and minded, nothing can divide betwixt it and the Soul, for if any Thing should, it must be either Good or Evil; Good cannot, for the Soul will not leave a greater Good, for a Less, and there is no Evil so great, as the Loss of the chief Good. Therefore, if you be gone from God, it is a Sign you make not God your End, as you have done.

4 *It quiets the Heart so far as it is attained.* Every Thing rests in its proper Place, its Appetite is satiated in its End, and a Man that makes God his End, cannot be quiet in his Absence, but is ever restless in his Motion and labour after him, till he find him, yea, nothing can content him, till he finds such a Presence as he needs. Though God give Riches, and Health, and Friends, and all the sweet Accomodations of this Life. Yet, as the Child that wants the Nurse's Breast,

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is not quieted with Baubles, no not Bracelets of Pearls, or Chains of Gold, but it must have the Breast, so he still pursues God, and is not satisfied, till he get his hard Heart softned, his dull Heart quickned, his Darkeness enlightned, and God returning again into the Tabernacle of his Soul, to fill it with the Glory and Power of his Presence. And so far as he gains in this, he is at Peace: If God open the Well of Life, and cause the Streams thereof to flow in upon him, if he come in with Power to destroy his Lusts, to quicken, awaken, and establish the Soul, he counts it a greater Happiness than to possess a Crown, or Heap of Pearls, or Mines of Gold.

The second Act of Love is *Hope*: This is an Act of the Will, extending it self towards that which it loves, as *future*, it is of great Use to a Christian, it is an Anchor to uphold in Troubles, and a Goad to excite to endeavour: Yet, such is our Folly, that though all Christians have a *saving Hope*, yet few have a *living Hope*, that is to say, such a Hope as lives in them, and gives Life unto them; but must rest in a poor, faint, feeble Hope, seldom improving this Grace, except in the Day of Fears, Sorrows, Troubles, and of Death.

But surely if Hope be abated, a Man is abated in his Communion with the God of Hope. And the Decays of Hope are in some of these three Things, or in all: In the *Certainty*, *Acts*, *Efficacy* of Hope.

1. For the *Certainty*. Certain Hopes are not only Man's Portion, though there be a *Certainty* in the Object, yet not always in the *Subject*. Hope in the Saints respects the Good hoped for, in a *threefold Degree of Certainty*. Some hope for Heaven, as *possible* only. This is the lowest Pitch of Hope. Some Hope for Heaven as *probable*. Though they have Hope of attaining, yet not without Fear of missing. Some hope for Heaven as *certain and infallible*.

The Hope of Possibility is a *weak Hope*: The Hope of Probability is a *fluctuating Hope*. The Hope of Certainty is a *settled Hope*: It is that which the Apostle calls *the Plerophory, or full Assurance of Hope*, Heb. 6. 11. Now, as in other Parts, so in this, the Saints are subject to Declension; but where it so fareth, That a Man's Hope is clouded and enfeebled, so that from a *triumphant and joyful Expectation*, and waiting for of heavenly Glory, he is fallen into an habitual *Anxiety and Dubiousness of Mind*, it argueth, that he enjoyeth not God as he hath done.

2. For the Acts of Hope.

Note, Hope hath two Acts, 1. *Desire*. 2. *Expectation*.

The one is the *reaching forth of the Will*, to the Thing promised, the other hath two Things which constitute it.

1. *The fixing of the Soul upon the Thing desired*.

2. *The resting of the Soul in the Futurity of it*.

Concerning these, I will propound three Things for your Tryal.

1. The Acts of Hope are decayed, where there is not that *Compleatness* in them that hath been, as *Desire of Heaven*, without minding it, or some *slight Desire* and scattering Thoughts of it, without a *patient and joyful Waiting* for it.

2. Where there is not that *Frequency* of these Acts that hath been, as, when you do not so often long and look for Heaven, not so often mind it, and feed your Hearts in the *Expectation* of it.

3. Where there is not that *Fulness* in these Acts, which hath been, as, when your Heart doth not so eagerly desire it, but hath lost her former *Breathings* and *Pantings* after it, not so *looking for, and hasting to it*: 2 Pet. 3. 12.

And when it doth not dwell above, but hath lost her *Habitation* which she had in *Heaven*, and hath pitched up *Tents* unto her self in the *World*, and when it doth not comfort it self in the *Remembrance* of the *Promise*, and solace it self in the *Thoughts* of its fu-

ture Blessedness, it is certain here is a Decay in the Acts of Hope.

3. For the *Efficacy of Hope*. Note, That a lively Hope is an *efficacious* Hope, and as there are many precious Effects of it, so I will instance in Four

1. *Prizing of the Promise*: Faith commends the Promise unto Hope, it reveals the Worth and Truth of it, and then Hope takes it and hugs it, so that it reckons it as its Treasure, and feeds upon it as its Manna, which God hath given to refresh the Soul in this Desert. When you forget your Consolation, and let the Promises ly as a Thing of no Account, when you afford them no Room, yea, the highest Room in your Hearts, when you build not your Peace on this Pillar, and suck not your Joys from these Breasts, surely all is not well, your Hopes are diminished.

2. *Moderation of the Affection to the World*: Hope doth elevate the Heart, *Where a Man's Treasure is, there will his Heart be also*, Matth. 6. 21. If you be grown more proud in Abundance, more covetous after what you have not, more discontented with what you have, your Hearts are again entangled in the Love of the World, and fallen from the Heights of heavenly Hope.

3. *Qui knung Endeavour* Hope makes a Man willing, constant, chearful, diligent, abundant in Endeavours. Therefore if you strive less, you hope less.

4. *Making able to suffer* This steeled the Saints with Courage and Patience in Persecution, yea, this made them to *rejoyce*, yea, *glory in Tribulation for Chr st*, Rom.

5. 3. Encrease of Fears of the Cross, and of Impatience in Suffering, argueth a Decrease of the Efficacy and Vigour of Hope.

3. The third Act of Love, is *Delight*. This is a sweet Contentment of Heart in God, and in the Things of God, a Complacency, or taking Pleasure in God, and according to the Degree of Love, is our Delight in God. The same Love that quickens Desire, and Hope after God, as absent, sheweth it self in delighting in him, as present

ent. It is true, God is in a Sense absent from us while we are in the World, 2 Cor. 5. 6. That is, we *have not fully attained*, Phil 3. 12. but yet he is also present. He is present 1. to Faith, for Faith hath a *propheticall Eye*, to see that as present which is absent, and a *magnetical Hand* to draw unto it self that which is far off. And he is 2. present to Sense, for we taste and feel his Power and Goodness, and so far as the soul that loves him, enjoyeth him, it joyeth in him; Therefore if your Delight be less, your Love is less.

Quest *How may I know that my Delight in God is less?*

Ans 1. If you be more forgetful of God: For that which we esteem we mind.

2. If you *delight more in the World's Vanities* Heavenly Delights, and sensual Pleasures, are contrary each to other. There is a lawful Delight in the World, consistent with Delight in God, yea, for whom is Delight in the World, but for the Heirs of Heaven? He that is in his Sins stung with the Venom of his Guilt, and racked with the Fears, and Clamours, and Terrors of an unquiet Conscience, can have no true Delight in the World; what Sweetness is a Man's Dainties to him, that fears he hath no Portion in the Bread of Life? What Comfort in his great Riches, that looks to have Heaps of eternal Woes? What Peace in his fair Dwelling, who expects hereafter to live in the lowest Hell? What Good do those Pleasures which are sowed with hellish Horrors, and dreadful Expectations of insufferable Pains for ever? No, no, he only hath true Pleasure, who hath God for his God. Yet even they are subject to a carnal Use of lawful Comforts, which is, when our Delights are immoderate, not used in that Way, and to that End, that we may be more fitted to walk with God, &c. And when our Delights are such, the more they are, the less is our Delight in God, a full Delight in God deads the Heart to earthly & carnal Delights: As in the Pipes of Water, when the Water hath broke a Vent to it self upward, it ceaseth to run forward.

3. *Unwillingness to walk with God*: Which lyeth in five Things.

1. *Hardly drawn to God*: A Stone need not to be driven downward, because that Motion is suitable to it, and it affects the Centre. The Eagles flie willingly to their Prey: An hungry Man need not either Perswasion or Compulsion to take his Meat. If you did delight in God as before, what means your hanging back from him? And how is it that the Counsels and Thoughts of your Hearts, the pressing Perswasions of the Word, the strong Motions of the Spirit, the shining Examples of the Godly, the wise Advice of faithful Friends, the sweet Inducements of precious Promises, the sad Menaces of fearful Evils, yea, the heavy Strokes of an angry God; yea, the melting Mercies of a tender Father, yea, the bleeding Wounds of a crucified Redeemer, I say, how is it that none of these do more prevail with thee to a more ready Walking with thy God? This Backwardness is hateful.

2. *Uncheerfulness in his Presence, People and Service*: A Man may soon see when a Servant works willingly in his Master's Service, David, when he had his Delight in God, *delighted in all the Ways of God*, Psal. 119. 16 24 35 47 70 77 174. It may be, to be with God hath in Times past been to thee better than thine appointed Food, but now thou comest to Duties, as to Meale when thou hast no Stomach. What then more clear than this, that thy Delight is less in God.

3. *Unevenness and Inconstancy in the Way of God*: When a Man is in and out, and constant in Nothing but Inconstancy, it is a Sign he is not well-pleased with his Way; the Soul rests in that which she fully likes, all Changes are from dislike, for if a Man had what he would have in any Thing, he would not desire to leave it. All Unevenness in our walking with God, argueth a Distaste of the Ways of God, and of God himself, and it is great Weakness to be drawn so from our selves, and to be so tottering.

4. *Easiness to be drawn from God*: When a Man is well pleased in his House, or Horse, or any Thing, a small Price will not buy it out of his Hands. Therefore judge your selves. When Satan comes and bids you such a Price, offers such a Pleasure, or such an Advantage, to draw you from that which happily heretofore the whole World could not have won you from, and you easily and ordinarily are by this taken off from your holy Course, it is a Sign your Hearts are not so delighted in God as they were.

5. *Loathness to rise to the highest Pitch of an holy Conversation*: You have some Hopes still, but you can rest with the sad Admixtures of Fears, some mortifying Grace, but you seek not for the Fulness of it; some quickning Grace, but you strive not for the Abundance of it, you have some Communion with God, but you strive not to be much in it: A Man hath never enough of that, which delighteth him much.

Now briefly of the other main Object, about which our Affections are conversant while we carry this Flesh, is Sin and carnal Things. There will be a Change in these in the Time of Desertion. In a Word, That I may dispatch, this I will instance in two Affections. 1. *Hatred*, 2. *Grief*.

These two go together, and they are ever of an equal Height, Hatred respects the Nature of Sin, Grief the Proximity of it, though we had no Sin, we should have Hatred of it, but if it were not near us, or in us, we could not have Grief for it.

To begin with Hatred, which is a Displeacency against Sin, in the Nature of it, this Hatred is founded in Love, and as Love is either terminated on a Man's self, or on God, such is the Hatred of Sin: A Man may have the Former, and yet be without God, that is, he may hate Sin as repugnant either to his Nature, so meek Men hate Contention, or to his Peace, so Men enlightned hate it for the Evil that it brings, as Shame, Sorrow, Fears, Pains, Death, Hell: But they that thus

thus hate it, love it, their Hatred is but respective, but their Love direct and real, though they hate the Fruit, they love the Tree, though they dislike the Effect of Sin, yet they like the Sin it self.

But true Hatred is a Displacency against Sin it self And since this is of God, the more we have of it, the more we have of God. Consider then if there be not an Abating of this. Is not thy Heart entred into a Kind of League and Amity, with thy former Lusts?

Quest. How shall I know this?

Ans. The Occasions of Sin will be less feared and distasteful: The Occasions of Sin are Harbingers and Spokesmen of Sin, and where these find better Entertainment, there Sin is not so much disaffected. Princes do show their loving Respects to each other by kind Entreating of their Ambassadors. Judge thy self if thou hast been formerly fearful, jealous, watchful, but now art grown heedless, bold, venturous, yea, not only less fearing Occasions of Sin, but also more delighting in them, it is a sure Sign that the Temper of thy Spirit is corrupted, thou art grown worse.

2. The Law of God is less loved. There are two Branches of the Law, Precepts and Prohibitions, and our Natures will more easily embrace the one than the other. We many Times are content to do much, if the Law require this, or that, we yield and consent to it, but to be limited and barred is most distasteful, when Men love their Sins, though they like not the Law prohibiting those Sins. And look into your selves, for so strangely do the Regenerate sometimes degenerate, that sometimes it is a displeasing Thing that there should be any Law to cross and thwart their Desires and Lusts, yea, to be angry with them that hold this Law unto them: So good *Asha* was overtaken, 2 *Chron.* 16. The Seer struck at his Sin with this Sword of the Spirit, and *Asha* stands up in Defence of his Sin, and smites the Seer. Oh! How far may the Heart go out from God? What a Thing is this, that a renewed Man should

should so far decline, as to love that which God hates, and so to love it as to reject God, to harbour it, and so say in his Heart, Oh! That there were no Bonds, that I might be free, Oh! That I had my Will, then would I repeal that Law, and return to Sin. Yet this is sometimes found, but it is a Sign of a Man much estranged from the Life of God.

3 His Prayer will be less against his Sin. That which we hate is our Burthen, and so far as the Soul hates it, it desires to be freed from it. See how the Apostle cryeth out as a Man tired with the Chains of a grievous Bondage, *Oh! Wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* Rom. 7. 24. Yea, and when he felt his Sin stirring, he prays, and prays, and prays again to Heaven for Help, 2 Cor. 12. There is a Praying against Sin, while yet the Heart is towards it, but it is fearful Mockery of that Majesty to whom we pray. It may be a Man's Case, that the Power of Conscience may enforce and extort Prayer for subduing of Sin, and yet the Power of Sin may be such, that it may hold the Heart in the Love of it: But if you lack in the Sincerity and Fervency of your Prayers for mortifying Grace, you have abated in Hatred of Sin.

In the next Place comes Grief for Sin: A Grief rising and springing from the Bowels of Love to God; this is a special Grace, which as it is from God, so it is honoured with the Promise of God's Presence. *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy Place with him also that is of a contrite, and an humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite Ones* Isa 57. 15. As when the Streams are shallower, it hath less of the Fountain, so the less godly Sorrow, the less of God. When a Man is not so frequent in humbling his Soul, nor so full of Grief, then Sin's Wounds are not so grievous as they have been, he hath now Cause to sit down and lament his Case, for God is departed in a great Measure from him.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

The second Rule to judge of Desertion is taken from the Increase of Sin, where, how the Increase of Sin may be known

THE second Rule to guide the Judgment in this Matter, whether a Man be deserted or not, is the Consideration of his Sins. Where Sin is increased there is less of God; Sin is contrary to Godliness, and the Nature of all Contraries, is, That the Intention and Increase of the one, is the Remission and Decrease of the other. As in the Air, when there is most Darkness, then there is least Light. When the Spirit of Holiness is present in his powerful Working, then the Power of Sin is weakned; but when he withdraws his Influence, then Sin breaks out: As when the Sun sets, then the Beasts, that lay before lurking in their Dens, come forth with Roarings and Howlings for their Prey: And as when the King is gone out of his Kingdom, then the traitorous Rebels, who before concealed themselves, rise up in Arms to work their Will. And it must needs be that upon God's Departure and his ceasing the Acts and Operations of his Power in the Soul, that Sin must revive, and return upon a Man with a renewed Strength, and prevail much. For,

1. First, Satan is vigilant, and takes his Time to do all the Mischief that he can, when God leaves a Man, he seeks to make a Re-entry, as Thieves break open Houses, and pill and spoil in the Absence of the Master. And indeed, when God thus leaves the Soul, there is not a meer Desertion only, but a Tradition of a Man into the Hands of Satan, God permitting him to deal with the Soul in a Sort, as with *Job's* Body, to lay his Hand on them, to spoil them, to smite them with many Sores, and though he cannot slay them, yet he may much hurt them, so that they come out of his Hands as the Man in the Gospel that fell among Thieves, and was robbed, and wounded, and left half dead.

Luke 10. 30.

2. Si

2. Sin is a potent Thing, it hath indeed many Things gainst it, but more for it, and only God above it; that if God cease to watch, and keep the Heart in his Way, and to keep down this Monster, it will be stirring.

Take a short View of the Power of Sin. It is compared to an Husband which overcomes by Kindness, to a Lord which prevails by Power, yea, it is compared to the Things of the greatest Power, it is called a Conquerour, leading all into Captivity, a Tyrant holding all in Bondage, a King holding all in Subjection: And draw near and see the Strength of it. Consider the City that she is mured in, it is Man, an active Creature. And as Fire is more fierce in Gun-Powder, than in Wood, and Rebellion stronger in a General, than in a Peasant, so Sin is stronger for the Subject of it: Hence it comes that the Devils exceed Men in Wickedness, because their Natures are more active, and more potent. Sin also is in the whole Man. Therefore as Fire that hath Hold in every Part of an House, burns exceeding fiercely, if Men cease to quench it, so Sin rageth much when God ceaseth to slack it, by pouring in his Spirit, which is compared to Water, *Joh. 3. 5. Ezck. 36. 25.* as Sin is compared to Fire. *Jam. 3. 5, 6.* Again, Behold the Forts of Sin, which are carnal Thoughts and Reasonings, which are called strong Holds, *2 Cor. 10. 4.* in which it both strengthens its own Power, and defends it self against all adverse Power.

Then behold her Weapons. Every Faculty, Ability, Endowment, Riches, Wisdom, Strength, Honour, Friends, and the Members of the Body, which are *Weapons of Unrighteousness*, *Rom. 6. 13.*

Then behold her Allies and Aids. Many Things come in to contribute Strength, I say, many Things without a Man, as Satan by Counsel, Suggestions, Perswasions, Diversions, Discouragements, and strong Operations, and all the Objects of Sin, yea, every Creature, and the Examples and Counsels of Men, yea, and

and the Acts of Sin it self, all these make the Power of Sin greater. Therefore considering these Things, who can wonder that there should be a renewing of the Power and Working of Sin, when God denyeth his gracious-Presence in the Soul? But concerning this renewed Power of Sin, take these Considerations:

1. We must distinguish of Sins: Every Sin is contrary to all Holiness, and to the whole Law in a Sense, because Holiness, in the Nature of it, is contrary to Sin, and the Law condemns all Sin as a Transgression against it; but some Sins are more directly contrary to all Holiness, as total Apostasy, positive Hatred of God, &c. These, such as abide in Christ are kept from, but other Sins which are particular Defects, though in their Kind grievous, they may possibly fall into, &c. But let me add this Caution, 1. That they are seldom found in such, if hainous Evils. 2. That it concerns Men to watch, because such Ways are Ways of Death, and the proper Effect of great Sins is wasting of the Conscience, and incensing of much Wrath.

2. The Power which Sin gains is but a limited not an absolute Power. Christ is not willing to lose his Subjects, though he may suffer them to be vexed, yet not conquered; Sin may rage, but not rule, or, as I said, its Power is limited.

1. It is not full. Sin may have much Power, but Christ still keeps the Throne, though he permit it to do much, yet he keeps the Scepter in his Hand, yea, though he let Sin loose in a Degree, yet he holds the Reins in his Hand to curb it at his Pleasure, and tho it find a Part yielding in a Man, yet it ever finds a Part resisting, *Gal 5 17*. He that hath fully and resolutely given up himself to Christ, as a King, can never admit of another Sovereign, it is not only contrary to his Duty, but to his Nature, and that anointing, by which he is set above the World, and above Satan, and above himself, and under none but Christ. This Anointing is the Spirit of Christ, which is a Roy-
al

al Spirit, and makes us Kings like himself, both in Nobleness of Spirit, which abhors Bondage to base Lusts, and in victorious Power by which he overcomes all; yea, our Strength is the Blood, Mercy, Power, and Truth of Christ, who hath undertaken to rule his People *with the Rod of his Strength*, Psal. 110. And to beat down their Enemies *with his Iron Rod*, Psal. 2. And he hath said, *Sin shall not have Dominion over you, for you are not under the Law but under Grace*, Rom. 6. 14. God will throw out Sin, by pouring out upon His Servants a Spirit of Repentance, of Faith, of Prayer, and Power, yea, and Lust by winning loseth, and her present renewed Strength proves the Occasion of her future and greater Weakness. For when the Heart is awakened, and seeth the Ruins which Lust have made, now it stirs up it self, and girds its Sword, and buckles its Armour about it, and the Spirit of the Lord comes upon it, that it subdues her Enemies, and drives out those Pests from her Territories, and takes up a Resolution of perpetual Enmity, and War against them, never to admit Leagues, or to shew Favour, but to be avenged on them, not one shall escape: Thus, as the Sun sets in a Cloud, and seems buried in Darkness, but riseth again in Glory, and as the Earth seems vanquished, and to lose her Crown and Life by the fierce Invasion of the cold Armies of Winter, yet at last regains her Strength, when the Sun breaks forth, and unties her Bonds, that her imprisoned Power and Life may come forth again, and now, where are those blustering Storms, those battering Hails, those Heaps of Snow, those nipping Winds? So, the Soul renewed, though it may be far gone, yet shall revive again, and Sins greater rise, shall prove her greater Fall, and at last shall perfectly be destroyed.

These being premised, I say, that the Encrease of Corruption is a Sign of Desertion: But yet with Caution.

1. *Caution*, Take not all renewed Motions and Stirrings of Lust, for the renewed Power of it, for Sin may stir much, where it is much weakned, Tentations may be stronger, and so that Grace which we have received may be less able to prevent all Risings, and Workings of inherent Lusts: God may seem to leave us, when he doth but try and exercise us, by suffering IncurSIONS of Sin, and by permitting us to be assaulted with Satan's Depths, and Stratagems, and Power, as hereafter I shall declare.

2. Where Repentance, and Prayers, and Resolutions are multiplied, according as the Tentations, Motions, Suggestions, and Solicitations of Sin are encreased, where Sin, though it seem to grow, doth not, and he that argueth that God is absent, because of his Lusts so working, should consider that those Lusts do not argue God's Absence, but these Graces stirring and working argue his Presence.

Indeed where Sin and Lust is grown stronger, there a Man hath Cause to conclude against himself, that so far as his Sins have gained in him, he hath lost of God.

Quest. How may it be known when Sin hath thus revived, and is become stronger?

Ans. It will be necessary to consider four Things The Root, Branches, Soil, Fruit.

1. The Root of Sin: The Life of the Plant is in the Root, and there is something, which hath the Resemblance of a Root to Sin, in the Soul, by the Means whereof Sin lives: 1. *Affection*, 2. *Understanding*.

The Affection and Love of Sin is the Life of it: Then Sin dyeth, when we hate it, then it lives, when we love it. Hence flow all Resolutions to Sin, and all voluntary Acts of Sin, and all Yielding to Temptations and Occasion of Sin. Love is an Affection, begetting Union and Action, a Man is desirous to be, and do that which he loves, judge then the Increase of the Power of Sin, by the Increase of Love to Sin. There

There are four Degrees of Love to Sin.

1 Degree is Non-resolution against it, which is, when though a Man be not come to a Resolution to fulfil his Lust, yet he is not at all, or but slightly resolved against it, his Hatred against it is not so great as hath been. Therefore his Watch is neglected, his Sin connived at, the Course of Mortification slackened, though he open not the Door to entertain Sin, yet he leaves it unlocked and unbarred, that if Occasion present it self, Sin may not be excluded.

2 An allowed Desire of Sin. Desire is Love, or an Act of Love tending to that which pleaseth and suiteth with the Heart. And as Hatred begetteth an Aversion, so Love begets Desire. When you find a Leaning, and Hankering, and Lusting unto Sin, with Allowance, it is a Sign of Love, and this is a woful Temper of Spirit.

3. A Resolution to run to Sin, when the Heart hath decreed with it self, that it will do Evil; It is a Sign of a great Strength of Sin, when a Man retains a Purpose of Sinning, and, for the most Part, is a Token of a rotten Heart. What greater Strength of Sin can there be imagined, than against Reason, Religion, Vows, Threats, Promises, Heaven, Hell, to maintain a Resolution of Evil in the Heart? This begets a desperate Prosecution of Sin, and argueth a great Measure of Atheism, and Contempt of God, and is ever joyned, in Persons enlightned, with a Resisting of the Holy Ghost, in the Counsels of his Word, and the Checks and Dictates of Conscience.

4. A delightful Acting of Sin, and taking Pleasure in Unrighteousness. As here the Acts of Sin are very sinful, because the more an evil Act is wilful, the more it is sinful, so the Power of Sin is very great; because, the more it is in Delight, the more in the Will; and the more it hath of the Will, the stronger it is.

The second Thing which is a Part of the Root, and the main Part, is the Understanding: As it is in the

Root of the Tree, one Part conveys Sap to another, and then that conveyeth Sap into the Tree, so here Affection feeds Action, and the Mind feeds Affection, the Mind gives Strength to Sin.

1. By good Opinion of it. That fleshly Wisdom that is in us, that carnal Mind is wholly for the strengthening of Sin, and the more this ministers that which gives Life to Sin, the stronger it is: As in the Church, so in every particular Man there is a false Prophet, and a Beast, the Beast of Sensuality and brutish Lusts, and the false Prophet of carnal Wisdom working Miracles before the Beast, raising up many Representations of a bewitching Nature, by which Lust is quickned and strengthened. Now while Christ rules with Power in the Soul, the Beast is bound, and the false Prophet is silenced; but when he departs, then they are loosed, and walk up and down, with Power and Deceit, working in the Heart.

2. In a Word, when the corrupt Mind works unto Sin, Sin is grown.

Quest. How doth it work unto Sin?

Ans. 1. By diverting it self from the Thoughts that might detain the Heart from Sin, being voluntarily inconsiderate.

2. By studying to defend it. Either making it no Sin, or small Sin, being willingly careless to search and enquire into the utter Sinfulness, and exceeding danger of Sin.

3. Drawing the Heart to Sin By Speculation, presenting Sin to the Heart, as Fire to Powder, By Persuasion, suggesting the Sweetness, Advantage, Necessity, Smallness, Secrecy, and Singularity of the Sin, or the Possibility, Facility, and Efficacy of Repentance, to remove the Guilt of it, or such like Shifts or Stratagems, doth the corrupt Mind use by these Persuasions and Suggestions, as by Cords drawing, and by Cords entrapping the Heart in Sin. Now when the O

perations

perations and Efficacy of the Mind in this Kind are encreased, then Sin is strengthened in the Root.

2. Consider the Branches of your Sin. As it is a Sign the Tree groweth when it spreads, so in this Spreading of Sin observe:

1. When thy Sinfulness spreads into gross Sins, such as the Apostle calls the *manifest Fruits of the Flesh*, Gal. 5. 19 And the Defilements of the World, 2 Pet. 2. 20 Thou hast Cause to reckon, that thy Sin hath regained much Strength.

2. When it spreads into many Sins, and various Lusts. When Swarms of Evils, and many sinful Distempers are put forth, as Pride, and Envy, and Passion and Earthliness, and Unbelief and Impatience, and the like. It is a Sign a Disease hath much prevailed in the Body, when it hath brought it into a general Weakness, so when Distemper and Sickness hath overspread the Soul, so that it is every Way disabled to an holy Walking, and over-run with various and manifold Corruptions, it is evident that Sin hath gained.

3. When those Sins sprout up with liking, which you have confessed and bewailed. If there were not a strong Stream of Sinfulness in your Soul, such a Dam of Resolutions and Vows, as is made with Tears and Heaviness in Repentance could not be so born down.

3. Consider the Fruits of Sin, which are 1. *Inclination*, 2. *Action*.

First, Inclination, and Propenseness to Sin, is the Fruit of Sin, Disposition begets Action, and Action corroborates the Disposition, Sin fostered and favoured, and acted, groweth stronger in the Habit, and still doth more dispose the Heart to it. As a Stick that hath been in the Fire, is more apt to take Fire again, so if thy Heart be more bent and engaged to Sin, if more easily drawn and overcome to Sin, Sin is grown in thee.

2. *Action*, The more Sins blossom in the Disposition to it, and bear in the Execution of it, the stronger

er they are : Spiritual Weakness and Declension appears more by the Acts of Sin, than the Inclination to it ; for many have Ability to withstand the external Act of some Sins, the Lustings whereto they cannot withstand . Inward Lustings, whether they proceed from Grace or Sin, are both in the Regenerate, and these Lusts are as the Commands of a Master . Now as two Men, whereof one hath been, the other is his Master, may command a Servant contrary Things, but he obeyeth his Command to whom he is most subject ; so when the Flesh and the Spirit lust one against the other, it is the doing of the Will of the Flesh that sheweth the Power of Sin . When a Man is led and walks in the Power of the Spirit, though he cannot but lust, yet he cannot so well fulfil the Lusts of the Flesh . The Victory of Sin lyeth not so much in the rising Lusting of the Heart, as in the *Fulfilling of it*, Rom. 6. 16. A Tree when it is cut down, will sometimes sprout, but it bears no Fruit, there is no Strength to bring the Bud to Maturity . Therefore, if you be overcome to commit Sin, it is a Sign that the renewed Part is on the Foot-stool, and Lust on the Throne ; That is weakned, and this strengthened . For as in Wrestlers, both strive, yet the Victory is not in the Tugging and Contending on either Part, but in the Casting, he that gets the Fall proves the Weakest . And in the Acting of Sin, the Power of Sin appears .

1. When a Man is brought under by a small Temptation : A small Thread will pull a Child down, which will not stir a Man, because the Child is weak, and a Master that hath his Servant in much Subjection, will do more with a Word, or a Beck, than another with much Compulsion . It was the Centurion's Power that caused his Servants to be easily commanded, *I say unto one, Come, and he cometh, and to another, Go, and he goeth ; and to my Servant, Do this, and he doth it*, Matth. 8. 9. And he believed that herein was the
Greatness

Greatness of Christ's Power, *That if he would but speak the Word only, his Servant would be healed,* vers. 8. so when small Occasions of Sin, and small Advantages, and weak Provocations can prevail, it is a Sign of the Power of Sin.

2. When the Acts are frequent Ordinarily there are not many Sparks without much Fire, and it is a Sign the Tree is very vigorous and full of Life, that is full of Fruit, when you are often overtaken, and frequently foiled, it is a Sign you are much under the Power of Sin, for all Things as they are in Operation, so they are in Being, a full Stream argueth an abundant Fountain, and many Children a fruitful Womb.

3 When the Sins are such as have been of old subdued, and long vanquished, for if they had had that Strength in thee formerly, why did they not work and prevail as now? It is evident that here is an Awakening and Reviving of Lust, where that from which thou wert delivered, doth now again bring thee into such Bondage.

4. When the Acts of Sin are with less Reluctance, and more Delight, now Sin's Power is enlarged, for what greater Power can be in any Sovereign, than to have his Subjects yielding Obedience willingly, and without Reluctance? It may be the Time hath been, when the Motions of Sin hath been grievous, and thou hast fought manfully by Prayers, Vows, Meditations, Watchfulness, &c. And if thou hast fallen, thou hast fallen fighting, with thy Weapon in thy Hand, yea, when thy Sin hath had the upper Hand, yet thou hast fought, being foiled; and though overborn, yet wouldst thou not yield. But now thy Sin comes upon thee as a Conquerour into a vanquished City, where the Gate is opened for him, and no Man holds up a Sword against him: If it be so with thee, thy Sin hath grown upon thee.

4. Consider the Soil that feeds thy Sin, and that is the Objects of Sin, which are as the Earth to the Tree, as the Fuel to the Fire, or as the Oyl to the Lamp. If there were no Riches in the World, there would be less Covetousness; if no Honour, less Ambition, &c. When the Objects of Sin do more prevail, Sin hath the greater Strength. The Offer of the whole World, by the God of this World, was unto Christ but as Musick in a dead Man's Ear, it was but weak, because in him *was nothing found*, Joh. 14. 30. And all earthly Hopes and Advantages prevailed not with the Martyrs, because they were *crucified unto the World, and the World unto them*. If you offer to a Dog Grass, or to a Sheep Flesh, you avail not, because there is not a Principle in them, not an Appetite carried to such Things, Sin may lie asleep till he come to Occasions of Sin, as a Swine may keep clean, if she keep in the fair Meadow, and come not to the foul Lares. Lure when it meets with Water, sheweth its latent Heat. It was the Sight of the *Golden Wedge, and the Babylonish Garment*, that quickned *Achan's* Covetousness. Look to your selves, for sinful Objects could not work upon you, if you your selves had not corrupt Affections and Lusts to be wrought upon. If you pile never so much Wood in a Chimney, there will be no Burning, except there be Fire, it was the Strength of *David's* Warriouess, that he was so ensnared with the Sight of *Bathsheba*, and the Strength of thy Sin will appear by the Operations of it, upon the Presence of suitable Objects.

CHAP. XIII.

The third Rule to judge in this Case, is from the Consideration of the Means of Grace.

THe third Rule is the Consideration of the Means of Grace. In these, God is wont to meet his People, and to shew himself unto them. Now, by two Things you may judge, whether God hath withdrawn himself

1. Consider what Frame of Heart you have to the Ordinances: When God intends a Blessing, he usually prepares the Heart to receive it, he keeps the Method of the Covenant, and therefore works in his People the Dispositions to which he hath promised a gracious Presence in his Ordinances. One principal Quality is a poor, and hungry Heart; for his Promise is to pour out Waters upon the chopped Earth, and to fill them that hunger. So far then, as he upholds in thee an humble and thirsting Spirit, he is graciously present with thee. Speak, Oh! You *poor in Heart*, and you that seek him with hungry Affections, doth not the Lord meet you with Comforts, and with Influences of Life? How oft do you go from his House with your Hearts laden with his hid Treasures, and burning with an heavenly Fire falling from his Presence upon you? Oh! The Streams of spiritual Graces which Water the Valleys, while the Mountains are left parched and dried! If you be grown proud and lifeless, if your Thirstings after the Ordinances are abated, you shall find God proportionably hiding himself, and locking up his Mercies from you; you being dead in your selves, all Things are dead unto you.

2. Consider what Quickning you find in the Use of the Ordinances. It may be Time hath been, when thou wert wont to find God feeding thee with Milk, and the Honey of the Gospel, and causing his Glory
to

to pass before thee in his House, but now those Days are gone, the Word doth not warm thee, cheer thee, humble thee, quicken thee, as in former Days, but thou comest for Manna to feed thy starving Soul, and findest none; thou comest in Deadness, and goest away without Life; thou comest with Diseases and Sores of Spirit, and art not healed, the Gospel is hid unto thee, that Ministry that is a shining and burning Light to others, is to thee without Power, others are melted, moulded, cheered, elevated and strengthened, and bless the Lord, meeting him with Gladness and Praise, who meeteth them with Life and Peace, but thou findest none of this. Yea, the Word that did sink into thy Soul, as the Dew that falls upon the tender Herb, is now of none Effect, it causeth not thy Heart to mourn, rejoyce, yield Fear, Love, as in Times past. The Golden Showers are restrained, and thou art left as the Mountains of Gilboa.

Thou comest to the Lord's Table, but he bids thee not welcome, as he doth his Children, his Friends. He gives thee not so much as to taste, or but to taste of his Cup, which others drink of, in thy Sight, to their inestimable Comfort, nor to eat of his Childrens Bread. Tell me then, Hath not God withdrawn and estranged himself? If a Father will not bid his Son, when he comes into his House, so much as to drink, or afford him a kind Look, will he not say, My Father is offended, and doth estrange himself?

Time hath been, when the Company of the Saints was dear in thy Esteem, and a sweet Conveyance of Grace into thine Heart. But now thy Delight is not with them, nor art thou quickned by them, but conversest with them as the Dead with the Living.

Thus, if the Blessing of the Ordinances be not upon thee as before, know that God is not with thee as before.

Object

Object. But may not a Man conclude amiss, supposing God hath left him, because he finds no Good by the Ordinances, may it not be a Man's own Fault, or may he not think he hath no Profit when he hath?

Ans. Yea, but the Answer to this followeth in the Place of seeming Desertions: Only for the Present I will propound one Thing, which will clear the Case, whether you enjoy a comfortable Communion with God in his Ordinances, for there are Flashes of fleeting Affections, and transient and fading Impressions which fall upon the Hearts of Men, but they are not such as come from God's special Presence: Know therefore, that if God's saving Presence in his Ordinances, doth distil the Dew of spiritual Blessings upon thee, it makes thee grow, they are Food indeed, and do incorporate themselves into the Soul, and so become an effectual Nutriment. The stony Ground received the Seed with Joy; and many of *John's* Hearers did rejoyce in the Light for a Season, but they were not changed by it, there was not a Power in it, to bring them unto God. Such Flashes are fading Things. But they that receive the Word, as an engrafted Word, find a mighty Power in it turning the Stock daily into its own Nature, the Gospel comes to them not in Word only, but in Power also, and in the Holy Ghost, *1 Thes. 1. 5* Where God is in his Ordinances there is Power, *1 Thes. 2. 13.*

CHAP. XIV.

Causes of Desertion. They are for, first, *Instruction:* That Nature and Grace may be better known, the one in its Sinfulness and Weakness, the other in its Freeness and Necessity.

Hitherto of the State of the deserted Christian, with the Symptoms and Signs. Now I come to the third Thing, the Causes of God's Withdrawing, which are especially two: 1. *Instruction.* 2. *Correction.* God

God by withdrawing the Aid of his Spirit, doth teach us the Knowledge of *our Natures*, and of *his Grace*.

1. By this he unmasks the Quality of our Nature, and opens the State of a Man in himself, to himself Which Point of Knowledge as it is most needful, so most difficult, the Eye of the Mind being like the Eye of the Body, which can see all Things but it self. But because the Knowledge of a Man's self so much conduceth to his End. Therefore, God sundry Ways leads his People to it, and among all Glasses, there is none that gives a clearer View of the Temper, Frame, and State of humane Nature, than our Life before Conversion, and in Desertion, for then a Man is most truly himself. And as the truest Picture is then drawn when the Body is without her Covering and Ornaments, because, often the Blemishes of the Body are hid in its Adorning, and the Body shines with a Beauty borrowed from an external Dress, so in Desertion, when a Man is left most in his Colours and Shape, he may best see what he is.

Particularly, Desertion makes a Man see,

1. His Sinfulness: While God is mightily present with restraining Grace, bridling in and keeping down the Violence of Corruption, a Man cannot think, it hath such a Power in it, or that it is so great. When the Master or Keeper is by the Dog, or Bear, his Authority muzzles and chains them up, but upon a fit Occasion, if there be none to curb them, you shall see the Utmost of a most fierce and cruel Disposition, which before lay hid: And as in a Garden, so long as a Gardiner is in it, weeding it daily and diligently, it seems fair and pleasant, nothing appearing but wholesome Herbs, useful Trees, good Fruits, fragrant Flowers, and pleasant Walks, but when the Hand of the Gardiner slacketh it self, then the cursed Nature of the Ground will appear, and it brings forth of her own, and is over-run with Weeds, and so turned from a Garden to a Desert, so God leaves Men, that they

they may act themselves : So it is said, *God left Hezekiah to try him, that he might know all that was in his Heart.* 2 Chron 32. 31.

A Man would not think that he is so bad as he is, while he enjoyeth an abundant Aid of spiritual Grace : As, while the Soul is in the Body, that putrifying Quality, and the Filthiness of it doth not so much appear, but when the Soul hath left it, then it becomes a rotten, unfavoury Carcase. And a foul Channel, while it is fed with the continued Issues and Streams of pure Water from a clear Fountain, sheweth not its Filth, but when the Streams are cut off, then the Foulness of it discovers it self. If God do but take off his Hand, and cut off the Influence of his Spirit, and slip the Collar of our vile Affections. Oh ! What Monsters start up ! and what a Cage of unclean Birds ! what a Den of Beasts ! what an Habitation of Devils do our Hearts appear to be ! What a Blackness of Darknes covers the Earth when the Sun is gone ! Yea, the Air that now seems so lucid and clear, how fill'd with darkned Storms, and Fogs is it, when the Sun withdraws it, self ! Herein is Shame cast upon the Soul, and a Man is made vile in his own Eyes, when he seeth his own Image and Complexion, and findeth himself overgrown with Botches and Sores rising from Abundance of filthy Humours in his Soul, He that, in the Day and Sunshine of quickning Grace, thought he had been freed from his Lusts, shall wonder with Shame and Astonishment, to see, in the Night of Desertion, what Darknes will appear, and what fell and fierce Lusts will shew themselves, like the Lyons of the Evening raging for their Prey.

2 It discovers a Man's Weakness and Emptiness : Now a Man shall discern by his Deadness, Indisposedness, Unmeetness to all Good, How great the Insufficiency of Nature is, and how little he hath attained in Grace. A Child that is carried in the Arms seems tall, and when it is led by the Hand of the Nurse,

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and

and upheld, it seems to have more Strength than it hath indeed, but being left unto it self, the great Weakness and Feebleness of it appeareth. A Christian may have high Thoughts of himself, while he is sustained in his Way by a divine Manutenency, and carried on with plentiful Gales of auxiliary Grace. But, if God be pleased that this *Wind that bloweth where it listeth*, John 3. 8. turn from him, he shall see, that thought himself a Pillar in the House of God, that he is but a bruised Reed, and he that conceived himself rich, is poor and miserable, blind and naked, Apoc. 3. 17.

2. God's withdrawing of himself gives a fuller Knowledge of his Grace, 1. In the Freeness of it. When a Man seeth the Depths and Worlds of Wickedness in his Nature, and discerneth what a loathsome Sepulchre, and Receptacle of Rottenness his Soul is, now he stands wondering, that ever he should obtain this Mercy, That the Spirit of eternal Life should be given to him; he wonders to see God take such a Briar to plant in his own House, yea, to graft in that true Vine, his beloved Son, that the Waters of Life should run in such a Channel, so full of Filth, that so great a God should come under so base a Roof, and such a Dungeon and Den of Devils should become *the Temple of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor 6. 19

2. The Necessity of Grace and of a continual Supply of Aid. This is sure, a Christian lives in a continual Dependence, and hath not a Sufficiency in himself. If all our Stock would be soon spent, if we had not continual Supplies from Heaven, our Fulness is not in our selves, but in our Head. Suppose a Vessel (cracked and apt to lose all it receiveth) set to the Conduit-cock, it hath now a Fulness from the Conduit, and while that runs, it cannot be empty, but if the Cock should cease to run, the Vessel would soon be emptied. Those that are in Christ live, but it is Christ that liveth in them, Gal 2. 20. Our Life is not so much in our selves, as in him, our Life is said to be hid in him.

yea, he is called our Life, Col 3. 3, 4. In the natural Body the Members have Life in themselves, yet we know the Life of every Member is not so much in it self, as in the Heart and Head, and this appears, because, if there be a Failing of Spirits either vital or sensitive, all the Body sinks, and hereby we are taught the Necessity of the Grace of God, because, if that be withdrawn, we wither as a blasted Arm of a Tree, Oh! How wofully doth the goodly Fabrick both of an enriched Heart, and an heavenly Conversation come tumbling down, if God withdraw the Props of suppoiting and assisting Grace! God, by his Spirit, doth lead and draw the Heart to him, but when this Byas is taken off, by which the Heart was wheeled up the Hill, it is carried with great Swiftnes downward to Sin and the World. David's Fallings had taught him this Lesson, to see a Need of a stronger Support than his own. Therefore prayed, *Hold up my Goings in thy Paths, that my Footsteps slip not* Psal. 17. 5. Yea, and he acknowledgeth God to be his Strength, and Stay, and Rock, and he that doth establish his Way, and carry him in it, *I am continually with thee*, (but whence was it?) *thou hast bolden me by my right Hand*, Psal. 73. 23. *My Soul followeth hard after thee*, (what enabled him?) *thy right Hand upholdeth me*, Psal. 63. 8. Thus then, God for this End sometimes suspends the Workings of the Spirit of Power from us, that we may see a Necessity of Grace, and know where the Fountain is, and that all is of God, that so we may depend upon him, and not rest in our selves, and ascribe all to him, and nothing to our selves.

The second End of Desertion is Correction: Desertion is out of Love, and though it be grievous for the Present, yet the Fruit is good, like the Lopping, or Winter-Season to the Tree, which makes for its Strength and Growth.

I will instance in such special Sins, which bring this heavy Rod upon the Soul.

C H A P. XV.

Desertions are, Secondly, for Correction, and are caused by Pride and Carelessness, &c.

1. **P**Ride; which is a Swelling and Tumor in the Spirit, or a lifting up in the Heart, 2 Cor. 12. 7. through a supposed Abundance of Revelation in the Mind, or of other rich Endowments of spiritual Graces, it brought upon the Apostle that goaring *Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above Measure.* Pride is a dangerous Evil, it breeds Contempt of others, which God abhor-eth, it is a Crossing of God in the End of all his Grace and Mercy, which is to exalt his own Glory, *Ephes. 1, 6, 12. Chap, 2, 7, 8, 9. That no Flesh should glory, but that he that gloryeth, should glory in the Lord,* 1 Cor. 1. 29, 30, 31. 2 Cor. 10. 17. The more we esteem of our selves, the more we take from God's Account and put to our own, which is a Robbing of God in that which he hath said, *He will give to none other,* Isa. 42. 8. Therefore God *resists the Proud,* Jam. 4; 6. 1 Pet. 5. 5 and cuts him short, and will not be friendly to him; *The Proud he looks at afar off,* Plal. 138. 6. as with Disdain and Displeasure, *Making him low that exalteth himself,* Prov. 29. 23. The Pure in Heart are dear in his Eyes; *And the Hungry he fills with good Things, but the Rich he sends empty away,* Luke 1. 53. And no Wonder that a proud Heart is a dead Heart, and that upon an elevated Spirit there be Barrenness, as upon the Mountains; for Pride kills the Endeavour. Rich Men take no Pains, but the Poor is diligent, and all Encrease and Liveliness of Soul is the Reward of industrious Seeking, as Pride abateth Endeavours; so it debaseth them, Prayer, Hearing, all Duties are spoiled by the Savour of this noisome Evil: Oh! Ye proud in Heart, your Commodities are marred, and are not vendible, all your Works ly
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upon your Hands, as breathed and worthless Wares : So, as the Merchant loseth, when his Goods are not current and marketable, so you wax poor, when you have no Trade with Heaven. That God that accepts the Humble that comes to him with the Lading of Prayers, Tears, Groans, Cries, and takes these, and likes them, and makes him rich Returns, turns back the Proud and all their Works.

2 Carelesness.

1. In not accepting the Seasons of Grace : When God draweth near, and we regard not, when He knocketh, and we open not, he often leaves us, and goeth from us. So he came to the Church, and knocked, open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Undeiled, for my Head is filled with Dew, and my Locks with the Drops of the Night : But she was careless, and regarded not the Day of her Visitation, and what followeth ? I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone, I sought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but he answered me not. Cant. 5. 2, 6. Sometimes the Spirit comes sweetly melting and tempering the Heart to an holy Softness, and godly Sorrow, but is quenched by Negligence. Therefore, justly doth that Soul groan under the Misery of a stupid Heart, lamenting with the Church, *Why hast thou hardened our Hearts, from thy Fear ?* Isa. 63. 17. And taking up that Cry with Her, so often here, I cannot repent, my Heart is frozen, I cannot mourn. Sometimes he cometh with strong Convictions, Perswasions, and Contactions, to take the Heart off from a Way that is not good, so that the Heart begins to draw back it self, but, because we lose this Opportunity, therefore our Sins remain, and tyrannize in us, causing us to take up David's Complaint, *Iniquities prevail against me*, Psal. 65. 32. Sometimes he cometh exciting and raising Thoughts and Resolutions of Heart, to a more heavenly Walking, but we hoise not up Sails to these Gales, we blow not up this Spark. Therefore justly are we left to

a Spirit of Dulness, neither have Life nor Peace in the Use of Ordinances, and Discharge of Duties.

Secondly, The Neglect of the Means of Grace, which is ;

1. When they are not so much used As the Body when it is shortned in necessary Food, groweth weak so the Abating of the Commons of the Soul doth weaken Grace. The less Plants are watered, the worse they thrive We are fed by that whereof we are bred, *The Word begets us*, 1 Pet. 1. 23 and the *Word feeds us*, 1 Pet. 2. 2. There is a nutritive Virtue in every Ordinance, they are Means appointed of God, as Pipes for the Conveyance of living Waters into these empty Cisterns of our Heart. If therefore, either out of Wretchedness, or Pride, any do withdraw from them, they withdraw from God, and if so, no Wonder if God withdraw from them. Therefore consider this, If you have not filled from your abundant Use of the Ordinances, and if you enjoy God less than you have done, know it is, because you seek Him less than you have done.

2. When they are not so well used Not the mere Use, but the Use of them in a spiritual Manner doth profit, a Man may starve in Plenty. When you receive the Word and Sacraments, if you think that the very Act done is sufficient, you are deceived, for the Food of the Soul is not like the Food of the Body, which being taken in only, though there be no more Thought of it, yet doth nourish, nor like the Pool of *Bethesda*, which required but coming into it, when the Angel moved it But we must bring Hearts fitted and prepared, seeking earnestly of God the Effusion of his Spirit, yea, we must work the Word upon our Hearts, knowing, That where the Minister's Part ends there ours begins: When therefore we only hear, labour not to work our Hearts to a Conformity to the Word, we deceive our selves, *Jam. 1 12* And requites our Carelessness with spiritual Impoverishment.

shutting up his Mercies, and locking up his Treasures from us. As the Blessing and good Providence of God makes him that is diligent to encrease in Riches, whereas *he becometh poor that dealeth with a slack Hand*, Prov. 10. 4. so the same God doth plentifully recompense the Diligence of the Saints in their spiritual Affairs, and this he would have all Men believe, in their first Coming to him, *That he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. But it is just, That he that labours not, should not eat, he that digs not for the Pearl, should not find it, but that the Fruit of spiritual Slothfulness should be a Decay in spiritual Estate.

3. Neglect of Duties and Exercises of Godliness : You know the Promise, *To him that bath shall be given*, &c. Matth 25. That is, He that useth his Talent with Fidelity, and Sedulity, shall increase in the same Talent (I say in the same, for else it holds not, that he that useth the Talent in one Kind, shall thrive in another, *for what a Man soweth, that shall he also reap*) but such as are idle and negligent shall grow worse and worse, Duties of Godliness are a Christian's Trade, and he that is slack in them shall be on the losing Hand : God will punish the unfaithful Servant, and the Wages of the Idle shall be Rods and Stripes. Now the Failings in Duties are these.

1. When they are omitted, this hinders spiritual Growth. For not only contrary Acts of Vice, but Cessation of Acts of Virtue doth weaken the better Part.; we must not think that the Liveliness and vigorous Stirring of Spirit gotten in our Approach to God in any Duty, will last alway, we live by Prayer, and Reading, and Meditation, as we do in the Flesh by Food and Sleep, and other natural Refections. And as the Body, though it be filled to Day, and its Spirits are much cheared, yet, if there be not a constant Use of Food, it will wax weak, so it is with our Souls, if they do not daily and constantly feed themselves in God, they

they become feeble and languid Yet it must be noted, That it is not meer Omission, but the voluntary Omission of Duties which hurteth; when the Heart hangs off, and forsakes it, as a Thing unpleasant, then it is in the Way to lose it self, and much of that sweet Communion which it had, for when the Heart withdraws from God, then God withdraws from it, *Lev. 26, 27, 28 2 Chron. 15 2*

2. When though Duties are not omitted, yet are slightly done A Christian may as well lose by doing Good evilly, as by doing what is evil, and as well by misdoing of Good, as not doing Remiss Acts weaken Habits, as well as contrary Acts; Laziness and Idleness, in spiritual Endeavours, are secret Thieves, robbing us of many heavenly Influences from above, cold Prayer is like a Bow slack bent, which will not deliver the Arrow home to the Mark Where God reaps most, he soweth most, if we sow to the Spirit, we shall reap of the Spirit, any Duty which is not spiritual and lively, is like a Sacrifice without Life, which God will not accept; all is lost Labour which is not done in the Spirit And as our Actions are formed by our Spirits, so our Spirits are much formed by our Actions, he that accustometh himself to do Good superficially, will become superficial in Goodness, we should never come to God in vain, nor think the Duty well done, till we find God.

3. Private and secret Converse with God in Duties, A Man may do much in the View of others, with abundant Flashes of Affection, yet have little of God, public Actions are often, though materially spiritual, yet formally fleshly, being produced by human Respects, the Heart filled with Ambition, or such other Advantage, which fills her Sails for the Present, and bears her on, but that which hath its Rise from fleshly Principles, doth not work to the Advancement of spiritual Grace. Secret Duties are free from such Mixtures and Ingredients, as do debase both the Ac-

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tion and the Spirit, and to a well-tempered Soul are very precious. Consider then what you are in Secret, where no Ear can hear, no Eye can see, no Hand can reward, but God's alone. What are you in Confession of personal Failings, in Supplication of such Supplies, in Thankfulness of such Mercies, as none are privy to, but God and your selves? For if you be less active and serious in your retired and closet Duties, than in those that are more open and publick, it is evident, that something without you doth make the Difference, and if worldly Motives are the Wheels upon which your Hearts are moved, it is no Wonder if God meet you not with Largesses of quickning Grace.

4 Not Watching. This is a great Cause of Declining, for the Way is narrow, the Heart apt to stray, and there are many Things to drive and draw you from the Path of Life, and though there were none without us to put us out of the Way, yet there is a Sinfulness resident in us and active, and when you go from God, you go from Life, for your Life is in him, and from him. In Nature, Causes work strongest in a Propinquity: As the Fire communicates more its Heat to that which is near it, than to that which is far distant from it, so the closer we keep to God by a watchful and diligent Carefulness, the more he pours into us of his Fulness. By Nature, we were afar off, and in that Condition, we were like those in the remote Northern Parts, which Darkness and Desolateness doth inhabit, because the Sun hath little or no Converse with them, we were *then without God, without Christ, and without Hope in the World*, Ephes. 2. 12. But by Grace we are made near, and so have Fellowship and Communion with God, but if by Heedlessness and Folly we go out from him, we have Cause to blame none but our selves, that we are less happy in the Enjoyment of him, Yea, if God let loose upon us Corruptions from within, and Tentations from without to beset us, and much to spoil, pillage, waste, and weaken us.

C H A P.

C H A P. XVI.

Of grieving the Spirit, causing Desertion.

GRieving the Spirit: This causeth God to withdraw, yea, it works not only an Eclipse of Favour, but Disfavour, they vexed his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their Enemy, and he fought against them, Isa. 63. 10. We must not conceive that there is any Passion in God. Therefore, that we may clear this Matter, note, That the Spirit may be considered, as having a Dwelling in us or others, so it is subject to Passion, that is, That which is of God, that renewed and heavenly Quality in the Saints may be molested, oppressed, vexed. So the Saints may grieve themselves, and they may grieve others, doing that which brings Disquietness of Spirit, and though this Spirit be human, yet in a Sort it is divine, and when the renewed Part is grieved, we may say the Spirit is grieved. As that unpardonable Sin, which is a malicious Opposing of the known Truths, and heavenly Graces in others, is called, *The Sin against the Holy Ghost*, as it is in it self, and so it is impassible, but yet it is said to be grieved.

1. Because those Things that are the Effects of Grief in a Man, are sometimes done by him, as God is said to repent, *Gen. 6.* and it is said he cannot repent, *Num. 23. 19.* That is, the Form of Repentance which is a Change of Mind, cannot be in him who is unchangeable, but the Effects of Repentance are wrought by God, and these being Signs of Repentance, when God doth them, he is said to repent. As when a Man undoeth what he had done, it is a Sign he repents, so when God was about to pull down the Fabrick which he had raised, it is said, *That God repented that he had made it*. In like Sort God is said to be grieved, when he doth that which Men grieve by others use to do, that is, When he chides, rebukes, withdraws, &c.

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2. Because the Spirit may have Cause of Grief; That may be done which gives just Cause of Grief, and which usually with Men works Grief. Now it is not every Sin which is said to grieve, as every Offence with Man works a Displeasure, but only greater Offences and Evils work Grief.

Now the Things by which the Spirit is grieved, may be referred to two Heads. 1. *Dishonour*, 2. *Disobedience*.

1. *Dishonour*: Honour is a tender Thing, and by how much the Greater it is, by so much the more Dishonour grieves. We dishonour the Spirit negatively, when we give not that Esteem to his Graces, Comforts, Ordinances, Promises, Influences, that we owe, especially if our Defect be common. As a King would take himself dishonoured, if his Proclamations, Embassies, Pardons, Favours should not be entertained with high Respect, Especially, by such as are not only Subjects to his Power, but the Objects of his special Grace and Favour. When the Sabbath is not our Delight, the Word our Treasure, the Promise our Joy, Christ our Life, then is Dishonour done to God, who made these Ours, by his Son's Blood, and reveals, offers, and seals them by his Spirit.

2. Positively; so we may be guilty of Dishonour two Ways. 1. *Directly*, 2. *Occasionally*.

1. *Directly*, 1. When we have low Esteems of the Counsels and Comforts of the Spirit, when we accept them not gladly, keep them not diligently, being such precious Fruits, of so inestimable Mercy. If a Friend send to his Friend his Counsels of Love, and the Tokens of Amity, and they be rejected, he counts himself dishonoured, much more, in this Case, do we dishonour him who is so glorious and so gracious.

2. When we prefer other Things before him, as the Wisdom of the Flesh before his Counsels, and sinful Contentments, beggerly Treasures, vanishing Trifles before his Comforts. What greater Dishonour, than that

that the Things of the World should sit in the Throne, and the Things of God in the Foot-stool, that the Slave, yea, the Enemy, should have more Respect, than the supream Lord ?

3. When we charge our Failings upon the Spirit, as if a Subject should father his Bastard upon the Prince: False Opinions, boasting that we are taught of God ; rash and precipitate Fierceness, calling it the Zeal of the Spirit, licentious Walking, styling Christian Liberty ; lumpish Uncheerfulness, titling it Godly Sorrow, and presumptuous Peace, naming it The Comfort of the Spirit. What is this, but to farther Error, Madness, Wickedness, and dull or sullen Sadness upon the Spirit, which is a Spirit of Truth, a Spirit of Holiness, and a Spirit of Comfort ?

4. When Men put spiritual Things to base Employments, as when we use our Knowledge, or any Gifts of Ability, spiritually to Pride, Covetousness, Fraud, or any worldly End, this is, as if the sacred Vessels in the Temple should be put to common Employments, or, as if we should use the Royal Robes of a King to act a Play. This was *Simon Magus* his Sin, *Acts* 8. who would gladly have purchased those rare Gifts of the Spirit, that he might seem some Body, and enrich himself. And thus many, even of the Godly, do much offend, putting forth their Parts too much to their own Advantage. Now, what is this, but to serve thy self of thy God, and to make spiritual Gifts the Price of worldly Vanities ? And what Dishonour is this ?

5. When we are ashamed of the Spirit before Men, as when we dissemble and hide our Graces, lest we should be scorned, when we count it a Dishonour to us to be judged and called spiritual, or Persons walking in the Spirit. Were it not a Dishonour to a Prince, that a Subject and Servant should be ashamed of his Master, his Livery and Service ? This is greatly threatened, *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous*

dulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels, Mark 8. 38.

2. As the Spirit may be thus dishonoured directly, so also he may be dishonoured by us, when we do such Things as occasion it: As when, by our faulty and unholy Conversation, we occasion Men to think and speak evilly of God; thus did they whom God taxeth, Ezek. 36. 20, 23. Rom. 2. 23, 24. These Things seldom go unpunished; if Blasphemy be so hainous, then it must needs be a great Sin to cause it. Now when we walk so, as that we do either directly or occasionally work Dishonour to the Spirit, we grieve the Spirit, and so procure the Effects of Offence and Grievance, God's withdrawing himself from us, and leaving us to the unhappy State of a withering and languishing Spirit.

CHAP. XVII.

The second Means of grieving the Spirit, is Disobedience and Resistance of the Spirit.

THE Spirit may be resisted in 1. Others, 2. in ourselves.

The Spirit may be resisted in others, even by the Godly.

1. By envious Workings against their spiritual Gifts: When out of a Displeasancy of Mind against the Lustre and Life of Grace and Knowledge which shines forth in others, we set our selves with Detractions, Discountenance, Defamations, that by such or the like sinful Courses, we may cloud and darken them: We may and ought to emulate others, but not to envy any. The Root of Envy is Pride, the Fruit is Opposition, and this is a grievous Sin, and a Sin against the Spirit, tending to the Nipping and Weakening of Grace in others; in which Way we work against the Spirit; for what he builds, we destroy, and what he plants, we pluck up;
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and what he cherisheth, we withstand: But such envious Spirits shall be brought low, for God giveth Grace to the Humble: But he resisteth the Proud, Jam. 4. 6.

2. By Stubborn Rejection of the Counsels of the Godly, especially the Ministers: Thus the Jews are said to resist the Holy Ghost, Acts 7. 51. because they rejected the Doctrine and Counsel of the Holy Ghost in his Servants; when the Prophets spake to them, it is said the Spirit spake, and their Disobedience is counted Disobedience against the Spirit, Neh. 9. 30. And tho' this be a Sin of an high Nature, yet so have the People of Israel been transported through the Heat of Lust, that they have not only rejected the Counsel, but have quarrelled also with him that gave it, so Aza did, the Prophet had reprov'd him for his Fault in seeking to the King of Syria, and for this, Aza was wroth with the Seer, and put him in a Prison-House, for he was in a Rage with him, because of this Thing, 2 Chron. 16. 10. When the Spirit comes in his Servants, to convince, correct, perswade, and we grieve those by our slighting, refusing, and rejecting them, we grieve the Spirit, Luke 10. 16.

Secondly, We resist the Spirit in our selves. 1. By not doing Good required. 2. By sinning against Light. 3. By Impenitency

1. When we hang off from that Good to which we are strongly moved. So the Israelites were much pressed to repent, and to turn from their evil Ways to God, yet were rebellious, insuassible, as God complains of them. Hear, O my People, and I will testify unto thee O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me, &c. But my People would not hearken unto my Voice, and Israel would none of me, but what followed? So I gave them up unto their own Hearts Lust. And they walked in their own Counsels, Psal. 81. 8, 11, 12. God dealt with them, as the Physician doth with an unruly Patient, whom, if he will not be ordered, he gives up. Here is a main Cause why God hath retired himself, you have quenched and resisted his Spirit, which by inward Pulsations

fations and Perswasions would have drawn you to a more holy Walking; but you would not, but have withheld the Truth in Unrighteousness, Rom. I. 28. For this Sin God gave up the Gentiles to a reprobate Mind, to a Mind without Judgment, which could not discern Things aright, but they called Darkness Light, and Light Darkness, their foolish Hearts being full of Darkness, yea, he gave them up to most vile Affections. And consider what a grievous Sin it is to draw back from that Holiness, which God doth secretly draw thee to

1 It is Contempt of his Sovereignty and Authority, who is thy Cod and Guide, and to whom thou hast given up thy self, and who hath Power to judge and condemn thee.

2 It is a Contempt of his Goodness, for to what doth he call thee, but to that which is thy Good, thy Peace, thy Crown, thy Life? If thou hadst followed the Lord wholly, how would he have filled thee with his Goodness? He would have had thee nearer him, that he might have blessed thee with greater Riches of Grace and Peace, and seest thou not how he leaveth thee to walk in a woful Way of Darkness and Licentiousness? Yet of his Grace he came to call, and to draw on thy Soul to more Communion with himself. Oh! Why didst thou so ungratefully despise such Riches of Mercy? How often hath he sought thee! How long hath he waited on thee! And hast thou contemned this abundant Kindness?

3. It is a wilful Disobedience. Because thou wast not only enlightened, but with frequent, long, and strong Perswasions moved. And the more thy Rebellion is voluntary, the more it is sinful, and causeth God to depart, he that sinneth against him, sinneth against his own Soul. Prov. 8. 36.

4 It is Enmity against Holiness, else it could not be resisted. Resistance is between Contraries, and if thou walk contrary to God, what Wonder if he walk contrary to thee? Levit. 26. H. 2 2. When

2. When a Man sins against Light, and strong Arguments of Dissuasion: There are two Degrees of Sin, 1. *Desire*. 2. *Act*. By both the Spirit is resisted.

Quest. Whether it be worse to will Evil, than to do it?

Ans. We must distinguish of the Will.

There is a Will 1. *Incompleat*, 2. *Compleat*.

An Incompleat Will is that which is not fully and maturely set upon its Object, and it hath these two Things in it, or one of them. 1. It is not deliberate, but sudden, rash, precipitate, when a Thing is not done out of Judgment and Reason, it is not fully voluntary. Thus that which is done out of Passion, as Fear, Anger, &c. is not a compleat Act of the Will, because not deliberate. 2. It is not determinate, so not so much a Will, as a Velleity, which is not a full Tendency of the Heart to a Thing, but a weak, mixed, checked, fluctuating Inclinedness to it, the Will not going fully one Way, but as it hath something to perswade, and something to dissuade, so it is divided, partly willing, and partly nilling.

These Things premised, I say.

1. That the greater Sinfulness in any Act is from the Will. For 1. Some Acts which are materially evil, are not formally evil without the Will. As if a Man working with an Ax kill a Man, though Killing be materially evil, yet if the Will had no Influence into the Fact, it is not murder *Leut* 19. 5, 6. So happily *Lot's Drunkenness*. 2. All Acts which are formally evil, are made more sinful, by how much the more the Will is in them.

2. That a determinate Will to sin, though without the Act is more sinful, than an Act of Sin without a determinate Will; because, he that is fully willing, sins as much as in him lyeth, and though the Act be wanting, yet it is not from any Reason against it, but from some other Cause, as it may be it is out of his Power, or appears very hurtful, bringing Shame, Pain, Damage, Danger, or the like: As he sins worse that is purposed

purposed to deny Christ, though yer he hath not done it, than *Peter* who did deny him in Act, but not with a full Will. Where Sin hath the full Consent, it is an absolute Sovereign, but where it hath the Act, but not the Consent, it is but a Tyrant, which prevails not so much by its own Power, as by the Weakness of its Adversary, and the Concurrence of external Help.

3. That a sinful Act with the Will is most sinful, because there is an actual Concurrence of the whole Man to it; yea, and this argueth a great Sinfulness in the Subject, for Lustings to sin are less evitable than Acts: Therefore, not only to conceive Sin, but to bring it forth, argueth a greater Power of Sin. There is more against Acts of Sin, than against Inclinations and Desires, many Respects keep Men from doing Evil, that cannot prevent Motions to Evil, so that Sin ruleth much in such an one, as willingly commits it.

Now, when the Soul hankers after Sin, in frequent, potent, and allowed Lustings unto it, the Spirit is resisted and so grieved. The Spirit is resisted in three Respects.

1. In Respect of the *Rule*, the Word, which is the Law of the spiritual Kingdom, which is a pure and perfect Law, not only ordering and judging the external Acts and Issues of the Heart, but the Motions and Lustings also, requiring not only Abstinence from Sin, but Death unto it, *Ephes. 4. 22. Gal. 5. 24.*

2. In Respect of *Grace*, which is a Principle disposing against Sin, this is checked, and the Light and Lustings of it are overswayed through the rebellious Disobedience of the Heart.

3. In Respect of these *inward Operations* and Workings of the Spirit, by which he excites and quickens the new Man to Newness of Life, his Counsels are repelled, his Comforts rejected, his Rebukes contemned, his Offers disvalued, all Cords are broken, and the Soul, like a prevailing Stream, bears down all.

2. *Secondly*, Men resist the Spirit by doing evil: This is a further Degree, when Men not only lust an-



The deserted Soul's

into Sin, but fall into it; here Sin is perfected. These Things grieve the Spirit, *Ephes. 4. 30.* especially,

1. When the Acts are for kind grievous. Such as are the manifest Deeds of the flesh; *Gal. 5. 19.* And those Pollutions of the World, *2 Pet. 2. 20.* These are worse; 1. Because the Godly have more Strength against such, than against Sins more spiritual 2. They are most contrary to Grace, for they are contrary to Nature.

2. When, to the Shame of Religion, Sin is openly committed: Open Sins are provoking Sins, because they feed and quicken that Malice that lyeth in the Sins of Belial, to Reproaches against Godliness, and lay stumbling Blocks in others Ways, so crossing the Spirit in the great Work of turning Men from Sin, because Men are hardened, and set further off, when they see such Wickedness in them that are godly: This was their Sin that caused God's Worship to be despised, *Mal. 1. 9.* *This hath been by your Means, and will he regard your Persons, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

3. When the Sins are such as he hath often fallen into, and often confessed and bewailed. Iterated Sins are double Sins, as it is in Figures, the Addition of any one makes the Number ten Times more, this strikes deep, that having been often in Fault, and often freed, yet a Man should sin again, this was that which made Solomon's Sin of a deeper Dye, that he had found Mercy: The Lord was angry with Solomon, because his Heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, *1 Kings 11. 9.* So Ezra confessed the Grievousness of Sin, being committed after Pardon. And after all that is come upon us, for our evil Deeds, and for our great Trespases, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve, and hast given us such Deliverance as this. Should we again break thy Commandments, and joyn in Affinity with the People of these Abominations? Wouldst thou not be angry with us, till thou hadst forsaken us, so that there should be no Remnant, nor Escaping?

LXXI.

Ezra 9, 13, 14. Concerning the Sin which the People of God committed before the Captivity, God gives them special Charge; *Thou shalt not commit this Lewdness above all thine Abominations*, Ezek. 16. 43. When then a Man, after Mercy begged, and graciously renewed, shall again transgress, this is high Rebellion. So Mal 2. 13. &c.

4. When a Man hath suffered much for his Sins, many Rebukes from Heaven, Checks from Conscience, Frowns from Men, Stripes from God, yet willingly returns to do this Evil. This was their great Impiety in the Wilderness, that though often reprov'd, yet they sinned in the like Kind again and again, *They have tempted me these ten Times*, Num. 14. 22. This was in Nehemiah's Eye the great Aggravation of their Sin, that after they had suffered so great Miseries, *They did Evil again before God*, Neh. 9. 28.

5. When the Acts are frequent, tho' in their Kind less abominable than many. Many smaller Sins may amount to as much as a great Transgression, yet often lesser Evils provoke most; as we say to our Friend, would you stick with me in so small a Thing? So God takes it ill, when, in Things which are more in our Power, we transgress, for it proceeds from much Neglect of him; and it is more that he should be neglected by his Children, than that his Enemies rebel.

6. When the Occasion is less, the Sin is the greater? Adam's turning from God, for the forbidden Fruit, so small a Matter, was very grievous, the less a Man is tempted, the more voluntary is his Sin, and so more sinful.

7. When it is a leading Sin; as 1. When by a Governour, or Minister, whose Example doth much, especially if such an One in drawing others to Sin, this God will punish. As in Aaron who was not only an Occasion, but a Cause of the Peoples Idolatry, by the Idols which he made, Exod. 32. 4 so Mal. 2. 7, 8, 9.

2. When it is the first Transgression, and Breach of a Law.

Law: So *Nadab*, and *Abihu* for offering strange Fire, were judged of God, *Levit. 10.* So *Uzzah* for touching the Ark, *1 Chron. 13. 10.* As in civil States, the *first Breach* of a Law is often punished with exemplary Punishment: It is a dangerous Thing in a Commonwealth to be the *first Man* in a Rebellion, and to break the Ice to others.

Thus you see how the Spirit may be resisted and grieved many Ways: And for such Causes, as the outward Man is often left unto great Calamities, so the inward Man is afflicted with great Miseries, through God's Departing from it. When the Soul joyns it self to other Lovers, then comes a Kind of Divorce, and God saith of a Man as he did of *Ephraim*, *Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone, Hos. 4. 17.* Let him go on in his Way, let his Soul wither, let his Lusts prevail upon him, let nothing do him Good.

3. Men resist the Spirit, when they *bear up* themselves with Fearlessness, Boldness, Shamelessness, and Impenitency in their Way, especially, when they are strongly called and urged to Repentance. As the Authority of a Prince is two Ways resisted.

1. When Men willingly transgress. 2. When they *bear up themselves* impudently and stubbornly in their Transgression. So God is not only opposed and affronted by Disobedience, but also by Impenitence: And indeed, there is more Provocation in a Fault, when not bewailed, than in a Fault, when it is committed, to a good Disposition, he that is penitent, is in a Sort innocent, humble Confession is a Kind of Satisfaction, but Stoutness and Stiffneckedness increaseth Rage: For Impenitence is,

1. A Continuation of the Offence, he is still in the Offence, his Heart is with it, and in Interpretation of Justice, he doth sin continually, that repents not, Repentance breaks off the Soul from it, but Impenitence is a Continuing in it, Disobedience in committing Sin, is like the Falling into the Myre, and Impenitence is like the Lying in it.

2. *Int.*

2 *Impenitence* is a *Justification* of the Offence; for he that repents not, acknowledgeth no Offence. When a Man apprehends that he hath done Evil, this breeds Shame, Sorrow, which ever arises as high as the Sight of the Sinfulness of Sin, so he that is not ashamed, seeth not the Evil that he hath done. See it in the Jews, *No Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done?* Jer. 8. 6. They being a stiffnecked People, were far from judging and condemning themselves, yea, they excused themselves and pleaded their Cause, as if they had done nothing worthy of such Evils as the Prophet threatned; yea, they argue the Matter with God Hand to Hand. *O ye Priests that despise my Name, and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy Name?* Mal 1. 6. *Ye offer polluted Bread upon mine Altar, and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee?* ver. 7. *Ye have wearied the Lord with your Words, yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him?* Chap. 2. 17. *Return unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will return unto you; but ye said, Wherein shall we return?* Chap. 3. 7. *Ye have robbed me; but ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?* ver. 8. *Your Words have been stout against me, saith the Lord, yet ye say, What have we spoken against thee?* ver. 13.

Thus an impenitent Person justifieth himself, and this provokes highly, especially where the Fault is, 1. *Great*, 2. *Clear*. as it is here.

3 *Impenitence* is *Disloyalty*, yea, greater than an Act of Offence, for a Man may offend out of Fear, Hope, Rashness, Ignorance, &c. But he that is wilfully impenitent hath a disloyal Spirit towards his God.

1 Here is *little Love*, for Love would melt and draw the Heart back to God.

2 *Little Fear*, for this would make a Man *serious* in Consideration, *humble* in Confession, and *fervent* in Supplication that his Sin may be pardoned, and Favour restored.

C H A P. XVIII.

Persuasive Considerations to move Men to study the Preservation of Communion with God.

NOW having treated of the Causes of the sad Loss of God's quickning Presence, I come to consider of the Cure, and because, as some are *actually* in this miserable State; and all are *potentially* in it, that is, Tho' they are not in this Manner deserted, yet they may be I will accordingly prescribe Rules,

1. *Preservative for all.*

2. *Restorative for such as are in this State.*

In the Former I will propound something. 1. For Persuasion. 2. For Direction.

That which I perswade is, That Men would labour to maintain a constant Communion with God. Consider,

1. *You may lose much of God*, as I have declared: The Best may be in this Case, therefore be not secure, tho' thou sail'st now with a full Gale, thou mayst be becalmed, thy Mountain is not so strong, but it may be shaken, Dangers should make Men wise, especially so great as this, though the Promise assures thee of Life, yet thou art not out of Danger of Sickness, thou carriest a backsliding Heart in thy Bosom, and there are seducing Spirits (many Legions) which seek to cloud the Day of thy spiritual Prosperity. Therefore watch, that you enter not into Tentation, Mar. 26. 41. But work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, Phil. 2. 12.

2. *You may lose that quickly which will hardly be recovered*: A Ship is easily born down the Stream, but it is hardly fetched up again. The Philosophers tell us, That the Way from the *Habit* to the *Privation*, is easier than the Way from the *Privation* to the *Habit*, as a Man may easier make a seeing Eye blind, than a blind Eye to see, a Man may soon put an Instrument out of Tune, but not so soon put it in again, a Man may

may lose more Strength in a Day's Sickness, than he can recover in many Days of Health. Therefore, when thou art mounted aloft by plentiful Supplies of Grace, upon Eagles Wings, take Heed of falling, for it is easier not to fall, than to rise. If thou provoke thy God to retire, it may cost thee many Prayers and Tears, to get him to return. When thy Lusts begin to stir, and to be armed with a new Strength, the Monsters will cost you Labour and Sweat to muzzle them, and subdue them. It is easier to keep out an Enemy, than to expel him; a Man may better keep an Estate, than get it. How did the Church seek Christ before she found him again? *Cart. 5.*

3. *The Loss will be grievous*, it is most miserable to have been happy. When you have found the Sweetness of God's Presence, it will be a bitter Thing to lose it.

4. It is possible to be kept, if is a Comfort that Care will keep it.

Object. But Few do maintain a constant Communion with God, but do at one Time or other fall behind Hand.

Ans. 1. This doth not argue it impossible, but difficult.

2. The more difficult, the greater Care is required, and a wise Man stirs the more when a Case is difficult.

Object. But God doth sometimes, of his own Pleasure, shorten and diminish the Influences of his Spirit, even because he will, and that for Ends best known to himself.

A. S. 1. If it be not for your Default, it is not lost by you, though in such a Case it be lost to you, because you have not, yet you have not lost it, and so it is without Sin to you. As it is in bodily Health, if it depart, but not by your Default; by Want of due Care of it, we sin not, it is our present Affliction, not our Fault.

2. When God hath so left, he hath not left in that Manner, as he doth others; as we may see in Examples. 1. He denyeth not a general Assistance, but a special, that is, he withdraws not all those Workings of his Power, by Want of which an universal Weakness and Deadness overspreads his Servants, but in some particular

particular Case only . As in Peter , Christ did not leave him to a general Declension, but to a particular Slip. 2. He did sooner return to Peter, and caused Peter to return to himself. 3. He communicates more to them afterward, so Peter gained by his Loss.

3. We are not so much to mind what God doth in the Way of his free Pleasure and absolute Sovereignty, as what he doth in ordinary; nor so much what he will do, as what he will that we shall do, nor so much what the Issue of our Work shall be, as what our Rule is. This out of Doubt we shall find by an holy Walking, even more of God, if not at this Time, in this Thing, in this Kind, or in this Measure, yet in another, for our Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. 58. It is possible and frequent, to find little Strength in some Case, and much in another: It may be thy Lusts may be working, but thy Heart melting, fearing, mourning, warring, Praying, and abounding in much spiritual Life. It may be in Afflictions thou mayst have more Sorrow and Unquietness of Heart, being not so abundantly filled with spiritual Comfort, but this may be recompensed in much Meekness, Humbleness, hungering after God, Dependence upon him, &c. God will not be wanting to thee, that failest not thy self, if thy Love be constant to him, much more is his to thee. We say Love descends stronger than it ascends, the Father loves the Child better than the Child loves the Father; God's Love begets ours: Therefore, it is not only a preventing Love, before ours, but an excelling Love, above ours.

5. Consider the Excellency of the Enjoyment of God.

1. In the Means of it 1. The Son of God dyed to obtain it, his Blood was poured out, that there might be a Way for Man to have Communion with God: We are made near and have Access to God, and Favours from God, at no less Price than the Blood of the only begotten Son of God.

2. The Spirit himself is employed to pour in the Treasures of divine Grace.

3. All

3. All the *Prophets, Apostles, Preachers, yea, the Word and Sacraments* are the Instruments of Conveyance of this high Favour.

It must needs be of great Worth and Excellency, for the Effecting of which, such high Persons and excellent Means are employed.

2. In the *Effects*. 1. It brings great *Peace and Solace*, because it sets the Soul in an *harmonious State*.

1. A Man carried on in an heavenly Course, by a divine Hand, hath *Concord* betwixt *Conscience* and himself.

Conscience, as it is a *Tutor* for Instruction; so it is a *Task-master* for Exaction. As it *shows* what we owe, so it *demand*s it. Now, when a Man hath his Rent ready for his Lord's Bailly, he is not molested. Conscience will murmur and grumble if a Man come short, but holy Walking keeps Peace.

2. *Concord* betwixt the *Affection* and *Condition*; that is, When a Man enjoyeth God, he hath what he would have. Now if a Man hath what he loves, he is satisfied. As if you give a poor Man Riches, his Heart is eased. Whom doth the godly Man love and desire in the World, more than God? *Psal. 73 25. He is his Light, Life, Strength, Joy, all in all to him, Col. 3. 11.*

3. *Concord* betwixt *Inclination* and *Action*: When a Man hath a Principle that disposeth him to Holiness, and yet is hindered or perverted, this is a Sicknes and Pain to the Soul. As if you stop Water in its Course, it is full of Unquietness. Therefore, when by divine Assistance the Soul is loosed of her Bonds, and freed from Impediments of running her desired Course, it is at Peace.

4. Betwixt *Hope* and *Reason*. If a Man's Ways be not exact, Reason will give Check to Hope, and Fear and Anxiety will break in; and it cannot be Peace, but where Reason concludes for Hope, apprehending not only the Excellency of the End, and the Possibility, but the Probability and the Certainty. If Hope expect,

and the Understanding dispute against it, going about to overthrow its Title, it cannot but breed Trouble. Supplies from Heaven will prevent this, for these Supplies keep the Soul in her Way, and the Way leads to the Promise, and the Promise strengthens Hope, and in this Way Reason will join with it, the Understanding will see all clear, and so the Heart will be quiet.

5. Betwixt the Ordinances, and our Hearts: This Concord lyeth not only in this, That a Man shall more prize them, but also that he shall receive more by them. For,

1. The Heart doth more sympathize with them, it is more Receptive, God's Presence in the Soul doth capacitate it, it makes it more meet for the Gospel. And as Wood that is dry will take Fire more than Wood that is wet, because it is nearer the Nature of Fire, so the Heart draweth more Life, and partakes of the Power of Ordinances, by how much the more it hath a Preparedness through Grace.

2. Where God is present in the Soul, he is present in the Ordinances. As all the Servants are ready to serve him whom the Master honours. God hath a more full Command of all than any Sovereign, and if he will, that the Means of Grace shall bring in much of Heaven, it will be done. And where a Man is thus feasted with the fat Things of God's House, it is a great Solace to him, partly, because the Things themselves are excellent, and partly, because they are Testimonies of God's special Favour and Grace.

6. Concord betwixt Duty and Ability. It is a great Discomfort, when a Man seeth his Way, and cannot walk in it, or when there is that Disproportion of Strength to his Work, that he doth it not without much Contention, Difficulty, Weariness, but when a Man is able, then he is merry at his Work, his Labour is no Pain, having the Help of a God of Power, He runs, and is not weary, and walks, and faints not; Isa. 40. 31. That is done with Alacrity, which is done with Facility,

7. Concord

7. *Concord with the Saints.* Holiness is their proper Quality And therefore, the more Holiness, the greater Agreement. There will be a sweet *Consenting*, and *Concentring* with them; your Motion and theirs, your Hearts and theirs, your End and theirs will harmonize so sweetly, that you shall have their Counsel, Countenance, Company, Comfort, and it is a great Splace to have Communion with them, who are so near to God, and so full of God.

2. *It brings Glory.* 1. A *glorying Spirit*, that is, It worketh Joy and Triumph in God: When the Soul is carried in a holy Course, the Presence of God is so dear, and the Contentment and Sweetness of his Way so precious, that he not only bleisseth his God, but he also bleisseth himself in his God, he seeth that God is with him, and this is a Sign of his Favour: For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy People have found Grace in thy Sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? *Exod.* 33. 16. And so a Nobleness of Spirit is begotten in him, through which he is set above the World, so that through his God, whom he finds better than a thousand Worlds, he tramples upon the World, *Rom.* 8. 31. And is neither enticed with Hopes, nor deterred with Fears, but like a conquering Champion breaks through the Armies, and Hosts of the World, what need he fear the Assaults of Creatures, that hath with him the Power of the Creator? And how is he armed against all Trouble, that hath the Spirit of Glory and of God resting upon him? *1 Pet.* 4. 14.

2. *It is an Honour to a Man to be full of Grace*, and full of Life If Reason, which is but human, do exalt a Man so much above the Beast, then how much more doth Grace, which is divine, exalt the Saints above Men? Yea, if these Ornaments of the reasonable Creature, which are gotten by human Endeavour, and are common to all, be such a Crown of Glory; what Honour is it to have the Spirit of God making the Godly the Tabernacle of his Rest, and filling them with

the Glory of his Presence, and the blessed Operations of his Grace, to be Trees even green and flourishing, filled with Fruits of Grace, to receive daily from Heaven, that which excels the Crowns of Kings, to have Christ under thy Roof, supping with thee, *Apoc. 3 20.* to sit down daily, not only with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, but with Christ himself, to be led into his Wine-Cellar, to have the mighty God walking with thee, what Glory is all this to thee, which is the highest Honour of the Angels?

3. *It is an Honour to have God co-working with thee*, his Hand with thine. A Man would think it an Honour to be with *Princes* in Employment. While thou enjoyest inward Quicknings and Assistance, as Heaven joyns it self with thee, so thy Work appears to be a noble Employment, and a Service acceptable. As the Sacrifice of *Abel, Gen. 4.* had this Testimony of God's Acceptance, Fire came from Heaven upon it, as also afterwards in the Law, *Levit. 9 24.* So when God enkindles the Soul with his Spirit, for spiritual Sacrifices, it is a Sign that they are accepted of him. The Apostle by this proves his Ministry to be of God, and according to God, because God did work in him, and gave him Sufficiency to those great Things, *2 Cor. 3*

6. Consider there is a *Necessity of divine Assistance*. We are not like a Ship rigged and fitted, and sent out to Sea, and so left to shift for it self, but God is our continual Pilot, and that Power which wrought at first unto the Working of Conversion, *Ephes 1* worketh still, *Col. 1. 18.* unto Fructification, Augmentation, and Perseverance, what Need we have of the Help of this Power may appear, if we consider.

1. *That the most excellent Saints have failed*, when they have been left to themselves.

2. *That our Task is great.*

3. *That our Strength is small.*

1. Through the *Debility of Grace received*: It is but little which we have attained, and Grace being so imperfect,

perfect, there remains in us a proportionable *Impotency and Enmity* to Good.

2. Through the *Measure and Mixture of a contrary Principle*. The Flesh is so rooted, so potent, so overspread, so active, so charming and pressing down, Heb. 12. & 1. that the Apostle not only saith, *We cannot do what we would*, Gal. 5. 17. but also that *himself cannot*, his Sin like a Tyrant leading him captive whither he would not, Rom. 7.

3. Through *Exigences in our Way*. Great Fears, Straits, Extremities, which without the Help of the Spirit, we could not pass through.

4. Through *Satan's mighty and subtle Tentations*: All these inherent Corruptions, difficult Occurrents, Satan's Workings, meeting with small Measures of Grace, must needs prevail unto grievous Consequences, without the Support of the Hand of the Almighty.

And though we stand *always* in Need of a divine Presence, yet at *sometimes especially*.

1. When we are put upon some special Service. As *Abraham*, who was to leave all, and to go he knew not whither, Gen. 12. How would Reason and Affection have barred and blocked up his Passage, if he had not been mighty through God, so in that other Business of sacrificing his Son, Gen. 22. *Ezra* when he was to take a long Journey by a Way that he knew not, asked of God a right Way, and safe Protection from the Hazards that he might meet, Ezra 8. 21, 22. And, when our Path is not a beaten Way, or, when it is a difficult Way, and we are put upon new and special Service, then is a Time to crave the Aid of God.

2. When there is some eminent Weakness, and Decay grown upon the Spirit, by a customary Carelessness, and long Negligence in the Way of Holiness. In such a Case, a Man is like one, in whom Nature is so oppressed and over-mastered by the Strength of a Disease, that without the Help of the Physician he cannot recover. This *David* found in his declined Estate, which made him pray that God would set him right, restore.

and establish him, Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me, Psal. 51. 10.

3. When some Lust hath recovered Strength · When the *Gabushites* have made Inroads upon Israel, and Babel hath prevailed upon Sion, then we need the Help of the Spirit, to charm down these Spirits, to hush these Winds, to deliver the poor Captive out of Chains. If Lusts prevail to lead captive, they will easily hold fast in Captivity, and except Redemption come from Heaven, how should a feeble Soul quit it self out of the Jaws of Lions; yea, out of the Hands of the Powers of Darknes.

4. In fierce Assaults, and strong Tentations · When Satan layeth Siege to the Soul, shooting his fiery Darts, and using Stratagems of Policy, joining his Endeavours with our Corruptions, as Wind with Tide, then we have Cause to pray as David, Hold up my Goings in thy Paths, that my Footsteps slip not, Psal. 17. 5. The Apostle also found he had Need of Help from Heaven, when he was assaulted And therefore, he prayed thrice, that the Thing that he feared might depart from him, 2 Cor. 12. Christ hath taught us to pray daily, Lead us not into Tentation, for it is dangerous, and then Tentations are most dangerous, when 1. most suitable, when Satan joins with our Disposition or Constitution. 2. continual. 3. When Opportunity and Power is greatest

5. In great Afflictions, Wants, Pains, Dangers, Persecutions. It is hard to endure Fights of Afflictions, to suffer great and sore Evils, especially, when they are multiplied and continued, whether our Sufferings be Corrections from God, or Persecutions from Men, we need then a greater Strength than our own, for we see in both, how the greatest Champions have been foiled, when God hath for a Time retreated, and left them to try it out in their own Strength: Job, the Mirror of Patience was overtaken with much Impatience; and Peter that Man of Courage, was over-mastered with Cowardize, the one so far, as to quarrel with his God, the other so far, as to deny his Master, and these Things are written for us

6. When

6. When the Means of Grace are cut off from us : These are the Food of the Soul , and when these fail, it would be with the Soul as with Fire, which, by withdrawing the Fuel, would be extinguished, or as with the Body, which, by Want of Nutriment, would be famished. A Garden, if, when the Heavens drop not in sweet Showers, it be not watered by the Gardiner, withereth , this is our Comfort, that though, when the Means of spiritual Life are afforded, we must expect all Supplies in that Way, yet we are not set in such an absolute Dependance upon them, but that, through God, when they are wanting, we may be sustained. Light in the present ordinary Course of Nature comes from the Sun and Stars , yet God gave Light at first to the World, when yet they were not created, *Gen. 1.* So, when the Sun and Moon (the Means of Knowledge) shall not give Light, *The Lord shall be to thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory, Isa. 60. 19.* But if God should not feed us himself, when with *Elijah* we are in the Wilderness, how should we subsist ?

7. When inward Comforts are suspended, and the Streams of living Water flow not from the Well of Life, when Storms and Tempests arise, and the Waters of *Marah* overflow , then if God do not uphold, the Soul sinks in the Deeps . As *David*, *Psal. 69. 1, 2.* *Heman Psal. 88. Job. 1. 6.* In Times, when the sweet Gust and Taste of those Things which did refresh the Heart are cut off, if God put forth himself in a Way of Help, the Thirst and Labour of the Heart will be much *after God*, *Psal. 63. 8.* But if God withdraw his Hand, either the Heart lyeth sleeping and feeding upon inferior Things, like the *Prodigal*, who when he had not Bread, fed upon Chaff and Drass , or else it faints in Discouragement, hangs the Wing, and lyeth in fruitless and mournful Dejection, either fearing to draw near so great a God, or thinking it in vain to stir. It is hard to live by Faith, when all Sense faileth, and to retain a living Hope, when Fears break in like a Flood.

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All these Things considered, doth it not much concern us to endeavour to keep the good Hand of God with us in all our Ways? Let this suffice for Persuasion.

C H A P. XIX.

Directions how to retain a divine quickning Presence with us.

THe next Thing is Directions how to retain the Happiness of divine Assistance,

1. *When you have it, acknowledge it.*
 1. *With Thankfulness.* Prize it, for it is a precious Mercy, it is a multiplied Favour: How much have you in this one Thing? All the Comfort and Sweetness of Duties, the Quietness and Liberty from Lusts, the Fruit and Efficacy of Ordinances depends upon this, if God hold back this one Mercy, all these are gone. Consider what a Difference is in your selves and Ways, when you are carried in the gracious Arms of God your Helper, and when you are left to walk in your own Strength. Oh, how great is God's Goodness to you! He calls upon others for the same Things, and Conscience stands, as Pharaoh's Task-masters, requiring the Tale of Bricks, but not allowing Straw, it impells and presseth, but gives no Enlargement of Heart, and buffets and wounds them for Neglect, as the hard Creditor, that taking the poor Debtor by the Throat, saith, Pay me that thou owest me, but yields him no Power to do it. Thus God might deal with you also, for he oweth not Assistance to us, but we owe Obedience to him, remember we had Power, and it is just to demand what we cannot do, because the Weakness that is in us is of our selves, we have impoverished our selves. Therefore, when, in much Mercy, he puts forth his Hand into the Work with thee, be very thankful. If the Work be not done, he is no Loser, if done, and well done, he is no Gainer, *Job 22. 2. Chap. 35.*

, 7, 8. *Psal.* 16. 2. But the Gain is all to thee, all the Good that comes by it, is to thy self.

And, *this* also take into thy Thoughts, it is a Sign of great Loving-Kindness Consider the infinite Distance betwixt thee and the great God, would a King t down to work for, and with a *mean Man* in his Trade, to help to maintain him? *One thing* more I add, That you have Cause to be thankful, because by this, God testifieth his *Acceptance* of thee and of thy Way, else his Hand would be far from thee Get therefore and keep thy Heart in a thankful Plight This is the Way to continue it.

2. With *Faithfulness* Take Heed of taking from God, do set up thy self, put not that to thy Account which belongs to him, take Heed of Sacrificing to thy strength, or Parts, acknowledge that all the Excellency of all thy Actions is of him. God is very jealous of his Honour, and (as I have said) oftentimes leaves his People to feel their own Weakness, because, they honoured not his Strength If the Faculties of thy Soul bring in willingly and plentifully Offerings unto God, say *David*, when so much Store, with much Freeness, was brought in by the People to build the Temple. Now *God*, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious Name, but *to am I*, and *what is my People*, that we should be able to do so willingly after this Sort? For all Things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee; O Lord our God, *this Store that we have prepared to build thee an House to thine holy Name, cometh of thine Hand, and is all thine*. *1 Chron.* 29. 14, 16. So the Apostle, when, in that Distress before Nero, he was so courageous, did not ascribe it to his own Strength, but acknowledged that it was the Lord, *The Lord stood by me and strengthened me*, *2 Tim.* 4. 17. It was his Way to strip himself, and to cast the Honour of all his Ministry and Actions upon God, *By the Grace of God I am that I am*, *Cor.* 15. 9, 10. And you see with how full a Gale of divine Grace he was carried in all his Way. Learn there-

therefore in all Things, wherein the Excellency and Life of Grace shines forth, to know, that as the Stars shine not by their own Light alone, but by a Light which they have from the Sun, so thy Lustre and Vigour in thy Way is not of thy self, but from him who is thy Life; that thou mayst not draw down that to the Feeding of thy Pride, which should be to the Glory of God. Whatever thou dost, when ever thou art carried through any Service, still say as the Apostle, *Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any Thing as of our selves, but our Sufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. I may say in spiritual Sense, as Solomon in a natural, *Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the first Fruits of all thy Increase, so shall thy Barns be filled with Plenty, and thy Presses shall burst out with new Wine*. Prov. 3. 9 10. by the first Fruits they acknowledged, That all was his, and that it was not their Tillage and Labour, but the Influence of his Blessing, which caused the Field to be clad with Grass, and stored with Corn, so thou acknowledge that it is not any Thing in thee, but all of God that thou bringest forth the Fruits of Righteousness, and then his Promise is to be with thee, and to make thee to abound still, and to bring forth more Fruit, *Psal. 73. 23, 24.*

2. Use his Help. When he comes with Excitement and Enlargements of Heart, turn not back the Inspiration of the Almighty. *Quenching the Spirit* is often the Cause why God shuts in his Spirit. I have spoken of this before, but I will add somewhat more here in Discovery how we sin against the Spirit. Know therefore that thou mayst grieve the Spirit, not only by doing Evil voluntarily against Knowledge, but also by omitting Good, *Reminds us of*

1. By omitting of a known Duty. When God sheweth you what is good, and stands ready to help you, if you walk not in your Way, you provoke him to leave you, and because this is an Evil so incident unto Men, to Sloth and worldly Affections and Distractions, I briefly declare, 1. The Sinfulness, 2. The Foolishness

First, *It is a denying of God his Due*: A withholding in him that which is due to him, as you are his creatures, Servants, Children, a People in Covenant. It comes not to you, as that cruel Servant to his Fellow-servant, *Matth. 18. 28, 29.* But he entreats and graciously moves for his own, he forgave you all your former Debts, and now though he might demand the whole, yet he is content to take it, as you can pay it; and will you now deny him? The Flesh calls, and you yield; the World commands, and you obey, yet you are not Debtors to these, but to the Spirit; *Rom. 8. 2.* God comes with one Hand to give, as with the other to take, and he gives more to you, than he demands of you, he gives you Leave to ask him whatsoever you will, *Matth. 21. 22.* and is not backward to hear, *He doth not turn back your Prayer, Psal. 66. 19, 20.* He might have said, upon your praying to him, as *Solomon of Adonijah*; *God do so to me and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this Word against his own Life, 1 Kings 2.* And if he should shut out your Prayer, what a sad Case would you be in? Therefore, be not of a withholding Heart, to deny God. Consider further, when you do neglect and refuse to do your Duty, you deny his Sovereignty, and in Effect, you say as *Pharaoh, Who is the Lord that I should obey his Voice?* *Exod. 4. 3.* And as those Rebels, *this Man shall not have Dominion over us, Luk. 19. 14.* And your denying of God in this kind, is worse than when the Wicked, and such as are forsaken of him, do deny him, for 1. They stand not engaged unto God, God hath not paid so dear for them, he hath not done that Good for them that he hath done for you, they have not so given up themselves to him as you have done, yet, when they do not what they know, he visits their Sin upon their Heads. God took the kingly Throne from that great King *Nebuchadnezzar*, for his Sin, and so God dealt with his son *Belshazzar*, the Reason you may see, *Dan. 5. 22. Thou, O Belshazzar his Son, hast not humbled thy self, though thou seest all this.*

2 You

2. *You stand with God for a small Matter*, having given up your selves to God. If a Man sue to a Woman, he taketh it, not so ill, that she will not bestow herself upon him, as being his Wife, that she denyeth him some particular Duty.

3. *They never knew that of God*, nor of his Way as you have done: They think it is a hard Way, and that God is an hard Master, but you have found much Good. 1. *A gracious Assistance*, God meeting you in the Way with a gracious Hand of Help. 2. *A sweet Recompence*, the Work hath been your Wages, it hath brought Meat in the Mouth. Therefore, it is very sinful for you to withdraw from the Way.

Secondly, There be other particular Aggravations of the Sinfulness of this, respecting the Duty, Neglect.

1. In Respect of the Duty, Omission becomes more sinful.

1. When the Duty is of great Importance, when much hangs upon it. As 1. The Duties of publick Places, Magistracy, or Ministry, for if such be neglected, much Evil followeth. 2. The Duties that have greatest Influence into the Life of a Christian, as Meditation, Searching the Heart, Repentance, &c. If these be not done, God loseth his Due many other Ways, because the Spirit and Life of other Duties depends upon these, all Duties are necessary, but some are of more Importance, there are *σπουδαιότερα τοῦ νόμου*, these Things must be especially minded, Matth. 23. 23 Luke 11. 42.

2. When the Duty is much enforced, by former Resolutions, by present Impulsions.

3. When you have found much Good in it.

4. When it is most facile, in Respect of Ability and Opportunity. In such Cases the Disobedience of the Heart is greater; and so the Sin also is greater.

2. In Respect of the Neglect, the Sinfulness is encreased;

1. When it is extended: When voluntarily a Man lives in Neglect of that he knoweth.

2. When

2. When *not lamented*, the Heart being not only stubborn, but secure, senseless, impenitent. In these Cases this Sin becomes exceeding sinful, and very provoking.

2. As you have seen the *Sinfulness*, so cast your Eye upon the *Foolishness*, of denying God what he calls for.

1. In every voluntary *Action*, you have a *Reason* that moves you, especially, when *two Ways* are set before you: Now then, consider what it is that *moves* thee to withdraw thy self from that, unto which thou art excited of God; what is it, the shunning of any Evil? Think then, if the *Good* which is in God's Way be not *greater than all Evil*, and if the *Loss of God* be not a *greater Evil*, than all the *Evil* thou shunnest. Or what, is it the Difficulty of the Duty? Think then, hast thou not found the Way *smooth*, Doth not God offer his *Hand* with thee to the Work? What is the Work to the Wages? Or what is it to gratifie thy self with some present Advantage? Think then if any Thing can be good *without God*, and if there be not a greater Good in his Way, and if thou mayst not have that very Thing in God's Way, which thou seekest out of it. Thus you will find that *without Reason* you deny God.

2. God *hath devised the best Way for your Good*, his Wisdom and Goodness have conspired to prepare that Way which might be *best* for you. Therefore, to follow your own Counsels and Affections before his Counsel is *Folly*, see all that God hath done, look into this visible World, who could have by Wisdom framed and ordered every Thing in that Order and Beauty, as all Things now stand by his Hand? Yet this is the great *Foolishness* of the World, Men think they can order Things *better for themselves* than God hath done, and this very Principle is the main Root of all the Strayings of Men. But suppose a *Ship* at Sea in the Winds, among many Rocks, whether were it better that the Pilot, who is skilful, should steer her, or the Passenger who knoweth not his Way? Consider that Good and Evil are *hardly known*, they many Times are *veiled* with
K such

such Villages that there needs Wisdom to discern, and it is always safest to follow the greatest Light. Your Wisdom is but *borrowed*, it is but a Drop from that Ocean of Wisdom, which is in him who is *Wisdom*, and it was given you for *this End*, that you might be ordered by his Wisdom, to the *true* and to the *greatest* Good, as the Eye in the Body was given you, not to be a sole and sufficient Guide to the Body, but that by it you might be *capable* of the Light of the *Sun*, without which the Eye cannot see. Therefore it is *Folly* to be led by your own Spirits, and not by God's.

3. *You cross your Hopes and Prayers*, for it is in vain to ask or expect any Good, but in the Way of Good. God that undertakes to save you, hath shewed you the Way; now if you refuse the Way, you refuse your own Good, *Psal. 73. 24. Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel, and afterward receive me to Glory.*

4. You refuse to do *what you must do*, when God speaks he will not be denied: If you stand out now, he will have it out another Way, he will have it out in Repentance, and Mourning, and though now thy Heart be not bowed to do thy Duty, he will make thee repent thy Folly, before he will put up such Disobedience.

2. Secondly, You sin against the Spirit, when you do *less than is clearly due*, when you do not, as Caleb, who followed the Lord wholly, *Numb. 14. 24. Josh. 14. 14.* When like ill Debtors you pay *something*, but not the *Whole*. Think not that it is enough for you to be doing Good, for you may as well *sin* in doing Good, as in doing Evil, and indeed a good Man sins more in Good than in Evil. Now note that the Deficiency of a Man in doing Good is from a *two-fold Spring*.

1. *Insufficiency of Strength.*

2. *Malignity and Sinfulness of Heart.*

In the *Former*, you are like a *sick Man* that cannot do what he would, in the other, like an *idle Man* that will not do what he can. The Difference in these two is,

1. That

1. That when a Man comes short out of *Weakness*, there is a *present Willingness*, his Heart yields all, he consents fully to the Demands of God, and grieves that he cannot do what he would, *Rom. 7.*

2. It is not *imputed unto Sin*: God will not charge the Defect upon such as are his, because they are *not under the Law but under Grace*, *Rom. 6.*

But *voluntary Neglects* he will require at your Hands: It is certain all the other Churches were found defective, and did not all they should as, well as *Ephesus*, but this was that which brought *Ephesus* under the Rod, because she did not what she *could*, but was *voluntarily deficient*, *Apoc. 2. 2.*

And a Man may be defective *two Ways*.

1. By doing less for *Quality* than he should, not putting so much into his Duty as belongs to it, or not bestowing the Cost that he might, but being slight, formal, heartless, &c. This is like unto their Sin in *Mal. 1. 14.* having in the Flock a *Male*, they offered a *corrupt Thing*, this provoked God unto Indignation, yea to Execration against them, God looks for what we can, *Dent. 6. 6. Eccles. 9. 10.* so David saith, he did, *I have prepared with all my Might*, &c. *1 Chron. 29. 2.* Common Stuff will serve for an ordinary House, but if it be for a Palace for a King, then Silver and Gold and great Art is used.

2. By doing less for *Quantity* than we ought: God stands much upon Quantity, because all our Ability is from him, and to curtail his Service is a Dishonour to him, for it detracteth from his Greatness, and sheweth what little Respect the Heart bears him, when it puts him off with half, short, lame and curtailed Duties; we are wont to frame our Actions and Carriages towards Men in a Way proportionable to their Quality, our Deportment unto a King is such as may declare a Stamp and Impression of his Majesty in the Heart; God is sensible of this Disesteem. See how he pleads with them, *Mal. 1. 8. If ye offer the Blind for Sacrifice, is it not Evil?*

And if ye offer the Lame and the Sick, is it not evil? Offer it now unto thy Governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy Person, saith the Lord of Hosts? and ver. 14. Cursed be he that hath a Male, &c. For I am a great King saith the Lord of Hosts, and my Name is dreadful among the Heathen. And again, if God should not be strict in the Quantity of his Service, Religion in Time might come to nothing, it would be so lessened and nibbed, that in Time there would scarce be any Memorial of a God, or any Honour done unto him.

Here, by the Way, let me take Liberty to answer two Questions.

C H A P. XX.

Q. Quest. Since all come short of what they know they should do, and God imputes not that as Sin to them that are Believers, How may a Man know when his Deficiency is imputed as a Sin to him?

Ans. 1. **W**hen his Defect is voluntary: He doth but little, and is not willing to do more, he knoweth he should do more, but his Will is against it, God expects this at least, that though his People be unable to do all, yet they should be willing, he will have all their Hearts towards him. And this David gave in Charge to his Son Solomon. And thou, Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind: For the Lord searcheth all Hearts, and understandeth all the Imaginations of the Thoughts: If thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever, 1 Chron. 28. 9.

2. When you do less than you have done. The necessity still urging, Conscience still pressing, Opportunity still serving, this was the Sin of that backsliding People, Apoc. 2. 4. They fell from their first Works. Therefore Christ threatened to forsake them.

3. When you do less than those that have like Abilities, Occasions, Engagements, Opportunities, but much

much more clearly you sin, when others that have more Straits, more Encumbrances, less Abilities, less Means, less Advantages, shall exceed you in Fruitfulness, and all the Ways of Godliness and Piety.

4 When you live not by what you do, but Lusts grow strong, and Grace weak, and all is worse and worse; as in the Regiment of bodily Health, when a Man declines, it is a Sign he hath not a due Care of his Dye, or Rest, or Exercise, you must hold up Life, the Church of Ephesus doubtless was doing, but she was still a Loser, her Spirit and Strength decayed, as it is with him that is in his Trade, but doth not follow it to Purpose, and so goeth back in his Estate, according to the wise Men's Speech *He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack Hand, but the Hand of the Diligent maketh rich*, Pro. 10.

4 By much Slothfulness the Building decayeth, and through Idleness of the Hands the House droppeth through. Eccles. 10. 18.

5 When God accepts not what you do, when he is pleased with our Ways, he sheweth his Liking of them, sometimes by a secret Testimony, giving Joy, *Our Rejoicing is this, that is Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God we have had our Conversation in the World, and more abundantly to you ward*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Enoch had this Testimony, *That he pleased God*, Heb. 11. 4, 5. Sometimes by Rewarding, as he did Phineas, Num. 24. 11, 12, 13. Sometimes by filling the Heart with much spiritual Life and Vigour in the Work, but where God accepts not, there is a Damp upon the Spirit, the Duty goeth forth like the Raven out of the Ark, but returneth not as the Dove with an Olive-Branch in the Mouth, a Man is no Way bettered by what he doth.

6 Enquire into the Reason why you do less than God calls for, and take a true Account of thy self, ask thy Heart what moves, and take a full Answer from it, for you may discern by the Reason that it gives, whether all be well or no, no Doubt but it will have some-

what to pretend, but weigh all in the Ballance ; if the Reason be insufficient, you are sinfully deficient ; as if you find Slothfulness, Lothness to be at so much Pains, which was their Fault, *None stirreth up himself to &c. Isa. 64. 7.* Or if it be Respects to rhy-Lusts, thy needlesse Ease, superfluous Gain, unnecessary Employment, unseasonable Delight ; these and such like, robbing God of his Due, leave a great Guilt upon the Soul.

2. Quest. *How may a Man know he doth his Duty, when the Heart is still pressed to more and more than is done ?*

Ans. By Way of Caution, Proposition.

1. Caution, be liberal ; keep your Hearts open and full for God . Though other Things should be done, yet the Heart may, and ought to hang most after God . These Paths are more noble, more sweet, more suitable to an holy Heart, a Child should be willing to do what his Father bids him, though he send him as David into the Field to keep Sheep, but he had rather be in his Father's Presence . You should always come to God with Delight in him, and go away with Desire after him, as they say in Meats, it is good to live with an Appetite, Satiety is hurtful, that Friend is scarce welcome that is glad to be gone from us, it is a Sign you have little Love to God, when you come with Unwillingness, stay with Weariness, and go out with Gladness, be ever bent towards him, account your Duties, and converse with him your pleasant Seasons , let all other Things be as your Labour, this as your Meal, never think you do enough, say as David, *I will yet praise him more and more* Psal. 71. 14.

2. Caution, be rational : Take Heed of being bound with more Laws than are imposed by God, and of adding to the Yoke which he puts upon you, there may be much Deceit in this, in having the Heart engaged to more than God requires . There are two Things which concurring with Principles and Dispositions that are good and holy, may vex the Soul with a Kind of spiritual Oppression and Extortion.

1. *An erroneous Conscience* : As sometimes it errs by exacting *less* than it should, and giving *Acquittances* when the Debt is not fully discharged. So sometimes it errs by going beyond its *Commission*, and exacting *above the Bond*. A weak Servant sent to gather up his Master's Debts, may mistake his Business, by misjudging of the *Sums*, requiring an *hundred Pound* where the Bond is but for an *hundred Crowns*. The Spirit of a Man is so apt to err, that, like Water, which is hardly kept within its Bounds, if it transgress not on the left Hand by *Defect*, it often mistakes on the right Hand by *Excess*. Thus *superstitious Spirits* do more than they need, and ly in the *Chains* of their own making, subjecting themselves to Ordinances and Ways which God made not, Poverty, single Life, absolute Obedience unto Men, Confessions, Pennance, Fastings, Watchings, Pilgrimages, Canonical Hours of Prayer, &c. *Superstition is prodigal*, and there is this *Quality* in Men, that in those Things which indeed are *enjoyed of God* they are deficient, but in their own *Inventions* abundant, they are loth that God should carve for himself, but if God will take it of their *Cutting*, they will go far. So the *Pharisees*, who, in a Way of Religion, were most *irreligious*, neglected *Judgment and Mercy*, Luk. 11. 42. but in *Traditions and Rules* of their own Coynning, they were very free and liberal: *Papistry* offends more by *Addition and Multiplication* in Religion, than by *Subtraction*.

And as the *superstitious*, so the *melancholy* and fearful Spirits are often ready to go beyond the *Line*, and bring themselves into *inhabitable* and unsufferable Ways of Religion. Where the *Sun of Piety* in a mistaking and yielding Spirit, is so *hot*, that nothing can grow for it, *Nature* is parched, *Strength* wasted, *Health* impaired, *Estate* neglected. I have known some that have thought themselves ill employed in *any Thing* but in the *Exercise of Religion*, and when they have been in their *Business*, or at *Meat*, or in *Bed*, have been forced to lay by all, and to go to *Prayer*, or &c.

2. *Sa-*

2. *Satan* puts Men upon more, as he is sometimes an *Angel of Darknes* withholding Men from Good, or drawing to *Evil*, so he is sometimes as an *Angel of Light* exciting unto Good: For 1. *It is his Principle* and constant *Rule*, as much as he can, to *sail with the Wind*, and to row with the Tyde, to joyn himself to the Tempers and Spirits of Men in their *own Way*, and if he find Principles and Dispositions not altogether so fit for his Turn, if he cannot change them, he will rather use them as he finds them, than *cross* them. So he found in the *Jews* a great Zeal for the Law of *Moses*, and he makes this Use of it, to set them against the Gospel. *Saul* also was one that made Conscience (as it seeth) of seeking God before he went to Battle, and hereupon *Samuel* not coming according to Expectation, *Satan* puts him to offer Sacrifice himself, and did it with that Impetuousness and Importunity, that though *Saul* knew it was not his Office, yet the Case standing as it did, *He forced himself, and offered the burnt Offering*, 1 Sam. 13. 12.

2. *Satan* hath, in this Way, a great End, he brings Men by it into great Straits, what have the *Jews* lost by that misguided Zeal, and religious Disposition? And by this he wearieth and tyreth out the Spirits of Men in their Way, and breeds in them a Dislike and Weariness in Religion, riding the Soul, as it were, out of Breath, so we have known many very forward and active for a Time, but now, as wearied Men, they are laid down to rest, and their Life is gone. By this also he works ill Effects on others, who, by the vigorous Courses of Men religious, look upon Religion as a Tyrant, who is able to sum up his Treacheries? What a Plot was that which he had at Corinth. His Device was to get Advantage upon them, 2 Cor. 2. 11. And how? he seeth a Zeal in the Church against the Offender, and a mournful Spirit in the poor Man, and now he drives on the Chariot, and works in the zealous Spirit of the Church, that they may hold on in a severe Way against him, that so, *He might be swallowed up of overmuch Sorrow*, 2 Cor. 2. 7.

Quest.

Quest How may a Man know when he is pressed to Good, that it is by Satan?

Ans. The Print of his Foot will be found where he hath been, and though he put upon Good, yet it is ever in an evil Way, as for Instance he may be discerned;

1. When he divides Piety from Mercy, and carrieth the Soul on without Care of the Body, when God comes, he comes with much Goodness; and as Jacob drave softly, as the Children and Cattle were able, Gen. 33. 14. so he will not so put on the Soul as to destroy the Body, Grace and the Law are for the Perfection of Nature, not Destruction, the Religion that Satan deviseth is hard and cruel. How did the Priests of Baal cut and launce themselves, even till the Blood poured out? 1 Kings 18. 28. The Jews learned of God to sacrifice Beasts, but of Satan to sacrifice their Children, They burned their Sons and their Daughters in the Fire which I commanded them not, neither came it into my Heart, Jer. 7. 31. Rather than his Servants shall be oppressed, he will lose his Right. I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice, Mat. 12. 7.

Yet we must not press this Rule of Mercy too far to an immoderate Indulgence unto Nature, the Soul must not be too much Loser by the Body, nor God for Man, nor must this be extended to the base Favouring and sparing of our selves in Times of Persecution, For he that so saves himself shall lose himself, Luke 9. 24. If you send your Servant upon Business of great Concernment, and he fall sick, and so do not what you expected, you excuse him, but if he say as the Sluggard, Prov. 20. 4. The Wind blew, and the Air was stormy, and wet, and cold, you will not like this well. So when you cannot do him Service through Disproportion of your Strength to your Work, he will bear with you, but whatever it costs you from Men and Devils, when you know his Will, as you are able, you must obey.

2. When he divides betwixt Piety and Charity. As when the Jews devoted so much to pious Uses, that they left nothing for their Friends, no not for their Parents; but

but when their Father, and Father in Necessity asked Relief, they said, *It is a Gift by whatsoever thou mayst be profited by me*, Mat. 15. 5. That is to say, That which thou askst for thy Supply is given to another Use, and I have nothing for thee. Again, when Men walk in such a Way of Religion, that they provide not for their Families, which is so far from Christianity, that the Apostle saith, *He is worse than an Infidel that provideth not for his Family*, 1 Tim. 5. 8.

Again, when Servants bestow that Time with God which belongs to Man: God never demands of you that which is not yours, he never requires you to rob your Master's to pay him.

3. When *without Order and Reason*, as when you are put upon one Duty in the Season of another. As when your calling, refreshing Occasions truly and necessarily call you one Way, and yet Conscience driveth another; or when you are hearing, to be put upon Reading. Again, when you are put upon extraordinary Duties without extraordinary Occasions, or when put upon such Actions as belong not to your Place; as Saul to offer Sacrifice, Uzziab to burn Incense. Let this suffice for the first Way of answering the Question.

The second Way of answering is by Proposition.

1. Proposition. There are Bounds of Duties of Godliness. For the Law is full of Reason, now Reason requires no Action without Limits, if it bid a Man ear, give, labour, &c. it together with the Matter includes the Measure, if a Master bid his Servant go, and say not whither, and how far, how can the Servant obey, when he knoweth not his Master's Mind? If I would have an House built, or a Garment made, except I appoint the Bounds and Measure, how can the Artificer fit my Desire?

Now there are Bounds for Extension, Limitation of Actions.

The Bounds of Extension shew how far you are to go And I will, in General, lay down three Rules to find this out, how much you must do?

1. A

1. *Ability and Opportunity* • Where much is given, much is required, and to whom Men have committed much, of him they ask the more, Luk. 12. 48. Where God soweth much, he will reap much, that may be enough from one, which is too little from another, yea, that may be Abundance in one, which is scant in another, he that had but two Talents did well with Praise, in gaining other two, but if he that had had five Talents had done no more, he had not had such Praise Where God gives much Grace and large Opportunities, such must do much, you that have much Knowledge, spiritual Engagements, Fulness of the World, much Time, know that you should be more with God than others. Honours is your Trade, and your Closets are your Shops, and every Day is a Sabbath to you, and this is a great Favour that God hath freed you from inferiour Drudgery, to employ you in more noble Things In the Court, which are happiest, they that are in the Kitchen, or they that attend upon the Prince? If then you see others that are poor and held to work hard for a mean Living, more lively, more frequent, more abundant in Duties than your selves, know now you walk not by Rule.

2. *Sufficiency for the good State of the Soul* As the Body must have so much Food, Rest, Exercise allowed to it, as may uphold it You must do so much as may

1. Keep the Soul in *Life*, when you grow weak, dull, languid, you do not enough.

2. To keep the Soul in *Health*: The Health of the Body is the Peace and Concord of all Things in it self; such also is the *Health* of the Soul, you must put forth your selves so far as to keep the Soul from *Molestation*. A threefold *Molestation* comes by doing less than that which God calls for.

1. A *restless Accusation of Heart* • Conscience will not be quiet till God have his Due, but it will dog you with uncessant vexative Reproofs, it is like, David lived not in a total Neglect of Repentance and humbling himself after his Sin, but, till he came to the Work in Earnest, he had no Quiet, Ps 32. 3.

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2. A *strong pulling* and drawing of Heart ; when the Heart is set towards God it cannot be quiet but in him, and where the *Disposition* and *Motion* of a Thing are at Variance, this breeds Disturbance, when Nature is not satisfied it is unquiet, how will the Stomach pull, when it is not fed ?

3. An *Impetuousness of Lusts* : The Field of the Sluggard will be overgrown with Weeds, as when you keep the Body too short of her Due, it breeds painful Diseases. So Lusts grow, when you do not enough, when you do *least*, Satan doth *most*, your *Night* is his *Day*, when you *remit* he *intends* his Forces.

3. *Occasions*. You must proportion your Labours according unto them, sometimes your ordinary Course is not enough, as in Times of strong Tentations, violent Corruptions, great Afflictions, inward Affrightments, publick Fears and Calamities. As in the *natural State* of Man, sometimes it is necessary to allow more rest, and more Food ; and in the *civil State*, if a Man be grown poor, he works the harder, if a Kingdom be in Danger, it doubles her Care, and Endeavours of her Conservation. So Paul when the Messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him, *Prayed thrice* 2 Cor 12. When Peter was in Prison, *Prayer without Ceasing was made for him*, Acts 12. 5. Ezra hearing of the great Sin of the People, rent his Garments and Mantle, plucked off the Hair of his Head and of his Beard, *and sat down afflicted until the Evening Sacrifice*, Ezra 9 4. In such Cases the Body must give Way and all Things else, only we must look to *three Things*.

1. That we judge rightly of *Necessities*.
2. That our *Time* that we spend in Duties be *our own*.
3. That we offer not too much Violence to Nature,
2. There are *Bounds for Limitation*, and it is needful to know and mind them, for we may *overdo* and offend in Excess.

Object

Object. Can a Man do too much, or, is there any Excess in that which is good?

Ans. 1. When it is said, there is no Excess in Religion, you must understand it, rather in Respect of Affection than Action. Though a Man may exceed in the one, yet he cannot in the other, as you cannot love God too much, or desire him too much, or hate Sin too much, or sorrow for it too much. If it be objected, that if the Affections should be very far extended, it might destroy Nature, as we commonly see it in mournful Spirits, and David found it so, *Psal. 13. Psal. 32. &c.* I say, That godly Sorrow never did hurt, but sometimes God drops in Bitterness, and mingles it with it, to the Afflicting of the Soul. And as Water that runs through Mines hath a Tincture and Touch of them, so Sorrow meets with much in us, by which accidentally it becomes hurtful. But godly Sorrow in it self, is, as all other Grace, for the Perfection of Nature, and so far from being an Oppression of it, that unto me it is not altogether improbable, that it shall be in Heaven, for if our Memories abide there to recollect the Ways of this Life, and our Understanding and Will be fully taken up in the Sight and Fruition of God, then I propound this to be considered, Since a little Sight and Taste of God in the World do work Sorrow for Sin, whether an abundant Sight and full Taste will not also do it in Heaven, when a Man shall remember (which I doubt not) his Sins against so good a God.

2. The Goodness of an Action lyeth not only in the Matter, but in the Measure, it must have its just Proportion. As in giving Alms, he that would be truly liberal must not only take Care, *what*, but *how much*, for as it must be proportioned to the Necessity of the Poor, so it must be also to his own Ability, there are Limits in all Duties. Take here three Considerations: 1. There are various Duties, therefore I must not be all in one, or in a few, with Neglect of the Rest, nor, in the Worship of God, I must not lay out all my self, so that Man
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shall not have his Due, for God that hath appointed a Service *immediately* to himself, hath also required a Service *mediately* to be performed, that is to say, hath consigned somewhat to Man, to be payed to him. As a King so requires Honour and Service to himself, that he will have some also to be conferred upon his *Attendants*. This is the Fault of those that are unreasonable in Religion, affecting a Monastick and retired Life, upon Pretence of bestowing all upon God, but Religion consists of Duties to be performed, some to God, and some to Man: And as the Boat cannot move rightly, when the Oars on one Side only are plyed, or as the Fowl, if the use only one Wing cannot flie up, so Religion will not profit, which hath one Hand wrapped up, that should be towards Man, in all Offices of Charity, tho' the other be used towards God, in all Offices of Piety. For this the Jews were blamed, who were liberal in their Kind towards God, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt Offerings, with Calves of a Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with Thousands of Rams, or with ten Thousands of Rivers of Oil, &c?* Mic. 6. 6, 7. Here are large Offers unto God, but they neglected Judgment and Mercy to their Brethren: Therefore how doth the Lord answer them? *He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* vers. 8. And the Apostle hath the like, 1 Cor. 13. 3.

2. *Distinguish of Actions*, some are *occasional*, they are to continue only during the *Occasion*, as feasting in some Time of great *Rejoicing*, fasting in some Time of great *Mourning*, some are *subservient*, and introductory to others; as studying to Preaching, Consideration to Prayer, Examination to the Sacrament. Now as a Man must not always abide in the *Porch*, so he is not to thrust out the *main Duty*, by continuing in the *subservient Duty*, as many do excuse themselves from Preaching, upon Pretence of still fitting themselves for the Work, and so they re
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like Men that gather Timber and Stones all their Days, but never build. In these *preparatory* Duties, a Man must have a Care of his End, and wisely order his Way; and take this *Rule*, when the Heart is in some good Measure quickned, then you have the End of that Duty, and so in the Fulness of your Spirit must go forth to meet the Lord in Faith and Confidence of Acceptance.

3 You must take Heed of *unfitting your selves by one Duty for another*, especially by the *less*, for the *more principal*, as to draw out your Spirits so far in beginning of the Day in Prayer, and other Duties of like Alloy, as to indispose and disable your selves for the Work of the Day.

In all Duties of Godliness, you must be *limited* by Calling, Condition, Ability, Occasion, Opportunity: It is very hard to divide betwixt these Things, and to give Piety *her Due*, other Things *then Due*, and it is impossible punctually to direct every Man in this, how far he should go. But let these general Rules be considered. And *observe this*, that worldly Respects, Indulgence to Nature, Care of Employments, Observance of Occasions, Respect to our Affairs, most commonly gain upon Piety, as the *Seas* gain upon the *Land*; these Things are present, and suitable to Nature, therefore they draw to them with much Strength, and often get *Benjamin's Portion*, and are better served than the Rest, they are *allied* to our Flesh and Kindred, often have better Usage than better Friends, take Heed of this, *the Childrens Bread is not to be given to Dogs*, Nabal will be loath to give his Bread and his Wine to David, Nature will be apt to hold fast, and to be niggardly to Piety. Therefore you must, as wise *Umpires*, moderate on both Sides, and take Heed the lean *Kine* eat not up the fat, how many Souls are like *Anatomies* and *Skelitons*, whose outward Man in Strength, Pleasure, Wealth, are like the *Kine of Bashan*.

2 Proposition. There is a Prudence in Christians directing them, as well in *Measure*, as *Matter* and *Manner*.
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of Actions, and the same Light usually sets the Bounds, that sheweth the Duty, *Prudence dwells with Wisdom*, Prov. 8. 12. And that God in whom these are united doth not part them in his Dispensation of Grace to Man, *He hath abounded towards us in all Wisdom and Prudence*, Eph. 1. 8. The Renovation of our Minds makes to know what the good and acceptable Will of God is, Rom. 12. 2. *A good Understanding have all they that do his Commandments*, Pl. 111. 10. And a good Man guides his Affairs with Judgment, Plal. 112. 5. Prudence is of universal Use, insomuch that some Philosophers have thought there is no other Virtue, but that this is that which doth all, and as the Seas passing by several Countries, get several Names, so this Prudence, in Respect of several Objects, is called *Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, &c.* But I should rather say that other Virtues are executive, and this directive, and so it is as needful to the Soul, as the Eye in the Body, all the Graces are as several Members, but how shall they move aright, if the Eye be wanting? God hath not built any Ship to lade it with such Treasure as is in his Saints, and sent it to Sea without this Pilot, all Creatures have their *Instincts* to guide them to their Ends, and the Beast knoweth not only what, but how much to eat, drink, rest, and he that hath given this to all other Creatures, would not make this new Creature, the Godly, as a World without the Sun to give Light unto it. *Wisdom* is the Glory of a Man, and puts the Beauty and Crown upon every Action, except a Man work by this Rule, how crooked and unshapen will his Actions be? Though *Zel* conceals, yet if *Prudence* form not the Conception, the Brit will prove a Monster. It may be said, How is it then that Men err so much, some doing too little, some too much, and that Men know not well how to guide themselves? I answer 1. Their Prudence is imperfect. 2. There is a false Guide in every Man. 3. Satan perverts the Soul by his Counsels. 4. There is a great fault in Men, 1. Inconsiderate, not hearkning to the Counsels of Wisdom,

com, or not consulting with her. 2. Some Spirits are too violent, partly by a natural Vigour and Heat, (and indeed all that is not Grace that seems Grace; when the Temper of the Spirit is not regular according to Rule, it is not right) partly out of excessive Fears, which are apt to hurry the Soul as the Winds do the Ship.

3. Proposition, it is safer to extend your selves by over-abounding than to come short, it favours of a better Spirit, when a Man is free, though in Excess, than when he is slack and backward, and it is not so much Evil by abounding somewhat to pinch the Flesh, as by abating to suffer Loss in the Spirit, the Things that concern the Body are not of such Value as those that concern the Soul, and so much the more Cause you have rather to lean to the right Hand, because, as there is a greater Worth in the Way on the right Hand, so there is usually a Disposition inclining rather to the left Hand. Few Men offend in passing their Bounds. More Men are found defective in giving Alms, than excessive, and so where one is in any Way of Piety carried with too full a Gale, an Hundred ly becalmed, where one Piece is more than Weight, many are found too light.

4. Proposition, That a Man must not be ruled by his own Disposition, but must seek a Rule to walk by, for in some Men the Heart hangs with perpetual Hungring after Converse with God, that if there were nothing to live without them, they would scarce do any Thing else; and there are three Things draw the Heart still unto God.

1. Great Comforts in meeting God in Duty, these make the Soul to say as David, It is good for me to draw near to God, Psal. 73 28. When God opens himself and his Treasures, and lets in his People to his Presence, and feeds them with spiritual and joyful Sights and Tastes, this makes them loath to leave, but they hang unto Duties as the Child to the Breast, and finding so sweet a Conjunction of Plenty and Sweetness, are filled with Delight, and are ready to say to all Things else, as Abraham to his Servant when he went up to the Mount,

Stay thou in the Valley; the *Sponse* was with her Beloved, and found him as an *Apple Tree among the Trees of the Forrest*, whose *Fruit was sweet unto her Taste*, he led her into his *Wine-Celler*, and she was ravished with his *Love*, and greatly solaced in his sweet Embraces, and now see what Care she takes to keep that which she joyed to have, and feared to lose: *I charge you, O ye Daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor awake my Beloved till he please*, Cant 2. 7. But in such a Case, it is a Point of Obedience and Self-denial for a Man to leave his *Banquet*, to do that which he is called to, and we should so prefer God to all our Comforts, as to be content to come down with *Moses* from the Mount, when he hath Business for us below.

2. *Love to God*: This is of a living and large Disposition, and apt to draw the Heart much out, he that loves, comes as a *Friend*, he loves to come and converse with God, and even then when his Necessities are not urgent, yet his Heart is drawing heavenwards, as the Wife loves to be with her Husband, &c.

3. *Necessitousness of Spirit*: When one is sensible of great Wants, great Corruptions, Tentations, Fears, then he is apt to be over-solicitous and active, especially, when such an afflicted Spirit hath either, or both of these two Things.

1. *An Opinion that all Good lyeth in Duties*: When Men think that a hard Heart may be softened, a stiff Heart bowed, a corrupt Heart changed, and all Good obtained by Labour and Sweat, Men that know what it is to want, these will work even their Souls out of Breath, and are so carried with Desire of the Good, that they are not sensible of the Labour. But remember all lyeth in *Christ*, and therefore you must seek it from *Christ* by the Means, if you make Duty and Endeavour your Refuge, you are deceived.

2. If there be an Opinion that God will not accept less; this is the Case of many, they have been at Prayer, and that not only in Sincerity, but with Importunity, and
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with a full Tide of Spirit, and yet they are afraid to betake themselves to their Employments, out of Opinion that they have not done that which is *sufficient*, but that their Occasion and Necessity calls for more still: But herein Men have Under-thoughts of God, as if he were like the Gods of the Heathen that did not hear, or, as if he were hard to be intreated.

For a Close of this Business I will, in a brief View, present some Things that are *considerable* in Way of Satisfaction in such Cases.

1. Distinguish between *Occasions*, and *Duties ordinary and extraordinary*: For as when an *extraordinary* or great Person comes, all stand by and give him Place, which we will not if an *ordinary* and common Man come, so Affairs and Things of the World and Nature do stand for their own, and will not be set aside for *ordinary Duties*, to wait at the Closet-Door, as when an *extraordinary* Service is performed. Your *Time* is divided betwixt *Heaven* and *Earth*. Therefore you must not only give to both, but with *Equality*, each must have his *own*.

2. *There is a Time to wait as well as to work*: When you have presented your Suits with what Strength you are able, now Faith must come in and lay hold upon the Promise, and you ought to believe that God heareth. for you have his Word. *The Eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Prayers*, Psal 34. 15. Remember you come not to God to obtain a Promise and Grant, but it is obtained in *Christ*, you must only *sue it out* by Prayer, and *whatsoever you ask in Christ's Name, believing you shall receive it*, Matth. 21. 22. So David's Practice, he begins often with *Prayer*, but ends with *Praise*, it is Want of Faith that causeth Unquietness, though you should not rest on your *Duties*, yet you should rest in the *Promise*, if God hear not at *first*, yet he will hear at *last*, yea he hears when you think he hears not. But you must give *God Time* that is all he requires, the *Thing* shall be

be yours, but the *Time* is his ; do with your *Prayers* as with your *Seed*, be patient till God come, *Behold the Husbandman waiteth for the precious Fruit of the Earth, and hath long Patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter Rain.* Jam. 5 7. Be ye also patient, *stablish your Hearts, for the Coming of the Lord, a watching* When you have preferred a *Petition* to the *King*, you do not fall presently to write another, but you wait a *Time* convenient, and then you move again, so do with God, the *Door* is open, you may come again in due *Time*, but live by *Faith*, and rest upon him as upon one that cannot fail you ; yea, though you, in *Weakness*, should have had *Thoughts* of him, though it may keep you long from the *Accomplishment* of your *Desire*, yet not always. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot dery himself, 2 Tim. 2 13.

3. Then a Christian may conceive he walks approvedly in the *Path* of *Piety*, when his *Soul* is held up in *Life*, and when he groweth up in *Christ*, when God blesteth his *Labours*, it is a *Sign* he accepts them, and though you cannot find a *Growth* upward in *Joy*, and *Peace*, and *Triumph* of *Spirit*, yet see if you grow not downward in *Humility*, *Hungering*, *Mourning*, *Zeal*, and see if all *Grace* be not more and more ridicited and confirmed in you. I have been haply too large in this *Digestion*, but I have done it for the *Satisfaction* of such as walk heavily, not knowing their *Bounds*. I return now to the *Direction*, which was, to improve divine *Assistance* when you have it : When God comes to fetch you to him, if you put him off as the Church did, *Cant.* 5 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. you may lose him as she did. Sometimes God comes as the *Angel* to *Lot*, and with a mighty *Power* draweth on his *People*, and will not leave them, but at other *Times* he so moves them, that the *Working* of his *Power* doth not effectually carry on the *Soul*, but leaves them at their *Choice*, and now, when the *Wind* serveth, if we hoise not *Sail*, we may be becalmed. Therefore accept the *Season* of *Grace*, and be doing.

ing. And I say to you as David to Solomon, Be strong and of good Courage, and do it. Fear not, nor be dismayed: For the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee, he will not leave thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the Work for the Service of the House of the Lord, 1 Chron. 28. 20.

C H A P. XXI.

Third Means to retain a divine Presence is Prayer, in which, Care must be had of the Rise, Carriage, and End of it.

THirdly, take this Direction, beg his assisting Grace: Prayer is the Way to get it. In the sight of thy Deadness, look up to the God of Life, and pray with David, Make me to go in the Path of thy Commandments, for therein do I delight. Incline my Heart unto thy Testimonies, and not to Covetousness. Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity. And quicken thou me in thy Way. Quicken me after thy Loving-Kindness, so shall I keep the Testimony of thy Mouth. Hear my Voice according to thy Loving-Kindness: O Lord, quicken me according to thy Judgment. Consider how I love thy Precepts, quicken me, O Lord, according to thy Loving-Kindness. Psal. 119. 35, 36, 37 88, 149, 159. When you find your Spirit willing, yet weak, that you cannot walk in your Way without Help, then go to God, and pray as David, Uphold me according to thy Word, that I may live. Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe, and I will have Respect unto thy Statutes continually, Psal. 119. 116, 117.

In your Prayer for Help, I will propound three Things considerable, for better Direction, the Rise, Carriage, and End of your Desire.

1 The Rise must be 1 a strong Desire of Walking with God: Then you are like to prevail when you come in Truth, Help is often desired out of Custom, and in this Way many Prayers are lost. Therefore get thy Heart to love the Way, and when thy Heart is with God, his Hand will be with thee, this Argument David used in seeking

ing Help of God, Make me to go in the Path of thy Commandments for therein do I delight, Psal. 119. 35 Let thine Hand help me, for I have chosen thy Precepts, ver. 173. With my whole Heart have I sought thee. O let me not wander from thy Commandments, ver. 10. Take Heed lest your Hearts draw back, when you seem to crave his Grace, that you may walk in his Ways, for in such God hath no Pleasure.

2. The Rise must be Necessity. Be sensible of your own Insufficiency, taking Heed of trusting to your own Strength, I have shewed the Evil of it before. Trust in the Lord with all thine Heart: And lean not unto thine own Understanding. In all thy Ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy Paths, Prov. 3. 5, 6. But be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might, Ephes. 6. 10 He that seeth and considereth the Multiplicity and Spiritualness of Duties, the Variety and Activeness of Corruptions, the Swarms and Violence of Tentations, &c. which ly in his Way, will see he stands in Need of a greater Strength than his own, that he may break through, walk on, and persevere unto the End, and he will be forced to use such Language as you find, Psal. 143. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Hear me speedily, O Lord, my Spirit faileth: Hide not thy Face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the Pit. Cause me to know the Way wherein I should walk: For I lift up my Soul unto thee. Teach me to do thy Will, for thou art my God, thy Spirit is good. Lead me into the Land of Uprightness. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy Name's Sake, &c. And he will cry out as he, We have no Might against this great Company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our Eyes are upon thee, 2 Chron 20. 12. Necessity must make you Beggars, you must see that you cannot live upon the Stock which you have received, God hath not given you so much, as that you should be able to subsist without him, the more indigent and poor you are, the more welcome you are to God, the Needy shall find Favour, He filleth the Hungry with good Things

Go then, and take up David's Words, *I am poor and needy, make haste unto me, O God: Thou art my Help, and my Deliverer, O Lord, make no tarrying, Psal. 70. 5.* And say as Moses, *If thy Presence go not with me, carry us not hence. For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy People have found Grace in thy Sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us?* Exod 33 15, 16 Go with the Apostle, and pray much, and you shall have like Answer from Heaven, *My Grace is sufficient for thee, 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9.*

2. The Carriage and Managing of your Requests in this Case must be right, with Confidence in the Might and Mercy of God. You have abundant Cause of Cheerfulness in coming to him, for besides this, that it is his Glory to hear, and that our Intercessor, who hath taught us to pray, that we be not led into Tentation, but to be delivered from Evil, and prayed for us himself, is with him, and dear to him, consider this is God's Glory, that the Life and Strength of his People depends upon him, he helped Jesus Christ our Head, Isa. 42. 6 and if he should not help you, the Work would not be perfected. And so all that Christ hath done would come to nothing. God hath called you to this Way, and hath appointed you by it to come to him, so that his End should fail if he help not, for this Cause you have but little in *your selves*, that you might live daily upon his *Alms*, God leaves in you Necessity, that he may better shew his *Mercy*, he will uphold what his Hand hath built, you have Experience of his Presence, if he had not been with you, you had not now been with him, his Promise is with you, *Lo I am with you always, even to the End of the World. Mat. 28. 20* It is a full Promise, like a Stream of living Waters running in the Church for ever, he saith not, *I will be with you*, but *I am with you*, that we might be confident of his *constant Preserence*, and he hath laid up much Treasure in this Promise, and therefore bids us look well into it, exciting by the Word *LO*, which he sets as a Beacon on a Hill, or as a special Mark upon the

the Head of this Promise, as having much in it. Therefore come unto God in much Assurance, he hates Suspitions and Jealousies, *Let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need*, Heb. 4. 16. This may be your Comfort, that what you have not in your selves you have in God, and what you have in God is yours by Promise, go then and sue God upon his own Bond, God will be sought, Prayer is the Key of the Promise, Ezek. 36. 36, 37. Though God be our Friend, he may pass by us if he be not called in, but when he is going from us, Prayer takes hold, When Christ made as if he would have gone further being come to Emmaus, the Disciples constrained him, saying, *Abide with us, and he went in to tarry with them*, Luke 24. 28, 29. David found God when he sought him, *In the Day when I cryed, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with Strength in my Soul*, Psal. 138. 3. When the Angel sounded Glory to God, he proclaimed Peace, and Expectation or Hope to us, as some read it, Luke 2. 14.

3. The End of your Desire must be observed, for if your End be wrong, you are not like to speed, take Heed of drawing down the Things of God to your Ends, for this is evil, it is a mistaking of God to serve you, for the Ends rules, and all that leads to it, is beneath it, the End is above the Means, and all the Means, as Jacob's Sons Sheafs, bow to Joseph's Sheaf, do Homage to the End, they are all for the End's Sake, and what a Thing is this, to set God in a Servility to our Designs? If the Vessels of the Temple might not be put to common Use, how much lets the Help of Grace? Take Heed therefore of seeking your selves, and desiring Assistance to advance your selves, this is to desire God to lend his Help *against himself*, and to make his Spirit the Ladder of our Ambition, it is as if a Pyrate should crave Aid of his Prince, to rob his Country, or, as if a Subject should pray his Sovereign to help him to lift the Crown from his Head, to set it upon his own Head

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You may seek your selves, your own Ends are *allowed* you, but they must keep their *Place*, God must be your *1st End*, come then and say, Lord help me that I may *honour thee*, I owe all to thee, but I can do nothing without thee, if I have Life from thee, I will live to thee, what I receive from thee, I will lay out for thee: *Restore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation, uphold me with thy free Spirit*. This is *David's Prayer*, but what is his End? *Then will I teach Transgressors thy Ways, and Sinners shall be converted unto thee*, Psal 51. 12, 13 As if he had said, Help me by thy Hand, and I will help others, *Draw me*, and I will bring Company with me. *We will run after thee*, Cant. 1 4. Again the Words following, also shew the like Spirit in him, *O Lord open thou my Lips, and my Mouth shall shew forth thy Praise*, Psal. 51. 15. as if he had said, My Tongue is like an Instrument prepared, if thy Mercy may but touch the Strings, it shall sound forth thy Name, *I will run the Way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my Heart*, Psal 119. 32. *Hold thou me up and I shall be safe, and I will have Respect unto thy Statutes continually*, vers. 117. Thus, be you faithful with God, and his Help will not fail you, but while your Eye is on him, his Hand is with you.

C H A P. XXII.

Fourth Means, keeping the Favour of God, with Directions now to do it.

Fourthly, Keep his Favour, and you shall keep his Presence, Love delights and dwells with Love: Though the Lord hath married you to himself in a Covenant that is unchangeable, yet you may have less of your Husband's Company, except you keep his Love; it is not inevitable Transgression, but voluntary Offences which separateth betwixt God and you; take Heed then of harbouring Lusts in Imagination, or Purpose, take Heed of Frowardness and Rebellion of Heart; Unkindness breeds Unkindness, can you with Reason

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expect that God should be with you, when you regard him not? *Can two walk in one Way that are not agreed?* Amos 3. 3. Walk then before him in all Well-pleasing, keep close to Jesus Christ, for all the Love of the Father is laid out upon the Son, and comes to you through him, be dearly affected to his People, for they are his Friends: *God dwelleth in such*, 1 John 4. 12. When you have your Friends good Will, you have your Friend, and when you fall into Straits and Lusts, and Men and Devils shall take up Arms against you, if you come and say to God as *Jehoram* to *Jehosaphat*, *The King of Moab hath rebelled against me, wilt thou go with me against Moab to Battle?* God will answer as *Jehosaphat* did, *I will go up, I am as thou art, my People as thy People, and my Horses as thy Horses*, 2 Kings 3. 7. My Brethren, you have a sure Way to return the Favour of your God, he hath shewed you the Way that is good, and have you not one alway with him, which is the Delight of his Soul, one ready at your Request to interpose himself, and to take up all Differences betwixt you and him? Ly not therefore under any Guilt, but every Day renew thy Peace and League with God, by making Christ thine Advocate, then shall his Face shine upon thee, and his Spirit shall not be withheld from thee. Think it not enough to escape his Wrath. A Friend not only dreads *Displeasure*, but delights in the Favour of his Friend, it cannot satisfy a *loving* and a *loving* Saint, that God's Hand is not against him, except it be also with him, or, that God is not his Adversary, except he be his Friend, a wicked Man may fear his Wrath, but a good Man cannot bear his Absence, if then you desire his Presence, keep his Favour. And because nothing but that which is against his Will displeaseth, take Heed of *crossing his Will*. And for this I will prescribe two Rules.

1. *Keep up Love*, for this will make you of one Heart with God. There will be an Harmony in your Heart and his, your Desire and his, your Delight and his, your Wills

Wills will run in the same Channel with his: Fear may make the *Life* better, but Love makes the *Heart* better, it carrieth a Man out of himself, and casts his Affections and Actions into God's Mould, it works after his Pattern, and doth all to please him, as Love in the Wife subjects her Desires to the Desire of her Husband Love would hold you in an uniform Course of Holiness, and all Strayings in Life are from Decayings of Love, this binds the Soul to God. So that, as the Hinder-wheels of the Coach follow the Fore-wheels, being all conjoined, so the Heart is drawn after God by Love, Love will not suffer you to please your selves with any Thing that may not please your God, nor to swerve from this Rule to gain the World: But as God's Love fulfils *your Will* in giving all Good, so your Love in its Measure will fulfil *God's Will* in doing all Good. And this is the Property of our Communion with God, there is a continual Intercourse of Love, God's Will and Man's sweetly conjoining in a happy Concord, mutually delighting each in other, and mutually fulfilling the Desires each of other, *God dwelling in him, and they in him*, 1 John 4. 16. they cleaving to him, and he to them.

And let me a little more open the Power and Efficacy of Love in this Business, and when I have done, you shall see that it contributes not a little to the keeping of the Heart to God.

1. *It sharpens and preserves Desires after God*; and what are Desires but Reachings of the Heart? The Soul by Desires doth, as it were, with *extended* and spread Arms raise it self after God, it will make a Man unfatigable, always thirsting, and now though the Armies of the *Philistines* be in the Way, yet the Soul will break through all for the Waters of *Betlehem* Desires after God hath much Good in them, they *capacitate* the Soul, an hungry Man eats much, the Promise *emptieth* it self freely upon such, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled*, Matth. 5. 6. And

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they quicken the Soul, as they make it *receptive*, so they make it *active*, *Psal. 63. 1.* It sets all the Wheels in Motion, it will not suffer the Soul to be at Rest, it cannot take Content in any Thing except it be fulfilled, but will put out all her Sails and Oars, in strong Pursuance, *Psal. 63. 8. My Soul followeth hard after thee.*

2. It makes *resolute*, regardless of all Things in Comparison of what it longs for, and fearless, and invincible. No Terrors can deter him, but as a Giant he rejoiceth to run his Race. It makes also unweariable, no Labour's too great but Love will find *Patience*, no Difficulties so long, but Love will find *Tolerance*, and Longanimity, nay Love thinks nothing hard, *The Commandments are not grievous, 1 John 5. 3.* It is a great Advantage to have *Strength of Resolution*, for now the Soul will be, 1. *More full in all Endeavours*: The Bow full bent delivers the Arrow with full Strength, a Piece full charged will go off with great Force, and its Fullness and Vigour in doing that, is the Grace of the Action. 2. *More steady*, it is hard to stop the Soul when she runs with Strength. What was said of *Aristides* is much truer here, you may as well almost stay the Sun in Heaven, as put such a one out of his Way. When the Resolutions are strong, the Soul is like a fenced City, it is hard for Tentations to break in. There is Room left for *Satan* to work, when through Coldness of Affection there is Weakness in the Resolution, a faint Denial begets new Suits, and a Door left unbarred gives easie Entrance. *When you cleave not to God with full Purpose of Heart, Acts 11. 23.* other Things may get in betwixt God and you, the Steeple moves not because it is settled upon its Basis, but the Weather-cock is turned with every Wind.

3. It makes the Soul of an *yielding Temper*. When God hath your Love, he hath the Key of your Hearts, Love sets him on the Throne, all the Faculties will bow themselves with Offerings to him, Love opens the Ears to hear God, and moves the Hands to work, and the

the Feet to walk, and the Head to devise for God. God may have any Thing in a Time of Love, he never comes out of Season, when the Heart is in this Temper if he say the Word, it is done, Love cannot say to God, it is full of Promises, easily entreated, is not churlish, but of a liberal Property, it stands ready for all service, and will trample upon all Reasonings, Respects, Contradictions, Rebellions that rise up against God, if God say of the dearest Lust, fall upon him, it will not spare, if God say, I must have thy Liberty, it saith, there it is, if God say, thou must be impoverished for my Sake, it saith, I am content; if God say, I must have thy Life for my Glory, it saith. Lord it is thine, take it, I am thine, do what thou wilt; Love cannot hold when God asketh, but will give all, do all, suffer all, if God call it, it will run out of Estate, Peace, Friends, the World it self, yea, when it doth much, it thinks it little, yea nothing, and so when it hath been labouring for God, it still saith with David, *What shall I render to the Lord?* and with the Apostle, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* It sticks at no Cost, nay it is glad it hath any Thing for God, and counts this the best Use of all, to lay it out for God, and this the best Possession of all, to lose all for God.

4 Love will make you fearful of losing God, every Man's Fears are equal to his Love, so that as the worldly Man fears to lose the World, which is his God, so a godly Man fears to lose his God. *Eli's Heart trembled for the Ark*, while he sat watching to hear News of the Battle, *1 Sam 4. 13.* Fear makes Men wise, *Prov 1. 7.* it keeps the Heart waking and watching, it keeps the Eye upon the Treasure, and soon apprehends the least Recess of God from a Man.

5 Love keeps the Intentions right. 1. Upon the right End, it is as the Eyes to convert the Soul, in all her Ways to her God. For what is Love, but embracing of God, and such a Closing with him? As that, as it finds Injustice and Want of him, so it hath Complacency and

Contentment in him, yea, and that Contentment breed
Hunger after what it *hath not*, and Gratitude for *what
it hath*, and so turneth all Designs and her whole
Course to this Thing, that she may be still blessed and
more blessed in the Fruition of God. 2. It keeps the Inten-
tions *in due Plight* in themselves. 1. Makes them *actual*
Love hath a good Memory, it carrieth the Stamp of God u-
pon the Heart, and seldom forgets him, the Soul lives
where it loves. And as Love came in by the Eye, so it de-
lights by the same Door to run out to God. 2. It makes
them *vigorous* and serious, and so able to order and re-
gulate all the Motions of the Soul in their right Way.
Thus Love is very useful in this Point, to keep you
from straying from God, and consequently needful, that
you may, by holy walking, retain his Favour and Pre-
sence.

2. Hold this as a fixed Verity, That *that is best which
God wills*. All that are come to God do believe this,
else they had not come, for what could draw the Heart
from all its Good, but that which is greater than all.
But though this be *habitually* in them, yet they do not
always *actually* believe it, for what should be the Cause
of their *Excursions* and Deviations, but because at pre-
sent they think it *better* to walk in *another Way* than
the Way of God, there are but three Causes of voluntary de-
clining any Thing, either it is because 1. The Thing is
not worth Entertainment, at least 2. upon such Terms,
or because 3. a better Thing is presented, which we can-
not enjoy with it, so that if a Man could carry this
Truth in his Heart unblotted, that it might ever ap-
pear *leevle*, it would be to his gadding Affections as a
Curb, and settle the Soul on God as on her Center. If
you could believe that you cannot mend your selves,
or make your Condition better any other Way you
would be *stedfast* and *ir moveable*, for now you would see
a Conjunction of God's Will, and your chief Good, so that
in crossing his Will, you should cross your selves, as Wis-

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dom speaketh; He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own Soul, all they that hate me love Death, Prov. 8. 36.

To help you in this as in a Matter of great Importance.

1. Get a clear Knowledge of God, what he is in himself and of the Wisdom of God in the Commandments, which are full of Reason, and of the End of the Command, thy Good, and of the Nature of that Good.

2. Make this Knowledge actual, often mind it.

3. Know that there is Reason to give the Lie to all Opinion of Good, out of God's Way, and against his Will.

1. Because God's Love is fully towards you, and so perfect that he hath not cut off any Good from you.

2. All that is truly good agreeth with his Will: As the Formality of Truth is the Agreement that it hath with the Mind of God, so the Verity of Goodness is the Agreement that it hath with the Will of God. And again, all true Good is from him, and emirently in him: Therefore that which stands in Opposition to him cannot be Good.

3. Consider the Subject of such Misperception. He is either one covered with Darkness, or, clouded with Passion. Men naturally are blind, and so call Evil Good, and Good Evil, and good Men sometimes are clouded, and with a Frenzy of Passion distempered, and judge that Good, which when they become sober they count the greatest Evil, and which is the truest Judgment, whether that of a Man drunk, and not himself, or that of a Man that is calm, clear and himself?

4. Remember that you must needs err in judging that to be Good, which you cannot entertain with Contentment, but a godly Man finds these two Things as sure Notes of the true Evil in every Sin. 1. Fear before, and in Admission of it. 2. Pain and Repentance after, and that for ever.

5. When you see two cross Counsels, weigh well these two Things, 1. the Counsellors, 2. the Reasons.

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First, Weigh the *Counsellors*; consider well who they are that stand up to oppose God, and you shall find that which may disable their Testimony, they can be but *one of these*, either your *own Lusts*, or, *Satan's Suggestions* and *Tentations*. As for your *Lusts*, consider, 1. They cannot encline to *any Good* for Kind, which God alloweth not, all the *Difference* between God and them is in the *Time, Measure, Order, Manner, Means*. And therefore since you have the *same Good* in Gods Way, is it *Wisdom* for *Circumstances* to hazard your Souls? 2. They urge *without Reason*, therefore called *foolish Lusts*, and *prurish*, it is true, they have a *Colour* of Reason, but such as a Spark of Wisdom would see to be *Folly*. 3. The *Order* of Reason and Nature is, that you should *affect by Judgment*, and not *judge by Affection*, Affections are blind Guides. 4. Lust can see Nothing but what is *present and sensual*, but they see not the *spiritual Evil*, nor the future Calamity and doleful Consequents of Sin: Now it is against Reason to be to *imprudently precipitate*.

And as for *Satan*, what can be expected by his Counsel, who seeks in all to destroy? And let this prevail with you, that all Opinion of Good in that which is against the Will of God, is either immediately, or mediately from *Satan*.

Therefore see what Cause you have to believe that that is *best* which God *willeth*, and if you can carry this Truth engraven upon you, it will be as a Wall to limit and *shut up* your inordinate Affections, and to *shut out* and break the Force of Satan's Temptations. Here you begin to be taken when you are seduced, if this Fort had stood, you had been safe, and if you keep to God's Will in all, you shall have his Favour, and consequently his Presence in all.

2. Weigh the *Arguments* that are used on both Sides, for you shall by this better judge betwixt them. 1. God *argueth Debt*, you are his Creatures, you live at his Cost and Charges, he hath done you Good and not Hurt all your

your Days Can your Lusts plead this? Whence comes Fears, Grief, Pain, Want, Death, Hell, but from Sin? You are then Debtors, not to the Flesh, to live after the Flesh. Rom 8 13.

2. God proposeth Good without Evil, can your Lusts do so?

3. God proposeth eternal Good, but the Pleasures of Sin are but for a Moment.

4. God proposeth a certain Good, but Lust cannot, Ambition may reach at Honours that it may never attain, Covetousness may hunt for Riches, which it can never find.

5. God proposeth all Good, but Lust only some particular Good, Voluptuousness proposeth Pleasure, not Dignity, &c.

6. God proposeth Good to the Posterity, but can Lust do it? nay it draweth to Evil without Care of Posterity; yea to the Shame and Calamity of Posterity.

7. God proposeth true Good, that which comforteth and giveth Life indeed, but all the Profers of Lust are Delusions: Solomon tryed it. Many Spies have traversed this Land, and find it a Continent of lying Vanities and true Miseries: Therefore keep close to God that you may have his Favour and Presence with you.

CHAP. XXIII.

Fifth Means, keeping in God's Way.

Fifthly, Take this Direction Keep your selves in God's Way, else you cannot expect his Help. Thou meetest him that repoveth and worketh Righteousness, those that re-
over tree in thy Ways, Isa 64 5

Here are two Things to be carefully observed.

1. That the Things which we undertake be good, that we may pray is David, Hold up my Goings in thy Paths, that my Footsteps slip not, Plal 17 5. For in an evil Action to ask his Aid, is to provoke him, it is an high Indignity, it is to draw the great God into a cursed Confederacy with sinful Man against himself.

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2. The Things must be such as we are called unto, for if out of Rashness and Folly, or Pride and vain Glory, we thrust our selves into Actions or Difficulties, without Warrant or Command, we may miss our Aim, if we think to be carried through with a divine Hand.

Quest. *How may a Man know when he is called to such or such a Work.*

Ans. 1. Some Actions are tied and appropriated to an Office, as Administration of Sacraments to a Minister, Execution of Justice to a Magistrate, &c. Concerning this take these Rules.

1. Ordinarily no Man is called to the Work of an Office which is not called to the Office: Therefore Saul and Uzziah sinned. Samuel told Saul, when he being a King had meddled with the Work of the Priest, in offering Sacrifice, That he had done foolishly, and kept not the Commandment of the Lord his God. 1 Sam. 13. 13. And when Uzziah went into the Temple to burn Incense upon the Altar of Incense, Azariah with his Brethren withstood him, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn Incense unto the Lord, but to the Priests that are consecrated to burn Incense, go out of the Sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine Honour from the Lord God. 2 Chron. 26. 16, 17, 18.

2. No Man is called to the Office, in whom is not Gifts, and Ability for it, these Things at the least a requisite.

3. No Man is called to any Act of Office, but according to Commission and Order annexed to his Office, as for the Magistrate to execute Judgment without hearing the Cause, &c. So long then as I keep my self in my Station, and do the Work that belongs particularly to me in my Place, I may comfortably expect the good Hand of God, and with Cheerfulness I ought to walk in my Way, and not to afflict my soul, with Fears and Cares, God hateth Presumption in Men thrusting themselves into Things too great and weighty, doth require Alacrity in those whom he calls to his Service, when he put Joshua in-

to that great Office of being a Leader to his People *Israel*, through the Wilderness, he promiseth to be with him, and often presseth this, *Only be thou strong, and very courageous*, Josh. 1. 5, 6, 7, 9. What should I speak of *Moses*, *Gideon*, *David*, *Jeremiah*, *Paul* and others, in whom you have so many Patterns of God's Goodness, not leaving his Servants in that Way which he sets them to walk in.

Ans 2 Some Things belong to Men as Partners of the heavenly Calling, as all Acts of Piety and Charity, yet in these take this Rule:

A Man is not so called to these, as that all are to be done by any one, at any Time, in any Season, in any Manner, but we must wisely know how to order our Ways with Discretion, for it is not enough to do Good, but we must do all according to Pattern, in due Season, and in due Order, for a good Work may be marred in the handling, when we walk not by Rule. As when a Man neglects his Calling, and is unseasonable in Conference, Hearing, Fasting, Praying, he cannot, upon just Ground, expect God's assisting Presence and Blessing in his Way, and so on the Contrary.

Ans 3. Sometimes a Man is, above ordinary Course, called to some Work. And here we find the Calling of a Man to be of God. 1. When he hath a particular Word, so *Abraham* had a particular Charge to leave his Country, and to slay his Son in Sacrifice, so *Peter* also had a particular Word to walk upon the Water, and God failed them not. 2. A strong Bent and Inclination of Heart, so *Paul* was bound in his Spirit to *Jerusalem*, though Dangers waited for him, *Acts* 20. 22. So it is judged of *End* in killing *Edom*, of *Phineas* in slaying *Zimri* and *Cossi*. 3. When God fits not only with a Disposition, but with a Spirit for the Work. As when he called *Saul* to the Kingdom, he gave him another Spirit. 4. When he gives Peace of Heart in their Way, and bears them out against all Accusations from within, or from without,

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so Paul and Silas had this *Testimony* of their *Calling* to their *Work*, a *Spirit* of *Glory* resting upon them.

Quest. But evil Men have sometimes a great *Flush* of *Spirit*, *Courage*, *Ability*, *Peace* and *Confidence*, have they this of *God*?

Answ. 1. God may emp'oy even wicked Men, and may, for the *Service* of himself, and of his *Church*, fill their *Sails* with a full *Gale* of great *Gifts*, and carry them on with a strong *Hand*, so he helped *Cyrus*, *He saith* of *Cyrus*, *He is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my Pleasure*, Isa. 44. 28. And, *Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus, whose right Hand I have holden - or strengthened, &c.* Isa. 45. 1.

2. There is a *natural Strength* which may do much, some have a *natural Vigour* and *Confidence*, which enables them to do and suffer much.

3. Mens *Lusts* and *ferful Ends* and *Respects* may add *Activity* and *Vigour* to their *Spirits* in good *Actions*, *Jerhu* was zealous, but that *Flame* of *Zeal* was enkindled by the *Love* of the *Kingdom*, and many others do much, but it is by the *Strength* of their *Self-love*, and *politic Ends*.

4. There is a *diabolical Power* of that *Prince* of the *Air*, who *worketh in the Children of Disobedience*, which makes his *Zealots*, as God hath his. As *Pharaoh's Magicians* wrought like unto *Moses*, so *Satan* transforms himself often into an *Angel of Light*, and, in a *Way* of seeming *Piety* and devout *Zeal*, makes many to be valiant *Champions*. But there is this *Difference* of this common *Assistance* of the *Spirit* of *God* to evil Men, and of the *Strength* from *Nature*, *Lusts*, or *Satan*, from that which the *holy Spirit* gives to the *Godly* in their *Ways*.

1. That which is from *natural Temper*, *Lusts*, or *Satan*, is often found in an *evil Cause*, as *Saul's Zeal*, before he was called of *Christ*, was *Madness against the Truth*.

2. Only the *Spirit* of *Holiness* works by *Love* to *God*, others for other *Ends*.

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3. Only the Spirit of Holiness makes *more* holy by all Assistance which it affordeth, this only wins the Heart; so that the more God is with him in his Way, the more he loves him, and loves to serve him, and so hath this Evidence, that it is from God, because it tends to him: So David's Heart was filled with Love when God appeared for him, *Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the Voice of my Supplication. The Lord is my Strength and my Shield, my Heart trusted in him, and I am helped. Therefore my Heart greatly rejoiceth, and with my Song will I praise him,* Psal. 28. 6, 7.

Let this suffice in this Digression for a brief Answer of these Questions: Now let us return to the Direction; Be sure you keep in God's Way, for you cannot find God, but in his own Way, when the Ark and Pillar of Fire (the Word) moves before you, walk after it, and then you shall find God pouring in himself, and girding your Loins with Strength. *Wait on the Lord, and be of good Courage, and he shall strengthen thine Heart: Wait I say on the Lord,* Psal. 27. 14. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness. I the Lord thy God will hold thy right Hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel: I will help thee saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the holy One of Israel,* Isa 41 10, 13, 14. It is a precious Promise, a Man may say, and sign in himself, Alas! The Work is great and I am weak., but God saith, *I will strengthen thee, and help thee*, and if the Difficulty be too great for thee, yet it is not too great for me. But a Man may say, Alas! They that war against me are many and great, and I cannot stand before them, I find mighty Lusts, strong Disputes, strong Tentations; but see what God saith, ver. 11, 12. *They that strive with thee shall perish, they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a Thing of Nought. They may come against thee, but thou shalt be above them, they shall vanish, they*

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are no more than a Shadow. But a Man may say, I find my Heart shaking at the Sight of these Sons of Anak, and I am ready to say in my self, *I shall one Day fall by the Hands of Saul*: To this God answereth, 1. By a Repulsion of Fear in a Word of Encouragement, *Fear not, nor be dismayed*, which he repeats again and again. 2. By Iteration of the Promise, *I will help, I will help, I will strengthen thee, I will hold thy right Hand*. As if he had said, I will surely do it. 3. By calling in his Attributes as Witnesses and Assurances. *I am Jehovah, one that is, and will give Being to all my Words, I am the holy One, one that cannot deceive you*. 4. By pleading his Relation and Affection, *I am thy God, I am Jehovah, thy God, thy Redeemer*, as if he had said, I have given my self to you, and have undertaken to save you. And therefore fear not though thou art but a *Wism, Jacob*, yet will I uphold thee. Oh then that we could now, in our Way, rejoice, and say as the Prophet, *The Lord Jehovah will help me: Therefore shall I not be confounded*, Isa. 50. 7.

CHAP. XXIV.

Sixth and seventh Means Be doing, and wisely and diligently use the Means of Grace.

BE doing: Many cry, Lord help, but they stir not up themselves, but think to live all upon Supply from Heaven. But if you keep the Seed in the Garden, God will not encrease your Store, you must plough and sow, and in your Endeavours look for the Blessing from Above, you have a Life in you, and you must put it forth, God hath said he will help you. That is, You must do what you can, and he then will joyne with you, he hath said, *He will meet you*, Isa. 64. 5. That is to say, He expects that you should be coming, and then he will come, the Mother will lead the Child by the Hand, but the Child must use his Legs, he will do as Men do with young Swimmers, he will hold your Head,

Head, but you must use your Limbs; I shall speak more of this, when I come to speak of such as seem to be deserted of God, but are not, they find a Deadness, but it is not because God will not co-work with them, but because they do not co-work with him. I will at present only say what *David* said to *Solomon* his Son, *Arise therefore and be doing, and the Lord be with thee*, 1 Chron. 22. 16. Sit not weeping and sighing, for that will not profit, you must be doing.

Wisely and diligently improve the Means of Grace; for God doth ordinarily work only in them and by them, where they are afforded. He hath shewed you the Way of Life, if you walk not in his Counsels, no Wonder if Deadness and Deformity of Spirit overtake you; having spoken somewhat of this before, I will here add these two Things. 1. The Faults of Men in the use of the Means. 2. The Inducements to use them rightly.

First, There is a Faultiness in the Godly often, in the Use of the Means, which weakens them and takes off their Vigour.

1 *Prophaneness*, when Men come with *slight and common Spirits* to these holy Things, without *due Composedness*, Reverence and Preparedness, this is to provoke God to forsake his Sanctuary, and to leave his Ordinances unclothed of their wonted working Power and quickning Virtue, for this is not Service that he can bear, it overthrowes his Majesty, and layeth his Honour low, when Men come so before him, *If I be a Father, where is mine Honour?* Mal. 1. 6. As if God had said, Your unholy and contemptible Carriage in my Worship, declares that you set light by me, and make nothing of me, if you had me in Esteem as your God, you would worship me as God, *Let us have Grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with Reverence and godly Fear*, Heb. 12. 28.

2 *Confidence misplaced*. When you make the Minister, his Gifts, Graces, Prayers, or the Things that he administers, your Trust, God will not bear it: Remem-

her, that Gifts, and Ordinances, though they be ordained for Edification, yet they are but *Instruments*, and the whole Force of the Instrument depends upon the *chief Agent*, the Waters of *Bethesda* heal not except the Angel move them, *neither is he that planteth any Thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the Increase*, 1 Cor. 3. 7. God hath not appointed these as Things without which he could not work, but out of Liberty, because it pleased him, partly to convey himself in a Way suitable to Nature, the Word and Sacraments being fit Things to deal with intelligent and rational Creatures, and partly that his Name might be more honoured in the Fellowship of many in the Ordinances. Therefore our Trust must not be in them, but in God, 1 Cor. 2. 5.

3. Men come not to them *for this End* But, as the empty Spirits of Men unchanged gather the Chaff and Cockle, but let go the Wheat, and prefer a fine Weed before the Ears of Corn; so many that are good do catch at Things less useful, for the most Part, Men have what they seek and no more. In a Field, one comes to get Wood, another to pick Flowers, another to take Air, and the Sheep come to get Food. There is a Spirit among Men too much carried after Difficulties, Novelries, Depths, Disputes, and by this Means they become to be like some Children of swelled Heads, but weak Limbs and little Strength: This should be your End, to get Life, to meet God, to be filled with the Spirit. You may be *sated in Gifts*, and *lean in Grace*, like a Tree full of *Leaves* and *Branches*, but empty of *Fruit*. Knowledge is good, when it is sought to a due End, not to set up your selves above others, but to set up God, it were good to count nothing Good to you, till you find God in it, a thousand Notions are but Vanities, and as empty Clouds in the Air, except they dissolve themselves in Showers of Grace and Holiness upon the Heart, *As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* 1 Pet. 2. 2.

4 Men

4. Men use not the Means *in Faith*, but are ready to say as *Naaman*, What are the Waters of *Jordan*? Except you believe you shall not see the Power of God. When you say in your Hearts, My Heart is corrupt, dead, dark, past Cure, what is this but to charge God with Weakness and Folly, in appointing these Helps that cannot profit? Though Lusts and Tentations be many and strong, yet remember, God is able to deliver.

5. Not drawing out the Efficacy of the Means by Prayer, Application, Meditation, you should hear for hereafter, the Word should remain upon you, and you should mould and form your Hearts to it, and by it The Benefit of the Ordinances comes not always at present; they are like Grapes that must be pressed. What Encouragement doth God give oftentimes? If you were wise, you might get much, doth not God present them sometimes like the flowing Breasts? Now if you would suck, how might you be filled? You put from you the Word, when it is like a Mine not half broken up, yea, often when you are near to Springs of Life, you cease to dig, the diligent Hand maketh rich, a hungry Soul finds many sweet Meals in your Leavings, God would give much of himself if you would stay by it, what if nothing come at present, do with the Ordinances as with a Pump, dwell at it, and the Waters will flow, it is not much Hearing, but wise Hearing that carrieth the Blessing, the Word must be laid up, and must soak into the Heart *John 8. 37.*

Secondly, Let me add a little for Inducement, to put you upon seeking God in this Way.

1. Consider it is Gods Way. Therefore you must not expect Good without it, it is his Way, and he will make it good, he hath appointed the Means for this End. And therefore they shall prosper that use them; his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, stand all inviting you, bring as so many Seals of this Truth, that they shall live that hear, and they say to thee, O thou that art named the House of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord strait-

ned? Are these his Doings? Do not my Words do Good to them that walk uprightly, Mic. 2. 7.

2. His Promise is with you, how fully hath he expressed himself in this, *Incline your Ear and come unto me, hear and your Soul shall live*, Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. And hath not Christ annexed his Presence to his Ordinances, for his Peoples Good, unto the End of the World? Mat. 28. 20. Look then at the Ordinances in the Promise, and see how God hath engaged himself unto his Servants. If you could believe, you would see God more in his Sanctuary, but as it is said, that Christ wrought no more Miracles in his own Countrey, because of their Unbelief, Mat. 13. 58. so God shuts in his Power from working, because your Heart is shut up in Unbelief, you should go with Gladness to the House of God, as to a Place of feeding and healing, rejoicing in Hope to find an Effusion of the Spirit from on high, according to the Promise.

3. God hath done it. You see by these Means he prevails upon Men, and turns from Darkness to Light, and raiseth from Death to Life, you see others how they flourish in the Courts of God's House, as Trees by the Water-side, and have not you your selves found God often causing the Ordinances to come as Ships laden with such Treasures for you? Have not your Hearts burned when you have heard him speaking? Have not some Sermons been as Elias Chariot? Hath not Christ come often when his Disciples have been together? Why do you not then upon such Experiences, walk diligently and cheerfully in the Gospel?

4. It is God's Glory to meet his People; it sets out his Goodness, Wisdom, Power, Mercy, Faithfulness, as the Sun, in Clearness, it makes his Name precious, his Ways sweet, his People fruitful, and herein (saith Christ, John 15. therefore you have Cause to seek to enjoy God in this Way.

5 Consider with whom you have to deal. 1. One that knoweth who seek him, he knoweth who are his Friends, and seeth all the reachings of thy Heart after him: Christ asked the Woman whom she sought, but he knew she sought him, and so shewed himself unto her. the Child may seek the Mother, and she may be ignorant of it, but there is not a Prayer, not a Sigh after him, but it is in his Ear, not a Tear for him, but it is in his Eye. 2. He can do what you desire; he can carry you on as upon Eagles Wings, he is a Fountain of Life, and hath enough for you, and for Thousands. 3. He is pitiful, he is sensible of your Case, he knoweth your need of him, what Weakness you are left in, if he be not with you, what Temptations and Lusts break in, what Sorrow and Heaviness if you enjoy him not. 4. He is the Author of that Desire which you have after him, and God knoweth the Meaning of his own Spirit, these Desires he sent from himself, to be as Pharaoh's Chariots, to bring Jacob to Joseph; and when they have brought you to God, will he not accept you? He would not have sent for you, if he meant not to help you, therefore seek him with Faith and Diligence in the Means, that you may have his Presence for your Guide and Guard in all your Ways.

CHAP. XXV.

Three Counsels to such as are deserted.

NOW I come to deal with such as are forced to draw this sad Conclusion against themselves, that God hath departed from them. And I fear when Men seriously consider what hath been said, that it will be found, that not a few have Cause to sit down in the Dust, and to pour out Tears in the sad Sense of their grievous Loss of the quickning Presence of God. Methinks it is visible in some, that they are changed, and have declined from that Lustre, Life, and Activity of Spirit, which seemed once to be aloft, and to be elevated

vated to an excellent height of Holiness, and heavenly Mindedness, but now lyeth groveling in the Dust, with Clouds and Chains of evident Darkeness and Death upon them. And now I wish for such a Spirit, that I might come to them with like Success, as the Angel to St. Peter when he lay sleeping in the Prison. *The Angel of the Lord came upon him, and a Light shined in the Prison, and he smote Peter on the Side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly, and his Chains fell off from his Hands, and he went out and followed the Angel, Acts 12. 7, 9.* God hath sent us also to strike off Mens Chains, and to open the Iron-Gate that leads into the spiritual City, and hath given us the Hammer, *Jer 23. 29.* and with it the Key of the Gospel, *Luke 11. 52.* And Oh that he would manage these by his Strength, that Men might be delivered that are in Prison.

In dealing with such, I will take this Course to draw them out of these Deeps.

I will lay down the $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Matter of Perswasion,} \\ \text{Arguments to prevail,} \\ \text{Rules to direct.} \end{array} \right.$

First, *The Matter of Perswasion*, or the Things that I plead for are,

1. *To consider well whether you be not in this Case.* Call home your Thoughts, and send them as *Spes* throughout all the *Region*, and see if you find Christ in it as in former Times, see if thy Soul ly not as *Jerusalem*, when the *Babylonians* came upon it, are not the Walls broken down, the Gates burned, the Temple spoiled and pillaged, the Inhabitants driven into Captivity? Inconsideracy undoeth Men. You will never sit down by the Waters of *Babylon* and weep, till you remember *Sion* from whence you are carried, there could not be place for so much Sloth and Security in you, if you did see and consider how you are. According to the Acquaintance which Men have with themselves, so are their Fears, Cares, Joys, Endeavours. No Man will seek for what he thinks he hath. *Luce 11.*

ceat dreamed golden Dreams, when she slept in Poverty and sought not Relief, because she knew not her Need, *Apoc. 3. 17.* It is not a slight View, or weak Conjecture, or transient Thought, or light Suspicion which will rouse the Heart out of her sleep, these Things may disquiet, but they are as weak Physick, which moves the Humours, but removes them not, working Pain, but not Cure: If you saw your selves indeed wrapped in Darkness and Death, lying like *Lazarus* in the Grave, covered with Earth, bound up and putrified, you would then hear, when we cry to you, *Lazarus arise.* Necessity would quicken you, nothing could hold you, you would mourn and howl, and pray, and seek, and not cease till you find, therefore put the Case out of doubt, and be serious and impartial, it is Wisdom to know well what it is not safe to bear, and to know we have not that which is Misery to want.

2. When you see in what Case you are, *make haste to recover*, take head of trifling, the Business requires speed: Therefore as the Angel said to *Peter*, so I say, *Arise quickly*, *Acts 12. 7.*

1 Consider *you are at a constant Loss*; you will not let your Money ly dead, you count every Day Loss when it is not used, when your Ships be ready to go out, or come in, but cannot for want of Wind. My Brethren, Grace is your *Stock*, your Money, the Estate which is laid up in the Soul, as in a Ship that is bound for Heaven, the Place of the richest Trade, and when you ly becalmed, and cannot put forth, you lose much: If you had a Wind, if the Spirit did come with Gales of Grace you would grow Rich. The more Goods you send to Heaven the greater will your Account be; but when you ly still and Trade not, or when your Commodities are not vendible, you wrong your selves. Think of it, you have but a few Days to Trade in, and what you sow, that you shall reap, if you were good Husbands, diligent and industrious, what might you get? Whereas by Carelessness you are at Loss:

Loss. You might be getting more Grace, Strength, Testimonies of divine Love, Sights and Tastes of hidden Treasures and Pleasures in this Life, and might be also still adding to the heap of Glory in the next Life: Count therefore every Day a great Loss, and be speedy. Do as the Disciples when Christ called them, *immediately they left all and followed him*; and as David, *I thought on my Ways and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies, I made haste and delayed not to keep thy Commandments*, Psal. 119. 59, 60 weigh it well. 1. *Grace is the richest Treasure of Heaven and Earth, that brings in the best Advantage.* 2. *You lose, it may be, such a Time of Trade as you may never have again, as the Days of Youth, and Strength, and Health, when Grace doth waste, or the Days of the Gospel, while the Sun shines, you should make Hay.*

2. *There can be no Reason of Delay, if your Case be sad, and you fear to begin so doleful a Work, and so stir in such a Wound, will it not be worse? And must not the Thing be done? And though there be Pain in stirring, yet it is the Way to the Cure, and the Disease is worse than the Pain:* Or if you think to take a fitter Time, I say there is no *choice in present Necessity*. Deliberation is *Idle* where the *Eminence of the Danger* requires present Action. Would you ly still and Consult of a fit Time, if you were in the *Sea*, or if your House were on *Fire*? Or if you think to dispatch some Business first, Then I say this is Folly, may not both be done? Or will you with *Saul* be seeking your Asses when a Kingdom seeks you? Will you leave your Child starving, to go to feed your Hogs? Or if you think it is hard to recover your Loss, and so rather sit down in Heaviness, than put forth your selves in Endeavours, then I say Mourning will not help it, it is hard, but is it no necessary? Will it not be harder? Or if you think I may find my self in better Case, my Heart more quick, more soft, I may have a better Time, then I say, and you may not: What Promise have you, that
while

while you ly still, your Work shall be done to your Hands? Nay, have you not learned, do you not understand, that if you come to him with what you have, you shall receive what you have not? There is therefore no Reason for Delay.

3. *Delay is very sinful in this Case.*

1. *It is Disobedience:* The Authority of a Superior is as much crossed in the *Time*, as in the *Matter* of his Commands: The *Jews* had sinned as well in *misplacing* their Feasts, as in *neglecting* of them; you call your Servant to come presently, and he saith I will come a Week hence, and how do you construe this? The *Jews* thought to build the Temple, but because they did it not in *God's Time*, God was angry, *Hag*, 1. 2, 4.

2. *It is Ingratitude;* God calls you to come to him, that he might do you Good, and you say you will come at leisure, would you do so with your King in such a Case?

3. *It is contempt of God*, and of his *Favour*. You count it not worth your Pains, for if you were willing, you would do what he demands, nothing keeps you at a distance from it but dislike, if the Heart were pleased, it would yield.

4. There may be *hard Thoughts of God* in it. You think he will not pardon, or accept you, but then, why doth he call you?

5. *It is Disloyalty* Why are you willing to be unserviceable to your God for a *Moment*? What are you fit for, when you are asleep? And would you not that your Servant should rise, when you awake him? Much Time is gone, you have but a *short Time of Service*, and your *Reward* is for *Eternity*. Up then, and lose no more Time for shame, that have lost so much, is not he worthy of all thy Time, that is thy Life? Rest not then in Purposes and Promises, for if the Heart were faithful, it would not only wish but work, not only purpose but perform.

4. *Delay is dangerous.*

1. *It is Satans Advantage*: When you are without God, he is diligent to deprave and corrupt, when the Body is dead, it is meat for Worms; when the House is empty, there is room for Lusts and all Evil, *Mat 12. 45.* you may get Guests which you can never be rid of.

2. *God may depart again*: It is a great Condescension when the great God comes to call upon you to come to him, if you stand off he may turn from inviting to threatening, and from kind Intreaties to bitter Chidings; Love will not bear Contempt: Therefore hear when he calleth. If you take not his Offer, if you accept not the Season, you may provoke him to go, *never to return again*, but you may run out your Time in a *dying Life*, your Sun may be clouded while you live, God may leave you to the will of *Satan* in a great Measure, to buffet and bind the Soul in Chains Therefore be speedy.

3. *Put on to Purpose.*

1. With Strength muster up all your Power, that you may recover your selves out of the Hands of those that have prevailed against you, and that you may regain the ancient Liberty which you have lost, and have a gracious Hand of God with you in all your Ways You may seek and not find, except you seek with much Contention. 1. The Heart that hath long gone astray will not be easily brought in Frame, there is such an habitual Deadness upon it, that without much Intenseness of Endeavour it will not be raised

2 God will be hardly pursued and pressed, he hath set all Things in a way of Justice, so that he that fights shall overcome, all degrees of Grace, and Enlargements of Spirit in Life and Joy come as Rewards: He is not in case to receive, that is not in case to seek, for he knoweth not the worth of his Presence, that doth not strongly seek it Many times many lose the Commodity, because they will not give a little more

2. With continuance: Sit not down till you have attained, press on, and resolve never to be at quiet till

till God return again. He seeks in vain, that seeks not till he find.

C H A P. XXVI.

Motives to use these Counsels, taken from Possibility of Recovery.

THe second Thing is, the *Arguments* to perswade. If a Man lose his Health, Friends, Riches, Liberty, it is no hard Thing to perswade him to Endeavours of Recovery, and to run after them, that he may bring them Home again, but, in spiritual Things, Men are often content to sit down with the Loss of Things of greater Worth, and it is hard to set the Wheels of the Soul moving in a serious Study to regain them. But let such who find themselves deserted, provoke themselves to endeavour the Cure of this Evil, and I will propound *two Things* as Perswasives: 1. *Possibility*, 2. *Necessity* of Recovery.

First, It is *Possible* to regain what you have lost, it is a Comfort, that there is Hope, Hope adds Life to Endeavours, but Despair kills them, sit not down as if all Hope were cut off, say not my Wound cannot be healed, lay not out your selves for dead Men, you may recover.

1 *You have Power to seek it*. Though much Deadness be upon you, yet if you be in *Christ*, you have a Spirit of *Life* in you, you have a *natural* Life, a *rational* Life, and a *spiritual* Life. Reason doth much in many without Grace, much more may you, a *Christian* is a living Thing, and all *Life* hath Power to do the Acts of *Life*, not to be able to act, is to be dead. I have renewed before, that God never leaves his People wholly; but though he withdraw his *arbitrary Influence*, yet not the *vital*, that may cease in a great Measure, which is to the *Well-being* of a godly Man, but yet, neither doth it cease *totally*, nor doth God, at any Time, hold back that which is to *Life* and *Being*; you have a Power; therefore you *must blow up the Grace of God in you*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6.

3. 6. There is Fire in the Embers, *μικρὸν ἔχεις δύναμιν*, *Thou hast a little Strength*, Apoc. iii. 8. And, as in a *natural* Way, God expects that Nature should work, or else he will not work, so in a *spiritual* Way, think not to find God, except you seek him. Call upon your selves, set your Minds to Consideration, commune and plead with your selves, for your Life is preserved by *Knowledge*, as it is wrought by it, and *Consideration* is like the Drum in an Army, to put all in Motion, a considerate Man is an active Man, Apprehensions and Thoughts put Life into the Heart. Therefore stir up your selves. If you will not help your selves, God will not, but if you will do what you can, God will draw near, *James iv. 8.*

2. *You are capable of reviving*: Though now Deadness be upon you, there is a *Warmth* left, there is great Difference between one in a *Swoon*, and one dead.

3. As you have a *Power*, so you have *Encouragement*. You have need to consider this, for an humble Spirit is apt to oppose it self, and to sit down with hanging Head, feeble Knees, weeping Eyes, fainting Heart, as if it were incurable, like them, *Acts xxvii. 20*. In such a dark and stormy Season they reckon themselves among the dead, and think that *all Hope is gone*, of getting out of these Depths, but now consider there is Hope.

1. *The Life you have is from Christ*; it is dear to him. He laid down his Life, that you might live, he hath planted in you that Grace you have, and will he not cherish his own Work, which with so much Cost and Care he hath undertaken? The Breathings of thy Soul, are the Breath of his own Spirit, and he will own it; if you come to him, *he will in no wise cast you out*, *John vi. 37*. That Grace you have was given you to fit you for Communion with him, and when you come to him, will he shut the Door? He opened the Door in your Heart, when you shut it, and will he not open his Door, when you knock? He loves to do much for his, for he loves them much: You are not
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straitned in him, but in your selves : What is the Meaning of the Gospel ? Doth not Christ stand with a Fulness in his Hand ? Why do you not look to him with Faith, who is as full of Goodness as of Power ? Is he not your Head ? Are you not his Members ? He feels your Pains, and Sicknes, yea, he well knoweth, and that by Experience, in his Kind, what it is to be without God, and knoweth there is no Help for you, but in himself, your Unkindnesses shall not hinder, if you will be Friends with him, he will be a Friend to you, the *Adulterers* shall find Acceptance, if she return, Jer. iii. 1.

2 *You have a Promise* Why then do you not lift up your Heads ? You cannot come before you are called, and what you want is ready for you. He hath said, he will give Rest to the Weary, Strength to the Weak, Light to the Blind, Health to the Sick, he would not have said these Things, but that he would have you rejoice in Hope, when you come to ask the Spirit, it is granted before you ask, Luke xi. 13. *If you that are Evil know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?* Do you think that you have more compassionate Love than he ? You think if your Children come hungry, crying, fainting for Bread, you could not deny them, how much less will Christ ? Your Love is nothing to his. *He is Love*, 1 John iv. 16. That is to say, He is the Fountain of Love, he works it where it is, and that Love that you have to him is from him ; and would he be loved of you, if he did not love you ? Certainly he was your Friend, before he made you his friend, 1 John iv. 19 So then believe, and God is ready, Good hangs in the Promise, like ripe Fruit, if you shake the Tree, the Fruit will fall, turn this Promise into Prayer, plead with God in his own Language, make his Bond thy Petition, live upon his Word, if you believe it shall be well, if you have Faith as a Grain of Mustard-seed, those Mountains that ly upon you shall be removed, when God deals with us by

Way of Promise, he deals the sweetest Way, for what would you expect but his good Will? And how would you know his good Will, but by his Word, by the Promise you have, God not inclining and yielding, but determining, binding himself, by this Ladder climb up, and bow thy Soul before him, upon the Pillars of Faith, which doth so surely interest thee in thy God: He proclaimeeth and makes Heaven and Earth his Witnesses, that he is yours; he hath given such Power to Faith, that he that believes sits upon the Throne with Christ, *Apoc. iii. 21.* and is made Lord of all the Treasures of the Kingdom, *Al! is yours, 1 Cor. iii. 22.* Yea, God hath so tied himself to his People, that he hath not only said, Ask, seek, pray, but *command me, Isa. xlv. 11.*

3. *You have Experience* You are ready to say as *Gideon*, What Sign dost thou give me? Still the Heart crieth for *Security*, and is hardly satisfied, Have you not Signs? What is the Word, but a Sign of his Favour? What is the Sacrament, but a Sign and Seal of his Love? What is the Grace you have, but a Sign and Earnest of his Love? What are all the Saints but Signs, a Cloud of Witnesses, *Isa. xlii. 10, 12 Chapter xlv. 8* How many Cripples have you seen walking and leaping? How many Sick healed? How many Dead raised? And why do you think he should be harder to you than to all? What think you, that he hath some special Quarrel to you? Are you alone, and have you none like you in Sin? What if it were so, yet is not all the Sins of all the Saints more than yours? Cannot he pardon thy personal Debt, that hath sealed a Discharge to so many Thousands? It matters not how much thou owest, a *Mountain* is as easily covered in the Sea, as a *Mole-hill*.

Have not you your senses Experienced? Pethink yourselves, have you not often been refreshed by his Hand? Did you never find your Bones out, and your Soul sick till now? And who helped you, when you came grovelling in the Dust, with your Backs bowing under Pressures,

Pressures? Did he not lift up thy Soul with a renewed Strength? When you came with Yokes upon your Necks, Irons on your Hands and Feet, like poor captivated Slaves, did he not hear you when you cried? When you had but a little Room to peep at, and could not see out of a close, stinking, dark Dungeon, see but little of Heaven, when your Souls were almost among the Dead, and you had but so much Life, as to cry *Lord help me*, did he not help? Nay, how often *unsought* hath he come to you? When *Pharaoh* and his Task-masters made your Souls to serve, you did not send up the Groans and Cries that *Israel* did, yet he came and led you out, not into the Wilderness, but unto *Canaan*, and gave you Liberty, Peace, and the good Things of the Land, when you had run in a Sort out of all, you came not as the *Prodigal* to his Father, but he came to you, and renewed your Stock, and filled your becalmed Souls with fresh Gales of Grace. And now after all this, when he hath been such a Friend, so faithful, such a Father, so merciful, will you say there is no Hope? No, rather say, if new Temptations arise, and new Lusts that break in and spoil, say as *David*, *The Lord that delivered me out of the Paw of the Lion, and out of the Paw of the Bear, he will deliver me out of the Hand of this Philistine*, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. and as the Apostle, *We had the Sentence of Death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raiseth the Dead, who delivered us from so great a Death, and doth deliver us, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us*, 2 Cor. i. 9, 10.

C H A P. XXVII.

Motives to seek Recovery, taken from Necessity.

SEcondly, As your Recovery is possible, so when you feel a Decay of spiritual Life, this is no State to be rested in, for it is *sinful*, *hurtful*.

1. It is *sinful*.

1. Consider what becomes of that precious Talent, and

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Trust

Trust of Worth which lieth in your Hands, doth it not ly dead by you?

2. *Where are you in such a Case?* Are you not sleeping in *Mespech*, and in the *Tents of Wickedness*? Is not thy Heart gone out from the Presence of the Lord? Are not other Lords in Christ's Throne? Is not thy Way a Way of spiritual Whoredom, Robbery, Disloyalty, &c.? Are not other Gods set up in the Temple of the living God? Are you not found with *Saul* against *David*? Are you not departed and gone afar off?

3. *Either you know that it is thus, or not:* If not, then what Stupidness, what Carelessness, not to miss him who is your Lord, your Husband, your Father, your Life? If yea, then to rest without him, is to despise him highly, what do you, but chuse *Egypt* and her *Calves*, before *Canaan* and the *Ark*, and Presence of the Lord? What do you, but let God, his Son, his Spirit in the Dust, to be trampled upon by every Vanity, and every base Lust, to cast off the Yoke of Christ, to serve the *Beast*, yea, to cast down the Crown of Christ, and to make his Throne the Foot-stool of his Enemies.

2. *It is hurtful:* And it must needs be hurtful that is sinful.

1. *It cuts off the Comfort of the Soul.* The Sun shines not bright, when the Air is full of Clouds, and the Spirit is not a comforting Spirit, where it is not a quickning Spirit, you may enjoy for a Time some Contentment in the Creature, but, when these Trees shall wither, when these Fountains shall cease, or be imbittered, then what will you do? You cannot find Comfort in God, when you are far from him.

2. *All Things are dead when you are dead.* A dead Man loseth with himself all Things, and all Things die to him, when he dieth in himself.

1. When you are in this Case, your *receptive* and *active* Power is weakned, you cannot so well comply with the Means of Life, there is a great *Unsuitableness*. As Water that is frozen is not so capable of Impression,

nor

nor so apt to move as before: A weak Man cannot live upon his Food, as he was wont. The Wheels of a Clock that are clogged with Dust cannot run well. There must be some *Fitness* in the *Recipient* to join with the *Agent*. Wet Wood will not enkindle so soon as dry Wood. A living Heart will find that to be effectual, which a dead Heart finds but as a Shadow. Those Promises, those Mercies, those Duties, those Thoughts which raise others with much Power, are but as the Blasts of Wind upon the Rocks to you, those Means which are as the Waters of *Nilus*, which makes the Land rich in Fruits, are to you but as Winter Showers, which bring up nothing.

2. *The Power of God is the Life of all*: Though you had as much Life as an *Angel*, and had the Food of Angels, yet except God be in it, you will not thrive. The Ordinances are called the *Power of God*, Rom. i. 16. 1 Cor. i. 24. because they are the Instruments of his Power. Now we know the Power of the *Instrument* depends upon the *Agent*, the Plough is fit to cut the Ground, but the Skill and Strength of the Husbandman must guide and move it. If the *Angel* of God's Presence move not in these Waters, they will not heal; *All Means are nothing, it is God that giveth the Increase*, 1 Cor. iii. 7. Therefore there is no safe resting in such a State without God.

3. *The Heart groweth worse and worse*. As the dead Body groweth more and more corrupt. This should awaken you, if you get not, you lose.

Consider, 1. *What a Change this is*: You did converse with God, and now with Devils, you were Christ's *Freemen*, now *Drudges* to Satan and your Lusts, you had *Eagles* Wings to soar aloft, and now you are like the *Serpent* that creeps on his Belly, and licks the Dust. Thy Soul was beautiful as a pleasant *Palace* for the King of Kings, and now it is a *Dungeon* of Darkness, a *Se-pulchre*, a Prison, a Den of unclean Spirits, on the vast Difference that is betwixt a Man enjoying God,
and

and a Man forsaken. And to this consider, that it groweth worse and worse, your *Bondage* encreaseth, your *Lusts* grow, the *Palace* groweth more ruinous, the *Dungeon* darker, the *Den* fuller, all goeth downward, worse and worse

2 *Your Case groweth more and more invincible* The *Heart* groweth harder, the *Mind* blinder. Satan is ever working, he loleth no Time, and you may be carried out so far into an Ocean of Sins and Miseries, that it will be hard recovering Land again, the Continuance of Sin leaves so deep a Dye, as sometimes will not out, till Death. When the Temple was forey wasted and spoiled, and lay long in Ruins, though in Time it was built up again, yet the *second* Temple was not like the *first*. Therefore you hurt your selves much by Carelessness. Stir up and awaken your selves, be not willingly worse and worse, suffer not that to abide, which, when it hath entrenched it self, will not, without much Difficulty, be beaten out again, and when you have wearied your selves, it may be, you will not be able to raise your Spirits to their old Vigour, Diseases hanging long, leave often such Impression, that Nature seldom gets up. The Fire of the *second* Temple, some *Jews* say, was not like the Fire in the *first*.

4. *You may have a worse Time to seek unto God than now*. If Age, if Sicknes, if Captivity, if Poverty, if any Misery come, then it will be an ill Time to find thy Heart so out of Frame, to have Banks to mend, when you have less Time, less Help, less Strength, and when also the Winds are high, and the Seas unquiet breaking in upon you, is to be taken in an ill Time. Consider this, you must be better ere you dy, you must build up the ruinous House within, if you neglect these Times of Rest, you may be forced to do it in a hard Time, when you must work by Day, and watch by Night, carry a Tool in one Hand, and a Weapon in the other. If you have a Journey to take, you will take the fittest Season: Now is your Summer, walk in the Light while

you

you have it, now you have the Help of Strength, Health, Friends, Ordinances, prosperous Estate, you will find when these are gone, it will be a sad Thing to have this Work to do.

5 *God will fetch you in* If you come not, he will shake thy Soul with Fears, and drop Bitterness into thy Spirit, or send outward Afflictions upon thee, to visit thy Carelessness upon thee Physicians (they say) in the Cure of the *Lethargy*, do sometimes put the Patient into a Fever, when *Ephesus* lay in such a stupified Condition, Christ came with a sharp Medicine, *I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against thee, &c.* Apoc. ii. 4, 5. Afflictions will stir you When God layeth on the Rod, you will feel, that it was a bitter Thing to neglect him, then your heavy-eyed and sleeping Conscience shall hit you Home, and, as the young Lions roar and yell, so shall the Thoughts of your Hearts fill you with a Cry like unto that of the Prophet, *Hast thou not procured this unto thy self, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the Way? Jer. ii. 17.* and now it will put you in Mind of running to your Pleasures and sinful Vanities, as the Prophet doth, *Now (saith he) what hast thou to do in the Way of Egypt, to drink the Waters of Sihor, or what hast thou to do in the Way of Assyria, to drink the Waters of the River? Mine own Wickedness shall correct thee, and thy Back-bones shall reprove thee Know therefore, and see, that it is an evil Thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that his Fear is not in thee, Verse 18, 19* My Brethren, if the Word will not, the Rod must, learn then to avoid Blows, if Counsel draw you, you may escape, but the Rod is for the Back of fools, if you come not in, expect some sad Messenger, God will do as *Abalom* with *Toro*, who set *Uriah* on his Cor, because he came not when he sent for him 2 Sam. xii. 29, 30,

3 Therefore, while the Season is calm, put forth, and seek to regain what you have lost

6 *God is not well pleased* when he withholdeth himself When he estrangech himself, and is not with you,

it is a Sign that he is angry. Remember those Words of Moses, *Numb. 14. 41, 42, 43.* When you go to fight against the *Canaanites* and *Amalekites*, your Lusts and Tenticions, you cannot prosper. *Because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you.* And how doth the Church bewail the Displeasure of God against her? *Thou hast cast us off and put us to Shame, and goes not forth with our Armies* *Psal. 44. 9* It is true, That sometimes, out of his Sovereignty and absolute Dominion, he may do this, but yet the Thing, in it self, is a Sign of Disfavour. Therefore it is not safe to abide in such a Case. Let then your Relation to him, the Knowledge of his Power, the Sweetness of his Favour, your Love to him, the Kindness which he hath shewed you put you upon a Study of Reconcilement, that you may enjoy your former Happiness, and his ancient Loving Kindness.

According to the Presence of God with you, the Proportion and Measure of spiritual Life will be. As the more the Plants have of the Sun, the more they thrive. All the Efficacy of Ordinances, and all the Activity of Grace depends upon this. As the House of Obed-Edom was blessed and all that pertained to him, when the Ark, the Sign of God's Presence, was with him, *2 Sam. 6. 11, 12.* so great Prosperity of Soul is there, where God hath his Abode, and where he puts forth his Power, and spreads his quickning Virtue upon the Soul. Were it not an Happiness, to be enriched in Grace, and to have your Grain of Mustard-Seed growing up unto a tall Tree? Awaken your selves, and till to thinking of this Matter, why are you willing to live so poorly, that might live like Princes? And to creep with the Snail, when you might mount as Eagles? Let me suggest a few Incertives to quicken your Spirits.

1 If you have but little, you can do but little, for nothing can exceed the Sphere and Compass of its Ability. Much Grace makes strong to work, and abundant in working, a full Spring makes a full Stream, much Grace gives

gives much Willingness, and as your Willingness is, so is your Strength. I say not that Strength and Willingness are always equal, for I know a godly Man's Will is beyond his Power, *and he cannot do what he would*, Gal 5. 17. but yet by how much the more the Heart is prepared, by so much the more it is enabled. The greatest part of the Impotency and Deadness of unregenerate Men is this, that they are *unwilling* and averse unto God, and *Disaffection* binds them as in Chains, that they cannot walk with God, and the *Strength* of a godly Man lyeth most in his *Will*: What is the Strength of Lusts in others, but the *Will*? What is the Strength and Courage of a Souldier but a strong *Will*? What is the Bounty of a liberal Man but a large *Will* to do good? This will be then your Advantage, you will do *more*, when you have *more*, and the more you do, the greater will your *Reward* be, *He that soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully*, 2 Cor. 9. 6 Every Man hath a large Field to sow in, for the World is as a Field to every Man. Therefore get much into your Garners, that you may now sow much, and reap much, when the Harvest cometh.

2. *Your Works will be more perfect* and compleat, if you have *much*. Every thing works as it is, there is a great difference betwixt the Work of a *Child*, and of a *Man*, *When I was a Child I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child, but when, &c.* 1 Cor. 13. 11. Actions are the *Births* of Habits, and the Child will carry the *Likeness* of the Father, if the Spring be affected with an ill Quality, so will the Streams also, a Man that hath but little of his Trade and Art, cannot make *compleat* Work, but his Work will carry a *Print* of the Weakness of his Skill. A famous Painter coming to his Friend's House, and not meeting with him, would not leave his Name, but with his Pencil drew a Line, and bade the Servant shew his Master the Line, and when he came home and saw it, he knew whose Hand it was. The *Apostle* took care to raise up the
Bounty

Bounty of the *Corinthians* to such a height, that something might be done, that might be *excellent* and honorable, 2 Cor. 9. 5 So that all that you do, will be more Mature and Excellent, by how much the more *Grace* you have, and the more perfect your Actions are, the better will your *Reward* be, they shall have more Praise with God. And your Desire should be, that all be done *exactly*.

3. The more *Grace* is raised in you, the sweeter will your *Way* be; and that,

1. Because there will be a greater Agreement between your *Spirits* and your *Work*, and *Rule*: What is the cause of that Weariness in Duty, and Backwardness to it, but a Disproportion between you and it? When your Hearts are more prepared, you will be as a smooth Bowl in a smooth Way, which runneth with much Ease and few rubs.

2. There is a *Sweetness* in doing Good. And the more you are able to do, the more Sweetness you have, the deeper you dig, the more Treasure you shall find, every Action spiritually performed casteth a *Reward* upon the Soul, it is like the pressing of Grapes, his Labour drops in that which is better than Wine. The Ways of God are as Beds of Spices, the more you walk in them, the more they requite you with sweet Delights and inward Refreshments. All the Ways of Wisdom are Ways of Pleasantness, *Prov. 3. 17*. Here Motion is Rest, as in the Heavens, their Perfection is their Motion. God's Ways are large, the Soul is most free and at greatest Liberty in them.

4. The less *Grace* the more *Corruptions*. This is the Nature of Contraries which admit no middle Thing, to partake of either, that where one is not, there the other is, and the less of one, the more of the other. As the less Light in the Air, the more Darknes. Now, so far you are Miserable as you are sinful. It is not Immunity from Calamities, but from Sin, which makes happy, and what Calamity is not upon him that hath many

Case and Cure.

many and strong Corruptions? Think of all Evils in the World, and you shall find them meeting in such a one, his Lusts are all Evils, and contain all in their Bowels, Fears, Sorrows, Wants, Wars, Chains, Wastings, Sickness, &c.

5. The greater Measure of Grace brings in more Comfort Little Grace will bring but little Joy.

1. *The Soul is not so capable*: Much Grace makes *capacious*. A little Vessel cannot receive much: A small Candle cannot give much Light: The same Promises are sweetest to the Heart that have most of God: The same Food is sweeter to a healthful strong Man, than to a sickly weak Man: The godly here have the same *objective* Happiness with the Saints in Heaven, but not the same *subjective* Happiness. They are more happy in Heaven, because they are more *capacious*, and *take in more* of God.

2. The less Grace; *the less Evidence* of Truth, and of God's Favour. As a Letter written in small and imperfect Letters is not so legible, as that which is written with more full Characters. You will be troubled to *spell* God's Love out of weak and low Graces. What is Grace but a Seal and Stamp of God upon a Man? The more *visible* the Seal is, the more Assurance it yields. When a Plant is in the *Sprout*, you can hardly discern what it is, but when it riseth up into a Tree, it sheweth itself fully. Gold in the *Oar* cannot be discerned by every Eye, but when the Earth and Dross is taken away, then it is apparent: In a cloudy Night the little Stars are hid, but the greater are more easily seen.

3. Comfort is usually given as a Reward. They that are very Holy, and walk much with God, in much Love and heavenly Mindedness, do usually exceed others in Comfort, *Acts 9. 31*, They being edified walked in the Fear of the Lord, and the Comforts of the Holy Ghost. Tho' sometimes the Best and Chief of the Saints come short in Comforts, yet I say, that they have Cause more than others, and it is by Accident that they rejoice not, either

whether they mind not what they have received, or they are under a dark Cloud of Unbelief, which cuts off the Light of Joy from them, but whose Fault is it? The Promise lyeth fair for them, and they have a greater Advantage to believe than others, because, with the Promise, they have a Pledge.

6. That Little which you have, is for *this End* lest defective, that labouring with Meekness you might seek continually for more. God hath so ordered the Conditions of his People, that he will have them live in a perpetual Dependence, and come daily to the Throne of Grace for Alms. More and more encourage your selves, for God is on the giving Hand. The Days of the Gospel are Dole-days. He hath reserved better Things for his People now, than he gave in former Days. The Church of the Jews was a Child in Minority, and had less, Gal 4. 1. But in these Times he hath promised to pour out his Spirit more abundantly, Joel 3. 28. which though it was literally fulfilled, and more eminently in the Coming of the Holy Ghost upon them, Acts 2. 17. yet it extends it self unto all the Church unto the End, Acts 2. 39. So the Apostle acknowledgeth in Abundance of Grace upon the Godly afterward, 2 Cor 8. 7 Ephes. 1. 8 Tit 3. 6. These Times are also Times of Affliction and Trouble, and God is wont, in such Times, to give much of himself. Therefore seek to abound, and to this End labour to recover your selves, and to gain the Good Presence of God with you, which you have lost.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Two Directions how to seek Recovery.

NOW I come to the *third Thing* propounded in the Way of Cure, Directions to further your Endeavours of recovering your Loss.

First, *Quicken your Desires after God*. For Desires will yield a two fold Advantage. 1. The Promise is full to such as desire much. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst

thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled. Mat. 5. 6. It is not every *Velleity* and *cold Wish* which entitles to this Promise: Every weak Appetite and Desire of Meat and Drink is not Hungering and Thirsting. When you are impatient, and long much after him, then you shall be filled, the *Word* is borrowed from feeding or foddering of Cattle, and it imports this, That tho' now you are put to graze upon the dry and barren Mountains, yet if you long after more, then the faithful Shepherd of Israel, that leadeth *Joseph* like a Flock, will put you into green Pastures, and feed and fill you by the Waters of Rest. God's Hand is shut, because your Hearts are shut: Hath he not said, *Open thy Mouth wide, and I will fill it.* The first Grace is given without precedent Desires. God is found of them that seek him not; but this Grace that we speak of, is given to them that seek it.

2 *Desires, when they are high, beget Endeavours like themselves, strong and vigorous, and the more you labour, the more you will get:* Therefore blow up your Desires by the Bellows of Meditation, sit down and consider what it is to enjoy God, and what to want him, these Thoughts, if they abide, will fire you out of the Bed of Sloath and Sleep in which you ly.

2 *Bewail your selves and your State before God, sit down and mourn.* Mourn I say, for 1. *Your Loss*, 2. *the Cause*

1. *Bewail your Loss:* Take up a Lamentation and say, *Woe is me, for my God, my Life is departed from me, and how am I changed!* I was, as the Tree planted by the *River's Side*, spreading and flourishing, and my Fruits were fair and full, but alas! Now I am become, as a Tree in the *Desert*, withering and shaking both Fruits and Leaves. My sweet *Spring* is turned into a sad *Autumn*; my first Days were my best Days, and my last Days are my worst Days. I was filled with *Light* and Life, but now my Sight is dimmed, my strength is wasted Time was, when Faith had Life in it, and I had Life by it, but now, Oh! Woful

Overspreading of Clouds of Darknes and Incredulity. My pleasant Days of Life and Lustre are fled away, and the Bonds of Death have taken hold of me My Soul was the *Temple* and Throne of Christ, and I received daily Oracles from his Mouth, but now I am the *Habitation and Region* of Vanity and Darknes What Sweetness did I find in Flights aloft, when it was my greatest Solace to be with God ! But now I, that was as a Star in Heav'n, am fallen into the Depths of Vanity, and am become to my self as Gall and Wormwood My Soul was an enclosed Garden, and the Chiefest of ten Thousands, did walk in the Shadow of the Trees, and was delighted in their Fruits, but now the Fence is down, my Love is gone, the Beasts break in, and *Sharon is become a Desert*. I me was, when the Thoughts of Sin did pierce me, and the Remembrance of God lift me up to the *third Heavens*, but now my Heart hath lost its Fence, the Things that I know have not their ancient Strength, my Tears, which were as pleasant Waters to my Taste, which I could pour out before my God, are gone, that Melting of Heart, which was my Joy, is vanished, my Heart is frozen, the Spring is stopped, the *Heart of Flesh* is become a *Heart of Stone*, that blessed Society of Graces, those holy Desires, those heavenly Dispositions, which did meet in a *happy Conjunction* in my Soul, seem now scattered, and to ly in Chains, whiles the *Troops* of Hell do hold all in Possession ; my Soul, that did walk with an heavenly *Guard* of divine Graces, lyeth now, like *Daniel*, in the Den among devouring Lyons, Oh ! How was I wont to meet God ! And what Communion had I once with him ! But now he hides himself, and will not come at me, I pray and he hears not, I hearken after him, but he speaks not, I call, but he answereth not, Oh ! Those golden Days, will they never more return ? I was wont to be feasted in my Father's House, the fatted Calf was killed, and the Ring, and the best Garments were put upon me, but now I am forsaken and not owned, I go hungry and naked, and feed among the Hogs,

Hogs, and in this, I am more miserable than they, because *I was a Son*. It is a Misery to have been happy : Lord, if I had never known thee, I could have lived without thee, but this is my Misery, not so much that I am *without thee*, as that *I have lost thee*. Many are well without thee, because they never enjoyed thee : The Children of *Beggars* and *Slaves* count it not their Misery that they are not *Princes*, but it is a bitter Evil, when the Children of *Princes* shall become *Beggars*.

Thus then betake thy self to these *sad Thoughts*, make thy Closet an House of Mourning, breathe out thy Sighs, send forth thy Groans, pour out thy Tears, rend thine Heart, cast up thy weeping Eyes, with the sad Complaints of a bleeding Soul, to thine ancient Friend ; thou mayst prevail upon him. Though he hath forsaken thee, yet he hath not forgotten thee, he hath not forgotten himself, and all the Kindness that he hath shewed thee, he cannot hold from *Coming*, when thou canst not hold from *Calling*, the Melting of thy Heart causeth the *Earning* of his Bowels. Can the Mother forbear when the Child cryeth ? God will not deny Mercy to the Mourners. *Blessed are the Mourners, for they shall be comforted*, Matth. 5. 4.

In two Cases especially, God will not deny Mercy, when the Sorrow of his People is *great, ingenuous*.

1 When the Sorrows of his People are great, then his Compassions are drawn out. When the Woman came with a troubled Spirit, pouring out Tears upon the Feet of Christ, and wiping them with the Hair of her Head, then Christ poured out Comfort upon her, and sent her away with the *Pardon of all her Sins*, Luke 7. And when Zion sate in the Dust, melting her self in Heaviness, and crying, *My God hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me*, When she was *tossed, and afflicted, and not comforted*, then God came in and opened a Well in the Desert, and in the Depths of her Trouble did no longer conceal himself, but brake out in a most gracious Protestation of his Love, *Can a Woman forsake*

her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Fruit of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands, thy Walls are continually before me, Isa. 49. 15, 16. The Words are a strong Expression of his dear and faithful Affection. The Mother's Affections are dear and tender, so are mine. The Mother loves her Child, because it is the Fruit of her Womb, I also have begotten thee, and thou art my Child. The Mother is most tender to the sucking Child, which cannot help it self, if it cry, she cannot hold, you also are such before me, the Mother may possibly forget, but I will not, you are always in my Eye, and if I cannot forget my self, I cannot forget you, for you are engraven and imprinted in my Hand. The Lord God hath comforted his People, and will have Mercy upon us Afflicted, Isa. 49. 13. He comforteth those that are cast down, 2 Cor 7. 6. When the Heart mourns much, God will shew himself.

For 1. the End of Sorrow is not to afflict, but to profit, not to cast down only, but also to raise up. When God casteth Sorrows upon the Wicked, his End is to afflict and to punish, and their Sorrows do attain their End, when they ly, like Loads, oppressing their Spirits, but that which is a Curse to them is a Cure to the Godly, their Mourning is but sowing in Tears to reap in Joy. Sorrow in the Spirits of such is like the Rain upon the Grass, it puts the Soul into a Flourish, it makes it yielding and tractable. As Wax when it is softened, will easily receive Impressions, and Metals dissolved are apt to be drawn out, and to be moulded as you would have them. Sorrow is better than Laughter, for, by the Sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better, Eccles. 7. 3. The sad Looks of others have a natural Force to work Seriousness, and Consideration in us, much more when our own Hearts are full, Ahab himself would do much in a pensive Fit, and Manasseh his monstrous Spirit was tamed by Sorrow. God brought upon him the Assyrian, and he bound him with Fetters, and

carried him to Baybylon And when he was in Affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his Fathers, and prayed unto him, 2 Chron 33. 11, 12. You see the sweet Fruit of this bitter Root, and what was the Issue? God was entreated of him, and heard his Supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his Kingdom, vers. 13.

2. The greater Sorrow, the fitter Object of Mercy: Mercy is for the Miserable, and none more miserable than such as mourn in the Loss of Communion with God, this Wound is the deepest, and most bleeding of all Wounds, the Soul, in such a Case, hath no Help in all the World, all Things yield not more than a Drop of Water upon Dives his Tongue. Look now upon the Nature of God, and you shall see him full of Mercy, upon the Promises, they also are full of Mercy; upon the Ways of God, they also are full of Mercy. Therefore, if you clothe your selves with the Garments of Heaviness, and can come before God with Spirits much lamenting after him, he will appear to you, He will revive the Spirit of the Humble, Isa. 57. 15.

3 Much Sorrow will put upon strong Pursuits after God: It will make you full and strong in Prayers, and the Power of Prayer is great with God, it makes the Soul to run to Christ, and to improve all the Hope, and Faith, and Interest that it hath in him, and they that seek the Father in the Son shall find him.

4 Now God will be welcome, when the Soul is bitten with his Absence. God leaves his People, because they slight him, but when they have learned to prize him, now he will come, no Place fits him but the Highest, and now God is lift up, when the Heart in the Presence of all Things which were delightful and precious, pines after him. Love is seen in Sorrow. We grieve much in the Loss of that we love much.

2 Then Sorrow prevails with God, when it is agonious.

1. When

1. When you sorrow *not only for the Loss, but for the Cause.* When you can mourn, not only that you are *deserted*, but because you have *sinned*; when you can grieve much that you have procured this Evil.

2 When your Sorrow is not only *because of the Misery of such a State, but also for the Sinfulness*: There must needs be many Fears and great Anxieties in such a Soul, as seeth it self left of God, but a holy Heart will grieve for this, not only that it is fallen into such *Misery*, but also, and especially, that *Sin* hath regained Strength, that the Life and Lustre of Holiness is so weakned. Grace hath a great *Beauty* in the Eye of him that hath it, and Sin carrieth in it the greatest *Deformity* and Misery unto him, so that such a one minds not so much his *Ease* as his *Cure*, yea his Heart is carried in such strong Desires after God, that it overlooks its Suffering. Weeping is no Burden, and so that he might recover his Loss, though it come through a Storm of Fears, Cares, Grievs, he would count himself happy. Another Man who hath no greater Thing to fear or desire than *Hell* and *Heaven*, dwells upon his Fears when he is afraid, and is held in them, and if he could be delivered from his Fears, he would be at *Rest*, but a godly Man though he feel his Troubles, yet would he not count his Case happier, if these Storms were down, but he will mourn still till he be restored to his former Life in God, *David* was not satisfied till a new Heart was created in him, and a right Spirit renewed, *Psal.* 51. 10, 11.

3. When he sorrows not only for the Loss of the Comfort & Sweetness in a holy Converse with God, but for the Loss of God himself. A Child hath much Comfort and Relief from his Father, but when his Father is gone, he doth not only lament his Loss of Comfort, but his Loss of his Father, so the Wife more laments the Loss of her Husband, than of her Good by him. When a Man seeth what he hath lost, he cannot but mourn, to think what Days

he had, when he lived under the Wing of his gracious Father, but yet all the Comforts that ever he had or hoped for, do not ly so heavy *as God himself*: For to a godly Man, all Comforts, and Graces, and all Good that he receiveth, doth serve to lead his Heart to, and to fix it *in God*. God hath his *End* here, for he sends out these, but as *Joseph* sent Chariots to bring his Father, and Brethren to him; all these Things are but *Conveyances*, and *Servants* employed betwixt God and his People, to invite and draw their Hearts to himself, and the Saints do not *rest* in these, they do not match with the *Hand-maids*. The Fruits of God's Love are sweet, and, because they are sweet. Therefore God is precious. *Christ is precious to them that believe*, 1 Pet. 2. 7.

4. When your Sorrow is not only for the Loss, as it is your *Evil*, but also as it *betokeneth Displeasure in God*: A true Friend is grieved, when his *Friend* leaves him and casts him off, not only for his *own great Loss*, but also for his *Friend's Anger*, he can as well be without his *Friend* as without his *Love*, and is as loath his *Friend* should be *displeased*, as himself *endamaged*.

5. When your Sorrow is, that you have *less Strength* to serve him: Grace hath great Recompence in it self; but can you grieve that, by bringing your selves into this State of Deadness, you have lived to little Honour to your God, and are not now able to do much for him? This is *ingenuous* Sorrow.

6. When you can gladly submit to all Conditions of *Reconilement*, and of *Restauration*. Though God require much, or impose much, yet you count all nothing in Comparison of God, can you say, Lord command me, chide, rebuke, smite, do what thou wilt, though it be through a Desert, yea, through a Sea of Straits and Troubles, yet I am content to go, so I may arrive at last at my desired End, if I may have thy good Presence it shall be enough, if thou wilt come to me, if I may come to thee, every Way shall be sweet, though I go through Thorns and Briars, to the raking
ing

ing of my Flesh, and the Effusion of my Blood, yet this shall be nothing to me, if I may enjoy my God who is all in all to me.

When your Sorrow is *ingenuous*, then you will find God, yea indeed he *hath found* much, whose frozen Heart begins to *thaw*, and to dissolve it self in Showers of Tears, for the Return of God unto his *deserted Soul*. The Lord hath looked upon thee, if, with Peter, thou *weep bitterly*.

Secondly, Bewail the Cause This is Part of that Cure which the great Physician of Souls prescribed to Ephesus languishing in a like Disease, *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first Love: Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent*, Apoc. 2. 4, 5.

Quest. *Whether the Subtraction of the quickning Influences of the Spirit be always for Sin?*

Ans. 1. Sometimes it is like he doth it, not because his People have *sinned*, but for higher Ends: As Peter was left to be strangely foiled with Fears of Suffering, falling exceedingly beneath his former Spirit and Resolution, yet not for any particular Sin of his, but, as it is likely, that he might see, how *unable* he was of *himself*, that so all the Glory of his future, heroick Acts and Sufferings might come, not to *himself*, but unto Christ And so Paul was buffeted, that he *might not be exalted* God let loose Satan, not to punish, but to prevent his Sin, 2 Cor. 12. So the Case stood with the *blind Man*, John 9. 3.

2. *There is also Cause in us*, though God make it not a Cause to *himself*, and to his Action Therefore your Way is to consider your Ways.

3. God *usually doth it for Sin*. And if you search the Scriptures, they testify that Sin is the usual Spring of this Evil: *Sin separates betwixt us*, Isa. 59. 2 He hath threatened, *If we forsake him, he will forsake us*, 2 Chron. 15. 3.

Quest.

Quest. *How may a Man find out what Sin is the Cause?*

Ans. First, Sometimes the Cause is *visible*, and a Man can scarce look besides it. 1. When upon some *particular gross Failing*, a Damp hath fallen upon him, in such a Case God points at the *Sin*, and discovers the Cause of his Displeasure by this sudden Punishment inflicted on him, Scripture affords many Instances of discovering the Sin by the Time of the Punishment.

2 It may be there hath been *an eminent Neglect* of those Means, by which Life was upheld, and gross Carelessness in Omission, or palpable Remissness in Duties, Vanity of Mind, sinful Affections, and other Evils connived at have so broken in, that a Man may plainly see the Time when his Fall *legan*, and when his Sun began to set.

Secondly, Upon Consideration, though the Cause be not *transparent*, it may be discovered, and for Help in this I will propound *four Rules*.

1. *Pursue your Loss*, and sad Condition to the Birth of it Consider *how long* this Night of Darknes hath been upon you, look back to the Days in which you were happy, in a living Communion with God. If a Man have lost a Thing, he bethinks himself *when* he had it, and *where*, and so, as much as may be, pursueth his Loss to the *very Time and Place*. It may be, when you come to this, you will have much Light to find out *how you lost* your Treasure, God goeth not away upon *small Offences*, you will, by Searching, find the Gap that let in these Floods

2 Consider, *what Things have been most pressed* by God, from Time to Time, upon you: For though the whole Law and all Righteousness be enjoyned to all, yet there are *some Things* more especially pressed So Joshua was much pressed to *Courage*, so much, as if it had been his *only Task*. Be strong and of a good Courage. Only be thou strong and very courageous, Josh. 1. 6, 7, 9. The Israelites were mightily, among other Things, called on to take Heed of *forgetting God*, and what he had done, when they should possess the Land of Promise,

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Deut. 4. 9. Only take Heed to thy self, and keep thy Soul diligently, lest thou forget, &c. Chap. 8. 2, 5, 10, 11, 14, 18. And, after their Return from Babylon, some Things especially, were again urged, as not to mix themselves with the Heathen, which things Ezra and Nehemiah laboured much in, and to build the Temple, which the Prophet Haggai again and again enforceth, &c. So every Christian, according to his Station, Temper, Measure of Gifts and Graces, Relation, Age, Course, &c. is put upon some Things in a special Manner. Hear what the Spirit saith, the Voice calls upon you, it may be, for more Humiliation, or more Meditation, or more Thankfulness, Prayer, Reading, Zeal, Mortification of particular Lusts: Now, if you have been deaf to these Calls, it is like, here grew the Difference betwixt God and you, for here is great Disobedience, when a Man sins against such strong and continued Calls. A Friend takes it ill, when he is often denyed, and long put off in a Thing much desired, and strongly requested.

3. *Listen to Conscience, for that is God's Deputy, and it will tell you what it is that God takes ill at your Hands. Observe at what Door Conscience layeth this sad Birth, this miserable Plight of Soul which you are in, for th t is like to be the Father, as God witnesseth with our Spirits, so usually he chides with them, at least he never chides without them, but when he will rebuke, he sets Conscience to do it, hear then its Errands, and receive its Charge. It may be, it will say, This is thy Pride, or thy Slightness in Duties, thy Neglect of God and Christ, thy harboured Lusts, &c.*

I deny not but Conscience may err, and doth often, charging that as Sin, which is no Sin, or making Sin greater than it is, or accusing a Man of that which he is not guilty of, or judging and condemning when the Sin is pardoned. Therefore I add,

4. *Pray the Lord to shew you wherein you have offended. It was Elihu his Counsel to Job in his sad Case, Surely, is it meet to be said unto God, I have born Chastisement,*

I will not offend any more; that which I see not, teach thou me, if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more, Job. 34. 31, 32. And when you are convinced of the Evil of your Ways, then look on them and mourn over them. What a Thing is this, that I should provoke him to leave me, in whose Presence I have had such Light, such Life, such Strength, such Liberty, such Peace, such Victories, such Treasures, such Joys? Hear O ye Heavens. For I have committed two great Evils, I have forsaken the Fountain of Living Waters, and have digged to myself Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that hold no Water, Jer. 2. 12. Oh! Wretch that I am, that that precious Communion, which I had with my God, was of no more Esteem with me, that those sweet Streams of Comfort which I now want, but then had from the Well of Life, those quickning Beams from the Sun of Righteousness, those refreshing, those ravishing Sights and Tastes of Jesus Christ, those pleasant Banquets which I had in the Ordinances and in Duties, those blessed Embraces of the everlasting Arms of the Lord my God; were of so low Account with me, that I should lose them by my Folly. I have been careful to keep my Name, my State, my Health, yea my Vanities, but I have not been careful to keep my God, that Life and Comfort of the Spirit, which Christ purchased with his Blood, I, like prophane Esau, have sold for Nought.

Who is me, that the Spirit of Jesus Christ should come, in Mercy, to make his Abode with me, and yet hath no better Entertainment. I set the Doors open, that he might depart, yea, by entertaining Lusts and Vanities, I have made him weary of his Dwelling, and he is gone in Anger, that came in Love, that which I begged with Tears, and enjoyed with Comfort, I have lost for Sin; Oh! What have I done against my God? Yea, what against my self? What Madnes was this, to gain my Lusts, and lose my God? Like that great Commander who sold himself for a Draught of Water.

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Thus

Thus break open the Fountains within, and add Sorrow to Sorrow, drink your Tears like Water, and mourn and mourn again: Say, Oh my Folly, that have lost that for Want of Care, which now I would redeem with my Blood; but when once God is gone, who can tell me when he will return again? He goeth from many, and takes Leave for ever, and now, if I go long in Heaviness, I may thank my self, if my Soul be spoiled with long Hostilities, and Tyrannies of the Power of Darkness, if my Sins rage like the Sea, if I walk as a Shadow of Death, my own Hand hath brought all this upon me; for God left not me, till I left him.

Yea further, Cause the Waters of Sorrow to rise yet higher, look upon former Times, and say, What was I then? What am I now? My Silver is become Dross, take up the Lamentation of the Church, and make it yours. How is the Gold become dim? How is the most fine Gold changed? The Stones of the Sanctuary are poured out in the Top of every Street. The precious Sons of Zion, comparable to fine Gold, how are they become as earthen Pitchers, the Work of the Hands of the Potter? They that fed delicately, are desolate in the Streets: They that were brought up in Scarlet embrace Dunghills. Her Nazarites were purer than Snow, they were whiter than Milk, they were more ruddy than Rubies, their Polishing was of Saphire, but now their Visage is blacker than a Coal, their Skin cleaveth to their Bones, it is withered, it is become like a Stick: We are Orphans and Fatherless. Our Necks are under Persecution, and we have no Rest: Servants have ruled over us, and there is none that doth deliver us out of their Hands. The Joy of our Heart is ceased, our Dancing is turned into Mourning. The Crown is fallen from our Head: Wo unto us that we have sinned: For this our Heart is faint, for these Things our Eyes are dim, Lam. 4 1, 2, 5, 7. Chap. 5. 3, 4, 8, 15, 16, 17.

Look about you, and gather Matter of Sorrow into your Hearts, cast your Eyes upon your Ways, and say, How little Good have I done? How much Evil? How
poor

poor is my Life, my Duties like Things without Life, and my Unfaithfulness appears as the Light, in all my Ways? I wonder how I could own such Actions, which stand all like the Children of Beggars, clothed with Rags, and full of Vermin, cast your Eyes upon others, and say, Such as had less Engagements, less Encouragements than I, are got far before me, the last is first, and the first last, many are grieved and dulled by my Deadness, that should have been quickened by my Life. Look up to God, and say, Oh foolish and unjust Man! Have I thus required the Lord my God? Look up to Heaven, and say, I might, by sowing much, have made my Harvest rich and full, but now it is just, I should reap little, that have sowed little, yea, that having sowed Vanity, I should reap Iniquity.

Repentance is the Way to make up your Losses, and to repair your Ruins, God hath promised Grace and Mercy to the Penitent. When thou art in Tribulation, and all these Things are come upon thee, (or have found thee) if thou turn to the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, for the Lord thy God is a merciful God, he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, &c. Deut. 4 29, 30, 31. Take then the Counsel of the Prophet, which he gave to Israel, when God was departed from them. Oh Israel return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity, take with you Words and turn to the Lord, say unto him, take away all Iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the Calves of our Lips, Hos. 14 1, 2. That you may find the like Favour, and God may do for you as he promised to them. I will heal their Backslidings, I will love them freely. For mine Anger is turned away from him. I will be as the Dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the Lilly, and cast forth his Roots as Lebanon, his Branches shall spread, and his Beauty shall be as the Olive-Tree, and his Smell as Lebanon, &c. ver 5. 6. When Ephraim repented and mourned, God pitied him, I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the Yoke: Turn thou me, and I

shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God, &c. Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: Therefore my Bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have Mercy upon him, saith the Lord, Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20.

You see then what Encouragement you have to seek, in *this Way*, for Peace with God, and for the Quicknings of his Spirit, which you have lost. Sin arms God against you, but he cannot hold back Mercy from the *Humble*; his Promise hath given Repentance a Power to prevail with him, and he will not contend with the *Broken-hearted*, he hath a special Eye upon *Mourners*, and will not hide himself from the Cry of the Afflicted; a *contrite Heart is a Sacrifice* which he will accept, Psal. 51. *He is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit*, Psal. 34. 18. The Father of the Prodigal made Haste to receive and welcome his straying Son, and rejoiced, that *he that was lost, was found again, and that he that was dead, was alive again*. Luke 15. This is the *Way*, walk in it, if God should deny such, he should deny himself, because he hath said, though he hath been sorely displeased, *turn you unto me, and I will turn unto you*, Zach. 1. 2, 3.

Till you repent, your Sin is continued, and consequently God's Displeasure.

Therefore consider seriously of your Case, for Want of serious Thoughts doth great Hurt, so that though the Heart be affected, yet not enough, it seeth often that all is not well, and knoweth the Cause, yet because these Things ly not upon the Spirit, by ponderous Thoughts, a Man bears his Misery, haply complaining, but not wisely and strongly endeavouring to remove it, and the Heart is not soon brought down. You must hold up the Objects of spiritual Grief, by Consideration, that they may be able to bear down the Heart: Therefore be much in pondering these two Things.

1. The

1. *The sad Effects of the Loss of God*: See what Blindness, Burenness, Weakness, Depravedness, Vanity, Fears, Acculations of Heart! What Cries and Clamours in your Souls! And now, what if Afflictions come? How will you be able to live in *such a Time*, other than a *dying*, and a fearful Life? What if Death come? Lister a black Cloud of *Darkness* will over-spread you, or a Storm of *Affrightments* and Terrors will torment you. And now remember your Sin hath brought all this upon you.

2. *The Seriousness of the Cause*: Why did you neglect and despise your God? If you had not set him shamefully at a *low Rate*, you would not have turned your Back upon him. What, could not the infinite Majesty and Mercy of the Father, the incomprehensible Love of the Son, the unutterable Comforts of the Holy Ghost pierce all with you? Do you see what you have done? Have you not said to the Father, I neither fear thy Majesty, nor desire thy Mercy? And to the Son, Leave not for all thy Love, nor yet for I see that dyed for me! And to the Holy Ghost, I regard not all thy living Counsels, living Influences, and high Refreshments? Do you not hear these pleading with you, each for himself, and each for all? *They are one*, and what you have done in this, you have done against *each* and against *all*: Weigh well then what your Contumacies and Disobedience amounts to, that you may meet him with an humbled spirit, drenched in Tears, and clothed with Shame. Put the Case now, that God should requite you in your Kind, and that his Heart should not be towards you, then you might bid Peace, yet Life, yea Hope *when for ever*.

Consider further, How God did follow you and encouraged you not to go from him. Did he not tell you, he could not bear Contempts, and that you would leave it at last? And will see, that what you have done against him, you have done against your selves. Did he not kindly use you? And were you not al-

ways welcome to him? O my People, what have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me, Mic. 6. 3. And when you were going, did he not cry after thee? Return thou backsliding Israel, and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, and I will not keep Anger for ever. Jer. 3. 12. Yet you would not: Consider now how long you have lived without him, and how often God hath called upon you, to consider your Ways, if you will leave your Thoughts out, you will find abundant Cause of Grief: And when you seek him with Repentance, you will find him, in Mercy drawing near, and he will forget your Unkindnesses, and you shall hear no more of them. Doubtless your Sins, this Way, are very great, so that sometimes God hath been put, as it were, to a Stand, what Course to take. When God had promised Mercy to his revolting People, he adds, But I said, How shall I put thee among the Children? And give thee a pleasant Land? And I said, Thou shalt call me, my Father, and shalt not turn away from me. Jer. 3. 19. When the Church had been disloyal, she at last fell to this Course of Repentance, and the issue, A Voice was heard upon the High Places, Weeping and Supplications of the Children of Israel, for they have forsaken their Ways, and they have forgotten the Lord their God. Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your Backslidings. ver. 21. And Oh! That you also would tread in their Steps, and say, We come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God. ver. 22.

CHAP. XXIX.

Two other Directions how to recover.

THirdly, Go to Christ, and beg of him to send the Spirit of Life to come into thee, I put you upon Christ, but take heed of Mistakes here. 1. Think not that there is a greater Willingness in Christ, than in the Father or the holy Ghost, to shew Mercy to you, For the

honour the Son as you honour the Father, John 5. 23. they must have the same Honour, for they are one, they have the same Being, and the same Will, and the same Thoughts, I and my Father are one, John 8. 20. they have the same Friends. All things are mine, and mine are thine, John 17. 10.

2 Think not that what you have from Christ, you have from him exclusively, for they are one Fountain, and as they are one in Nature, so they are one in all that Mercy which is shewed to us. Therefore so cast Honour upon Christ, as that you also honour the Father and the Spirit. All that Christ doth as Mediator, he doth by Commission. And therefore he saith, he comes to do the will of his Father, Heb. 10. John 6. Look then upon this great Mediator, as one sealed of the Father, and filled with the Spirit, yea, and clothed with our Nature, and standing between God and us, to make both one, and to convey to us all the Riches of his Father, himself, as the Son of God, is equal with the Father, and hath a natural and eternal Sovereignty with the Father, but as Mediator his Power is Oeconomical, dispensed, and delegated to him. All Power is given to me, both in Things in Heaven, and in Things on Earth, Mat 28. 20. Therefore lift up your Hands with Joy, and come to Christ, pray him to look upon a poor Beggar, he hath Power in his Hand, he is the Lord of Life. Say, Lord, I need much, thou calledst me to buy of thee Gold, and Raiment, and Eye salve, Apoc. 3. 18. Now behold my Poverty, Nakedness, Blindness, and pity me. Say to him, Lord, I could rather bear all Evils than this Evil, I could think myself happy, if I might enjoy thee, though all other Troubles were upon me, Lord, thou knowest what it is for a soul to be forsaken, it was sometimes thine own Case, when thou complainedst, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Not, O my Lord! but that thou hadst a divine Supportment; but thou hadst not (it seemeth) that inward joy which at other Times did fill thee. Now thou art in thy Glory

ry, pity a *Worm* in Misery, that mourns and desires more after thee than all Things. Lord, thou parent dear for my Good, let Good come unto me, I desire more from thee, for thee. Not merely that I might have more Happiness, but that thou mightest have better Service, if thou wilt give me much, I will return much. Thou hast bid me, *If mine enemy hunger, feed him, if he thirst give him drink*, Rom, 12. 19. Prov. 25. 21. Lord, deny not such Mercie to thy Children. Though I have sinned, yet thou art my Father, and though thou hast been angry, yet am I not thy Child? This shall be thy Glory, when these *dead and dry Bones shall live*, when the Graves shall be opened, and the Bonds of Death shall be loosed, and I shall walk before thee. Thou saidst to the Woman of Samaria, *Thou if she had known the Gift of God, and thy self, she would have asked of thee, and thou wouldst have given her living Water*, John 4. 10. Now Lord, I know thee, and this Gift, those Waters, would be sweet to my thirsting Heart. Oh give unto me also! I remember thy Mercies of old, and my Heart both *joyeth and dieth*, the Remembrance of *Thy Sweetness* doth delight me, but the Thoughts of *Thy Absence* doth afflict me. I could not have desired thy Presence, but by thee, these Desires are thine, turn them not back without their End. I was well without thee (as I thought) till thou camest to me. And since thy coming I will sleep again, and was at Rest, but thou hast called me: And now, Lord, what wilt thou do for me? A little will do me good, and I will bless thee. There is no Sorrow to this, to have the Face hid, and Lusts and Devils to break in. Lord, what, and how many are the Troubles of my Soul? Oh in the multitude of thy Compassions help me, who am compassed about with a multitude of Evils. Art thou not set for the rising of them that fall, and to be a Reparer of Ruin? Is not thy Name *Jesus*? And is not *Salvation thy Imployment*? Oh! be a Saviour to me, and pull my Soul out of the Depth, remember that

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venant, &c. Thus take up *Words* and *Courage*, and go to the Throne of Grace; carry thine empty Sacks to Joseph thy Brother, for he is *Lord of all Egypt*. Stand not wasting thy self in sad Thoughts of thy Misery, but arise and pray, turn the Streams of thy Grief towards Christ, he will turn them into Streams of Joy: Sit not like *Hagar* weeping in the Desert for her Child, that is ready to die for Thirst, *is not the Well before thee?* Christ is the Fountain, let down thy Bucket, and drink and live, go with *Indictments* against thy self in one Hand, and with Christ's *Promise* and thy *Petition* in the other, and thou wilt be heard. If thou wilt take this Course, then *you* proud Lusts, and Troops of Hell, you must pack and be gone, *you* Clouds of Darkness and Unbelief must be scattered, *you* Chains of Death must get you hence, here is no Abiding for you. For here the King of Glory will make his *Temple*, his *Throne*, his *Rest*, only come with the *whole Heart*. Cold Prayers, and Remissness of Spirit lost what you seek, and fervent Prayers will find again what you lost. Be not discouraged, here is the *Gate of Life*, he that dwells here, is never from *Home*, nor ever asleep; extend your Prayers, as they *Acts* 12. 5. stay till the Alms come, the Thing is sure, only the *Time* is in the Lord's Hand. Many Times Prayer is lost, because you wait not for the Answer. Lie at the Gate, you need not fear to knock, the Lord will not be angry, you may be urgent, wrest the Door open by strong Prayers, it shuts not because you should not enter, but because you should knock, ask Leave to enter, the Bars of the Gate are Mercy, thy Prayers are like *Petards*, to break Way into the City: Therefore turn thy *Fears* into *Hopes*, thy *Complaints* into Prayers, thy *Lamentation* into *Supplication*, and Christ will turn thy *Darkness* into *Light*, thy *Deadness* into *Life*, thy *Bondage* into *Liberty*, thy *Weakness* into *Strength*. Mouthly, You must set your Hands to the Work. For it is vain to expect that God should help you, if you will not help your selves, you must use your Hands as well as your

your *Tongues* Idle *Beggars* must be whip'd, he that will not *work* must not *eat*. Remember what I have said, you have a *Life in you*, if you be in *Christ*, And, as you have a *Life*, so there is a never failing Presence of the Spirit to attend that Power which you have. If then you put forth your selves to what you are able, and as far as your Power extends, God will draw near to you.

It is true, that which you want is out of your Reach, you are not able to make crooked Things to become straight, and lay those swelling Mountains of Corruption level, but yet you must set to the Work. *Joshua* could not, with the Strength of Rams Horns sounding, cast down the Walls of *Jericho*, but yet he must set upon the Work. When the *Midianites* fall, there must be the *Sword of the Lord* and of *Gideon*, *Judg.* 7. 18. The Father holdeth an Apple to the Child, the Child cannot reach it, yet his short Arm must be put forth, and then the Father, whose Arm is long enough, will reach it to him: You must be *doing*.

Before I come to shew what is to be done, it will be needful to convince you, That Men regenerate have Power to do something of themselves. For oftentimes Men misunderstanding the State of Regeneration, do either excuse their Negligence by pretended Inability, or sit down discouraged, as having no Power in their Hands at all. How often do they complain and sigh in vain. Alas! I am nothing of my self, except God give me Heart and Strength, what can I do? I can do nothing, &c.

To these I say, That these *Conclusions* are ill drawn from a true Principle, which is this, That *all is of God* and that by Nature we are dead, But it is ill urged in this Case For that the Regenerate have a Power to do good, appears,

1. Because they are *living*, and all Life hath a Power to act.

2. Else there is no *specifical Difference* betwixt a Man regenerate, and unregenerate, if both were still dead and without Strength.

3. Grace

3. Grace is a *renewing of that Image of God* and Holiness which we lost in Adam; Ephes. 4. 24. But that was *Power to do what God required*. Therefore, so far as that *Image* is repaired, so far there is a *Power*.

4. Else we should not have as much *Benefit* by the *second Adam*, as we had by the *first*; the *First* would have communicated his *Power* to do Good, and being corrupted, doth communicate *Power* to Sin. Therefore much more by *Christ* have we a *Power* to do Good in our Measure.

Object. It may be objected, That it is said, *John 15 5. Without me ye can do nothing.* So that it seemeth that we have not *Power* in our selves.

Sol. The Meaning is, Except you be implanted into me, ye can do nothing. The Word, *Without me*, signifieth, separate from me, or apart from me, and intimateth this only, That till we be knit unto *Christ*, we are but dead and barren *Branches*. And so *Christ* explains himself, *Ver. 4. As the Branch cannot bring forth Fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me*.

Object. Phil. 2 13. *It is God that worketh both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* -

The Place proves what I say, That the *Saints* have a *Power*. It is true, it is of *God*, therefore we should work out our Salvation in Humility, not boasting in our selves; for all is received of *God*. More fully, *God* is said to work the will and the Deed.

1. By giving habitual Grace, a renewed Frame of Heart.

2. In exciting and strengthening this Grace.

And both these are ever afforded to the *Saints*, only the latter is more and less, according to his Pleasure. So that in the worst Times, a *Christian* hath a *Power* to do good, though not alike at all Times, and this *Power* you must use, and put forth your selves as you are able, else you cannot with Reason expect his help. A Ship hath Instruments of Motion, (though not an internal
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Principle) and if the Mariner would have Help by the Winds, he must loose his Cables, and hoise his Sails. So must you, or else you may ly still.

Now, that which you are to do, is,

1. *To stir up your selves*, for God hath promised to meet you, and to reach out his Hand to help you, if you be not wanting to your selves. It is certain, a godly Man cannot, by the Strength of his Endeavours alone, raise up his Soul, nor recover his Loss, though he should lay Mountain upon Mountain, and pile Endeavours upon Endeavours, yet he could not reach that Life he seeks, but the Strength of all our Endeavours is the Grace and Promise of God, but as Endeavours without God cannot, so God without Endeavours will not: Therefore labour to quicken your selves, that is, work upon your Heart by your Understandings: As the striking of the *Flint* and *Steel* together begetteth Fire, so the Meeting of these two *Faculties*, having an internal Life in them, do quicken the Soul: God hath made the *Understanding* the Guide and *Treasure* of the Soul, upon this *Altar* lieth the *Fire* of God. If these *Coals* be blown up, and cast upon the Heart, they will warm, melt, purge and quicken it.

There are two Things in a renewed Mind.

1. *A Treasure of habitual Knowledge*; it is the Ark of God, in which the *Tables* of the Law are kept, the *Mystery* of the Gospel is engraven on it; so that the Mind is as the Head to the Body, which gives *Sense* and *Motion* to all the Members. *Spiritual Truths* are as the *Spirits* in the Head, for the quickening of the Soul.

2. *There is a Power to use and improve these Truths*, by Meditation and Application, to awaken and provoke the Will. As a Man hath Power to counsel and perswade another, so he may do this to himself, by this discursive Faculty. So we see David pleading with himself, sometimes chiding, *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul*, and *why art thou disquieted within me*, Psal. 42. 5. sometimes exciting himself to Duty, *Praise the Lord O my Soul*, and

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all that is within me praise his holy Name. Psal. 103. 1. sometimes comforting himself in God, *Return to thy Rest O my Soul, for God hath dealt bountifully with thee.* Psal. 116. 7. It was an usual Thing with him to talk with himself, the mind hath a Language as well as the Body, *My Reins teach me in the Night Season,* Psal 16. 7. and he found so much good in this Way, that he puts all upon it *Commune with your Hearts upon your Beds, and be still.* Psal. 4. 4. Bring out those Truths which are laid up in you, and whet them upon your selves, God hath fitted you with Faculties and Powers to do this; you have an apprehensive Faculty, to lay in Truths and Notions, a retentive Faculty to lay them up, and a recollective Faculty to lay them out; you have not only Power of Intelligence, but also of Reminiscence, that you may call to Mind, and ponder of Things known, and call them out of the Cells in which they ly, to revive the Heart: The Understanding is to the Heart, as the Breast to the Child, or as the Stomach to the Body; all is fed by it. Set therefore upon you. Hearts with quickening Thoughts For as rubbing and chaffing the Hands or other Parts with hot Oils, is a Means to recover them when they are benumbed, so the plying of the Heart with stirring Thoughts, enforcing Arguments, is a Means to revive it. Among all Thoughts there are none more prevalent, than of Sins past, of Heaven, Hell, Eternity, Love of God, the Death of Christ. These are strong Cordials to cheer up the Spirits

To help you in this Work of dealing with your Hearts, let me propound these Rules.

1. *Make every Notion practical.* Let the Heart share with the Understanding. Count not your selves better for a thousand Notions, except there be some hear in them, mind your Hearts, and strive to gain by all Things. If you read, or hear, or discourse, let your Aim and Desire be, to better your Hearts.

2. *Be frequent in Thoughts* For mindless men are useless,

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3. Be

3. Be ponderous: For *slight* Thoughts are weak in working.

4. Pitch upon Things which most concern you: All are good, but some are more seasonable.

5. Observe the Temper of thy Heart, what may work most: All Thoughts have not the like Efficacy in all the Constitutions of Mens Souls differ. Learn to know your Tempers.

6. When Thoughts begin to take hold, ply them Keep the Fire burning, and let it not go out for want of Blowing.

7. Arm your Thoughts with Prayer. Beseech God to be in them.

Thus then employ your Minds This is God's Way: God will keep his Method which he hath set, he hath appointed the Mind to this Office, and he will not baulk it; Kings do all by their Officers. God comes not himself into the inward Temple, but by this Gate, all his Workings upon the Heart are in a rational Way, suitable to the State of the Creature, he deals with the Heart by the Mind, and upon the whole Man by the Heart as the first Pipe takes in Water for it self, and for all the rest, Whatever is in the Cistern of the Heart, is conveyed by the Mind; this is the Spring in the Watch of your Souls. Wind up this, and all the Wheels will move.

2. Attend the Ordinances. I will say no more of this having met with it before.

3. Take the help of the Saints: Crave their Counsels, their Prayers, use their Company, for they are living, and they will impart their Life, they will be helpful to the infirm, they have a Spirit of Compassion to succour the Necessitous. Wo be to him that is alone if he fall, who shall raise him up? It may be your forsaking the Assembly of these, hath brought you into this withering State God hath appointed the Saints unto Fellowship, and when they knit not, but carelessly out of Pride, vain Fears, or Envy, or any the like ungodly Principles

principle, hang off from each other, they shall not prosper.

4 Do your first Works. This is the Counsel of Christ to a slackening Church, *Apoc. 2. 5.* Do your first Works of *Quantity*, as much as you did, you see Abatement hath impoverished you. Therefore work harder, to make up your selves again. Do them also as much as you are able for *Quality* as you did before; remember from whence you are fallen, call to Mind with what fear, with what Reverence, with what Diligence, with what Intention of Spirit, with what Tenderness you were wont to do all. So do again.

O. J. Alas, *I cannot*. This is my Misery. If I could do as I have done, I could rejoice.

Ans. 1. You may do more than you do.

2. See if the Fault lie not more in the Defect of *Will* than of *Power*, and stir up your selves: If you were more willing, Things would be more easie.

3. The more you strive, the more you will gain: The Root of Discouragement is *Unbelief*. When God bids you repent, he knoweth how little your Strength is, and how hard your Hearts are, and so when he bids you pray, he knoweth your *Infirmities* what they are; both those of *Infancy*, and Defect of Grace, and those of *Sickness*, by declining from him; and his *Intent* is not, that you should work out these alone, but he calls upon you to put to your Strength, and he will join with you, and will go Hand in Hand with you. Therefore awaken your selves, and be encouraged, for if you be *repent*, he will work with you, in you, for you, and so you may recover your selves again. And what is all your Sorrows and Labours to this Recompence? If God will return again, you will think all Labour and Pains well bestowed. Oh! How sweet will *Life* be, after such a Time of *Deadness*? How sweet will a clear *Understanding* and an established Faith be, after such *Mists* of *Darkness* and *Unbelief*? How sweet will *Liberty* be, after so long a Time of *cruel Servitude*? How sweet will

R 2

Victory

Victory and Rest be after so long and so bloody a *War*? Now the Ordinances will be as the green Pastures in which your Souls shall feed and delight themselves, Now you that did dwell in the Dust, and were compassed about with hellish Lusts, and unclean Spirits, shall be filled with the Spirit of Christ, and shall converse with God. It will be a sweet Time, when all Things shall become new; when your Diseases shall be turned to Health, and you shall renew your Strength as the Eagles, when Christ shall come into his *ancient Throne*, and rule you with the Scepter of his Grace. And I pray God, that all that have been deserted may seek him, and find him. This shall suffice for the first Sort of spiritual Desertions, *viz.* Real: Now followeth another Sort, (if I may so call it) Desertions only in Appearance.

C H A P. XXX. —

Of Desertions in Appearance only, with the Causes of Mistake in this Case.

HAVING finished the first Sort of Desertions, or God's Withdrawings of the quickening Influences of his Spirit, which are, when Men are really so deserted I now come to those Desertions which *seem such*, but are not. a godly Man sometimes may, and doth draw sad Conclusions against himself, and conceives that God hath departed from him, when *it is not so*. And this Mistake proceeds from such Causes as these

1. *Fearfulness* This abounds in some more than others, the Matter is weighty, and in such Cases Man is apt to *Fear*. As one upon a Tower, though the Place be strong, and he sure, yet when he looks down, he is appalled at the Dreadfulness of the Precipice, and counts himself in Danger. This Fear is increased in Men, because they know they may sink into such Depths, and they see many have fallen. Now, as in a Time of Pestilence and great Mortality, Fear to take hold of some, that they think sometimes that they are *struck*

brucken, and that they also are going to the House of silence and Darkness, when as they are in healthful state, so sometimes men think in this Case. And the tempers of some Spirits are such, that they are apt to err, there are dusky Clouds of *Melancholy* darkening their Reason, so that they think with that *melancholy* Song, that they, of *Men*, are become *Beasts*, and so are ready to depose themselves from that Princely State which they lived in, to feed with Oxen. And to all this there is a *Working* of the Prince of Darkness, labouring to hide the Light, and to increase the Darkness and Saddens of a fearful Soul, and this *Fear* being raised, doth create dismal Visions and Apprehensions, that a Man seems to himself to be *metamorphosed*, and thinks he is as one cast out from God, when yet his Case is good.

2. *Mistake in the Cause of present Deadness*. When they are clogged with *indisposedness*, and *ill disposedness*, they lay this to God's withdrawing himself, which, indeed, is the Fruit of their own *Carelessness*, *Slothfulness*, and *Untowardness*, they take not Pains with themselves, but suffer their Hearts to die, and to be depraved, and then cry out, that God hath forsaken them. There is an Aptness in Men to charge God, but awaken yourselves, lest God withdraw indeed.

3. *Misjudging themselves*: They think *worse* of themselves than they are, and there are sundry Things which occasion them to *mistake*.

1. *Spiritual Poverty*. A poor Man is apt to complain, and an humble Man is apt to think meanly of himself. There is that maketh himself rich and hath nothing, and there is that maketh himself poor, having great Riches. Some Mens Hearts are high, when their Worth is low. The emptiest Ears stand highest, but the richest Mines lie low. An humble Christian is a rich Treasure, yet he thinks he is worth but little. But, I must tell you, all is not Gold that glitters; all in a godly Man that seems Grace, is not, there is a *Bastard Humility*, as well as a *genuine Humility*, true Humility is judicious, though it

think meanly of it self, yet *justly*, it judgeth not again Truth; false Humility is *distempered*, and errs in *judgment*: I say, it is a *melancholy Distemper* in the Habit of Humility, which can see nothing but ill Sights, it can see no Good: When it looks this Way, it cannot see Wood for Trees, it ever is in *Substraction* in its Account of real Worth, and Matter of Encouragement, but ever in *Multiplication* and *Addition*, beyond Measure of *Ends* and *Wants*, and all Matter of Discouragement. Ask him how he doth, and he will tell you he is a very Beggar, a miserable Man, a Bankrupt, full of Sin, empty of God, he is nothing, hath nothing, seeth nothing, tasteth nothing, doth nothing. Yea, he will tell you, (but who can believe him that knoweth his real Worth?) that he is worse than nothing.

2. *Hungering and thirsting after more Grace* This is a sweet Companion of Humility, but it hath this Property, To lead the Soul still *outward*, and is so serious seeking what it *hath not*, that it minds not what it *has*. A covetous Man is ever poor, because ever wanting; he forgets what is *behind*, and is still pressing to the which is *before*. It is the Fault of such as are filled with strong Desires after God, that they much forget what they have received. Pride ever Feeds on what it hath; but Humility seeth best what it hath not: But you should remember, that strong Desires after God, are strong *Evidences* of his Presence. Other things are first *desired*, and then *attained*; but spiritual Things are first *attained*, and then *desired*. Without these, the Heart would rest without God: And as it cannot be without some chief Good, so it would seek it out of God. But when it is wheeled about with a strong Byass towards God, doubtless God is there.

3. *Much Love*. This also is near in Blood unto the two former, and is an Occasion sometimes of *strange Thoughts* in the Heart. Love hath Qualities which expose the Heart to Trouble. 1. It is *jealous*, ever fearful, lest it should lose the Happiness which now it hath.

in enjoying God; this sometimes rising *high*, inclineth to think that God is gone. It is the Nature of a *fearful* Heart to fall from *Care* to *Fear*, from *Fear* to *Jealousies*, from *jealous Suspicions*, to *sad conclusions*. As the Mother out of the Vehemency of Affection to her Child, if he be out of her sight, *Fest*, Taketh Care, then is filled with Fears and sad Conjectures, *at last*, Crieth out, Where is my Child? 2. *Love is liberal*, and is never satisfied; it would still do better, and be better, and the more it is the less it seems to it self, and is so enlarged in Dispositions and Resolutions to do good: That, as it knoweth it cannot do enough, so it is apt to think it doth almost nothing. Hence many Complaints arise, that it is not with them as in former Days, that which they did before seemed much then, because Love was not much; and now all seems little, because Love is great: But you should consider, that God is much there, where he works much, and that this Flame of Love is blown up by him; for God is Love, 1 John 4. 16. that is to say, The Fountain and Author of Love. As Love is eminently and infinitely in him, so it floweth from him, and, *he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

CHAP. XXXI.

The false Rules of Mens judging themselves, causing Mistake in this Case.

Judging by false Rules, is a third Cause of Mistakes: As for Instance, 1. Men judge that they are dejected, and fear they are in a State of Declension, because they have less Quickness and Vivacity, as they conceive, than they have had. I confess this is an ill Sign, yet this may be where there is no just Cause of such sad Conclusions, and to satisfy such, let me propound four Things.

1 Distinguish betwixt God's Working in Gifts, and his Working in Graces: God is sometimes pleased to carry up the Gifts of Men very high, when their spiritual

ritual Life hath not a proportionable Elevation. We see he is much this Way, sometimes in Men that are not good, Gifts are given to the Members for the Body, and for others Sakes oftentimes he poureth out great Measures, and beareth them on with a full Gale of Assistance, and when the Work is done to which those Gifts serve, then God may withdraw - I doubt not but many faithful Preachers may find a Weakness and Dulness in their Gifts, in Judgment upon the People, for the Deafness of the Hearers, he smites the Messengers dumb, and so, in sundry Cases, it may fall out. It is said, *Christ could do there (in his own Country) no mighty Work, &c* Mark 6. 5. His Hands were, as it were, tyed and bound, his Power was suspended, because of their Unbelief, and where God had some great Work to do, he opened the Hearts of the Apostles, and much enlarged their Spirits. Wisely therefore distinguish betwixt Gifts and Graces, though you be not able to do as you have done, yet see into the Frame and Disposition of your Hearts towards God, for that may continue, when the other fadeth. It may be, you have not Occasion for the Use of Gifts, as heretofore, and except they be used, they grow dull inevitably. As the most expert Musician, by Disuse, may lose his Skill. But note here, That where there is Occasion and Use of Gifts, and they are not stirred up, but suffered, by Idleness and Carelessness, to be quenched, this is a Sin against the Spirit, and breeds a Damp not only upon Gifts, but upon Grace.

2. God may, and doth give, sometimes, more full Assistance to the Graces of his People, than he will perpetually continue, and the Abatement of this is no just Cause of concluding, that God hath forsaken them.

1. In Times of seeking to him, and of mediate Converse in Prayer, and Meditation, and the like, there is a fuller Taste of him than at other Times. A godly Man enjoyeth God in all Things, but especially in Duties of Piety. There is an evident Reason why a Man hath more of God's

God then, because Grace is now *acting* and feeding upon God: Duties are the *Meals* of a Christian, and other Actions are his *Work*, he comes in Duties to *re-ceive* Strength, in other Things he *useth* it: As the Body gets Strength and Refreshment by *eating*, and draweth it out in *working*, and then comes to repair it again by eating. Times of immediate Approach to God are *meeting* Times. There is a mutual *Visit* betwixt God and the *Soul*, and this is the proper *End* of these Things, that God and the Soul may *meet* together, it were an happy Thing if those *Impressions*, which the Soul receiveth at such Times, were *abiding*: But such is our Condition here, That we must *hunger* and *eat*, and when we are *filled* we shall *hunger* again. Heaven is the Place of *constant* Life, there is a *continual* Feast, but *here* we cannot have it so, the Mind is but *finite*, and being, of Necessity, to converse with *other* Things besides God, it cannot be expected, that it should be so constantly filled with him, so much a Man enjoyeth him, as he seriously *minds* him. Therefore they that neglect Duties, or slightly perform them, must needs lose much of God. But it is not to be expected to carry such a Spirit in *other* Employments, and in other Actions, as in *conversing* with God, though the more a Man hath in Duties, the better he will be in all Things, and the fitter to meet God in his Seasons.

2 In *Times of great Necessity*. God is wont to afford more of himself, than at other Times, when Tentations, Afflictions, and Dangers are many and great. Then, As a Father, when his Child comes to a Ditch or deep Way, which he cannot pass, takes up the Child into his Arms, but when he is got over, setteth him down again, so God, in such hard Cases, ministreth more abundant Aid, which he doth not continue always. Hence we see that even the *Weakest* of the Flock become *Lions*, and those that seemed to be but little, prove like mighty Champions, victoriously conquering all Difficulties, and treading under Foot the *Gloiy* and
Terror

Terror of the World, yea the Fears of Death it self. These, by the transcendent Nobleness, and high Courage of Spirit, (so far above their ordinary Pitch) do declare that there is *another* Power with them, than their *own*, which makes them so gloriously to exceed not *others* only, but *themselves* also. As the Spirit came upon *Samson*, when the *Philistines* came upon him, so it is in this Case, but God is not always at so much *Cost*; when the Necessities of his People are *less*, than he gives them their *accustomed* Pension. When *Israel* was in the *Desart*, a Place barren of Comforts, but full of Troubles and Exigences, God, by his mighty Power, did work *greater* Things for them than ever after, yet was he still their God. At the *first* Coming of the Gospel, the Way being *new*, and so subject to Cavil and Persecutions, which Christ knew the World would raise against it, he poured out *more* of his Spirit, and wrought with more glorious Power than in *succeeding* Ages, yet the Promise of Christ stands firm; *Lo, I am with you, to the End of the World.*

3. *At and about the Time of Conversion*, there may be more Quickness and Vivacity of Spirit, than afterwards. And hence many conclude, that they are finally abated, and that they are fallen from their first Love. But although I doubt not, but that it is indeed a just Complaint in many, yet I believe that some do charge themselves without Cause. Note therefore, That by *two Things* there may be a greater Flush of Affection, at that Time, than in after Time.

1. *The Newness of the Condition*. Naturally new Things affect much, the Suddenness of the Change, to be translated from Blackness of Darkness, into marvellous Light doth greatly affect them. In this Case distinguish betwixt solid Affection, and fleeting Passion, the Soul of a new Convert is put into a Kind of Astonishment, to see so strange and sudden a Metamorphosis. As if he were become another Man, and the whole World turned upside down, so that Heaven stands where the Earth did, and the Earth

Earth in the *Heavens* Place, *high* Things are made *low*, and *low* Things are set on *high*, these Things put the Soul to *amaze*, but much of this will *wear off*. Suppose a Man going to *Execution*, in great Heaviness and Fears, and in the Way, his Pardon, with Promise of the Prince's Favour, is brought to him, methinks I see his heart leaping, his Spirit dancing, and the Man filled with abundant Joy; but mark him, and in *Process of Time* you will see much of this vanishing, yet his Life is still as *dear* as ever. Or suppose two Persons married, sweetly conjoined in dear Affections, and after many Dangers and Difficulties, happily enjoying each others desired Company, what a *Flush* of Joy, what a Violence of Affection is mutually expressed? But in Time much of this ceaseth, but true Love still remaineth. Count not all that *Grace*, which is working at the Time of the first Conjunction of Christ and the Soul, there is much Passion in it, yet such is *holy* and good. But as it was stirred up on a *special Occasion*, so the Occasion ceasing, it may cease, and yet the Case may be good: The *Jews* were as those that dreamed, when they were first delivered, but that Dream did not always last. The lame Man, when he was first healed, was seen *walking, and leaping, and praising God*, Acts 3. 8. but though he was always glad of his Recovery, yet he did not ever leap and dance.

2. God doth more at the first Conversion for his People.

1. He gives more Assistance: For now a Man is entering upon a *new Way*, a Way of Difficulties, and all the Power of Hell comes out, as *Pharaoh*, to reduce their Escaping Captives. Therefore God covers them with his Hand, and fills them with Strength, to grapple with this Legion, and to break through these Difficulties.

2. God often pours in much Comfort at that Time: When the *Prodigal* was returned, his Father made him

very

very welcome, and calleth to his Servant, Bring forth the best Robe, and put it on him, and put a Ring on his Hand, and Shoes on his Feet. And bring hither the fatted Calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and be merry: For this my Son was dead, and is alive, he was lost, and is found. Luke 15. 22, 23, 24. Here was more than of Necessity, not only Shoes, but a Ring, not only Clothes, but the best Robes, here is Feasting, and Joy, and Chear: This Son was as welcome afterwards, yet had not this Entertainment every Day. It may be some of that comfortable Presence of God, which he then affords, some of that abundant Joy may cease, because it was given upon a special Occasion, and yet no just Cause given to raise such sad Thoughts, that God hath forsaken you.

4. There may be less Activity: Not from Change of the Spirit, but of Nature: The Body may be more feeble, Sickness or Age may clip the Wings of Activity, and take off much of a Man's former Vigour. The Body is the Instrument of the Soul. And as he that rides upon a weak and tyred Horse, cannot ride Post: so when the Oyl of natural Life and Vigour begins to waste, it cannot burn so clear as it was wont. We see in Sickness, when the natural Strength is decayed, how the Loss of Spirits degrades them from that high Lustre, wherein they were admired in the Time of Health. By the Way it may be a Caveat, and Warning to careless and dilatory Spirits, to be better Husbands in Opportunity, and while their Blood is full in their Veins, and their Arteries are rich in Spirits, to take Hold of Time by this golden Forelock, and to make their Voyage, while they have full Tide and Wind, lest when Death creeps on, and by Diseases hath dismounted them from their Vigour, they find Darkness, and Sleepiness to bind them in Chains. But for those whose Feet did run in the Ways of God, and who were, as the winged Bird, when Youthfulness and Vigour was in them and their Breasts did flow with Milk, and their Bones were full of Marrow, though now

ow, Nature being decayed, they seem lost, yet their case is safe and good: *Alas!* When the Keepers of the house tremble, and the strong Men bow themselves, and those that look out of the Windows are darkened, and when the Almond-Tree shall flourish, and the Grasshopper is a Burden, and Desire faileth, when the Silver Cord is loosing, and the golden Bowl breaking: When Nature is brought to this State, how can it be that there should be that Livelihoods of Soul, which was before? Eccles. 12. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Second false Rule. Men think they are in this sad Condition, because they do less than they have done. And I say, that this is an ill Sign, simply considered, because all Things work as they are, and I desire not to be mistaken here, for I would not be so injurious to God, or cruel to Men, as to nourish a sloathful, and backsliding Person in his Apostasy and Carelessness; but I say this, that it is possible less may be done than hath been, yet without all Loss of Life: For besides that which hath been said before, I add, in Way of Satisfaction, these Considerations.

1. It may be, that which was done before, was more than should have been: As other Men are apt to fall short, so a godly Man is apt to exceed, especially, when his Necessities pinch him, and when the Fears of God lay heavy upon his Soul, then he neither mindeth Business, nor Friends, nor himself, but is so intent upon this one Thing, as if it were the only Thing which he had to mind. I have spoken largely before, how a Man may know when he doth so much, as that he may, with Comfort, walk in his Way.

2. The Abundance of doing, is to rise and fall according to Occasions: When a Man is in Straits, he may and must do much, yea more than is required at other Times.

3. God may give less Opportunity for the same Abundance of holy Duties at all Times, he may put them upon such Conditions and Employments, as may take them up more: As a Woman, when she is married,

by the Variety of Occasions that attend that State may be deprived of some Opportunities, which she had when she was free. *There is Difference between a Wife and a Virgin, she that is unmarried careth for the Things that belong to the Lord, how she may please the Lord: But she that is married careth for the Things of the World, how she may please her Husband.* 1 Cor. 7. 14. The Apostle meaneth not, that the Married care not for the Things of God, but that that Condition will bring Distractions, yea, and by God's Appointment, doth put them upon such Things, that they cannot have that Fullness of Time, for Exercises of Godliness, which they had in a single State. In all Abatements of spiritual Action, a special Eye must be had to the Cause, for if either we thrust our selves into a Thicket of Businessess unnecessarily, or have lost that Edge of holy Desires and Dispositions which we had, we have here Cause to lament our Elongation from God.

CHAP. XXXII.

Other false Rules causing Mistake in Judgment.

THIRD false Rule. More stirring of Corruptions. Because Men feel greater Workings of Lusts and Corruptions than before, they think that God is not with them as before. But, in Way of Satisfaction to them, as I must needs grant, that this also is an ill Sign, yet will demonstrate that it may be the Case of a Man who is as full of God as ever.

1. Distinguish betwixt Corruptions formally considered and effectually considered; there may be many Motions to Sin, which are not Corruptions, then they are Corruptions, when they do corrupt and deprave the Heart. Christ himself had Motions to Sin, though not arising from himself, but caused by the Tempter, so that his Soul was but, as a Glass of pure Water, jogged though the Motions to Sin, which arise from the uncleanness in us, are formally, and in Interpretation of

aw, *Sins*, yet, except they take Hold of the Heart, and infect it, they are not *Corruptions*, not such as argue of God. Nay, as when a Man lives in an unhealthy and infectious Air, the Power of God is much seen in keeping him up in Health, so the Power of the Spirit is much put forth in that Soul, which is kept sound from the Plague, in the Midst of infectious and poisonous Workings, and Foamings of that Sinfulness within. It was the *Apostle's* Case, he had some burning Lust like a Splent or Coal in his Flesh, but God kept him, *My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness*, 2 Cor. 12. 9.

2. A Man may have more Occasions to stir Corruptions than before, and Occasions to Lusts, are as Wind to the Sails, or Fuel to the Fire. It may be you thought better of your selves than you had Cause, you might think you had more Meekness, when you were less angry, but it may be your Anger was not so much, not because your Meekness was great, but because your Offences were few: Know this, That Occasions do not so much beget, as bring forth Corruptions.

3 It may be your Lusts have not more Life, but they seem so, because you have more.

1 More Light to see them. At first, Grace is busied about the outward Man, and grosser Sins, but afterwards it descends into the lower, and more retired Parts of the Soul, and, by the Candle of God, searcheth the hidden Depths, and findin still new Worlds of Sin, you are apt to think you are worse than you were. The Saddle smells when it is stirred: But as the Sun sheweth a great Deal of Dust in the Air, yet you know it was there before, tho' not seen before, so, &c.

2. There is more Sense When there was but little before many Lusts might work unfelt, but now, every Touch of Sin is felt, and so you may think amiss, that you have more, when indeed the Cause is not Encrease of Sin, but of Grace. The *Apostle* made nothing of Lustings, and many other Things, till Grace had incorporated

rated it self, and made him quick to feel the bitter and stinging Workings of it, *Rom. 7.*

4. *It may be your Life hath been in a continual Tumult and Warfare, with great Afflictions of Body and Mind, so that Corruptions had no Time to work, but now being brought to a greater Calm, they begin to stir.* In a tempestuous Day, the Birds hide themselves in the Hedges, and the Conies in their Holes, but when the Storms are past, then they come forth. While *Rome* was held in Wars, and while the *Athenians* were busied by the *Lacedemonians*, their own Dissentions and internal Evils lay asleep; but when they had Rest, the that which lay hid, brake forth, to their great Hurt. We see Men that are serious, laden with weighty Concernments, living in Crowds of Affairs, or distracted with great Cares and Fears, are free from many Vices in their Lives, which break out when they have more Liberty. Consider well, if there be not some eminent Change in your Conditions, for a calm State is subject to many Inconveniences in this Kind, but it is not because Lusts have more Life, but because they have more Advantage.

5. *God may permit Satan to work in Men, and suffer their Corruptions to be drawn out, that they may be more mortified.* Then we take up Arms and fight much when we see our Enemy coming upon us. If the Enemy had kept in his Trenches and Holds, he had been safe, but by coming out, he falls into our Hands. The Rats and Mice in their Holes are secure, but when they shew themselves, by coming out, they are taken and killed. When therefore the Snuff, that your thought was extinguished, smells, and begins to burn again, it is, that you may make surer Work in more full Extinction.

Fourth false Rule. Men are too much swayed by the Opinion which others have of them. If they be censured or rejected, or discountenanced by such, it takes deep Impressions upon them, especially, if they be near, be-
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d, wise, godly, such as know them. There is a Disposition in a Man to be much affected with the Judgment which he knoweth others to make of him. Hence come those Enquiries into others Breasts, to see what shape we hold in their Mirrours. As the *Emperor* acted himself dead, and caused his Funerals to be solemnly performed, his Hearse erected, his Followers clad in Mourning, and himself carried as a dead Corpse, that, in the mean Time, through a secret Passage, he might observe what Respect he had in his Subjects Hearts. Hence also arise suspicious and secret Dejections of Mind, upon Conjecture of Disesteem and Improbation of others. Hence also vain Glorifying and supercilious Flation of Mind, upon the Applause and Fame which Men have with others. And indeed, to be approved of Men wise and good, is both desirable and honourable, the Concurrence of their Testimony is a glorious Thing. And, by the same Reason, the Disfavour, and ill Opinion of such, to an ingenuous Spirit, is an Unhappiness. But sometimes there is too much Weight laid on these Things. If the Opinion and Judgment of others were infallible, Reason would require, that we should mould our Thoughts of ourselves, to the Model of other Mens Opinion; but others are not always competent, and sufficient Judges in this Case: Therefore, as their Sentence is not to be wholly neglected, so it is not too much to be valued. God sometimes discovers his Displeasure, by stirring up his Servants against Men: As when the Master of the Family will estrange himself from one, he bids his Children and Servants to shew him no Countenance. If it be your Case, you should humbly and wisely consider it, and say, as *David*, when *Shimei* reviled him, *The Lord hath bidden him*, 2 Sam. 16. 11. Consider your selves, and rest no Way in the sentence which Men give, but appeal from them to the supream Judge, and study to approve your

selves to God: For he is a Jew which is one inwardly, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God, Rom. 2. 29.

Fifth false Rule. Men think *they grow not* And hence conclude sadly against themselves. They think the Time hath been when they thrived more in Grace And that therefore they are in this deplorable State of which we speak. But here may be great Mistake and for the Relief of such, let me propound some *Considerations*, tending to the Rectifying of their Judgment, in this Case.

1. The Growth in some Graces sometimes, to weak Spirits, hinders the Discerning of Growth in others. Besides that spiritual Poverty and Humility, which I have spoken of, the Increase of Light proves sometimes an Impediment. 1. The more Light, the more Weight lyeth upon the Soul, concerning the Matters of Eternity, which sometimes doth raise up Care and Solicitousness to that Height, that a Man is disposed to Fear and Jealousy, concerning his Condition. 2. The more Light, the more Duties are discovered. A Christian seeth not all his Work at first, God raiseth up his Way to his Eye by Degrees: As a Child is put at first to such Things as are proportionable to his Age and Strength, and as he groweth in Years to more Capacity and Ability, so he is put on to greater Things. Now the Godly finding still a Disproportion in their Strength to their Work, think that they *grow not*. As if he that taketh the Measure of his Height in a Tree, coming afterwards to measure his Growth, and finding that he doth not exceed, yea, scarce reach his Mark, should conclude, he hath not grown; this were no good Reasoning, because the Tree is grown also. Or, As if one that tryeth his Strength, by shaking a Tree when it is young, coming some Years after, and upon Trial, finding that he cannot stir the Tree more, yea, it may be, not so much, should conclude, he hath not increased in Strength, he should judge amiss, not considering that the Tree is also grown more strong.

and more unapt to be moved. The Task of a godly Man groweth, his Relations, State, Temper, Calling, Company, Tentations, and such like Things cause great Variations in his Work. And God useth a gracious *Indulgence*, in not imposing so much in the *Infancy*, as in the *Progress* of his People. And as many Things are not imposed at first; so the *Spiritualness* and *Exactness* of Duties is more and more discovered. And hence it is, that the Godly, labouring still with Weakness and Disproportion of Strength, do think, (tho' causelessly) that they grow not.

2. There are different *Growths*.

1. There is a Growth *upward*, in Hope, Peace, Joy.

2. A Growth *downward*. As a Tree that groweth in the *Root*, so many grow in Humility, and Lowliness, &c. And hence, as I have shewed, they are apt to think meanly, yea, meaner of themselves, than is meet.

3. There is a Growth in *Bulk*: As when a Tree groweth bigger.

4. A Growth in *Maturity*: As a Child which groweth a great While more in Bulk and Quantity, than in Ripeness and Dexterity, but afterward he groweth more in *Perfection* of Parts, than *Extension* of Parts, he groweth more strong, active, apprehensive, wise, so a godly Man groweth, at first, much in the Bulk of Knowledge and Grace, but after these, becomes more mature to know the Things which he knoweth, better, more practically and vitally, and to be able to do what he did, more spiritually and perfectly. An Apple, for a Time, groweth bigger and bigger, but afterward it groweth better and sweeter. Now, Men not discerning this, are apt to think, that they grow not, when they do.

3. Men often *mistake in the Judgment* of their *Growths*, by being too *hasty*, the Judgment of Growth is, by *comparing* ones self with ones self, but if a Man measure himself to Day, and a Week hence measure again, his Growth, though it be real, will be imperceptible:
When

When you compare your selves with your selves, if you find no Growth, then look upon your selves at a *great Distance*. If you cannot discern Growth, by comparing your selves with your selves the last Year then see what you were two Years, or three Years, or seven Years past, and now tell me if you find not your selves better, if not sensibly increased in the Bulk, yet at least in Maturity and Spiritualness of your Graces?

4. *Growth is not alway equal.* As in Nature, a Child shoots up sometimes more in one Year, than afterward in two or three Years, so Grace Groweth not so fast sometimes, as at other Times. As in Nature, Diseases, Wounds, Obstructions, ill Diet, &c. may keep down, so the Soul by Distempers, Falls, ill Diet, &c. may be hindred in her Spiritual Growth, but a Man must take heed of concluding in such Cases, that God hath deserted him. For as I have said before, it is not every Fit of Unproficiency which argueth a Man in such a State. Yea, all Things considered, it may be, though the Growth in Times Past do exceed the present Growth, yet a Man considering the Abatement of Means of Growth, with other strong Impediments of Growth, a Man may have as full a Presence of God with him, though he, for a Time, grow not as he did.

Be not therefore hasty in passing Sentence. For as many, through Slackness and Slowness to Judgment of themselves, are declined, but knew it not, so many, by Hastiness in Judgment, conclude they are deserted, when they are not.

CHAP XXXIII.

The second Sort of Spiritual Desertions, Loss of Comfort.

NOW, I come to the other Head of Spiritual Desertions, the eclipsing of the Comfort of the Soul. This is oftentimes the sad Case of the Saints: The Sons of Peace and Consolation, are often Men of Sorrows, cast from a Paradise of Comfort, into a Wilderness of Discomfort.

comfort, wandering in a Maze of perplexed Thoughts, heavy Cares, afflicting Fears, bitter Sorrows; and vexed with Roarings and Yellings of devouring Beasts, yea, rent and wounded, and almost becoming a Prey unto them.

Before I come to treat of this mournful State in which the sweet Streams of Comfort fail, leaving the Soul as a parched Heath, I must premise some Considerations about the Comfort of the Soul. 1. The Nature of it. 2. The Cause of it. 3. The Defectibility of it.

First, Of the Nature of it. It is a Chearfulness, or Satisfaction of the Soul, the Name sheweth the Thing: Comfort is from a Word which importeth Strength, and what is Comfort, but strengthening of the Heart, and it is expressed by *Strengthening* in the Scriptures, *Psal.* 27. 14. *Psal.* 52. 7. *Psal.* 104. 15. 1 *Sam.* 23. 16. *Job.* 4. 4. *Isai.* 35. 3. and Discomfort is the enfeebling or weakening of the Soul, so that it cannot walk in its Way, but falls and faints, but Comfort keeps her upon the Wing, and maintains, yea, increaseth her Strength; it is the Life of the Soul. So, when *Naomi* would express that *Boaz* should be a Comfort to *Ruth*, she saith, *He shall be the Restorer of thy Life*, *Ruth* 4. 15. For, take away the Contentment of the Heart, and it dieth. The Damned live in Hell, yet because it is a Life without Comfort, they are said to die, and their Estate is reckoned a State of Death, *They are dead while they live*. Hence *David* calleth it quickning, *Psal.* 119. 50. *Thy Word hath quickned me*, and *Ver.* 93. restoring of Comfort to Mourners, is called reviving. *I dwell with, &c. to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones.* *Isai.* 57. 15. So it is said of *Jacob*, when he heard of his Son, and saw the Wagons which he had sent, *The Spirit of Jacob their Father revived*, *Gen.* 45. 27. Those Words of *Ezra* are not unlike, *Grace hath been bestowed, &c. that our God might lighten our Eyes, and give us a little Reviving in our Bondage*, *Ezra* 8. 8, 9.

Comfort

Comfort, in a Word, is that *Strength and Life* which the Object contributeth to the Heart. There is then a *Difference* of Comfort, according to the *Difference* of Objects. Every good Thing which a Man hath either in Expectation or Possession, yields a Comfort proportionable to its *Worth*, and a Man's Propriety in it. All good Things in the World are as the *Fence* of the Soul, or her Fort against Invasions of Fear, Care, Trouble, Misery. So that as he, that hath the best Guard, strong and able Soldiers, is strongest and safest, so the Heart is so much *strengthened*, as it hath of Good. Then the best Things yield the best Comfort, as the *freest* Fountain yields the *fullest* Streams. But forasmuch as not only the Property of the Object, but the Propriety also is the Measure of Comfort. Therefore, according to the Degrees of Enjoyment of God, so are the Degrees of Comfort. Those in *Heaven* being fully possessed of God, have a Fulness of Comfort. *In thy Presence is fulness of Joy* Psal. 16. 11. But the Saints in the *World* have but an imperfect Comfort.

1. *Not stable*. Sometimes it is gone, and a Day of Gladness is turned into a Night of Heaviness. So that they complain as the Church. *The Joy of our Heart is ceased, our Dance is turned into mourning*, Lam. 5. 15.

2. *Not full*. It is mixed with various Fears and Sorrows, which, like Waters of Marah, flow into the Soul. For, though the Object of Comfort be *sufficient*, yet the Assurance and Enjoyment of it is *deficient*. So that as the Soul is comforted, because it hath God in a Measure, so it is troubled, because it *wants* still, not being so sure and full of him as it desires.

There are three Degrees of Spiritual Comfort.

1. *Peace*. When a Man agreeeth with himself, and is freed from that War and Combustion which was within him, by Incurſion of Fears, and Terrors of Soul. This is a Rest in the Soul, a *Rest* I say, but not from Motion, but from Commotion and Tumult. An uncomfortable State is a tumultuous State. *My Bowels boiled, and rested*.

not. Job. 30. 27. he was like the Sea, moving and working. It is a Tempestuous Condition. *Oh thou afflicted, tossed with Tempest, and not comforted.* Isai. 54. 11. Comfort is the Laying of the Storm, the Hushing of the Winds, the stilling of the raging Sea. When a Man hath Comfort in God, he hath a *two-fold Rest*.

1. *Mental* While God is hid, the *Mind* is agitated, and rolls to and fro to seek him, hunting and beating it self out in running after him; but when it seeth him, then it is quieted, and saith as *David*, *Return to thy Rest, O my Soul*, &c. Psal 116. 7.

2. *Cordial* The Heart sits in Heaviness, till it recover what it hath lost, Unquietness abides with it. If the Mind be puzzled, the Heart is troubled. If the Pilot be disconsolate, how are the Passengers afflicted! What Tears, what Paleness, what wringing, what fainting may one see there! What Sighing, Crying, Howling, Screeching may one hear! In such a troubled Case is the Heart, when God hides himself, and will not be found; like *Rachel weeping for her Children*, and will not be comforted, because they are not. But when the Soul seeth God, then it is quiet, the Cries of the Heart are stilled, her Wound is healed, her Pain ceaseth, and all is calm.

2. *Joy* This is an higher Degree of Comfort. Peace is *negative* Comfort, Joy is *positive* Comfort, that is a Cessation or Mitigation of Trouble, this is an higher Contentment, that is like the laying of the Storm, this like the breaking out of the Sun. A Woman in Travail, when Pain ceaseth, is at rest, but when a Child is born, she hath Joy, *John* 16. 21. A condemned Man, when he is pardoned, is at Peace, his Fears and Sorrows cease, but if with his Pardon he attain Preferment, he rejoiceth. There is a kind of Joy in Peace, and so Joy is the Fruit of Peace and Rest. But still it is a further Contentment than *mere* Peace, *Sorrow is turned into Joy*, *John* 16. 21. But, *First*, It is turned into Peace, Joy is the *Noon-tide* of Comfort, and Peace is the *Morning*, Peace is

a *Return* to it self, after that it had been tossed and driven from its desired State. *Joy* is an *Affent* above it self, *Peace* is a *Rest within it self*. *Joy* carrieth the Heart *higher*, it is a kind of *Election*, which if it be strong, is called *Exultation*, which is a Kind of *Vaulting and Leaping* of the Mind, yea, a *Leaping out* of it self. *Peace* is *Contentment*, when the Heart is bounded by its Condition, and is not *effused*, and poured out of its own *Channel*, as the River is when the *Channel* is too scant, or not passable. But *Joy* is an *Enlargement* of the Heart, it is called *Enlargement of Heart*, *Psal.* 119 32. The Heart opens it self, and is filled with the Thing it loves.

3. *Triumph and Glorifying*, which is Joy elevated. And it consisteth in two Things.

1. A *Victoriousness* and *Magnanimous Conquest* of Heart over all Things: When the Heart is raised to this Pitch of Comfort in God, all the World is brought under a Man, and the greatest Evils cannot daunt: There is such a Gradation as we speak of, *Rom.* 5. *We have Peace towards God*, Ver. 1. *We rejoice in Hope*, Ver. 2. *And not only so, but we glory in Tribulation also*, Ver. 3.

2. A *Boasting*, and *holy vaunting* of Heart, the Word which is used by the Apostle for *Glorying*, importeth a *jetting or strutting* of the Neck; it is often used by the Apostle for *Boastings*, as *2 Cor.* 9. 2. *Rom.* 2. 17, 23. *Chap.* 11. 18. *2 Cor.* 10 8, &c. A Man *boasts* when he is full of that which he thinks *excellent*, and to add *Worth and Excellency* to him, when a Man counts it not only *Happiness*, but *Honour*, to have such a God, and is not only not ashamed of him, but in his Account magnified by him, when he is able to hold up his Spirit against the *Proffers and Terrors* of the World, and doth profess to Heaven and Earth, amidst all *Blasphemies, Jealousies, Threats, Sufferings, Glory*, which is in the World, That God is good, sufficient, worthy of all *Love, Fear and Trust*. I say, When the Heart comes with *Undauntedness*, and full *Contentment*, sets Go
again

against all, this is a holy *Boasting* of God, or in God; like that of David, *I will bless the Lord at all Times, his Praise shall be continually in my Mouth, my Soul shall make her boast in the Lord* Psal. 34. 2. *In God we boast all the Day long, and praise thy Name for ever.* Psal. 44. 8. Psal. 64. 10.

C H A P. XXXIV.

The Causes and Root of Comfort,

NOW, from the *Nature* of Spiritual Comfort, let us descend to the *Cause* and Root of it: And that we may not run too large a Compass, we will confine our selves to the *Causes*. 1. *Efficient*. 2. *Material*.

The *Efficient* Cause is various, but we will only pitch upon the *principal* Working Cause, which is God, who is called the *God of all Comfort*, 2 Cor. 1. 3. Here briefly two Things. 1. *That it is of God*. 2. *How wrought by God*.

1. That Comfort is of God This appears thus.

1. Suppose a Man dead in Trespasses and Sins, here is required the same Power to give *Comfort*, which is to give *life*.

2. Suppose one troubled in Spirit, vexed with Fears; here no less Power can comfort than the Power of God.

For Comfort in *this Case* is an *Act of Supremacy*. As in *Civil State*, none can take off Chains of Imprisonment, but he that put them on. All Creatures in Heaven and Earth cannot lose him whom God hath bound. Though all should speak well, yet if God frown, chide, smite, condemn, this prevails, because he is *Supreme*. Nothing can comfort, but to have what God only can give; Burden of Sin, Deliverance from Hell, &c. and to know what God only can reveal, as, whether Sin be pardoned, God reconciled, &c. These Things God only knoweth, and none can know them, but those to whom he reveals them. And further, when God afflicts, he doth it for an *End*, till that be compassed, the
T Soul

Soul lieth in the Depths; Grief and Fear is to bring the Heart to Christ: Therefore none but he can take off, who is set to be the Physician, to cure the Sores and Wounds of a broken Spirit: And there is in the Soul when God shaketh it with his Power, a Disposition set towards him, that nothing can satisfie the Soul but his Favour.

3. Consider what *Comfort* is, it is a *Strength* or Satisfaction of Spirit That then which comforteth, must be proportionable to, or exceeding that which may cause Grief or Trouble. Now, if a Man be in great Affliction from the World, that which can comfort, must be something greater than the World, or if afflicted by Terrors of Conscience, Comfort cannot be, but by one that is greater than Conscience. If Death, Sin, Hell, Wrath disquiet the Soul, what Good in Heaven or in Earth can weigh down these, but God himself?

Secondly, Note, *How* this Comfort is wrought by God. There are three Acts of God concurring in this Work of Comfort.

1. Preparation, or disposing of the Soul for Comfort, by giving Sight, Faith, Fitness.

2. Collation of the Matter of Comfort. 3. Attestation & Confirmation.
1. God illuminates the Understanding to see the Fountain, and proper Object of true Comfort, with the Means and Conditions of it. Till a Man know the Excellency of Spiritual Things, with their Sufficiency in Eternity, and till he see them *haveable* and attainable, either the Heart is deluded with the dying Vanities of this sinful and mortal Life, or held under the Terrors of a guilty, accusing, misgiving and despairing Conscience. Though there be incomparable Work and most delightful Sweetness in Jesus Christ, yet it is this to him that dwells in Darkness? The Understanding is the Gate both of Life and Comfort And as the Heart rueth not what the Eye seeth not, so it joys not in what it knoweth not. It is necessary to true and strong Consolation, that a Man have a Sight

1. Cl.

1. *Clear* Dark Visions breed but weak Comforts ; Dark-
 is the Harbour and Womb of Doubts And in this
 case, so far as the Soul doubts, it dies. If a condemned
 man have a Pardon, but so written, either for Letter or
 language, that he cannot read or understand it. Though
 his Pardon is his Life indeed ; yet it is but small Com-
 fort at present.

2 *Extended* The Heart cannot be established and
 filled with Comfort, till the *Latitude* of the Object of
 Comfort appear Except the Mind see Things in all
 their due *Requisites*, which make them able to comfort
 fully, there will be somewhat wanting to a peaceful
 state, as if he see a *Worth*, but not *Fitness*, or if that,
 yet not the *Possibility*, or if that, yet not *Sufficiency*, or
 if that, yet not *Perpetuity* I say, If any one of these
 appear not, the Heart will remain unsatisfied. What a
Chink to Contentment in a Thing is this, when, though
 a Man seeth it is good, yet he saith, It is not fit for me ;
 it pleaseth not, or, it is not possible, I cannot obtain it,
 or, it is not sufficient, it will not serve my Turn, or,
 it is fading, and not certain : I may lose it again.

3 *Actual* For not knowing Good, but minding Good
 doth comfort, habitual Knowledge doth not comfort : It
 hath a Power to comfort, but till our Knowledge be
 actual, it gives not actual Comfort, it is but as Fire in the
 flues, which warmeth not, except it be blown up.
 The rich Promises laid up in a knowing Man, is but as
 Bread in the Cupboard, which, except by actual know-
 ledge the Mind feed upon, it starves If a Man have
 much Wealth in his Chest, except he take it forth for
 his Use, wherein is he happier than a Beggar ? Though the
 Well be full of Water, yet, except a Man draw it out
 he may thirst We must not forget our Consolation. Un-
 groundfulness breeds Uncomfortableness. When there-
 fore God will give Comfort, he is the Remembrancer
 of his People.

4 *Serious* For fleeting Thoughts breed flashy Com-
 forts. Passant Views and Glances of the Mind cannot

raise a settled Comfort; nay, rather they discomfort as much by their vanishing, as they comfort by their Presence. The Fruit of such Sights of God, Christ, Heaven, &c. yieldeth a *present*, but a *transient* Blaze of Joy, like Fire in Straw, soon up, and soon down. Yea, this *Sweetness* leaves a *Bitterness*, and wounds the Heart to lose that so quickly, which it had so happily. So that by such transitory Gifts, the Soul learns more indeed how to prize the Things for *Sweetness*, and how to lament them for their *Absence*, and not his *Comfort*, but his *Sorrows* are increased by such *curfory Views*. Howsoever, this is sure, except our Light be *permanent*, our Comfort will be *transient*, and the Heart will be still unsatisfied: These Fits of glaring Light, are but like *Night-lightnings*, which make not *Day*, it is *Night* still in the Soul, because the Sun sets over it. When therefore God comforteth, he fixeth the Eye of the Soul upon himself, and the good Things of his Grace.

The second Act of Preparation of the Heart for Comfort, is *working of Faith*, which is the main Organ of Comfort: Though a Man know the Gospel, yet, except he believe it, all the glorious Treasures of Grace and Mercy in it are but as a *golden Dream*, or a pleasant Tale, or as a Fire which is painted on a Wall, which yields neither Light nor Heat. The Word profiteth not him that believeth not. This was the Case of the *Jews*, they had great Promises made to them, but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it, Heb. 4. 2. As exceeding strong Drink not tempered and qualified profits not Nature, so those great Promises, so much exceeding Opinion and Expectation of Reason, not being mixed with Faith, did not profit them. Or, as some conceive, the Metaphor leth thus, as he that drinks of an empty Cup, so were they not believing, the Promise to them was but as an empty Cup: Or, as in the Margin of our Bibles, they were not united by Faith to them that heard, i. e. to them that

it believed, so that they had not the same Benefit by Word

Faith then is a Necessary requisite, and that, 1. As a Condition upon which Comfort is given. 2. As an Instrument by which it is received, for Faith gives the Promise Life and Subsistence, though not in it self, yet in us: except the Gospel be believed, it hath no Dwelling, no Root, no Power, no Life, no Being to us, but is as a Ring that is not. Therefore God works Faith, which shall enable and dispose the Soul to suck Sweetness from the Breasts of Consolation Joy and Peace are Fruits of Faith. Now the God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace believing, that you may abound in Hope through the Power of the holy Ghost, Rom. 15. 13.

The third Act of Preparation, is Sanctification, which is simply necessary to true Comfort 1. As a Condition of the Covenant For without Holiness no man shall see God. Heb 12 14. 2 As disposing the Soul. For these two things are required to make a Man capable of Comfort. 1 Life When a Man is dead in himself, he is dead to all Things, and all Things are dead to him, the best Cordials are no better than puddle Water, the richest Jewels no better than the meanest Trash to a dead Man.

2. Suitableness. What Comfort doth a Piece of Fleish afford to a Sheep? And what is a rich Pasture to a Man? That only is comfortable that is good to a Man, and that only is good which is convenient. The best Dish is but as Poison to him who hath an Antipathy against it. The Nature of Man is such, that since it forsook God, it so cleaveth to the Creature, that till it be renewed, it is not capable of Spiritual Comforts, and could no more live in God, than a Fish in the Air. There is a certain Compass of Goodness which every Creature walks in, the World is divided among them, and every sort of Creatures hath its Latitude, which is bounded by its particular Form and Disposition. The Fishes keep below in the Waters, their Walk is in the Deeps. The
T 3 Beasts

Beasts inherit the Earth, and go no higher, they must not Honour, Riches, Learning, &c. these are the Flowers of that *Eden*, which Mankind hath in Possession, and these are the highest Things of a *natural Man*, but Heaven, the Gospel, God, Christ, &c. are the Portion of the *spiritual Man*, the new Creature must be elevated above the Pitch of Nature, (as now it is) to live in these Things. The Eye is made for Light and Colours, the Ear for Sounds and Voices, the Smell for Savours, the Mind for Truths, the Will for Good: So every Thing is fitted for its Object. And, as in Motion there is no Rest but in a *fit Place*, so the Soul could not be quieted and pleased in *spiritual Things*, except there were a *Fitness* and Agreement betwixt them. There are some *Velleities*, and imperfect Motions of a *natural Will*, heightened by the Gospel. But these give not true Comfort, because the will clotteth not. It is easily moved from them, as a *Globe* or round Body upon a *Plain* is easily moved, because it hath but a weak Hold, it toucheth but in a *Point*, but a *plain* or square Body upon a *Plain*, stands fast, and hath full Rest, because their *Superficies* do agree, and they mutually meet and close together.

The second Work of God in giving Comfort, is *Creation of Matter of Comfort*. God bestoweth Things comfortable, these are the Food and Fuel of Joy. When God saith, Be of good Cheer, be comforted, he doth not do as those whom the Apostle reproveth, *James* 15, 16. If a Brother or Sister be naked and destitute of Food, and you say unto them, Depart in Peace, be you warmed, and filled, notwithstanding you give them not those Things which are needful to the Body, what doth it profit? When God cometh to comfort, he giveth that which is comfort, Precious Promises, sweet Mercies, as Peace, Grace, Light, Heaven his Favour, Presence, Ordinances, Christ, &c. Who is able to turn up the Riches and Treasures which God bestoweth upon his People, a Portion to live upon? Great Things in Possession great

greater in Reversion O! How great is thy Goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, &c? Psal 31. 19 Isa. 64. 4 So that when a Man shall see himself so fully stored, he may, with Mirth and Gladness, say to his Soul, *Soul take thine Ease, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years:* Having such a Portion he is a rich Man, enjoying such a Sufficiency, as is a strong Basis of Rest and Contentment, and makes him live a Life like the Men, a Life only in Degree inferior to the Life of Angels. That Paradise which God made for Adam, was as a Defect to this *Sharon*, those fruitful Trees were but Shadows of the Happiness which is in this new *Eden* the Garden which God hath planted for his People.

The third Work of God in comforting his People, is, *Attention*. The Soul is exposed to many Controversies, and is prone to many Agitations, it is hardly satisfied. Though it have a present Happiness, yet it hath a provident and solicitous Eye upon future Times, and extends her Cares and Fears, even to Eternity. Add also unto this, The Mind is hardly satisfied in that which it comprehends not, and sinful Reason will be wriggling, where it seeth not its Way and End, but must take all upon Trust and Credit. And in Things of Moment, a serious and fearful Man is apt to entertain Jealousies, and will scarce believe what it seeth, but though God pronounce him blessed, yet he is apt to call his *Terrors* into Question and to cast himself in the Scale. The Doubts and Controversies by which the Soul is vexed, may be reduced to two Heads, concerning 1. the Gospel, 2. themselves.

The first Question is about the Gospel.

There is abundance of Unbelief in the Soul. It is a difficult Thing, and a rare Thing to believe. There are two Things which much hinder Faith.

1. A Disposition in Man to judge of all Things, by Sense or Reason.

2. The

2. The Inevidence of the Gospel: As Things are more or less clearly propounded to Sense or Reason, so they are received with Assent more or less. A Philosopher believeth more strongly, that the Sun is much bigger than the Earth, or, that there will be an Eclipse at such or such a Time, than a Country-Man. When we say the Object of Faith is not evident, we must distinguish of Evidence.

Evidence is of 1 *Narration*, 2. *The Thing*.

Evidence of *Narration* is, when a Thing is so expressed as it may be understood, so the Scripture is evident and clear.

2. Evidence of the Thing, is, When either Sense or Reason apprehends it.

Thus the Things of the Gospel are Inevident, such as *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor, &c.* 1 Cor.

2. 9.

The Gospel is divided into *Doctrine*, *History*, *Prophecy*.
1. The *Doctrine* hath in it somewhat that is evident, and easily falling in with Reason. For there are Things in it appertaining to *natural Philosophy*, as Elements, Men, Beasts Trees, &c. To *Ethicks*, as all the moral Rules and Virtues, to *Oeconomicks*, Precepts for ordering of Families, to *Politicks*, Laws for Cities and Common-Wealths. These a natural Understanding can deal with. But there are other Things of a more high Nature, which are called *Supernatural*, as the Trinity, Incarnation, Resurrection, &c. These are above Reason.

2. The *History*: This is of Things past, and have no Evidence to *Sense*, for what can the Eye see of Paradise, the Flood, the Ark, &c. nor to *Reason*, by any Thing in themselves? How should Reason conclude, that such Things have been, but that they are related and revealed?

3. The *Prophecy* This is of Things to come, and so to come, as that a Man cannot see them, as a Philosopher may see the Effects in their Causes, for they come

me within such a Course; nor can any Creature, by reason, conclude their Futurity, but as their Being depends upon God's Will, so their Manifestation (that they will come) is only by God's Word. Hence it is, that Nature being so unapt to receive Things upon Trust, and desiring to see all hold to Rules of Sense and Reason, is very hardly brought to believe the Gospel. Because of this Unbelievingness, we need a divine Assistance, which is the *Working* of Faith, and *witnessing* unto Faith, (or to the Believer) the *Truth* of the Gospel, there are many *Witnesses* of the Gospel. Therefore it is frequently called the *Testimony*, there is a *Cloud of Witnesses*, Miracles, *Heb. 2. 4*. The Ministers, and Apostles, and Prophets, among them especially, *Acts 10. 43. Cha. 26. 16. Chap 5. 32*. The Saints, *Isa. 43. 10*. But the Holy Ghost is the Head of this *grand Army*, *Heb. 10. 15. 1 John 5. 6*. He comes with his Testimony, and settleth the Heart in Assurance of the Gospel, that it may find firm Ground and sure Footing. So long as Faith is wavering, Comfort will be unstable, the House cannot be strong, if the Foundation be weak. The Gospel is the Foundation, and if that be laid firm, the whole Fabrick of Grace will stand strongly, able to bear out all Storms and Tempests.

The second *Question* is concerning *themselves*, and their *Interest* in the Gospel. For though a Man knoweth truly what *that Faith* and Holiness is, which gives him a real Title to the Promise, yet he may be unable to know *his Faith* to be *that Faith*. There be many Things, which make true Faith often hardly discernible. 1 *Great Imperfection*. It is hard to know plainly when a Plant is *newly* put up above Ground, that it is, a low Faith hath but *little Evidence*, there is a Light in every Grace to shew it self. But as it is with some *Stars*, they are so small that they are scarce seen, so a Man may have Faith, and yet not able to say *positively* and *peremptorily*, that he doth believe.

believe. 2. The *Similitude of false Faith and true*. A Man may know, in general, what is requisite to the Nature of Gold, yet when he comes to apply his Rules, he may be puzzled, because Art can exactly imitate Nature. Yea so, as that a famous Painter was deceived by a Flie, which, though it was artificial, yet he thought was natural. 3. The Conscience is not always a competent Judge, because it may be clouded with Fears and Jealousies. 4. Satan often doth so snarl this Question, that the Soul is not able to extricate it self. We need therefore the Help of the Spirit, whose Office it is to be our Comforter. And as Conscience, in its Court, is Witness, Advocate, and Judge, so is the Spirit. He is a Witness, giving Evidence concerning the Fact. That this is done, i. e. That the Man doth believe. He is an Advocate to plead the Equity of his Cause, and that by the Law of Grace, he should live. He is the Judge, by pronouncing Sentence, applying the Law of Grace in a judicial Way, and saith, The Soul shall live. But all are comprized in the Testimony, for it is a Testimony clearing and determining the Case. That there is such a Testimony of the Spirit as doth evidence the Truth and Sincerity of Grace, and consequently a person's Interest in the Promise, appears further by these Arguments.

1. The Spirit of Bondage, and the Spirit of Adoption are opposed each to other, Rom. 8. 15. Now the Thing wherein they are opposed, is, their proper Working, the one causing Fear, the other Peace. Look then into the Work of the Spirit of Bondage, and you will find it doth not only enlighten the Soul to know and apprehend, in General, Wrath against Sin, and apprehend what Sin is, but it evidenceth to a Man particularly, That his Ways are Ways of Sin, and consequently works a Kind of Prophecy of Hell, dreadful Expectation of Wrath upon himself, so that a Man comes to conclude upon Conviction, I am a Man who have transgressed, and I am the Man who

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(except Salvation come to me in Christ) shall be damned. And, as the Spirit of *Bondage* thus joyneth in the Sentence of *Condemnation*, by stirring up, clearing, fixing, and strengthening the Conscience, in like Manner the Spirit of *Adoption* worketh with Conscience in the Sentence of *Absolution*, Reconciliation, and Adoption.

2. If the Spirit be a *Comforter*, which will not be questioned, it must *witness* the Truth of our believing, and by that our Interest in the Promise. Because till this be done, till a Man be assured that his Faith is *strong*, he cannot be satisfied in this *Question*, which now troubleth him, Whether he shall be saved? Or whether Mercy be his Portion? There are three *main Steps* to Comfort. 1. *Salvation comes thro' Christ in the free Promise*, but here it yields no other Comfort but this, *It may be mine if I receive it*. 2. *The Heart goeth out to take Hold of Salvation*, this is a *farther Step* to Comfort, and here the Foundation is laid, but yet though this be sufficient to *Life and Salvation* in the End, yet it is not sufficient to *Peace and Comfort* at present. A Man cannot be satisfied till he attain a third *Thing*, which is this, A *Knowledge* that he hath *rightly*, and *strongly* received Salvation.

3. If the Knowledge of the true *Definition* of Faith and Holiness were sufficient to give Assurance to him that truly believes that he doth truly believe, then were that are so qualified, and do reflect carefully upon themselves, can be uncertain or doubtful, whether their Faith be right or no. But now we see oftentimes that ever Men that have much Grace, and well-sighted Understandings, are much in Fears of their own Estates, and have given themselves for Hypocrites, unsound, yea dead, yea damned Men, read *Ps. 138*. and there see *Heman*, as a sad Instance of such an heavy Condition. Grace lyeth often so hidden, that they that seek it cannot find it in themselves.

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4. Consult that Text, *Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.* Besides the Stream of Interpreters who give Testimony to this Testimony of the Spirit, let the Place it self be considered.

1. The Text. In which there are three Things which come in as Props to this Truth.

1. The Spirit witnesseth with our Spirits. Here are two distinct Witnesses, our Spirits, that is, our Conscience or Understanding renewed, and God's Spirit God keeps the Course which himself appointed, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Thing shall be confirmed

2. The Spirit himself: Sometimes the Graces and Gifts of the Spirit are called the Spirit, as *John 1. 15 Acts 6, 5. 1 Cor. 14. 32. Gal. 3. 2.* But so it is not to be taken here, but the Spirit in this Place is the Holy Ghost himself, for so it is expressed, not the Spirit, but the Spirit himself: The Graces of the Spirit are Witnesses As every Effect is a Witness of its Cause, so God left not himself without Witness to the Heathen, *Acts 14. 17.* but by his Works did declare himself, so Christ saith, *His Works bear Witness of him, John 5. 36.* But this is not all the Testimony which the Spirit gives to the Saints, but himself doth it, saith the Text.

3. With our Spirits. There is the particular Application of the Spirit it is not thus, the Spirit witnesseth to those that believe are Sons, as if it were only a Testification of the Truth of the Gospel, but it is thus, the Spirit witnesseth with our Spirits, that we, even we, are the Sons of God.

2 Consider the Context. The Thing which the Apostle (for their Comfort) would prove, is, That they shall live, ver. 13. But how doth he prove it. Because they are Sons, ver. 14. And that they are Sons he gives a two fold Evidence.

1. The Spirit of Adoption, by which they cry, *Abba Father.* But they might say, May not Men be deceived, and claim

claim a Child's Place with God, when he is a Stranger? Therefore he adds, secondly, the *Testimony of the Spirit*. *The Spirit himself beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are the Sons of God*: As if he had said, You have a sure Ground of Assurance, for not only your own Spirits, but God, with them, joins in Testimony that ye are Children.

But concerning this *Testimony*, Note;

1. *That all the Saints have it, not, at least in such a Measure, as to settle the Heart clearly in this Persuasion, That they believe, and are Children*. Nor is the Testimony of our own Spirits alike in all, but as the Graces are more evident and conspicuous, so is the Testimony clearer. And herein differs the Testimony of God's Spirit, and our Spirit. Our Spirits give Testimony according to the Measure, Workings, and Evidence of our Graces, But the Spirit of God gives often less Testimony to the best Christians, and all have it not, at least not in a satisfactory Degree.
2. It is a Testimony, which, for ought appears in the Word, may cease, they that have it may want it, tho' it be true, that when once the Testimony is obtained, though it abide not it self actually and alway, yet the Efficacy should, so that it is Weakness to doubt again, because it is the Voice of God, a judicial Sentence.
3. It may be discerned from all phantastical, or diabolical *Enthusiasms*.
 1. It discovers it self in those that have it; As the Light of the Sun doth difference it self from all other Lights; so he that hath a full Testimony, knoweth it to be of God: *To know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, John 14. 17.* And it must needs be so, the Testimony should not be sufficient; for the Question would still remain undecided concerning a Man's Condition: It is as much to be regarded who speaketh, as what is spoken. Tho' a Man heard a Voice from Heaven, or a Voice within him, declaring and pronouncing his Reconciliation and Adoption, yet, ex-

cept he know it is of God, it will not satisfie. As if a condemned Man should have News of his Pardon, yet, except he know it is the King's Act, it cannot quiet him.

2. It is ever according to the Word. The Witness of the Spirit and of the Word is the same. There are two Voices, or Determinations, or Testimonies of the Word, the one is concerning the Way, the other concerning the End, that is, The Word saith, They that believe shall be saved: - But then the Question is, Who believeth? To this the Word answereth by describing what that Faith is which saveth, and so, as the Pill gives Sentence of that which is to be ruled by it. When the Word and Faith in the Heart are brought together by Examination, the Word either accepts or rejects, approveth or disalloweth of Faith, as it is in it self true or false. But as when the Gold is brought to the Touch-stone, though the Stone may give it for true Gold, yet the Examiner may want Skill to perceive this Testimony; so it is in this Case. The Word is the Law by which all are judged. But, as in a Civil State, there is Need of a Judge to open and apply the Law to particular Cases, so there is Need of the Spirit to join with the Word, to give out not another Verdict, but that of the Word; which is made more intelligible by the Spirit; not varied, but opened. Still the Testimony is the same, so that the Spirit never looseth where the Word bindeth. Therefore, those that live in Pride, Idleness, or any other Way of Sin, may pretend Assurance of Salvation given by the Spirit, are deceived: For if a Man be such as the Word condemns, there is no Absolution from God, while he continueth such.

3. This Testimony is holy: Holy formally, originally, effectively, it makes holy, more humble, more contrite, more watchful, more zealous, more thankful. That Assurance, which breeds Vanity, Contem-

of Ordinances, Neglect of Duties, Security in Sin, is deceitful and abominable.

Thus of the *Efficient Cause*: Now the *Matter* of spiritual Comfort followeth: That which is comfortable, must be such as can, in some Measure, satisfy and fill the Desire and Appetite of the Soul, for so long as Desire is held from her Object, there is an *Unrest* and *Unquietness* in the Heart, there will be a Whining and crying of Spirit, there is Pain in Hunger, and Grief in Want. Now, as Desire is an Extension or Reaching of the Soul after something suitable, so it is not satisfied: But,

1. Either by Possession of the Thing,

2 Or by Hope and Expectation.

So that the proper Object of spiritual Comfort, is,

1. Things spiritual given to us and received by us here. As the Light of God's Countenance, the Quicknings of his Spirit, subduing of Lusts, Success in our Prayers, Tastes of Heaven, &c.

2 Things promised. As in the Former, Desire is turned into Joy, and the Accomplishment of Desire becomes a Tree of Life, Prov 13. 12. so here, it becometh Hope, and this Hope giveth Comfort, it is the Anchor of the Soul, and the best Cure of Sorrow in the Want of Things future. We are saved by Hope, Rom. 8. 24. The main Things of our Life and Happiness for Eternity are ours, only in the Promise.

Concerning these Things, note,

1. That the Promise gives as strong Comfort to Faith, as Things present to Sense, yea greater: For,

1. The Things to come are greater.

2. More permanent, 1 Cor 13.

3 Sure. So that Faith makes them as present, Heb. 11. 1.

2. The Soul may have the Comfort of Hope, yet lose that of Sense: It may find the Way sad, when it believes the End will be sweet.

3. If a Man lose the Life and Comfort of *Hope*, he loseth the Comfort of *Sense*, his Way will be sad who is afflicted about his *End*.

4. According to the Strength of Faith and Hope's Claim, Comfort is advanced, when Hope fluctuates and looks for eternal Life only as *possible* or *probable*, then Comfort also is *unstable* and weak. But when it looks upon it as certainly future, then the Heart hath a full *Rest*.

Now, having seen the *Nature* and *Causes*, let us come to the *Defectibility* of Comfort. It may be lost. The *Tenure* of Grace and Peace is not the same, in Point of Comfort we are but *Tenants at Will*, and may in a Moment, be turned out of a *Heaven* upon Earth into a *Hell* upon Earth. Comfort is not of the *Being*, but *Well-being* of the Saints, it is rather a *Reward* than Grace, and belongs rather to *Glorification* than *Sanctification*. Not *Joy* makes a Christian, but *Grace*: As it is the *Light*, not the *Warmth* of the Sun that makes *Day*. So that this may fail, 1. God may suspend his Testimony. Or, 2. He may let in Satan to *fluct*: Or, 3. Hide himself, and not meet them in *Approaches* to him, in *Combats* for him, &c. I must cut my self short here, for I see the Book swells bigger than I desire. Let this therefore suffice for *Entrance* into the Business it self.

C H A P. XXXV.

Of the State and Degree of this sad Condition.

NOW I come to the sad State of the Soul wanting the Comforts of the Holy Ghost God withdrawing himself in Respect of that gracious *Effusion* of his *Mercy*, and Manifestation of his Love to the Soul, shutting up those sweet Streams of Refreshment which were wont to flow.

Here I will speak of

1. *The Cause,*

2. *The Cure.*

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The *State* of a deserted and disconsolate Soul, requires to consider of 1. *The Nature*, 2. *Degrees*, 3. *Effects*, 4. *Cause* of it.

First then, let us see *what it is*: It is an *eminent, and abiding Uncomfortableness of Heart towards God*, or a *Loss* of that *Comfort* which the Soul was wont to have in God.

1. It is a *Loss of Comfort in God*: A Man may have much *Unquietness*, and yet not be in this Case we speak of *Discomfort*, except the *Object* of it be *God's Displeasure* or *Departure*, makes not a deserted Case. A Man may be afflicted in his Spirit many Ways, yet *God's wonted Presence* may continue: As the *Conscience of some Sin* may cause much *Sadness* and *Mourning*, either *some Sin stirring*, or *some Sin acted* may much afflict: But *Trouble of Reluctance*, or *Sorrow of Repentance* are there, and will be there, where *God is most present*. *Paul* is a Pattern in the first, *Rom. 7* and *David* in the other, *Psal. 51*.

The *Sins of others* may disquiet. *Rivers of Tears run down mine Eyes because Men keep not thy Law*, *Psal. 119*. *Job*, *Exra*, -all that have most of *God*, have most of these *Sorrows*, and these *Sorrows* are no *Miseries*, but *Mercies*. There is much *Sweetness* in this Temper.

The *Troubles of the Churches* may, in a Way of *Compassion* and *Sympathy*, afflict; yea outward *Afflictions* may, in a natural Way, pain the Spirit for a Time, and the Soul may mourn because of its *Deficiencies* and *Poverty*, wanting that *Compleatness of Holiness* which it desireth. Tho' present *Degrees of Grace* are sweet, yea, because *sweet*, the Soul is not contented, being in *State of Want*, it will be in *Motion* till it attain the *Perfection*, *Phil. 3. 12*. but *Desertion* imports a *Loss of Comfort in God*.

2. It is a *Loss of usual Comfort*. As the former kind of *Desertions* is a *Loss of usual Quicknings*; so this is a *Loss of usual Quietness*. And as there are seasons, in which *God* gives more of himself in a

Way of Quickning, than he will constantly continue. In he gives Comfort sometimes in such Fulness as shall not always abide: Every Day is not a *feasting Day*. Paul was taken up into the *third Heavens*, but he came down again. The Sun doth not always shine in an equal Lustre. God sometimes gives *Corusation* of Glory, but, like Lightnings, they shut in again. As a Father sometimes sends for his Sons from School and makes merry with them at Home, but these play Times come not every Day, they must to School again, and live under Tutors and Governours, till they come to full Age. God opens himself much at some Times.

1. In *special Approaches* of the Soul to him. Then Man seeth and tasteth such Things, that he is loth to depart, but these Comforts, though they come from Heaven, yet, like *Plants* that are carried out of their *native Soil* and *Climate*, keep not their Sweetness to a constant Height: A Man warmeth himself at the Fire, and is refreshed, but this Refreshment wears off again.

2. In Times of *great Afflictions*: The greatest Comforts are usually found in Sufferings, then God opens himself, 2 Cor. i. 4, 5. The *Martyrs* did shine like *Stars*, in the Night of Persecution, and abounded most in Comfort, when filled most with Troubles.

3. In the *Ordinances* lively administered: Here so much is found, That a Man saith, as the Apostle, *It is good to be here*, yea, as Jacob, *This is none other but the House of God, this is the Gate of Heaven*, Gen. 28. 17.

4. In Times of *abundant Sorrow* and Melting of Heart. God often, in such Cases, breaks in with sweet Effusions of Peace, as to *Ephraim*, Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20.

5. At the Time of *Conversion*, God often comes with extraordinary Comfort, many (as one observeth) came to Christ in their Sins, and went away renewed and comforted, coming with

hell in their Souls, and going away with an Heaven ; having a Fulness of Joys instead of a Fulness of Fears.

I need not make further Instances, the Case is clear that Comfort may *fail*, yet except a Man lose that Comfort which he *ordinarily* did enjoy, he is not deserted.

3. It is an *eminent Loss*. It is not every Cloud that makes *Night*, but when the Air is full of Darkness, when the Sun is set.

4. It is not a *Fit of Uncomfortableness*, but a *State*: An *Eclipse* of the Sun makes not *Night*. He is not a *poor* Man that hath a *present* Want, but he that lives in *Want*. Every cold Blast makes not *Winter*.

Secondly, The *Degrees* of this uncomfortable State follow to be considered. There are some Nights *darker* than others, and some Winters *colder* than others; and there are *Degrees* of God's Withdrawing from the Soul.

1. *Degree*, when his quieting Presence is much *abated*.

1. Not so full as hath been: God seems not so *friend'y*, but looks somewhat more *strangely*, so that the Soul complains as *Jacob*, *I see your Father's Courtenance that it is not towards me as before*, Gen. 31. 5. When the Soul comes to God, it finds not those enlivening and refreshing *Visions* and *Tastes*, the Cup of *Consolation*, that was wont to be *filled*, is now but *empty*, the Heavens are not so *clear*, his Hopes are not so *full*, his Knowledge of his Happiness is more *obscured*, and tears begin to *overflow*, the Light of God's Face is *darkned*, and the Soul is *troubled*.

2. Not so frequent: The Visits of the comforting Spirit are more seldom. God holds off as if he were about to break off from the Soul. It is a Grief when a Friend goeth often by us, and seldom owneth us, so it is Heaviness when the Soul complains, (to use the Words of *Job* in another Sense) *Lo he goeth by me and I see him not, he passeth on also, but I perceive him not*, Job

Job 9. 11. Time was when the Soul had good News from Heaven every Day. But now she is like the Wife, who, when her Husband is gone far from her hears, but seldom from him. Returns are not so quick at a great Distance. God is so sparing in Manifestations of Kindness, that the Soul thinks it long. How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? Psal. 13. 1. Is his Mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his Promise fail for evermore? Will the Lord cast off for ever? And will he be favourable no more? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in Anger shut up his tender Mercies? Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9. My Soul fainteth for thy Salvation, I hope in thy Word, mine Eyes fail for thy Word, when wilt thou comfort me? Psal. 119. 81, 82.

23. Not so permanent God comes and goes. The Day of their Peace is often overcast, the Comforts which did flow, ebb again. The Soul is grieved as much with God's sudden Departure, as delighted in his gracious Presence, it hath not so constant Health, but is well only by Fits. The Soul that was as a dwelling Place to her Friend, is but as an Inn now. He, whom she loves comes rather as a Stranger and as a Passenger, than an Inhabitant, so that here you may hear the Prophets Complaint, O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the Time of Trouble. Why shouldst thou be as a Stranger in the Land, and as a wayfaring Man that turneth aside to tarry for a Night? Jer. 14. 8. Comfort comes like thin Clouds that yield sweet Showers, but are soon gone. The Good, whole Shade was sweet, soon withers. The Heart is become like a cracked Vessel, which, though it receive much, yet holds but little. The Waters of Life run out as fast as they come in.

The second Degree of Desertion and Uncomfortableness, is, when there is much Quickness, but no Quietness. Grace lyes, but Peace dies. The Soul is so far happy, that it seeks what it hath lost, but here-

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an unhappy, that it finds not what it seeks, it thirsts, but drinks not, it runs, but obtains not. Holiness is in flourish, but it is the *Winter* of Comfort. David was full of holy Affections, even when he was empty of Consolation. When is the Heart in better Case than when it calls, enquires, runneth, weepeth, sigheth, cries after God? Yet, in such a Case, a Man may want all Comfort. The richest Ships may wander in the Dark, and be tossed in the Storm. Sometimes a Father will frown upon the best and dearest Child. The most loving Christian may lay himself out for dead, Psal. 88. Grace and Peace are not linked in *indissoluble* Society, these *Lovers* may shake Hands and part. And the more a Man abounds in Grace, the more grievous it is to want the comfortable Presence of God. A Father's Frown, and such a Father's Frown is bitter to so filial a Spirit, Strangeness to Strangers is not strange, but to Lovers it is grievous. But it is a less evil in its self, when God is with the Soul quickning it, tho' he do not comfort it, than when God leaveth it in uncomfortable Deadness, though it be more bitter to Sense, yet in Reason it is worse, when Comfort ceaseth, and Grace sleepeth at once.

3 *Degree* When neither Comfort nor holiness, but a Night of *Darkness* and woful *Deadness* covers the Soul, when Hope and Love are both in a Dimp, so that a Man is as far from a holy and living State of Heart, as from Comfort, neither joying nor desiring, but being alien from the Height of living and joyful Converse with God, he is like the Prodigal, brought to another life, to feed upon Husks with Swine, in stead of Bread in his Father's House. Many such there are who had sweet Tastes of *Jesus Christ*, and did rejoice to see the streams of the Well of Life sweetly flowing, and with overflowing, abundantly filling the Saints and themselves with Comfort, but now the Tree in the midst of their Paradise, is to them like the withered Fig-tree, the Shadow and Fruit of it ceaseth, and they are Miserable

table in the Loss of that which is the Happiness of those that have it; and herein their Misery is so much the greater, by how much they count it less. Is it not a sad Thing to see a Man so degenerated, that he can live without his Life, and rest out of his Place, the Place where he hath had such Peace, and such Contentment? Oh! here is an heavy Spectacle; a Man hath lost his Estate, and he grieves, he hath lost his Name or Health, or, &c. and he grieves: But he hath lost his God, and yet he mourns not; he saith it is well, alas, he is not himself! When the Day breaks, and the Sun sends out her Beams into this dark Region, where a Spirit of Truth and Life shall bring this wandering Creature home again, and cause him to be himself, then you shall see the Man acting another Part, and what Amazement will seize upon him! How will he melt that is now frozen! How will he be afflicted to see himself and his Case, in which, now he lieth as quiet as Peter in his Chains Acts 12.

4 Degree When God not only *suspends* his Comfort but *afflicteth* the Soul, not only not continuing the Supply of living Bread, but feeding them with the Bread of Sorrow and Affliction, which he doth divers Ways.

1. By *Rebukes of Spirit* The Spirit of God comes sometimes in a Way of Displeasure, and Chides and rebukes the Soul. This David found, which maketh him often cry and mourn, as the Child whom his Father rebuketh. This chiding is,

1 A *Conviction of Sin*, not only of the *Fact*, but of the *Sinfulness*. God sometimes comes to *set out* a Sin unto Man, and then it is very dreadful, such a Terror and Astonishment seizeth upon him by a full Sight and Sense of Sin, as that, if there be not a supporting Help of Grace and Mercy extended to him, he cannot stand under it. Sin is a strange Thing, and if God should pull off the Visage of this Monster, and discover fully the fearful Nature of it, it would be a burden too heavy to be born. Now then, when God conceals

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ove, and reveals Guilt, it must needs be bitter : then a Man seeth his Indictment, but hath not his pardon, it must needs be grievous.

2. *Opening the Desert of Sin*, and shewing a Man into what a Gulf he hath cast himself, that, now in Justice, and in Sentence of Law, he stands condemned to eternal Death. When the Grace of the Promise is obscured, and the Justice of the Law lively presented, it must needs cause a Man to fear much. Now, saith God, see that I may do, I may cause all thy Welfare to pass away like a Cloud, and bring in a Deluge of Woes upon thee, I might shut thee, by a decreed Banishment from my Presence, and cast thee, as a Stone that is hurled from a Sling, into Hell for ever : Such Words as these are heavier than Mounts. When the Soul seeth that Vastness of Eternity filled with Death and sufferings, and seeth not the Refuge in the Gospel, this is a great shaking to the Soul.

3. *By holding the eye upon these sad Things* ; so that, whithersoever a Man turns, his Sin is with him, and Hell before him, the Cry of Sin, and the Curse of the Law is ever in his Ears, *My Sin is ever before me*, Psal. 51. 3. It was also Job's sad Case, that the Sins which he thought he had been rid of long ago, returned upon him, and did so cleave to him, as if they had been his Possession, *Thou writest bitter Things against me, and makest me to possess the Iniquities of my Youth. Thou puttest my Feet also into the Stocks.* &c. Job 13. 26, 27. This is an heavy Thing, when God continueth in this Way of Displeasure, breaking the Spirit with these grievous Charges.

4. *By meracing outward or inward Troubles*, as he did to David, when he had sinned greatly against him, he told him what he would do, how he would follow him with Evils for ever, and that his Posterity should rue his Folly ; and when he had numbred the People, what a severe Way did God take ? Now temporary Evils, especially spiritual, are often very
grievous

grievous, when God shall say, I will shut up my Peace, and my Comforts from thee, thou Rebel and ungrateful Wretch, thou shalt no more see my Face as thou hast done, others shall drink, but thou shalt thirst, others shall rejoice, but thou shalt mourn, will no more meet thee as I have done, I will spare thy Life, but I will not shew thee my Favour all the Days, thou shalt live dubiously, and die anxiously. I say, when these Words are heard, what an heavy Case is this! How did *David* even waste himself with Grieving, when God did estrange himself! *Psal.* 32. *Psal.* 51.

But when God shall menace, not only this, but Hell and Eternal Death, this is far more grievous. But this God doth even to his own, and sets it on so strongly, that he makes often their Spirits to waste and their Strength to consume. *David* and *Heman* were drenched in these Depths, and how grievous were their Complaints!

2. By Tradition of the Soul.

1. *Into its own Hands*: The Heart of a Man is the greatest Tyrant, and cruellest Monster against it self, it is more a Devil than the Devil. He needs no Fury to fulfil his Troubles, who is given up unto an accusing Spirit, it hath Cries, Clamours, Stings, Stings, Wounds, Deaths, it will be Law, Witness, Plaintiff, Judge, Executioner, Chains, Racks, Gibbets, what not? He hath a Hell within him that is in such Case. For consider,

1. The Temper and Nature of the Soul, it is receptive of much Evil and Misery, and very active, and this Activity is improved to Self-affliction. 1. By Guilt, which is as Powder to the Flames, or as the Winds to the Seas, which makes them to rage and boil. 2. By the Weapons which the Heart disquieted hath against self, an Eternal God, and a just Law. 3. By Unbelief by which the Soul is made naked to her own Blows. A guilty Conscience strikes the promise out of a Man's Hand.

hand, and draws the Sword, and sheathes it in the Soul, it undermines all Forts, and batters down all Comforts in former Evidences, as Walls of Paper; it cuts off all Relief, and represents God unwilling to hear-
 cen to any Reconcilement, and it hath also many Affections, which contribute Strength to make this Man more bloody. As Temper of Body, which pours in Abundance of dark and black Thoughts and Passions, and the Censures of others, who, by their cloudy Aspects, and rejecting Carriages, do sharpen the Sword in the Hands of an unbelieving and accusing Conscience, that it may make more ghastly Wounds, and draw out fuller Streams of Blood. Thus the Soul, like the Man that fell into the Hands of Thieves, is left half dead: Distracting and accusing Thoughts are worse than Robbers, a Man may say of them, what David said of Goliath's Sword, *There is none like that*, 1 Sam. 21. 9. Here is a fore Battle, when the Soul, like *Saul*, falls upon its own Sword, 1 Sam. 31. 4.

2. The Power of God God hath given to Conscience a Commission to afflict: God hath a Hand in all Things, working and ordering He can send Hornets into the Soul, even stinging Thoughts, and piercing Fears. He ruleth much in Mens Spirits, and in these Seas raiseth Storms at Pleasure Though he work not despairing Thoughts in his, yet he ordereth that Unbelief which is in them. And as he orders the Singleness of Mens Hearts this Way or that Way, not being a Cause of it, so he doth in this Case. Yea, he doth present Sin and Wrath so, that the Heart, being left to its own Darkness and Unbelief, cannot but be a cruel and active Enemy against it self. And now, as the Prophet said in that Case, so it may be said to a Man in this Case, *O thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thy self into thy Scabbard, rest and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a Charge against Askelon, and against the Sea Shoar? There hath he appointed it*, Jer. 47. 6. 7.

X

2. Intro

2. *Into Satan's Hands* : God may leave his People much to the Will of Satan, as he did Job, and he, out of Envy at our Happiness, Enmity against God, Hated of us, is willing to improve all his Skill and Power to afflict the Saints, so that a Man may here take up that Complaint, *His Troops come together, and raise up their Way against me, and encamp round about my Tabernacle.* Job 19 12.

5. *Degree* . When to all this, he adds an *Accumulation of other Miseries* . As, 1. *The Disfavour of the Saints* . This is a great cutting to an holy Heart, for he construeth their Favour and Disfavour to be the *Portion of God's* . And indeed, oftentimes God sets on his Children against such as he is displeased with . As a Master of a Family saith to his Household, concerning a Child which he will correct for much Stubbornness, *I shew him no Countenance, eat not with him, keep not with him*, so here God saith, with such an one *I have no Amity, no Fellowship, no Familiarity* . It was a great Grief to Job, and he complaineth of it, *He hath put my Brethren far from me, and mine Acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My Kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar Friends have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine House, and my Maids count me for a Stranger, I am an Alien in their Sight. I called my Servant, and he gave me no Answer, I intreated him with my Mouth. My Breath is strange to my Wife, though I intreated for the Children's Sake of mine own Body. Yea young Children despised me, I arose, and they spake against me. All my inward Friends abhorred me, and they whom I loved are turned against me, &c.* Job 19. 13. 20. You see sometimes how even the nearest Friends fall off with God, and when divine Grace is clouded, Nature it self is also clouded. Heman also found this Evil to all his Friends, *Thou hast put away mine Acquaintance far from me, thou hast made me an Abomination to them,* Psal. 88. 6.

2. *The Loss of worldly Comforts*, as Peace, Liberty, Estate, &c. This was Job's Case. Now, when the

ul is bereft of all Comforts from Heaven and from
 uth, it is an heavy Case.

3 The Loss of the Means of Grace : God may re-
 ove his Candlestick and take away the Shew-bread,
 e Doors of his House may be shut, or a Man may
 e imprisoned by Sickness, so that the Clouds above
 id the Springs beneath failing breed sore Distress.

6 Degree When all this is extended and continued,
 that a Man complains not of Days, but Years of
 affliction. A Man may ly long in this miserable Plight,
 ke Paul and his Company, to whom neither Sun nor
 was appeared for many Days, Acts 27. 20 Hence come
 ose mournful Sighings, Lord, how long ! Will the Lord
 st off for ever ? Will he be favourable no more ? &c. How
 ay are the Days of thy Servant, Psal. 119. 84 I am
 flicted, and ready to die from my Youth up, Psal. 88. 15.

There may be much Praying, that God would
 reak these dark Clouds, and shine upon the Soul A
 An may cry with Job, O but I knew where I might
 ad him, that I might come even to his Seat, Chap. 23
 , And with the Church may call after him, yet
 ay complain, Beheld I go forward, but he is not there,
 nd backward, but I cannot perceive him. On the left Hand,
 ut I cannot behold him, he hideth himself on the right Hand
 hat I cannot see him, Job 23. 8, 9 I sought him, but
 I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no An-
 ser, Cant 5. 5. Thou hast covered thy self with a Cloud,
 hat our Prayer should not pass through. When I cry and
 port, he shutteth out my Prayer, Lam. 3. 8. 44.

A Man may seek him in the Ordinances, yet not
 find him, yea, his Sorrow may increase God may
 seem angry with his Prayer, O Lord God of Hosts, how
 long wilt thou be angry with the Prayer of thy People ? Psal.
 80. 4 And the Word may seem to be against him,
 and may make his Wounds sorer, so that those Words
 may well be taken up by this afflicted Soul, If I go
 into the Field, then behold the Slain with the Savor, and if
 I enter into the City, then behold them that are sick with

Famine. Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy Soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no Healing for us? We looked for Peace, and there is no Good and for the Time of Healing, and behold Trouble. Jer. 14. 18, 19.

C H A P. XXXVI.

The Effects and Consequents of this sad Condition.

IN the next Place, let us view the *Effects* and *Consequents* of God's withdrawing, and leaving the Soul in this uncomfortable Case. The *Effects* are various, according to the *Quality* of the Persons thus deserted, which are of two *Sorts*, 1. *Sleeping*, 2. *Awakned*.

First, For the *sleeping Christian*: When he falls from a comfortable Enjoyment of God, as he is senseless in a great Measure, so he is,

1. *Careless*: He sets not himself to regain his lost Friend, but lyeth bound in Chains of Sloath and Sleep. As it is supposed *David* d.d, till *Nathan* came to him, to rouse him out of that slumbering State. It is strange to consider how far a *living Man* may be overtaken with Fits of *Deadness*, and how he may be so infatuated, that he may be robbed of his Comfort, as *Samson* was of his Strength, when he was asleep.

2. *Declining in Affection* and Vigour of an holy Walking with God. He now is hardly drawn to him, and soon drawn from him, he comes unwillingly, and abides with him uncheerfully, he comes slowly, and goeth quickly, having lost his first Love, he hangs to the Wing, and flags in Duties.

3. *Aptness to be drawn to Evil*. Having lost his Comfort and his ancient Vigour, he is easily perswaded to start from God. God lyeth lower in his Affection, which is the Bond of the Soul, and, being cooled in Love, he is more easily overcome. While the Soul is delighted in God, it easily contemneth all vain Delights, but now it becomes a Prey to Satan in his Temptations. *Solomon* fell strangely, when he fell from God.

God The Heart will pitch upon something, and if it have not its Contentment in God, it will hunt for it in the World. Hence it is, that many descend from Heaven to Earth, and fall from a glorious Height of Comfort, in and from God, to a worldly and sensual Condition, feeding upon Vanities, and filling themselves with the Creature, so that their Life is but a *Driftion* to present Contentments.

Now from these dull and *sleeping* Persons, we come next to such as are *awakened*, to view what Operation this mournful State hath in them. Among these there are different Workings, *Evil* Good

First, Of the *evil Effects*, or Consequents.

1 *Heartless Complaint*. This is found in some, who, though they are, in a *Degree*, sensible of their Loss, yet are not sensible enough, so that tho' they complain and grieve, yet their Sorrows are not deep enough, they feel a Burden upon their Spirits, but they can bear it, the Heart is *affected*, but not *afflicted*.

2 *A fruitless Complaint*: Some are of a whining Temper, apt to fill the Ears of all their Familiars, with sad Relations of their mournful Case, but there is little else to be found besides *Complaints*: The Soul humblyeth not it self before God, nor contends in Prayer, nor striveth by the Ordinances, and holy Working to find what it hath lost. These Men are like the sick Man who lyeth grieving himself, but no way seeking in Earnest to help himself. Or, like *Isaiah*, crouching under his Burdens. Such Spirits as these are of a stubborn Temper, and they have Cause to expect such multiplied Uncomfortableness, as shall enforce them to seek after God with more Sensibleness and Strength. David stuck and came not on to a full Endeavour of Reconcilement with God, till *Anger* and *Day* the Hand of God was heavy upon him, so that his Moisture was turned into the Drizzle of Sorrow, *Psalm* 32. 4.

3. *Great Unquietness* : In some the Apprehension of Loss of Communion with God, and Sight of his Displeasure, works to the Height indeed, yea, so far, that it works a *Fever*, or rather a *Frenzy* in the Soul.

1. *Hard Thoughts of God* : As if God were implacably incensed, and so departed, that he would never more return. That he hath forgotten to be gracious, and hath shut up his Mercy for ever, so that there is no Hope : He will not hear my Prayer, he hath passed a Doom upon me, and it must stand. *He is in one Mind, and who can turn him?* And what *his Soul desireth*, even that he doth, and he performeth the Thing that is appointed for me : Therefore am I troubled at his Presence, when I consider, I am afraid of him, for God maketh my Heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me, Job 23. 13. Sadness and Fear cloud the Understanding, and cause monstrous Apprehensions.

2 *Hard Thoughts of themselves* : Reflecting upon the Time past, as on a Course of Hypocrisy, upon the Time present, as a State of Death, and looking upon the Future, as without Hope. My Sins are so mighty that they will not be subdued, and so many that they will not be pardoned : God cannot shew Mercy to me, & I shall surely die. I am accounted with them that go down into the Pit, free among the Dead, like the Slave that ly in the Grave, whom thou rememberest no more, and they are cut off from thine Hand, Psal. 88. 4, 5. Thou hast removed my Soul far from Peace, and I forgot Prosperity. And I said, My Strength and my Hope is perished from the Lord, Lament 3. 17, 18.

3. *Dreadful Passions*, as Tremblings and Shakings. Fear came upon me, and Trembling, which made all my Bones to shake, Job 4. 14. The Hair of my Head stood up, Ver. 15. Mark me, and be astonished : When I remember I am afraid, and Trembling taketh hold of my Flesh, Job 21. 5. Sometimes also Roarings are heard from these Men. My Bones waxed old through my roaring all the Day long, Psal. 32. 3. My sighing cometh before I eat, and my Roarings are poured

pour'd out like the Waters, Job 3 24. Yea, so great is the Arguifh, that oftentimes the Body is wasted. I am as a Man that hath no Strength. Pfal 88. 4 Yea, sometimes they are tired, and weary of themselves, and of Life. My soul is weary of my Life, Job 10 1. Wherefore is Life given to him that is in Misery, and light unto the bitter in Soul? which long for Death but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid Treasures, which rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the Grave. Why is Life given to a Man whose Way is hid, and whom God hath hedged up? Job 3. 20, 21, 22, 23. In a Word, they think they can never complain enough, they account their Misery beyond all Words. Oh that my Grief were thoroughly weigh'd, and my Calamity laid in the Ballance together, for now it would be heavier than the Sand of the Sea: therefore my Words are swallowed up, (or, I want Words to express my Grief) for the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit, the Terrors of God do set themselves in array against me, Job 6. 2, 3, 4. And when the Soul hath exceeded all Eloquence, and past almost all humane Bounds of Language and Expression, it is not satisfied, but thinks it falls exceeding short of uttering her Misery. My Stroke is heavier than my Groaning, Job 23. 2.

But all this is not a right Carriage of the Spirit, such Passions would besit such as have a God without Mercy, and Distress without a Promise, and without a Redeemer. Faith is suspended when these Clamours are heard, and the Soul forgets the Freeness and Fulness of Grace, when it is thus transported out of it self, and from its Hopes.

Secondly, The good Effects of such uncomfortable Eclipses of God's Favour and Presence follow, which are,
 1. Sorrow, great Sorrow. *Thou hidest thy Face, and I was troubled, Pfal 30. 6.* The Heart should not, yea, (if it be in due Temper) cannot rest without God, his Absence is worthy to be lamented, whose Presence is most worthy to be prized.

2. Lorging

2. *Longing Desires of God's gracious Return.* The Soul thinks Delays grievous. *Hope deferred maketh the Heart sick.* Prov. 13. 12 The Church saith, *she was sick of Love* Cant. 5. 8 The Heart that hath had a Sense of God's sweet Presence, cannot be satisfied without him, but counts all Things nothing, till it regain him, as is to her as the Sun to the World, and the Soul to the Body.

3. *Repentance, and humbling of Soul.* It seeks what unhappy and accursed Thing hath raised this Cloud between twixt God and her, and falls down at his Feet, confessing, weeping and begging his Favour in Jesus Christ, willingly grieved and ashamed. It counts not this sorrow Bitterness, but hath some Sweetness in it.

4. *Subjection to all Conditions of Agreement:* It saith, Lord, impose, demand what thou wilt, I count nothing too dear for thee, I count the Gain of the whole World Loss for thee, and will deny my self for thee, if my Heart draw back, draw it on to thee, as far as I am able to sacrifice my self to thee, I do it. Thus the Soul sets on towards God, enquires for him in all Means, will not be put off, it falls not by Despair, or sleeps in Sloth, but Faith holds up Hope, and Hope keeps up Endeavours, and it cannot be quiet without God.

There are two main Causes of the Restlessness of the Soul without God.

First, The Condition of the Subject

1. *Tender* The Soul, but especially in a Beginner, when he is in a *living State*, is very sensible of any Evil, especially of the greatest Evil. A Man's Sorrow is as his Sight is. Therefore, where he seeth God, and hath a Knowledge of him in his Excellency, the Loss of him is grievous. All evils on the Body are but as the rending of the Garment, but Grief in the Soul is as the tearing of the Flesh: *A wounded Spirit who can bear?* Prov. 18. 14. Outward Evils are but as the breaking of the Out-Works.

orks All Sense in the Body is from the Soul There-
 re the Soul must needs be most sensible.

2 It is *spiritual*. If the Body be in Misery, external
 things may help, in Sicknes, Physick, in Want, Re-
 lief, in Famine, Bread, &c. But when the Soul is in
 distress, all the World is but like a great Cypher, it
 amounts to nothing: Heaven and Earth is but as a Sha-
 dow, nothing but God can quiet. As the Body is not
 satisfied with Things spiritual, so the Soul is not con-
 tented with Things corporal. There must be a Fitness
 in the Object, else it moves not, as the Ear is not
 pleased with Light and Colours, nor the Eye with
 sounds. The Soul therefore being spiritual, must meet
 with that which is spiritual and proper for it, else it
 is not contented. Every living Creature hath an Ap-
 petite and Sense carried to some Things, and out of
 that Compass it hath no Quiet, as take a Beast, and
 you shall never satisfy him, but with Pastures, and
 such Things as he affects; and take a Man, and he
 must have other Things, Things of higher Worth,
 suitable to his Nature, and take a spiritual Man,
 whose Soul is illuminated, and drawn out to higher and
 more Spiritual Things, and him you cannot quiet with
 thousand Worlds, without Interest in Christ, and the
 favour of God. The Spiritual Man is carried to Things
 spiritual, as the natural Man to Things natural. And
 as a natural Man cannot be quieted without natural
 accommodations, and Enjoyment of such Things as
 suit with him. So the Spiritual Man cannot have rest
 without his Spiritual Treasure.

3 It hath pitched upon God by Faith and Hope. It hath
 revolved it self upon him, and that for Eternity, and in
 the Business of Life and Death. Now, if a Man were
 falling over a deep and swift Torrent, and when he is
 upon these Depths shall feel the Bridge cracking and
 sinking, it must needs let in a Sea of Fears and Amaze-
 ment upon him. And how can it be, that when a Man
 seeth the Vastness of Eternity, the Greatness of Sin, the
 Terrors

Terrors of the Wrath that burns like Fire, and hath in his Agony thrown himself upon God in Christ, and now is doubtful, whether Christ will own him, or take any Care of him. I say, How can it be but he should be in great Distress. At such a Time, when God withdraws his Comforts, every Thing that may afflict stands forth in greatest Strength. Now Death is Death, and Sin is Sin, and the Soul feels the Weight of every Load. Comfort lightens all Burdens, and when Christ is present, all Evils vanish, and Discouragements scatter as a Mist; but when that is gone, then those Evils gather like Clouds of Fire and Blood over the Soul, and those Memories which did lie as conquered Men, do rise up with renewed Strength. And what a sad Time is this when the Soul seeth her Danger, and not her Refuge; her Wounds, but not her Cure! Nay, to see him that is her only Trust, not only not to be with her, but against her! It hath chosen him as her chief Treasure. Therefore can be no more without him, than without her self.

4 *It hath had Hopes of God's Favour.* Time hath been when it saw it self in the Arms of Christ, and walked with some Assurance that it had a Friend in Heaven. And therefore, seeing now her Hopes to wither, and those golden Days to pass as a pleasant Dream, it can not but be much afflicted. This shall be the Bitterness of the Anguish of unsound Hearts at last who, after they have fed their Souls with Hope, and have run out their Days in a Paradise of imaginary Happiness find, when they come to die, all those Joys, and all that Confidence, to spend themselves like a Vapour, and the Law to eat up the Fat, Sorrow and everlasting Perdition coming in stead of Joy and Salvation, which they looked for. Oh! Who can utter this Misery? It is hauled from a Pinnacle of high and glorious Hopes, into a Depth of eternal Woe! By this we may guess what is for a deserted Soul, that hath reckoned long upon high Things, and now seeth such a Change, that it

ored to count it self deceived, and to exchange her
ing Hopes for killing Fears, and wherers she thought
r self a Child, to be cast forth as a Stranger, yea, as
n Enemy,

5 *It hath had much in Communion with God and Christ.*
Time was, when the Man was kindly used, when God
onversed with him, as a Man with his Friend, when
e invited him often, and entertained him in Love,
nd poured in much of Heaven upon him. Therefore
ow, to see God estranging himself, yea, frowning,
hiding, aiming against him, cannot but be a cutting
his Soul. David having lost the Liberties of the Or-
inances, which were better than his Kingdom to him,
as down in heaviness, as one taught by the Experience
his former Happiness, the deeper to lament his pre-
ent Misery. *When I remember these Things, I pour out*
Soul in me, for I had gone with the Multitude, I had
me with them to the House of God, with the Voice of Joy
and Praise, with a Multitude that kept holy Day. Psal 42.

And this was the Affliction of the Church, that she
t him in whose Presence she had received such abun-
ant Comfort, *Cont. 5* The more the Soul hath had of
od, the more bitter is her Loss of him.

Secondly, The Object is such, as if you weigh it, you
ll see, that a Man cannot be at Rest, when God holds
h, and leaves him in this doleful Case.

Consider, *First*, The Quality of the Object. There
e three Things in God, which cause the Wound of an
nded Spirit to bleed much.

Goodness. Because God is good, therefore his Dis-
on is a great Affliction. This sweet Balm the Heart,
ach a Day, will turn into a sharp Corrosive, and out
his Sea of Comfort will draw bitter Waters. This
hen Mine, which is a rich Treasure unto others,
lds that which the Heart turns into Iron Rods, and
arp Swords to wound it self. For, *Ex. 31*, if it appie-
d his Goodness to be his Kindness and gracious Dis-
on to Pity and Mercy, then it reasons heavily.
Oh!

Oh! unhappy Wretch, that there should be so sweet a Fountain, and I should not drink of it, that Stream should flow forth towards Thousands, and none to me, envy not others Happiness, but I lament mine own Misery; that I should die in the midst of Life, and perish in the midst of Salvation. God is so good, so ready to shew Mercy, that sure he is highly incensed against me, who seek, and call, and cry, yet am not relieved. If my Wickedness were not very great, yea, if I were in his Heart at all, surely, he that is so good to himself, and unto Thousands, would not thus reject me. I am tossed Night and Day, and carry an Hell in my Soul continually, and if I were not as an Enemy in his Eye, if I were a Child, his Bowels would not hold I should surely be received. Who can reckon the heavy Conclusions which the Heart will draw against itself? It is so disposed to its own Hurt, that not only against Faith, but against Reason, it will afflict it self, turning the Sun into Darkness, and the Moon into Blood, fetching Misery out of Mercy, and Hell out of Heaven. Or, if, *Secondly*, The Goodness of God be taken for his Holiness and Perfection, then they reason thus. Surely I am very evil, whom Goodness rejects, if I had any Spark of Good in me, God would not cast me off, but certainly he seeth my abundant Naughtiness. Therefore he setteth himself against me. Thus sundry Ways the Goodness of God makes the hiding of his Face, and the Manifestation of his Displeasure, to be very grievous.

2. *Greatness*. When a Man apprehends the Majesty of God, the Fear of his Disfavour falls heavy upon him. *Who knoweth the Power of thine Anger? Even according to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath* Psal. 99. 11. The Favour of a Man of Power is of much Worth, and there is Power in his Wrath. *The Wrath of a King is as the roaring of a Lion; but his Favour is as Dew upon the Grass* Prov. 19. 12. The Wrath of the God of Power is terrible as Thunder: And, as the Beasts fall down astonished

ished at the Roaring of a Lion, so the Soul is overwhelmed, when so glorious a Majesty is incensed.

In God there is a *two-fold Power*.

A Power, *First*, Of *Authority*, which is that Power by which, 1 He *dispenseth* all Things, as having all in his Hand, as absolute Lord and Sovereign. And what a Misery is this, That he that hath Eternal Life and Death, Heaven and Hell in his Power, should seem to be against a Man? This is the Fulness of all Evil, when he, upon whose Will all Things depend, becomes ones Enemy. The Loss of a particular Comfort and Contentment is great, but how much worse is the Loss of all? By which he judgeth all: God being the Supreme Lord, holds this Royalty, That all Men and Angels are accountable to him in all Things. Now, to apprehend, That the Judge of all the World will not shew Mercy, but will proceed in Strictness of Justice, especially when a Man knoweth that he is guilty many Ways, and that God is privy to all his Sins, must needs be a sore shaking to the Soul. Though all Friends and Ministers, yea, though all Angels come in to comfort, yet it will not satisfy; because they are but Subjects. God is Supreme, and his Word shall stand. As if you tell a poor trembling Prisoner, going to the Bar for his Life, he needs not fear, he shall surely escape, he will be apt to answer you, Alas, except the Judge say so, all that you say will not profit me, so will a poor afflicted Soul think, when others come and tell him, Surely your Case is good, and doubtless you will find Mercy, and Heaven will be your Portion. Oh! That God would say this to me, except this be my Sentence at his Bar, your Comforts are but as sounding Brasses, or as a tinkling Cymbal.

Secondly, There is a Power of *Ability*, by which God is able to work what he wills, and to execute his own Purposes. If he pronounce Sentence from the Throne of Judgment, there is no Way to shun it: If in the Word of a King is Power, Eccles. 8. 4. how much more in the Word

Word of the *Almighty*? What makes any Thing dreadful but its Power? and all that Power in the Creature is but derived from him, and limited by him, but his Power hath no Bounds but his Will. Therefore, when the Soul is not only in Doubt of his good Will, but in Fear of his ill Will, how can it have any Rest

3. *Eternity* God abides for ever, this makes his Favour and Displeasure more considerable: The Loss of a Perpetuity, we reckon a great Loss in our Estates, but what is it to lose God for ever? And not only to lose him, but to bear his Displeasure, who is eternal? Eternity, Oh Eternity! How doth this swallow up the Soul in a Day of Fears? This sets on all other terrible Things with a redoubled Strength, and cauleth them to fall with Weight more Heavy than of Mountains upon the Spirit. Such a Thought as this, *He that hath all Power, and lives for ever, hath forsaken me*, batters the Soul as a Wall of Paper before a Canon.

2. Consider the *Relation* in which God stands to a Believer, he is to them in the nearest and dearest Relation, a *Friend, Father, Husband*.

God is *all these perfectly* The closest and most adive *Friend*, the kindest and most tender *Father*, the sweetest and most loving *Husband*, the Loss therefore of such a one is grievous, yea, the Loss of any one is great as if a Child lose a tender hearted Father, or a Friend a free-hearted Friend, or a Wife a kind-hearted Husband, but if one lose a Friend, a Father, an Husband at once, this is very grievous. But when the Soul is deserted, it apprehends it self to lose all these, yea, the best Friend, Father, and Husband, yea, her only Friend, Father, and Husband. No Wonder if it take up *Jeremiah* his sad Complaint. *When I would comfort myself against Sorrow, my Heart is faint in me. Jer 8. 18.* Nothing can Heal, but that which did wound.

3. Consider the *Operation of God* He hath not only put into the Heart, which he reneweth, a longing and restless Desire after him, but he quickens this Desire by

Sense of Misery, and by Manifestation of his Greatness and Goodness, that so the Soul may be carried with uncessant Reachings after him, he is then drawing the Soul towards him, when he seems to be departing, and how can that Man rest whom Heaven draweth? God's End in afflicting the Soul is not its Pain, that it may waste it self in Sighs and Groans, but that it may, with more Lagernels, pursue him. So that he is secretly and strongly working in the darkest Night of Spiritual Sadness, to a more full and comfortable Conjunction and Communion with his People. Therefore it is that they seek, and run to and fro to find him, because God draweth them by his Power. When David was in the Desert, he *followed hard after God*, but what set his Soul in that constant Motion? *Thy right Hand upholdeth me.* Ps. l. 63. 8.

Let this suffice for the *Effects* and *Consequents* of God's riding his Face, and cutting off the Comforts which the Soul was wont to enjoy in him.

C H A P. XXXVII.

The Causes and Cure of this sad Condition.

HAVING seen what a voful Case a Man is in when God withdraweth, let us now weigh the *Causes* for which God dealeth thus with his People.

First Cause *To put a Difference betwixt Heaven and Earth.* God went to in his Actions to Times and Seasons. Israel was a Child as well as we, yea, the *first born*, yet that Church lost to much of him, as the Churches of the Christians, it was not a Time for Ruiness. While the Church was in her Infancy, God dealt with them as with Children in Minority, he gave them much of the Word, and less of Heaven. The *Spirit of Adoption* was poured out more fully, when the Church was grown to maturity. And so God reserved much till the *Gentiles* were called, that when his Guests were more fully met, he might set out more Abundance of his Provision. So

God will keep the rich Store of consistent and-abiding Comforts till the great Day, that when all the Family shall come together, he may pour out the fulness of his hidden Treasures upon them. We are now but in the Way, and it is fit the best should come last, we are but yet in the Morning of the Day, the Feast is to come. In the mean Time, a running Banquet, a Breakfast, a Taste shall suffice to stay the Stomach, till the Time come, that the King of Saints, with all his Friends shall sit down together at the Royal Feast.

If you send your Son to travel, you give him less than his Inheritance, and you will send him forth by Sea and Land for your Ends. So God hath sent you abroad, you are but Travellers, therefore must not think it strange, if you meet with Storms, and weary Days, and if you have not so constant a Presence of God with you. The Difference of this Life and the next is not so much in the Kinds of Comfort, as in the Degrees and Continuance of them. This Life hath such a Presence of God, as is with a kind of Absence. We know this, *That while we are present in the Body, we are absent from the Lord*, 2 Cor 5. 6.

This Life is but our Seed Time of Comfort, Psal 91. 11. and the Seed will have a Time to be out of our Hands, Use and Sight, till the Harvest come.

Now is Working-time, and the Time of Fight, and Servants and Souldiers must not expect any settled Rest, till their Service is done, and the Wars cease. *There remains a Rest for the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9.

All the Saints that have gone before us, have found ill Days and hard Times, yea, *Jesus Christ* himself, till his Hour came that he should be glorified, had Trouble in the World, yea, he drank of this Cup which we have in Hand. This makes Heaven sweeter, and puts the Soul upon more longings for it, because there it knoweth it shall not fear, nor sorrow any more.

Constant Joys in such a Condition as this is in the World, suit not more than constant Feastings in Times

heaviness. We are freed from the Power of Sin but in part; so we are but in Part freed from Afflictions. And it is probable, except Grace were more abundant, that constant Peace would have ill Consequents. *Paul* was emptied after his Exaltation, that he might not be exalted. Comfort belongeth not to Sanctification, but Glorification. Therefore the Fulness of it is kept till we be set in Glory. Comfort is the Reward of Holiness, therefore the Perfection and Stability of it is kept till that Time, when Holiness shall be perfected: And the Perfection both of Grace and Peace is deferred, that when Christ shall appear in Glory, this may set out the Day. When Christ came in the Flesh, God poured out much of his Spirit at his Ascension, and will pour it gloriously when all shall be consummate, then Christ shall shine among all his Saints, and the Fulness of their Perfections, as the Sun attended with all the Stars in their brightest Glory.

Till that Time, while you are Children under Tutelage, and at School, you will meet with Frowns as well as Smiles, and Correction Days as well as Play Days: And it is well the Day is coming that hath no Night, and Joy that hath no Sorrow with it.

Second Cause. *In Judgment to the World* God might send out his Saints as Stars in Glory, that all Eyes might gaze on them, but he will not. All Things are in a Mystery, and hidden to the World, the Graces of the Saints hid under many Infirmities, and the Comforts of the Saints under many Sorrows, in just Judgment upon the World. God is wise, and knoweth how to fit the same Things for many Ends. Christ came in a poor estate, and his Glory and Majesty was covered with a Cloud and Mantle of a mean outside: And why was this? It is true, it was for Satisfaction of Justice, for the Sin of his People, but it was also in Judgment to the World, he was a precious one, yet, because he came not in a State and Pomp, he was a Stone refused by the Builders, and so a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence. 1 Pet.

7, 8. And because the Gospel came not with humble Dress, and external Ornament. *The preaching of the Gospel is, to them that perish, foolishness* 1 Cor. 1. 18.

God hath not stooped in the Matters of Heaven to Sense, as he hath in the Matters of the World, he will not send unto Men any from the Dead, nor yet shall they walk among Men with shining Robes of heavenly Glory. The Things of this Life are seen and tasted, but the Spiritual Things are conveyed most in a Spiritual Way. If Adam had continued in his Integrity, God would have manifested himself to the World, as a Man to his Friend; and not only Faith and Reason, but the Senses should have been blessed in Communion with God. But now, he so disposeth of all Things, that even the People *walk by Faith, and not by Sight*. He will not give such a sensible Demonstration of his Bounty to the World, that it may justly perish in its Wickedness; it will not believe Moses and the Prophets, and it will not believe the Gospel.

The World is led by Sense. Though the Scriptures testify of the Excellency of Redemption and Adoption, and of the great Happiness of the Saints, yet do they foolishly cast away Faith and the Word, and run by Sense, and finding the Hairs of Cloys to be often tedious, beholding not their Comforts, but their Sorrows, they conclude, that the Way is worthless, and that Religion is but a sowre Grape, and as bitter Waters, and as a Way of the Desert.

Third Cause. *To establish them in more full Comfort*. There was Darkness before Light in the World. At the first, the strong Wind which rent the Mountains, and broke the Rocks, came the still Voice in which God was, 1 Kings 19. 11, 12. And as God often sends great Comfort before great Afflictions in the World, (Christ was troubled in the Mount, before his great Agony in the Garden) so he often promiseth Affliction of the Soul before great Comforts, and the Soul is settled more afterwards, as the Tree is rooted more by storm.

rg It is God's Method to bring first to *Egypt*, and through the Sea and Wilderness, and then to *Canaan*. The Apostle prayeth that they may be strengthened and established. But when? *After ye have suffered a while.* 1 Pet. 5 10.

When the Soul hath passed through Straits, and hath seen the Wonders of the Lord in the Depths, it is advantaged much to further Establishment

1. Because that Comfort and Evidence, which comes so immediately from God, is strongest. When a Man hath been taken off from all his Foundations, and God hath appeared unto him in the Desert, it is a strong Demonstration of his Love, and wins the Heart to much Love, and to strong Confidence. As if a Friend, when he is offended, and hath us at an Advantage, so that he may in Justice, and can undo us, if then he spare, and not only so, but is as *Esau* to *Jacob*, turning Wrath into Love, and anger into compassion to Kindness. This much knits us to him to love him, and cleave to him as a good and a true Friend indeed

2. God gives much Proof and Evidence of the Truth of Grace which he hath wrought in them, when he makes them see they had Hearts that could love him, even when it was doubtful to them whether he loved them. When the Truth of Grace is evidenced clearly, it brings much Comfort, and what greater Evidence of an upright Heart, than to follow God, when he seems to flee away, and to love him, when he seems to abhor and hate them, to weep upon him in Love, when he seems armed with Weapons of Death, and to pour out the Soul to him, when he seems to be pouring down Fire and Brimstone upon them.

3. It gives Hope, that if dark Clouds do arise, yet they shall be scattered again. The Sense of former Troubles may help to conclude that such Depths are passible, and the Soul will be apt to say, There is Hope concerning this. Experience of Mercy is a great Help to Faith and holds up the Soul, that it will not fall to Hatred, and

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lie so long under Discouragements again, it will help and furnish the Heart to pray much, because God hath been intreated in such Times before, and to say as the Apostle, having delivered us from so great a Death, *in him we trust, that he will yet deliver us.* 2 Cor. 1, 10.

4. *It works more closing with Christ* The Death of Comfort occasions a greater Life and Strength towards Christ, both in Desire of him, and Dependence upon him, and for this Cause God shakes the Soul with Earthquakes, that it may stand faster upon its true Basis and Foundation. That which at first brings the Soul to Christ, is his Worth, and our Need, and the more we see our selves necessitous, the more our Hearts gather in to Christ. The Soul must have some Rest, and if it find none within nor without, it is carried to Christ, as *Noah's Dove* to the Ark: That which is the first Cord to draw to him, hath also a Strength to bind to him. Therefore God gives his People sad Visions of Sin and Wrath, that by being shaken, they may root themselves more in Christ. This was God's great Aim, to set up his Son as the Hope and Help of his People, and as that glorious Means by which he may diffuse the Beams of his Mercy, and Love upon Men. And he loves to see the Saints advancing him, by flying to him, and abiding in him.

And the more they go forth to Christ, and seek the Father in the Son, the more they are blessed: Christ is the Rock of the Saints, and when they are knit to it, they stand fast: The nearer they are to Christ, the nearer are they to all Happiness. God will not look friendly upon the Soul, but through Christ. He will not pour out the Spirit of Comfort, but through him. And as Comfort comes by Coming, so the oftener the Soul comes, and the more it converseth with Christ, and resteth on him, the more Comfort it will find at last. Christ will tell you many Secrets, and open his Father's Bosom to you, when you stick close to him.

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And this Advantage comes by Desertions, that the soul is so frightened with those Storms which it met with, that it is afraid to be any more out of its Harbour, but seeks to dwell under the Wing of Christ, and to keep closer to him than ever it did before, and so this Affliction brings forth *the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness in them which are exercised thereby*, Heb. 12. 11.

Fourth Cause The *correcting and healing of some Evil in his People*. He doth it for their Profit, that they may be Partakers of his Holiness, Heb. 12. 10. There are many Things in the Saints which are very repugnant to that final State, in which they are set by Grace. And it is no Wonder if God take such Courses, wherein he seems not to be a Father to them that are not as Children to him. I will instance in some particular Evils, which God will not bear with, but doth visit in his People, with this and other Rods.

1. *Deadness, and Dulness of Heart*: Sometimes living Men are in a lifeless State, their Hearts are so benumbed that they seem to ly among the Dead, the former Vigour and Activity of their Graces is gone, and they are become barren and unfruitful. Now, as in a Lethargy, or Apoplexy, Physicians use strong and sharp Medicines, so God casts the Soul into a Fever, to get off this Stupidity, and hangs their Souls over the Mouth of Hell, and makes them to drink of that *Cup of Wrath Wine, the Dregs whereof the Wicked of the Earth shall drink out and drink*, Psal. 75. 8. That by this strong Motion, he may quicken their dull and sleepy Spirits. Deadness is such a State, in which a Man is neither receptive nor active, neither fit to receive Good, or to do Good, and such a Case is not tolerable, for in this God's Ends are stopped, for he calleth out his People to be Vessels to receive Mercy, to hold forth his Name, but he can do neither that is dead. Nature it self loves not a dead Thing, it is both useless and unsightly, for where Life faileth, there is Corruption. As in the Body, a mortified Member doth putrifie nor

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only it self, but others: Therefore, as a Man useth all Means to recover the Life and Spirits in his Body, so God doth with his People. *David* lay in a slumbering Drowsiness a long Time, but, at last, when he was like *Jonah*, sleeping by the Sides of the Ship, he sent a Storm into his Soul to awake him, then he revived like another Man.

2. *Fearfulness of God*. This is a Temper to which Saints are apt to grow. As Children are wont to grow froward, and presumptuously malepert and irreverent, till the Father's Frown and majestick Austereity lay down their Spirit. God will not be carelessly dealt with, though he allow us Confidence and holy boldness in Approach to him, and converse with him, he expects a due Sense of his Majesty and Greatness. *Let us love Grace whereby we may serve God with reverence and godly Fear, for our God is a consuming Fire,* Heb. 12. 28, 29. Though he be a Father, yet he is a terrible, an holy, and an Almighty God. And therefore, to correct the sinful Boldness of his People, and to cause them to stand in Awe of him, he sometimes shows in his Favour, and keeps State by concealing himself. As the *Persian* Kings shunned Humility, and were seldom seen, that they might be more revered. The Fear of God is one of the main Pillars of his Throne, and so far as he is not our Father he is not our God. Therefore he hath ever showed himself, in Power and Greatness, unto Men. When he came to give the Law, he came in great Majesty, with Blackness, and Darkeness, and Tempest, and the Sound of Trumpet, &c. And so terrible was the Sight that he said, *I exceedingly fear and quake,* Heb. 12. 18, 19. Yea, and in the Gospel it is foretold, That *Clouds and Darkness shall be about him, and Sons of Men shall see him, and shall be terrified, and shall fall on their Faces, and shall be as dead Men, and shall be as the Sun shall be darkened, and the Moon shall be as blood, before the great and terrible Day of the Lord come,* Joel 2. 31. Rom. 10. 15. Acts 2. 19, 20, 21. When he came to publish Peace

Gentiles, he came with great Terror in Judgment on the Jews, and struck off the Branch natural, that Gentiles might not be high-minded but fear, Rom 11,

And in particular Persons he so works, by Inter-
 mures of Frowns and Favours, Majesty and Mercy,
 that they may learn to walk as those Churches did,
 in the Fear of the Lord, and in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost,
 Ps 9 31.

It is not a servile Fear, or a Fear of Discouragement
 which God expects, but a Fear of Reverence, a Fear
 tempered and tempered with Love. There is a great
 difference in Fears, a Man fears a Beast and runs from
 him, a Man fears an Enemy, but hates him, but a
 Man fears his Father and loves him. Yea, there-
 fore he fears, because he loves, they shall fear the Lord
 and his Goodness, Hos. 3. 5.

5. *Slightness of Heart*: There is a certain Wanton-
 ness and trifling Disposition in the Heart, that Men
 are apt to be superficial, and imperfect in their Ways,
 and thus God visits upon them

6. *Jollying with Sin*: They will be playing with
 Sins and Baits and allow a secret Liberty in the
 Heart to Sin, conniving and winking at many Work-
 ings of it, and not setting upon Mortification with ear-
 nest endeavours. Though they be convinced, yet they
 are not perswaded to arise with all their Might a-
 gainst the Lord's Enemies, but do his Work negligent-
 ly which is an accursed Thing, and for this Cause God
 visiteth them upon sore Straits. The Israelites could have
 done the Work perfectly, when they were command-
 ed to root out the Canaanites, but because they were
 slack, and did it but by the Halfe. Therefore God
 visiteth them as a Scourge, and as Briars and Thorns to
 be always an Affliction to them. When you are pre-
 pared to fight for Christ, and have taken up Arms against
 the Rebels in your Hearts, if you fight not with all
 your Strength, and pursue the Victory to the utmost,
 till you find your Enemies dead before you. God may
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give you into their Hands to lead you into Captivity and to hold you in Chains that will eat into your Souls and may, in this Distress, stand afar off, as one that knoweth you not.

2. *Dallying with Duties* : Men do them as if they did them not, without Heart, and in a loose, lazy, formal, lifeless Manner. And when there is such Idleness and Negligence, and Indisposedness, God comes in a Way of Anger, to whip up the slothful and unfuthful Spirit. Duties of Godliness are not only a Debt to God, but a Reward to us. Therefore, in Slightness there is not only Unfaithfulness, but Unthankfulness also; both the Majesty and the Mercy of God is despised, and can God be well pleased with such Things? Remember the wise Man's Counsel, *Whatsoever thine Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might*, Eccles. 9. 10. You are in an evil Frame of Heart, when you can do the weighty Things of God with Slightness. And because you serve God so, he therefore comes with a Kind of Expulsion and Banishment, and throweth you out of his Sight, that you may see what it is to dally with God.

3. *Dallying with Ordinances* : Slight and careless Attendance upon them. God comes in a Way of gracious Condescension, and stoops down with Offers of Grace and Mercy to poor Dust, and sets before them Jesus Christ, the most precious Treasure of Heaven and Earth, and calls them to a near Conjunction and Communion with himself, and holds forth precious Promises of Life; but what is the Carriage of the Soul? It neither minds these, nor vouchsafeth God in all his Goodness, so much as a Look, or if it be affected, yet but little. It makes no great Haste, nor useth much Solicitousness, or Pain about the Matter, but as if the Things were of no great Importance, it is very moderate, and easie in making towards them. Neither that high Hand that holds them forth, nor that Blood that bought them, nor that Worth that is in them works much, but all is slighted. And therefore

therefore God comes in the Quarrel of these high Things, to vindicate them from our Contempt, and teacheth the Soul, by the Sense of Misery, to value Mercy, and, by the Fear of Hell, to prize Christ, and to be more serious in the Ordinances, as *Means* of that Good, which they have learned to esteem, by the Want of it. The Apostle's Rule is, *to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. Salvation is a tender Business, and of great Concernment. And therefore will not be dallyed with. What think you? Shall God let that before you which is better than the World, for you to abuse? You your selves take away the Bread when the Child playeth with it, and shall the Bread of Life be slighted? Shall God stand waiting upon you with Calls and Calls, and with gracious Offers, and will you dally with him? Hence is that black Cloud which now darkens the Heavens over you. You are grown wanton, and except the Gospel come in a Dress to please you, you slight it. Therefore God puts you into Straits, and then you will come with a Stomach, and in Earnest.

4. *Living too much upon the Creature.*

Quest. *When is that?*

Ans. 1. When it takes up so much of a Man's Time, Strength, Thoughts, Affections, Spirits, that he is *unfitted for God*: When the Soul is sick with a Surfeit of the World, drunk with Cares, Fears, Delights, so that the Heart is stollen away, and an Indisposedness groweth upon the Soul towards God. This was Solomon's Case, till God fetched him by imbittering his Ways to him. The World is allowed for a Way, or Inn in our Travels, but not for our Home: To be a Staff in our Hand, but not to have a Throne in our Hearts. For this Cause God rains down Wrath and Bitterness upon our Spirits to wean us from the World, and thrusts out Hagar to give Sarah more full Possession.

2. *When a Man cannot be without the World*: When he gains so much in our Opinion and Affection, that

we think there is no Life or Subsistence without it. This is that for which God comes and takes off the Soul with a Storm, and rescueth the poor Captive with Violence, that was held in Chains, and makes him to see of how little Use these Things are in an evil Day. When the Soul falls to adulterous Leagues with the World, that they are so conjoined, that it lives and dies with the World, God brings this Bill of Divorce, and turns off, as it were, the disloyal Soul to her miserable Lovers, that it may see the Folly and Wickedness of its Way.

3. *When a Man can live without Christ*: The Pleasantness and Abundance of earthly Contentments have bewitched him, that he becomes like a Prince that hath such Fulness, that he can reign with Christ, and hath faith in his Heart as those, *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee*, Jer. 2. 31. Oh! What unworthy Carriage is this? What, is Christ shut out, that the World may reign? Expect God saying and doing to you as he did to them; *Can a Maid forget her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire? Yet my People have forgotten me, Dry without Number. Thou shalt go forth with thine Hands upon thine Head, for the Lord hath rejected thy Confidences, and thou shalt not prosper in them*, Jer. 2. 32, 37. While the Sun shines, and the Sea is calm, you may sport yourselves in the Deep, but when the Storm comes, then the Harbour will be precious. God will teach you that your Life is in Christ, and in a Day of Fears, and Affrightments of Soul, you will say, None but Christ, none but Christ, God will bring all the Enemies of Christ under his Feet, and if there be a treacherous Disposition, like *Joab* exalting *Adonijah* into the Throne of *David*, God will bring it down. Christ must have his own Place, the Throne must not be given to another. If you so set up the World, that you count it Happiness, and seek it more than Christ, and are more careful to leave this than Christ unto your Children, God will arm himself against you to subdue this

his treacherous Conspiracy and Rebellion against his appointed.

5. *Intractableness and Stiffness of Heart* This is another Cause of the clouding of our Comfort. God deals with the Heart by Cords of Mercies, and by Bonds of Affliction, but Mercies move not, and Afflictions prevail not. Therefore God takes another Course, as Physicians, when gentle Means profit not, apply sharper. God will not lose any whom he hath called: Therefore if they be stubborn, and stand like Rocks against all ordinary Means, he will come upon the tenderest Part, and use the sharpest Way, and when he comes in Storms and Clouds, who can abide it? His Rebukes are more terrible than Thunder. *The Spirit of a Man may sustain his Infirmities, but a wounded Spirit who can bear?* Now the Soul is hard set, and comes upon her Knees to submit her self, and melts like Wax, and yields to any Thing. It seeth an absolute Necessity of Agreement with God, when it is beleaguered with such Trouble on every Side. David had enough upon him to have humbled him, but his Heart was strong, till God put the Cup of trembling into his Hand; and this wrought so, that it fetched up all, and brought the Man in Frame. Clay is easily moulded, but the Marble must have many Blows. The Sun Beams will melt the Snow, but Irons must be put into the Fire. A tender Sprig is easily nipped, but a stiff Oak must be hacked and hewed before it falls. A stout Spirit brings much Sorrow upon it, it is a grievous Temper, if it be not bowed to God, it groweth worse and worse: If it be bowed, it is often with great Violence. In natural Causes Resistance increaseth the Vigour and Operation of Contraries. When Fire and Water meet in strong Opposition, how doth the stronger rage, till it hath got the Victory? If a Man enter the Lists with a stout and a strong Antagonist, he calls up all his Spirits and Power, that he may get the Conquest. If a King send

to deal with Rebels, if neither Proffers, nor Patience, nor Counsels, nor Favours can prevail, he arms himself against them. God will overcome, if fair Means do not the Work, then he awakes himself as a Lyon, and comes as a Man of War, and lets fly his Arrows to the Soul, *Job 6. 4* God tryed Ephraim divers Ways, but his Heart yielded not, at last when warning Pieces did not bring him, God mounts his Canons against him, and gives him a Broad-side, *For the Iniquity of his Covetousness I was wroth, Isa. 57. 16, 17.* and then he strikes Sail and yields, *Fer. 31. 19.*

6. *Rigidity and Unmercifulness to the spiritual State of others:* The Saints are sometimes much wanting in Bowels of Pity and Tenderneſs, and apt, by Censures, Neglects, Contempts, and rough Dealing, to break the bruised Reed, and it is hard to pity much, till they have felt much. For this Cause Christ was a Man of Sorrows, that we might be assured of his Compassion in all Things it beloved him to be made like unto his Brethren, that he might be a merciful, and faithful High Priest in Things pertaining to God, to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People: For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. *Heb. 2. 17, 18.* God chooseth broken Vessels to pour Comfort into, that it may diffuse it self upon others. *Whether we be afflicted, it is for your Consolation, 2 Cor. 1. 6.* Sense of the Pains of a wounded Spirit makes the Heart tender, and God loves such a Spirit. He abhors Pride, Insolence and Unmercifulness in all, but most in his Children. It is very natural for Fellow Members to be incompassionate one to another. The Relation requires Love, and Love calls for Mercy. Christ is full of Meekness, and will not quench the smouldering Flax, nor break the bruised Reed: And he that abounds in Mercy loves Mercy.

What if thy Brother be low in Gifts and Graces yet know you not that the Beauty of Christ's Body is made up, as of the Symmetry and Congruity, so of the Inequality

unequallity of Members? And the least Infant in Grace as the Apple of his Eye. Take Heed of destroying, by your uncharitable Carriage, the Temple of Christ, or causing those to grieve whom he would not have grieved. Is it for you whom he hath spared, to deal so with your Fellow-Servant? Your hard Dealing is the Way to bring you into Prison, and to lay you in Chains.

What if he be poor and mean? Yet look not over him with Disdain, *Have not the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, with Respect of Persons,* James 2. 1.

In this you are corrupt Judges, *Judges of evil Thoughts,* ver. 4. These are chosen of God, rich in Faith, Heirs of the Kingdom, ver. 5. If ye despise the Poor, it will occasion Men to blaspheme that worthy Name by which ye are called, ver. 7. The Law saith, *If thou love thy Neighbour as thy self, ye do well,* ver. 8. You must be judged by this Law, and he shall have Judgment without Mercy that hath shewed no Mercy, ver. 13.

What if thy Brother have many Failings, or have offended, remember the Rule, *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken with a Fault, restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one anothers Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ,* Gal. 6. 1, 20. Edom's Sin was great, because he added Affliction to Jacob's Troubles, *Thou shouldest not have spoken proudly in the Day of Distress, &c. As thou hast done, it shall be done to thee, thy Reward shall return upon thine own Head,* Obad. 12. 15.

7 Some great Transgression: There are daily Infirmities which have a Pardon in Courtesie but though God be merciful to the Weakness of his Servants, yet if they sin willingly, and put out the Light of Conscience, he will put out the Light of Comfort. If they break the Bonds of his Government, he will cast them into Bonds of Distress. David is a visible and known Pattern in this Case. Sometimes the Saints take Head,

and run, like the wild *Ass* in the Desert, till the Month come, in which she hath Travel and Sorrow, and sometimes they wound the Honour of the Gospel, and so bring a Wound upon themselves, the Sword is sheathed in their Souls, and sometimes they will run to their old Ways, and this reneweth their old Fears, and breeds new Troubles, sometimes they will long unhumbled, till God awake them with Rods, and raise them by kindling a Fire about them. Rebellion brings many Loads. Disobedience and Impenitence are Springs of Bitterness. A Fire comes out of this Bramble, to burn the Cedar of *Lebanon*.

Fifth Cause. To shew that *he is the God of all Comfort* 2 Cor. 1. 4 He keeps the Cistern empty, that we may look to the Clouds above, for the pleasant Fruit of Peace, hath her Roots in Heaven. Our own Hearts, though they may be planted with pleasant Trees, yet of themselves bring forth nothing but Briars. And God loves to shew himself the Lord of these Treasures of Comfort, that the Heart may have no Dependence but in him, and that it may always fear, because he can soon turn the clearest Day into the darkest Night. Comfort is not given us in absolute Possession, but we are always Tenants at Will. If God will, he can, in a Moment, lay our Hopes and Joys in the Dust, and strip us of all our Garments of Joy, and turn us into Mourning. And as Light in the Air, or as Water not in the Spring, but in the Vessel; so it may soon be cut off. God needs not go far to seek a Rod to whip us with. If he do but withdraw his comforting Spirit, our Spirit will soon prove an afflicting Spirit. The Peace of the Soul, is by Virtue of the Power and Presence of God, but if he depart, all is uproar, our own Thoughts will be as Scourges. The *Roman* Emperors kept Lyons to destroy the Christians, and our Hearts are Grates and Dens of Lyons, if God let them loose, Oh the Rendings that are by them. If God keep not Garrison, the Enemies will break in.

o that all our Peace is from him. The brightest Star that shines most with Light of Comfort, derives it from the Sun of Righteousness. And therefore that they may have a Sight of that dark and dismal Nature of their own Hearts, he shuts in his Light, and then when the Soul lyeth in a mournful and distressed Case, in Depths where it finds no Bottom, and whence none can deliver, when a Man seeth all Creatures standing as dead Pictures, and reckons himself past all Hope, then I say, God sheweth himself to be the God of Comfort, by commanding Light to shine out of Darknes, and quieting the high and raging Storms, which did bear down all before them.

Sixth Cause: To revive their Esteem of Mercy: When a Man is first brought out of Babylon, he is as those that dream, the Heart is full of Gladness, and the Mouth of Praise. The Birds sing sweetly in the Spring. When a Man is newly brought out of the Pit, and delivered from the Sorrows of Death, which did compass him about, and from the Pains of Hell which gat Hold of him, while the Prints of the Chain are on him, and the Scars of his Hurt remain, he saith as David, I love the Lord because he hath heard my Voice and my Supplications, Psal. 116 1. I was brought low and he helped me. Return unto thy Rest O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from Falling, ver. 6, 7, 8. The Soul is in a Float at present, but when the Days of Mercy continue, the Remembrance of the Days of Sorrow wears off, and the Fire of Love begins to abate, and Christ is not of so high Account, though at first he was the Chiefest of ten Thousands, the Joy of their Hearts, yet now his Love and Kindness groweth stale: Therefore God sends back the Soul into her old Prison, to feel the Weight of her ancient Irons and Chains, and causeth her to put on her old cast Garments of Mourning, that Sackcloth and Ashes which she wore in the Days of Old, that by laying this Rod upon her:

As

As the Prophet spread himself upon the dead Child, so a new Life may come into the dying Love, and now Mercy is raised to its former Price, and Christ is advanced on high, now the Soul returns with redoubled Strength, and with multiplied and increased Thankfulness.

Seventh Cause. *That others may be instructed.* Sometimes God chuseth the most eminent to set them out as Demonstrations of this, That Assurance is not essential to Holiness, that their Conjunction is not indissoluble. Weak Ones might have thought their Cause worse, if they had seen much Grace always, attended with abundant Joy. But now God sheweth, that Comfort and Rejoicing is not always the Portion of the Saints, that so in their dark Nights, when they see no Light, they may live in Hope that the Sun will rise, though their Way be a dark Way, it may be a sure Way.

Eight Cause *To fit for special Service: They that go down into the Depths, see many Wonders which others know not.* Experience gives Wisdom. Many are kept in a low Way, and have neither strong Fears, nor strong Joys: These are not as David's Worthies, but are Christians of the lower Rank, common Souldiers. Many are carried much aloft in great Hopes and Flashes of Joy, but they much overlook the Things below, many Infirmities and Failings ly undiscovered, but when God fetches the Soul down, and sets it to dig beneath, this Man is more enlarged in true Wisdom and Holiness, and carrieth a fuller Knowledge of Sin, and Christ, and of Hell and Heaven, than others do, and so is made a stronger and more compleat Man. As he that hath been in all Conditions, and hath travelled through Sea and Land, and seen many Countries, gains an Excellency by his Experience above others. An homebred Spirit is a low Spirit. God will not do much with many, but leaves them to this Work mainly to save their own Souls, but he will use some as his Agents

nd Factors in his great Designs and Affairs of Mer-
 And therefore trains them up to the Knowledge
 of Heights and Depths. Some are ordinary Passengers,
 and it is enough for them to look to themselves, being
 able to do but little for others, but some must be Pilots:
 And therefore must be acquainted with Winds, and
 Seas, and Rocks, and Sands, that they may not only
 save themselves, but others.

Afflictions come not empty handed, but, like a dark
 Cloud, bring much after them. There are many
 Things which a Man cannot learn in Books, but he
 must learn it in himself. A Scholar may read and ac-
 quaint himself with the Art of Navigation, but that
 will not make him a good Mariner, nor will the
 Study of War make a Souldier, but Experience makes
 both.

God doth all, as in great Freedom, so in great Wit-
 dom, and having appointed Men to several Ends, he
 leads them in several Ends, and works them in sever-
 al Moulds. Out of the same Lump he makes some
 differing from others in Form, Quantity and Excel-
 lency. Some Metal which is for highest Use, he casts of-
 ten into the Fire. It may be God may call you out to suf-
 fer much for him, and Desertions are great Preparations,
 partly, because they give much Experience of the Va-
 nity of all Creatures. He hath shewed you, learn how
 little they avail in *the Day of Wrath*, so that you may
 see you part not with so great Matters, if you do part
 with the World. God hath shewed you that Life is
 not in them, and that you may live without them;
 and partly, because having felt greater Evils, you
 are more encouraged to endure the less. You will not
 fear to fight with a Stripling, after you have encoun-
 tred with a *Goliath*. Moreover, in the greatest Depths,
 have you not seen how all your Fears have vanished,
 and all your Sorrows passed away by the Light of
 God's Countenance shining forth upon you? And so
 you see that the *Joy of the Lord is strong*. It is a Sign
 of

of much Love, and that you are highly set by with God, when he thus leads you into several States, for this is to lead you by the Hand, to see all that may be seen, and if he did not intend much Good, he would not bestow so much Work upon you. You stand in this in the greatest Conformity to Christ, when through many Tribulations and Afflictions you enter into Glory.

God keeps you from much Soiling by constant Rubbing, and useth the Fan so much, to blow away the Chaff, and keepeth you awake by these Stirs. Some Troubles enoble the Spirit of a State, which would degenerate into Effeminacy by constant Peace. Winds fan the Air and purge it, and the running and restless Waters are most clear.

This may suffice to have pointed at some Causes of God's cutting off the Comforts of the Saints.

Having hitherto treated of the *Cause* of the afflicted Soul, I now come to the *Cure*. I shall not need to enlarge my self much here, having been somewhat copious in the *Cure* of the first Kind of Desertions. There are two *Sorts of Men* that walk much without the Consolations. In the First, the Cause is *natural*, in the Second *spiritual*.

As for the First. Who are oppressed with *Melan'oly*, that dark and dusky Humor, which disturbs both Soul and Body. Their Cure belongs rather to the Physician, than to the Divine, and *Galen* is more proper for them, than a Minister of the Gospel. It is a pestilential Humor where it abounds, one calls it the Devil's Bath.

These Men cannot walk clearly. But as a Light in a dark Lanthorn shines dimly, so is the Soul in such a Body. The Distemper of the Body causeth Distemper of Soul, for the Soul follows its Temper. This Distemper worketh strange Passions, and strange Imaginations, and heavy Conclusions, it is not possible such a Man should be quiet till he be cured, the Seas rage not more naturally when the Winds blow, than this Man. He may
some-

ometimes be elevated, as it were, into the third Heavens, but anon he will be brought, as it were, into the lowest Hell. But I leave such with this Advice, When they find their Temper to be naturally or accidentally melancholick, to use all such Ways as God hath prepared in a natural Way: For as the Soul is not cured by natural causes, so the Body is not cured by Spiritual Remedies.

But I shall direct my self to those whose Heaviness of spirit is from Spiritual Causes.

These Persons are of two Sorts. 1. *Sleeping.* 2. *Awakened.*

First, there are some *slumbering and drowsie Spirits*, who are fallen from their former Comforts, and know it; but make up that Want in the Creature in which they take Delight, living in the mean Time without God. As it was in the former Kind of Desertion, so it is in this, God is departed, and either Men know it not, or mind it not, but bear their doleful Loss with a stupid and a sinful Patience, or rather, with a stupid Dullness. But if you find your selves in such a Case, consider, what a Contempt of God this is, to be willing to live without him, and to pour out your Hearts upon the Creature, you must look for a bitter Scourge, except you repent, or else God will leave you to walk on to your Graves in a dull and a low Way. It is a woful change, to descend from communion with God and Christ, to these poor Things below. And, how little do you set by all precious Promises, the Favour of the great and eternal God, and the Blood and Love and Presence of Jesus Christ, that can be content to live in such a State? Look upon others, how their Souls have melted, when God hath been estranged from them. Where is your Love, Faith, Fear, Hope, Life, that you can endure to be so? If these were not all asleep, you would take a Cry for your former Happiness, and sit down and weep over your present Misery. Is the Loss of a Friend on the Earth so grievous, and is a Friend in Heaven no more Account? You live in a Spiritual Adultery, because

because your Husband is neglected, while other Things are entertained. Awaken your selves, and seek to regain your former Peace and Joy in God.

Secondly, Some are awakened, and see their Loss, and are affected with it: This Sort, though it have more Sorrow, yet is in a better Way than the former.

I will to both these propound some. 1. *Persuasive*.

2. *Directives*.

For *Persuasion*, consider.

1. That *Comfort is your Strength*: The more a Man feeth and feeleth the Love of God, the more the Heart is established. There are three great *Affaults* and Trials that a Man is exposed to.

1. *Temptations to Sin*: He that will walk in the Way of God, shall not alway sail in a Calm: The great Leviathan will shew himself, he whose Victories have been many, even among the highest Saints. Now if your Hearts be filled with Comfort, you have Strength greater than the World. For the Manifestation of Divine Love is the Incendiary of Love, which is stronger than Death. So long as Love to Christ is kept up, the Heart is safe, Love is a strong Garrison and makes the Soul impregnable. And while you keep a fresh and clear Sight of the Love of God and Christ, it feeds Love, and keeps it up in Strength. Add to this that comfortable Enjoyment of God doth carry the Heart aloft, it makes the Conversation to be in Heaven: And while a Man's way is above, he is safe from the Snares below. Then the Heart is in Danger to be ensnared, when it wanders in the Creature, as the Fowl is in Danger when she is upon the Earth, but when she is mounted upon the Wing, then she is safe.

2. *Inward Accusations*: The World may accuse, but that is not so shaking, as when Satan casts in Objections, he is a subtle Sophister, and comes oft with insinuating and cunning Disputes, and except you be well settled, he will drive you from your Ground. Except

and clear the State of your Souls, and give Evidence of your Graces, you will not be able to hold up against them. I speak this to such who live with low Comforts, and content themselves with dark Evidences: though you may hold out till you be set upon; yet when that comes, you will find your selves weak.

3. Outward Straits. What if a Day of trouble come? you may see Changes, you have no sure Hold of any Thing under the Sun, and what shall Support you in that Time? What an heavy Thing will this be, that should God Trouble in the World, and no Peace in Heaven? Spiritual Comfort would make you as laurel and strong. What need he care whether he goeth that seeth Jesus Christ with him? You have heard of the Patience of the Martyrs, and of their stoutness; not was their Courage, that it could neither be corrupted, nor denuded, Water could not quench it, Fire could not scorch it, Fire could not burn it, wild Beasts could not devour it. And what was that which gave them this Strength, but the Sight of him that is invisible, and the Sense of his Favor and Presence? *The Seed of Glory did rest upon them.* The Apostles acknowledged the Force of Peace towards God, and comforted themselves to him. *We rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.* *We are comforted, not we glory in Tribulation also,* Rom. 5. 2. This was that which made Sir Job, *My Tribulation I will not leave, but I will hold fast, though I am brought down to Hell.* *And a good Man is renewed Day by Day.* 2 Cor. 3. 18. He is well fenced that is intrenched with Salvation, and hath Christ with him. He reckons not of the World, when he is full of Heaven. Therefore seek to get Abundance of Comfort. Labour to recover your Souls you will have need of all that will hold when you come to die? How sad will Death be when you are going you know not whether? But Death is but a shadow to him that meets it with Assurance of God.

2. Your Sickness doth Hurt to your selves, wasting your Strength, and to others by discouraging them.

3. Your Recovery is possible You may attain to your former Comforts.

1. The same Way is open still: There is the same Mediator in God, the same Mediator, the same Promises.

2. You are not now in further Distance from Peace with God than in former Times, are you not now capable as then, when God found you in your Blood in Enmity against him, in Darkness, in Bondage, in every Lust, altogether without him? Did God appear to you when you sought him not, and will he not be found when you enquire after him? Is not his Promise to revive the Spirit of the Contrite? *Iai. 57*

3. Others have recovered David was in these Depths yet he was restored This Testimony God hath, *Iai. 41* he is the God that comforteth those that are cast down, *2 Cor. 1*

7. 6. Therefore live in Hope

4. He hideth his Face, that you may seek after him He goeth from you, that you may seek after him the Promise is. *That they that seek shall find* He will open to them that knock.

5. To have a Right to Peace and Comfort, for it is that which Christ died for, and which he hath left as a Legacy to his People *Peace I leave with you, my Peace I give unto you* *John 14. 27.*

6. Sit not therefore under Discouragements for there is no Hope, take heed of hard Thoughts of God who is a Father of Mercies But encourage you, seek in your God weeping and mourning are good things of a love. but you must not stay here, out is the word that which is before you. This shall suffice by way of Persuasion.

Now for Direction, let me propound a few Counsels

1. Seek the Father in the Son Happily you have held up Christ in your Heart, and for your strange to the Son, the Father hath estranged himself, go and carry Christ in your Arms, for he is dear unto our

and the Father hath determined to pour out all his Love through the Son: Christ is set before you, stir up your selves to take Hold of him, if you will come to him, you have the Father's Heart. You make your Case to be Christ's Case when you come to him, and he cannot be denied. The Father's Mercies melt at the Son's Mediation. You may pray and weep, and lift up your Voice on high, but except you come in Christ, all will not profit. Then a Man comes in Christ, when he thankfully accepts of the Offer of Christ, and devolves his Cares upon him, desiring in his Heart, that Christ would undertake for him, and then believes that he shall be accepted: Any one of these wanting, you come not in Christ. 1. You must entertain the Offer of Christ, counting him worthy of all Acceptation. 2. You must cast your selves upon Christ, else he will not undertake for you. Holy Dependence engageth him, and makes him your Friend. 3. Then you must believe that you shall find God a Friend, for except you believe the Promise, Christ will not move for you. But when you are thus come to him, then he will not fail you. The Son will be fast to you, *Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out*, John 6. 37. this is a precious Word. Christ will not shut the Door upon you when you come: When you cast your selves into his Arms, he will not, no, he will not cast you out, you have a sure Hold. When you fall into his Arms, you fall into his Heart, and being in his Heart, you will be sure, that if he hath any Power with the Father, he will work your Peace.

Why do you afflict your selves? If you believe, you shall be established. Christ will carry you in to the Father, and will draw out his Kindness towards you. And know, that if the Father love the Son, he will shew Favour to his Friends. And who can express that Love that Christ bears to a mourning Soul, that flyeth for Refuge to him? His Love was such that he died for you, and will he not speak a good Word for you?

You sit poring and searching for Pillars of Hope within you, and bestow much Pains to answer your own Fears, but the ready Way to make the Business clear, is by going to Christ. Stand not so much upon this *Query*, Whether you have believed in Truth or no, but put all out of Doubt by a present Faith. The Door is open, enter and live, you may more easily build a new House and Fabrick of Comfort by taking Christ rather than repair your old Dwelling, and clear all Sins that are brought against your Tenure.

Hear, Christ calls you, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you*, Matth. 11. and 28. And, *Ho every one that thirsteth come, &c.* Isa. 55. 1. *Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the Waters of Life freely.* Apoc. 22. 17. And now will you not go? Oh, that you would go! How soon would your Mourning be turned into Joy, and your Sadness into Gladness! How would those everlasting Arms of Mercy embrace you! And you should have future Happiness in a Kind of Presence.

2. *Seek Peace much*: Be not weary, but strengthen your selves in the Promise, let this Pillar hold up your trembling Hands, for *he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. Behold he cometh, and his Reward is with him.* Oh! Methinks I see the Fountain opening itself to the Thirsty, I see the Clouds dissolving, prepare your Vessels, stay a While, for I hear the Sound of many Waters, you are at the right Door, knock, and knock hard, the Lord is there, there dwells everlasting Mercy. Hark, how the Saints sing for Joy! Look in, and see Paradise, and Rivers of Joy feeding them. How came they to get in, but by lying at the Gate? Hold on, for *in due Time you shall reap if you faint not*, Gal. 6. My Friends these are not Dreams, but they are real Truths, which *Jehovah* will make good to them that believe. You come, it may be, but you come not in Faith, and you stay not with Patience, consult with Reason and with the Scriptures, is there a Way to God, or no?

If

yea, which is that Way? If God tell you this is the Way, then walk in it, wait in it; and tho' you have lost your comfortable Enjoyment of Christ, yet I say to you as the Angels to them, *This same Jesus which is taken from you, shall so come as ye have seen him, Acts*

11. Therefore keep your Eyes upward, pray much, and the Heavens will open, when you believe and pray, you have the Key of Heaven in your Hand, whose everlasting Doors will open to you. Therefore hold up your selves in seeking, it may be, you may meet with Fire, and a Tempest, and Storms, but stay, and the still Voice will come.

3 *Come in much Love to God.* Come as a Friend, then come and welcome. Many desire Ease, and desire to be delivered from Wrath and Hell, but come in Love, desire God to be your Friend, and be willing to be his Friend. Let Love shew it self in two Things.

1. *Lament thy Sin:* That hath caused a Strangeness betwixt God and you. Come weeping for Sin, and humbled for thy Unkindness, and all is forgiven. You think too meanly of God when you think he hath much ado to pardon you; *He is ready to forgive*, and he overfloweth in pardoning Mercy. He expects your Acknowledgment and Repentance, and then you are Friends.

2. *Come with new and strong Engagements of Heart:* Bring your selves as an Offering to him, and sacrifice your selves upon that golden Altar *Jesus Christ*: Say, O Lord, if thou wilt love me, I will love thee, be thou mine, and I am thine, and will be thine.

Thus two old Friends shall renew their Friendship, and they that were at a Distance, shall meet in Love, he that did depart shall return with Kindness, and he that was forsaken shall be received with Mercy, and the ancient Joy which was in Heaven, at his first Conversion, shall be renewed at his Restoration.

Now clap your Hands ye Heavens and Earth, for the
If

Son

Son *that was lost is found*, and he *that was dead is alive*, the Exile is received, and a Covenant of Peace is renewed betwixt a Man of Sorrows and the God of Peace, thro' the Prince of Peace, to whom be Praise for ever.

F I N I S.

