SERMON XVII.
ON
2 PET. 1. 4.

That by these you * might be partakers of the † Divine Nature.

This Verse most Interpreters take to be part of the Apostles Preface to his Epistle; wherein, according to the old Rule, ἀρχωμένοι τοῦ ἔργου πέτασον ἵππον ἐκεὶν ταῦτα χεὶρ ὁμοιόμορφα, as a skilful architect prefaceth a magnificent Palace with a stately Porch and Front, so he his after-discourse with a glorious Entrance. It being the manner of the Apostles in the Proems of their Epistles to put together a Summary of the Gospels Mysteries, so Paul usually in his, and so our Apostle Peter in the entrance into his former Epistle, and the same course he takes in the four first Verses of this; in which the various readings are so many, and both the words and connexions of sentences so dubious, that it makes the sense difficult, which Camerarius observes to be more in this Epistle than in most other Apostolical Writings. However it's plain, that being in the sequel of the Epistle to exhort to true piety and a gracious conversation, he doth in this Preface lay down (and Beza faith it could not be more briefly and divinely) as a foundation of it, the true causes of our Salvation, and (as Beza noteth) especially of Sanctification.

As in particular.

1. For the causa περιεχομένη, the first original cause, it's free grace by lot, λατεστ, v. 1. and gift, διασώμεται, v. 3. and to make sure of it the same word περιεχομένη is again repeated, v. 4.

2. The procuring meriting cause is made the righteousness of Jesus Christ as our God and Saviour, v. 1.

3. The immediate working cause is assigned to be Θεός ὁ θεοῦς: a divine power, v. 3. working in us a communication θειακῶν of an answerable Divine nature, v. 4. namely in our effusion, bref. breui-
SERMON XVII.

Camerarius.

224

actual vocation, wherein we are called to glory and vertue, or rather (because the words in the original are ηὐς ἡ ἄνθρωπος) by glory and vertue, that is, ἰδιοτέρας καὶ ἄνθρωπος most gloriously and powerfully, so that it is ἴδιος, or ἴδια ἰδιός as the vulgar it's likely found it, and therefore rendered it by his own proper glory and vertue, v. 3.

4. For the instrumental cause, we have it twice expressed to be ἵδιος the knowledge, or acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, v. 2, 3, which is nothing else but that precious faith v. 1, which layeth hold on promises in this verse, or the word being ἵδιος σωματικά, which here signifies promises rather than promises, the benefits or things promised rather than promises, and therefore are laid here to be given, whereas promises are rather laid to be made (so 1 John 2. 25. This is the promise which be both promised, even eternal life) though with reference to the promises, the promises as moral causes alluring and attracting us to all Divine Purity [Dr. Hammond] and the things promised, faith, repentance, holiness, grace, glory, mean by these ἵδιος all those things which pertain to life and godliness in the beginning of the third verse, and as some conceive [Piscator, Beza and our Translators] that glory and vertue in the end of it. All these great and precious things promised, as proper and Physical causes do formally make us partakers of the Divine Nature. And that is the Truth expressly laid down in the words of the Text, and more particularly to be made out in our handling of them.

That they who are effectually called, are by the divine power made partakers of the Divine Nature.

The subject persons are such as are called to the faith and acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, v. 3.

The effecting cause is θεία θέρας a most divine power, in the same third verse.

And the most happy and blessed effect is answerably a θεία φύσις a divine nature, in this verse.

It's neither what nature in its utmost energy can produce, nor what any mere natural man, or Philosopher as such (whatever they talk of their θεοῦ φύσις and θεοῦ φύσις) in the highest Apogenum of their most sublime attainments can arise up to. It's only a Divine Power that can produce this Divine Nature, and precious faith in Christ, which alone inflates the Christian believer in this most precious promise, or promised mercy of being made partaker of it.
In the handling whereof two things I shall especially intend.

1. Explication, by endeavouring to shew what is meant by it and contained in it.

2. Application, and what improvement we are to make of it.

For the first, what is meant by this Divine Nature, and our communication of it, as coming to us through various men according to their different apprehensions and persuasions, determine diversely. They may be reduced to these three. They interpret it either, 1. to God simply, 2. or to Christ, 3. or to the Holy Ghost.

I. They who are most corrupt understand it of a real participation of the Divine Essence, as Origen will have us justified by Gods and Christ’s essential justice, and Sertecus to his very death maintained that the essential Godhead is transfigured into the Godly, as the Soul is into the body by which it is animated and inacted, and Gerson’s Contemplatius and some high flown Platonic speculations of our times take at a little lower flight, whilst they (with their interopia palatibra 2 Pet. 2. 18.) say that by their divine contemplations they are abstracted from their own dark personality, their humanity annihilated, and they swallowed up in the profound abyss of the Divinity into which they are wholly transported. Which also the even Ranting Enthusiast-Gnostics of this and former ages, who of all men by reason of their abominable filthiness partake least of God and most of the beast and the Devil, make yet greatest pretensions to, whilst they give it out that they are Goded with God, and Chrified with Christ, such is their blasphemous gibberish. Whatever either Fantastical or Diabolical trances such have, and divine ills, unions and communications they may vainly boast of, yet I am sure that no evil dwells with an holy God, Ps. 5. 4. and that Christ is separate from such sinners, Heb. 7. 26.

What diviner raptures and heavenly ravishments (I do not say a Platonick Philosopher in his speculations, but) an holy and humble believing Soul may sometimes have in its holy meditations and devotions I neither envy, nor now dispute; only say that with the Psalmist that it is good for me to draw near to God, and Psal. 73. 28. that they are happiest, who in a spiritual union and communion can get and keep nearest, but to pretend to get so near as properly to participate of the essence of God, flieth higher than Luc.
SERMON XVII.

cifer's pride, Isa. 14. 14. and is Antichristian Blasphemy, 2 Thes. 2. 4.

I acknowledge, some of the Fathers, especially the Greek, in their Rhetorical Hyperboles and desiring to express that lively image of God which his children have instamped upon them, do indulge themselves a sufficient liberty, as St. Basil in his Θεοποισμάτα, and St. Chrysostom in his τοῦ τοίχου θείου όρους ὁμορροφον, but not as though they ever meant any such abolition of our nature, and transformation of it into God's, or participation of his essence, which being in it self infinite, is therefore to the finite creature incommunicable; if Christ's hypostatical union did not confound the natures and their properties, much less will this mystical union of God and the soul work any confusion, or transfusion of it into the Godhead.

1. The three consubstantial persons of the Sacred Trinity only in common partaking, (if I may so call it) of the Divine nature essentially.

2. Christ's humane nature, (not only άγγελικά, and ἄγγελικά, as Nestorius blasphemed, for so we partake of it, but) υμνοτρικά, and personally, which is his alone prerogative.

3. It's our highest honour and happiness that we may be made partakers of it by a participation of Divine Grace and image, which is wrought in us by him, and by which we are made conformable to him, so far as the image of his infinite, holiness is expressible in a limited and restrained being, as the wax receives the impression of the seal, not the essence, and that in a picture is called a face, or hand, which hath the likeness of it, as he well expresseth it, and as truly addeth, that he who raiseth it any higher must have swelling and lofty thoughts of the creature, and low and most unworthy and dishonourable thoughts of God. (Thus Divines say) we partake of the Divine nature accidentaliter per donum gratiae sanctificantis, as we have Divine Grace wrought in us by the spirit of God, which makes us like God. But as for Cornel. à Lapide's substantialiter which he adds, as we are partakers of the spirit of God himself, we shall speak of that by and by, we are now dealing with Enthusiasts, who (as the Manichees of old held that by nature we are extraducte Dei orti, drops, and beams and particles of the Deity, so they) conceit that in the way of their high attainments they are partakers of the very Godhead, Godded with God, and Christed with Christ, as their blasphemous gibberish blunders it. But how much more soberly and
and piously doth Cyprian express it! Nostra & ipsius conjunctio nec miscer personas, nec unit substantias, sed affectus consociat & consederat voluntates. This quae quae in the Text is not Θεός, This Divine nature is not the Divine Essence as they conceive it.

I acknowledge that Calvinburgh and de † Dieu after him conceive otherwise, and that as Jewel 3. 7. quae the nature of beasts signifies Beasts, and quae describes the nature of man, a man, so here quae the Divine nature, or nature of God may Orthodoxally enough be taken to signify God, as † In Textum, considered in his own nature and being; but then that by xaiayoi or partakers is not here meant a transfusion or communication of the Divine Essence, that in that sense we should be xaiayoi of the Deity, but only as Heathen Idolaters.

Cor. 10. 20. are said to be xaiayoi to have fellowship with Devils, so true believers have not only a real communication of Divine Grace infused into them, but also a true and blessed Communion with God himself, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and the Son, as the Apostle affirms it, John 1. 3. Nor hath this exposition any thing in it which is contrary to piety or sound doctrine, but yet this xaiayoi signifies not a more inward and inherent communication of something, and not only a bare communion and fellowship, as one friend hath with another, though that be included, and of it some good Interpreters expound it.

2. Others therefore interpret these words in reference to Christ, as Ambrose, and Oecumenius of his incarnation in which his humane nature was made partaker of the Divine, because hypothetically united to it; But

1. Therein the Son of God did more properly take part of our humane nature, as is expressly said he did, Heb. 2. 14. than we of the Divine.

2. Besides, that partaking was already in act, ever since our Saviour’s birth and conception, whereas this which the Apostle here speaks of was in part yet to be accomplished to believers, in their several successions and further participation.

3. And withall, Thus all that have an humane nature might be said to be partakers of the divine, which the Apostle here restrains to believers only.

4. And therefore Cyril although he interpret it also with reference to Christ, yet of our Symbolical partaking of him, and so of God in the Eucharist. This the Papists greedily swallow down.
SERMON XVII.

as making (they think) for their Transubstantiation, by which (as they say) they come to eat the very material Body of Christ, and so become Christiferi, and Christo corporae, Christ being con-
corporated with them, as the food is with the body, for so they
will expound those words of our Saviour, John 6. 56. He that
eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

But although in the due receiving of that Sacrament, we spi-
ritually by faith are made partakers of whole Christ, and so far
as saving grace is conveyed to us in the use of it we may be truly
fayed by it (as by other Ordinances) to be made partakers of that
which the Apostle here calleth the Divine Nature, yet

1. He speaketh more generally of it here, than to be restrained
to the effect only of that Sacrament.

2. And more spiritually than to understand any such gross, ab-
surd, and blasphemous commixture and concorporation of Christ's
Body with ours, so as to be this partaking of the Divine nature.

3. Others therefore more rightly and properly interpret it in
reference to the Holy Ghost, and so C. à Lapide faith, we are
made partakers of the Divine nature, not only accidentaliter, as
we are by the Spirit of God and the work of his grace indeed
with Divine Qualities and Graces, wherein especially the image of
God consists, and so by those Divine Lineaments drawn by the
finger of God (which are a shadowy representation of his glori-
ous being and holiness) we are made conformable to him, and,
as Children, like unto our Heavenly Father:

But he would have it also understood substantialiter, that we
are substantially also made partakers of the Divine nature, in that
the very person of the Holy Ghost is united to us, and dwelleth
in us as in his Temple, substantially and personally novo modo, and
so in a manner desistis us. This he proveth out of others of their
Authors. Nor do I deny but that some of our own * Divines
(though I know none of them that expounds this Text of it) do
yet hold that not only the grace, but even the person of the Holy
Ghost is in an especial manner in Believers who is therefore (as
they conceive) said to be given to them, 1 John 3. 24. 4. 13. Rom.
5. 5. to be, and to dwell and to abide in them, John 14. 16. 17. 1 Cor.
6. 19. and such like. But although I fully believe these Scriptures,
and therefore subscribe to what Lombard lib. 1. diff. 14. proveth
out of Antiquity, that the Holy Ghost himself is given to and
dwelleth in believers, yet as concerning that nomina modis which
they speak of, I must confess my own ignorance, as not know-
ing how the Holy Ghost being God, and so in his Essence, substance and person alike everywhere, should in that respect be more present in believers than elsewhere, but only in a more gracious and glorious presence of manifestation of himself to them, and operation in them, unless they would have the third person hypothetically united to believers, as Christ's humanity was to the second person, which Lapide's words seem something to sound like to, when he faith, that the Holy Ghost personally dwells in the righteous Soul, which I suppose he meant not of a personal union, but only an union of persons, of the person of the Holy Ghost dwelling there, not as though it were so personally that the Spirit and the believing Soul were one person, as it was with Christ's humanity in its hypothetical union with the second person of the Blessed Trinity, which yet he there compares this to, and to my apprehension doth but nicely distinguish it from it, whilst in that personal Union in Christ of the second person with the humanity he makes the bond and tye to be modus substantialis, but in this personal Union of the third person with a believer the tie is grace as a quality. But I leave these niceties which many a gracious Soul, in which the Holy Ghost dwells by his grace, cannot conceive, and therefore troubleth not it self with. It's sufficient for my present purpose that he confesseth this grace of the Spirit to be the medium, vinculum & causa of this personal indwelling of the Spirit in us: and therefore it is, that as the Spirit by his grace dwelleth in us, we are made partakers of the Divine nature. And this fitly leads me to that which undoubtedly (and if not only, yet) is most fully and properly intended and held out by this Expression. Partakers therefore we are of the Divine Nature.

1. In and by the grace of Adoption and Sonship, for by Adoption being called to the fellowship of Christ in his Sonship, what he is by nature, we are made by grace, viz. the Sons of God, and so Christ's father is our father, and his Spirit our spirit, and consequently the nature of all three (being but one) is in this relative sense communicated to us, we as Sons having our subsistence from the Son, who is one with the Father, and we in our manner and measure one with them both, even the Children of God, and so partakers of the Divine Nature. So Athanasmus, * αυτος γε τιμησθεις, τω Θεω μαρτυρων λεγησα, by being partakers of the Son of God (members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, as the Apostle expresseth it, Ephes. 5. 30.) we become thereby partakers of God, and of this he addeth this Text is to be understood.

But
SERMON XVII.

But as we are the Sons of God upon a double Title, both of Adoption and Regeneration (for whom he adopts to be Sons, John 1. 12. he begets as Sons, v. 13.) so we are made partakers of the Divine nature upon a double interest, as relative in adoption, so

2. Positive and inherent in Regeneration, and it carried on in sanctification, and this I conceive here especially understood. So Nazianzen, καθαειν θεωδοτεν ιεροτειλα γυνιμεθα σεθαλα κοινωνιης την κοινωνιαν τη αγια πνευματι. We are made partakers of the Divine nature by partaking of the Holy Spirit, as Athanasius in another place expresses it [de S. Trinit. dialog. Tom. 2. p. 164.] while left by the operation of the Divine Spirit in heart and life we are made like God, in the one bearing his image, Ephes. 4. 24. Col. 3. 10. and in the other shewing forth his verities and graces, de aleatoribus, 1 Pet. 2. 9. made one spirit with him, 1 Cor. 6. 17. not by any S. 10. την συνεργησιν Partnership of his Essence and substance, but of excellent graces, holy as he is holy, 1 Pet. 1. 15. pure as he is pure, 1 John 3. 3. merciful as he is merciful, Luke 6. 36. perfect as he is perfect, Matt. in his nos filos 5. 48. grace for grace, John 1. 16. as the Child to the Father, member for member, or in the wax to the seal, stamp for stamp, or in the glass, face to face, being changed from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18. This likeness to God and imitation of him in hatred of sin, in holiness, righteousness, and all other graces, is as a transcript of what is in God originally and infinitely. A new Creature is this Divine nature, when from an inward Divine Principle and energy (as in the Glossary φυσις is rendered Ingenium) in word and deed we do γνωστυ express God as well as our selves, and in many things God and not our selves, or God more than our selves, we are Θεοφυτες (as Ignatius and others of old were filed) Θεοεονετες, Θεοεοελαιοι, like God; and as Adam at first having God's image in holiness and righteousness stamped upon him was Ἵλιον as God, Gen. 3. so a true Saint having this image renewed in him is as God, vir Divinus, which is even the highest Title, which the Socinians will vouchsafe the second Adam our blessed Saviour. In a word, when ὁ τις θεος τοις ανθρωποις ουδ οφεις, as Hierocles expresses it, or as Calvin; quantum modulus nofier feret, sumus summum cum Deo, as far as our measure reacheth we are like God, 1 ene with God, we are here said to be partakers of the Divine nature.

Which is evident from the words foregoing and following.

1. The Text, that you might be partakers of the Divine Nature,
and immediately follows the having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, added on purpose by way of exposition to tell us what it is, in and by which we are made partakers of the divine nature, not of God's divine essence, so as to be Godded with his Godhead, for whosoever should ascribe to it the escaping of pollution would thereby most unworthily and blasphemously disparage his infinite and essential holiness; but only a participation of his heavenly grace, whereby in a way and frame of sanctification we escape worldly pollutions.

2. Again immediately before the words of the Text, it's said, there are given to us exceeding great and precious promises whereby we are made partakers of the Divine nature. It seemeth therefore we have it by promise, so hath not God, it being his essence and nature, nor should we if we had his very nature, of which there is no one promise made us in the whole book of God, unless that of the Devils, ye shall be like God, Gen. 3. but of Divine grace and sanctification very many.

3. And lastly that which in the Text is called a giving to us that whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature, in the foregoing verse is called the divine powers giving to us all things that pertain to life and Godliness, and (as many expound that which followeth) a calling of us to glory and virtue. The divine nature then is in that which pertains to godliness and virtue here in an estate and way of grace, and to life and glory in the other world, which leads to the

3. Third and last particular of our being partakers of the Divine Nature; and that is the perfecting of grace in glory, when God shewing himself face to face shall so fill us with his light and life, that then we shall be most fully Deipneus, most perfectly like him, when we shall see him as he is, 1 John 3. 2. And if by beholding him in the glass of the Gospel in the face of Christ we are here transfigured from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord into a most holy, divine and heavenly conformity, 2 Cor. 3. 18. what a far greater transfiguration will it at last be, when we shall be once got up into the holy mount, and there see God and Christ face to face? Oh how shall we then be changed from glory to glory when made partakers of the glory of Christ, John 17. 22, 24. and the glory of God, Rom. 5. 2. when we shall (as much as we are capable of) be transformed into his likeness in the immediate fruition of himself, there where all old things are past away, and God fashions us only shall be all in all, 1 Cor. 15. 28.
Thus at last in these particulars we have seen what it is to be made partakers of the divine nature, and in the explication of them there hath gone along with it a sufficient proof that true believers are so, and by truly being God-like, do make good their name, while they are called Godly. And because the main thing I intended in the choice of this argument was the due improvement of it in heart and life,

Let us first with all humble reverence and thankfulness to God in Christ admire and adore this unspeakable gift, inexpressible, that cannot be uttered or declared sufficiently. The Apostle 2 Cor. 9. 15. used that phrase of God's making the Corinthians willing and ready to communicate of their outward and temporal goods to the Saints; but by how much greater right may we apply it to God's giving himself, and (in the sense before explained) communicating of his own nature to sinners? The poor Scholar when he had nothing else, he gave himself to his master; and the great God, as having nothing greater, sweareth by himself, Heb. 6. 13. so having nothing better, he giveth himself to his servants. It was Peter's poverty that made him say to the Cripple, Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. But it is the unspeakable unvaluable riches of God's grace, who though he could say the silver and gold is mine, Hag. 2. 8. when all the silver and gold in the world is his to bellow upon the heirs of life; yet as when among all the other creatures there was not a fit help for Adam, he gave him a wife, so when all the world and the riches and glory of it (the greatest boon that the Devil could offer to Christ) are not worth giving or taking to be a Christian's portion, the great God giveth himself to be that to his children. It was the high honour that God put upon Adam that in regard of his rational being and dominion over his creatures (which was one part of his image stamped upon him) he made him like him, and this was as the ground upon which that other part of his image was drawn, which (as the honour of our nature) is in part yet continued, in which sense the Apostle approved the Poets a γάρ ἡ γένεσις ησύχας for we are his offspring, Acts 17. 28. (not as though we were his natural sons and as creatures made of his essence, as the Manichees and other Heretics of old, and Weigelius and other Fanatick Enthusiasts of late have blasphemed, for so we are by way of creation, not of generation, which is his essential sons property) this prerogative of our nature I acknowledge is our great honour and

Crocii Anti-weigel. pars 4. 1. 8. 2.

and privilege, as we are reasonable men, and of this St. Ambrose sometimes expounds my Text, *Dedit enim de cognitione sua, rationabilis seclices nature*: but were this all, we might be base and miserable enough, for of such as were in this sense God's off-spring, our Saviour said they were the *Children of the Devil*, John 8. 44. Adam in innocency had an higher honour put upon him, and a far nobler part of God's image stamped on him, which was in righteousness and true holiness: this by our sin and fall in him we have defaced and lost. But oh the infinite condescending Philanthropy and love of God to mankind, especially to Believers, that to recover it and us, he hath sent his only begotten Son into the World, *Cognitandum enim est unde Deus in tantum honoris culmen evehatur*. Divine Nature. What cannot omnipotent mercy do that makes these meet? Consider we but seriously how infinitely glorious and holy God is, and how wofully base and sinful we are, and we shall not be able but in an holy ecstatic with the Apostle to cry out, *& θάνατος, O height and depth!* (well might Arminius say, that it's *Relatio disquiparantia, cujus fundamentum Christus nullâre indigens, terminus fidelis omnium egens*) that on God's part it is the lowest condescension, and on our part the highest exaltation imaginable, truly above all that we could ask or can think, *ad eò sublimis est ut omnium Angelorum naturam superet nec altius assecurere potest homo*, as he speaks of it, Man can be raised no higher, and the Angelical nature of it self cannot rise to so high. Well might they (in the words foregoing the Text) be called *τά μυστήρια τού θεού* exceeding great, superlatively great and most precious promises, if by them we may be made partakers of the Divine Nature. We to vile and filthy, by nature *Children of wrath*, Ephes. 2. 3. to be made partakers of that Divine nature, which is *Hebr. 7. 26.* so glorious and holy, and separate from Sinners! If the Centurion thought himself unworthy for Christ in his estate of humiliation to come under his roof, how infinitely more unworthy we that the God of Glory should come into our Souls? That he should ever draw to nigh us, and take us so near to himself, to be *Friends, Sons, Heirs*, not only to be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints, but also of himself and his own nature, is as much as God could give, and infinitely more than the heart of man could think that he should ever receive: and can we then do less than adore and bless him, *Cay give up our selves*
to him, who hath given his Son himself to us, and be willing to
be partakers of his sufferings, 1 Pet. 4. 12. who hath made us
partakers of his nature and happiness) if we find it in our
selves?

But what shall we do then when we meet with it in others? but
take heed that

I. We do not malign, hate, oppose and wrong it, μηδὲν ῶ
Θεονάξιον ἔστησας, lest haply we be found to fight against God, as
Gamaliel warned the Council, Act. 5. 39. It's not haply but most
certainly we shall so do in so doing: for we hear that the faithful
are partakers of the Divine nature, and therefore hate them as such,
and you are Θεοσύνης, sitters of God, Rom. 1. 20. fight against
them, and you are Θεονάξιος, fighters against God, you persecute
not them so much as Christ, Act. 9. 5., you touch the apple of God's
eye, Zech. 2. 8. whatever good or evil we have done unto them,
he takes as done unto himself, Matt. 25. 40, 45. As at that last
day he will be glorified in his Saints, 2 Thess. 1. 10. So now he
is opposed and persecuted in his Saints, and this not only conse-
quenter, & interpretative, but propriè & formaliter. It is the face
and appearance of God in the Saints, which the malice of ungodly
Enemies directly strikes at, and would wound him through their
sides, as David said, the reproaches of them that reproached thee have
fallen upon me, Psal. 69. 9. Their natures are oftentimes so sweet
and amiable, that otherwise they could not but love them, but it's
the Divine nature in them, the bright lustre whereof angers their
fore eyes, and shames their filthy nakedness, and that's the reason
why they so hate them. Cajus Sejus was otherwise a good man,
but only evil in evil men's eyes because he was a Christian.

Had only an austere John Baptist lost his head, or were they
only harshly dealt with, whose natural tempers and conuerses
were more rigid and harsh, we might think the cause of it were
only in them; but when Paul losteth his head too, who even in
Porphyries eyes was a man so full of worth and desireable, when
David was so cruelly persecuted, who was so amiable; when Christ
himself who was sweetness it self was so bitterly hated and at last
crucified; and to this day when we shall see that Christians though
otherwise in their carriage and temper never so sweet and pleasing,
yet if zealous and eminent in holding forth God's truth and grace
against other mens errors and lufts, are therefore cried out against
as austere, and rigid, and sower, and accordingly sowerly dealt
with (as sometimes the frost is very sharp when the day is still and
On 2 Pet. 1. 4.

Ferene) the case is plain, that (whatever is pretended) persecution is raised for the words sake, Matth. 13. 21. For thy sake are we slain all the day long, could they say, Psal. 44. 22. and to this day may others say, it's for God's truth and holiness sake that some are so maligned and opposed by Strangers and Enemies, whose dislike of them is truly grounded on this, that they are more God-like than they would have them. It would therefore be very well that such would think what they do, and what at last will be the issue of it, for certainly he that will spit against the wind will spit in his own face, and he that dares against the Rock, will be dashed in pieces. If it be the Divine nature in them which thou opposest, it's but Devilish malice that proves the Satan, the adversary. It will be wisdom therefore here to forbear. Take heed thou speak not to them good nor bad. Refrain from these men and let them alone. Have nothing to do with those just men. For, as Joash said to Amaziah, why shouldst thou meddle to thy hurt? Iron of it self may be handled, and if you will, roughly; but if it have fire in it, touch it and it will burn your Fingers. In themselves they are poor men and you may do your pleasure with them, but if God be in them, take heed, touch not mine anointed, Psal. 105. 15. as (Esther 6. 13.) Haman's Wife told him that if Mordecai were of the seed of the Jews, he should not prevail against him; so if they be the seed of God, in fighting against God, either in himself or his Children, thou wilt never prosper. If it be the Divine nature that is in them, be never so either unnatural or ungracious, as to hate, despise, or oppose it. But

2. On the contrary let us own, love and honour it wherever we find it. Let us own God and his image in his poorest servants. Let it be evident to us that we ourselves are partakers of the divine nature, when yvnotas even naturally and from a divine natural instinct and sympathy we close and clasp with it, love and honour and cherish it in others, both it and them for it, how mean and abject and despised forever they may be otherwise. That the dunghill-cock should pitter the barley-corn before the Gem, that a stranger should ask the spouse what is her beloved above another beloved, is no wonder; no more is it for an ign. Cant. 5. 9. norant carinal worldling who knoweth not the spiritual worth of the things of God to undervalue the children of God, or to act Cor. 2. 14. count them the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things. Cor. 4. 13. But for prohibited Christians to think goodly of him that hath a gold ring on, and gay apparel, and mean while to tread under James 2. 2, 3, their 4, 5.
Their footstool a saint rich in faith, as a child of God partaken of the divine nature, and heir of the Kingdom because of his poor raiment and mean outside, is most unworthy. Let me ever value a diamond though in the dirt above a pibble or crott of earth though set in gold; a poor Christian all glorious within, though with them, Heb. 11. 37. clad with sheep skins and goat skins, above all the Sattins and Velvets and ruffling gayeties of other bug men who have little or nothing of God in them. Intratae nam hic Dii sunt. Any appearance of God is glorious, but this of saving grace in his Saints (which rendereth them most precious and honoured) next after that which appeared in Christ, is most glorious as Christ of John Baptist, What went you out to see, a man cloathed in soft raiment, or a Prophet? Tea I say unto you more than a Prophet, more than a bare man, one that hath much of God in him, a Theosopher as Ignatius explained it to Trajan, τὸν Χριστὸν ἐπιήχθην, or as we read of those Christians in Justin Martyr which had τὴν Θεότητα συμβαίνον τοιχισμένον, even God himself, (may I say?) enfrained in their souls and consciences, and what is then due to them?

No divine worship, as would be if Weigelius and other Enthusiasts concepts of our being of the very essence of God were true, and which some of our Blasphemers have of late given and received, which an Angel refused, and therefore it is Luciferian Devilish pride to entertain, though the godly be partakers of the divine nature, yet they may not be of divine worship.

But yet upon this ground there is due to them:

1. Great Honour and reverence, for if we ought so to reverence the image of God looking out in Magistrates and Superiors (who are therefore called Gods, Psal. 8. 6.) in regard of their greatness, is there none due to the Saints who resemble him in his holiness and goodness? The hollow of a Papist eye put out for Christ's sake is worthy of the kids of an Emperor.

2. Singular and transcendent love, and this in the fruits and effects of it, in bounty if they need; for if they be partakers of the divine nature, what we give to them we lend to the Lord. However in most ardent affection, let this divine nature inkindle this divine flame, and more to them than to other men, and to them most, in whom most of God appears. Good is to be done unto all: ὠφελεσθήτω but especially unto them which are of the household of faith, Gal. 6. 10. Be reconciled (as your phrase is) to
the whole creation, and let your love be as universal as you can
to all mankind; to brotherly kindness we must add love, 2 Pet.
1. 7. Be we not so prodigal of our love to the Saints that we
prove so niggardly that we have none for others; but yet on
the contrary, although our love should be universal, yet it should
not be equal; extended to all, but yet so as more intently set
on such whom he beflows his peculiar love upon, and ours should
imitate his, be discriminant as his is. The Arminians in their
doctrine so enlarge God's saving love to all, that they lessen it to
those whom God will have the greatest sharers in it, and so
whilst they divide the river into more channels make it more shal-
low, where he will have it run in a more full stream. Let not us
be Arminians in our practice, so to love all as in a manner to
love all alike. Let a φιλανθρωπία a love of mankind go always a-
long with us, but so as this φιλανθρωπία may ever have the upper
hand. Prefer Jerusalem above our chief joy, Psal. 137. 6. Love
all men as men (as the Prophet faith, Hide not thyself from
thine own flesh, Isa. 58. 7.) but yet so as to love them most, with
whom we have one and the same spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Honour
all men, but especially Love the brotherhood, 1 Pet. 2. 17. Let at
least humanity prevail with us to esteem and love all that
with us partake of humane nature, for so far we love our selves,
but so as to put more abundant honour on them who are made
partakers of the divine nature, for so we shall love God in them.
BUT that we may have this honour and love, it will be required that we examine ourselves whether we have attained to this true ground of it, this truly honourable state of being made partakers of the divine nature.

Wherein that controversy hath already in the general been declared in the former doctrinal explication; the main of it was, that divine grace was his divine nature.

Pelagius heretically called humane nature grace; we may piously and truly call saving grace divine nature; to be God-like. God is holy, just, wise, good, spiritual, heavenly, and it is his very nature to be so. And he that is of such an heavenly spirit and carriage, although nil humani à se alienum putat, yet totus divinitatem spirat, though otherwise he be a poor weak man subject to humane infirmities, yet by this his conformity to God he is raised to divine perfection. As the eye of faith under all that blood and spittle law on our Saviours face his glory as the glory of the only begotten Son of God full of grace and truth, John 1. 14. so the same eye under the mean outside of him who hath filled out of Christs fulnesse his measure of grace and holiness, even grace for grace, beholdeth with awful reverence and complacential love bright rayes and reflections of divinity. In his heavenly discourse, it faith Non vos hominem sonat, there is more than a man; God speaks in him, as Junius thought of that poor godly man, who was one means of turning him from his Atheism. And when it beholds his holy and heavenly conversation, though it do not say with the Lycaonians, Acts 14. 11. that Gods are come down to us in the likeness of men, yet though but an Idiot, he will report that God is in him of a truth, 1 Cor. 14. 25.

But enough of this in general: Let us rather for our better direction consider some particular properties of this Divine Na-
ture by which it may be discovered and manifested; some from
that it's called Nature, and some from that it's stiled a Divine
Nature.

1. Nature is an inward inbred principle. In natural bodies it's
ordinarily defined to be principium motus & quies, and so this
divine nature in a gracious spirit is an inward principle of power
and act, the spring that in this divine orbe mater sets all the
wheels a going like the spirit of the living creatures in the wheels,
Ezeck. 1. 20. In this sense our Saviour faith that the water
which he giveth to the thirsty yeulolas in eury ann shall be in
him, is eury it shall be in him; but what? a well of water sprin-
ing up to everlasting life, John 4. 14. not a Cistern, which hath
all its water from without put into it. It is so indeed as it hath
all from God, but in regard of outward supplies such a well it is
that hath such a spring in it, as from it itself is continually bub-
bling and springing up to everlasting life. It's no artificial engine
to spout out that water which it had not of its own, but a true
natural fountain that poureth out of what springeth up in it self,
Jer. 6. 7. as in the creation the herb brought forth seed and the
tree fruit after its kind, Gen. 1. 12. from its innate seminal vertue,
its inward natural, temperament and composition, and the stone
moveth down to the center and the sparks fly upward from their
natural propension, nature being that ingenita rei vis & potentia,
qua ipsa seipsa moveretur; so in this new creation, where there is
a Divine Nature, there is something within, not only a blaze in
the lamp, but also oyl in the vessel, Matth. 25. 4. an inward
principle, which sets the soul in motion to God and heaven,
these divine sparks naturally fly upward, as it's said of Timothy,
Philip. 2. 20. that ynyche he did genuinely and naturally care
for the things of God and his Church; and Job said of himself that
the root of the matter was in him, Job 19. 28. contrary to what
is said of the stony-ground hearer, that he had not root in himself;
is lauris, Matth. 13. 21. which is the broad difference between a true
born child of God and a formal hypocrite: the one fluttereth and
makes a great stir in the things of God, but God knows and he
himself knows and feeleth there is no inward vital principle that
sets him on work, nothing from within, unless vain-glory or oth-
er sinister crimes and intentions, which are only corrupt na-
ture, but usually all is from without, either the applause or
frowns of men; and the one as the wind drives about the mill-
fails which else would stand still, and the other as those Treholeres

ON 2 PET. 1. 4.

239
or water-works force the water upwards which else would lie below or fall downward. But O friend (as he said of the dead statue which he could not make stand by itself) there must be something within that goes to a divine nature, an inward principle of Divine life and love, which without these pulleys and plunmmets sets the wheels of the soul on going God-ward. Doth not even nature itself teach you? saith the Apostle in that case, 1 Cor. 11. 14. and doth not the Divine nature itself, wherever it is in truth, from an inward principle and pædus animae prompt and incite and carry you out towards God in communication with him, and obedience to him? as, Acts. 18. 5. it's said of Paul oμειναν τα άνθρωπα, he was pressed in spirit, occasioned by the Jews obiUinacy, but there was a spirit within him that pressed him to it.

But here take a double caution, when I speak of this inward principle, it is not with our Enthusiasts so to cry up a Christ within them as to cry down a Christ without them, indeed without them, because never truly in them. Christ indeed dwells in our hearts, but it is by faith, Ephes. 3. 17. and that is both bred and fed by his word and ordinances, Rom. 10. 17. 1 Pet. 2. 2. 2. Nor is it to strike down such poor Christians as are already sinking by reason of inward faintness. I acknowledge that in the new-born babe through weakness of nature this pulse may be weak, and in the grown Christian through accidental corruptions and temptations there may be obstructions and interruptions; but then the man is the more feeble for it, and nature thus oppressed (if it be Divine) struggles and groans the more under it; when the man of God cannot do the good that he would, he cryeth out of himself as a wretched miserable man for it, Rom. 7. 18. 24. though the root of the matter be in him, as it was in Job, yet sometimes it may be under-ground, and as seed sown under a great weight of earth that keeps it under, but it works and works and at last peeps out, and then sprouts and springs apace, such an inward principle there is in nature, and such also in the soul that is made partaker of the divine nature in its outgoings to that which grace hath made connatural to it.

2. Hence in the second place from this inward principle natural motion of it self is ready and free, not forced or violent. With what inward freedom doth my heart go out to him whom I naturally love? and with what a free source doth the fountain cast out, or (as the Hebrew word מְרֶפֶנֶה in the active form signifies)
ninth) empty her waters that naturally flow from it? And a free spirit, how willing a people are God's in the day of his power, Psal. 110. 3. Psal. 51. 12. and our Saviour shewed that as free a current floweth from this fountain of life, when in the place before quoted, he saith that his Spirit and Grace shall be as a well of water, spouting, yea leaping up to everlasting life. No need of pumping and pulling. How naturally doth such a soul fall into thoughts of God and desires after him! O! never more free than when it can run in this Channel most freely! Or if at any time (as too often it is) this current be hindered or dammed up, what a complaining murmur may you hear, though without murmuring against God? and how may you see it, though not rising and swelling in discontent and pride, yet running over in tears of true repentance? And therefore for trial know, that a constant and total averseness from God and the things of God speaks plainly, either a devilish temper, or (at best) corrupt nature: And although, as in some cases in a man's body, there may be lowness where there is life, so an auk backwardness may and often doth consist with the Divine Nature, yet it's but as life in such a weak sick body, in which nature is oppressed: Grace is but weak or weakned: the man of God in such a case stands in great need of cure and relief that his soul may freely breath, and go out to God, as David did naturally to his Son Absalom, 2 Sam. 13. 39.

3. As natural actions and motions are free, so thereupon they are not irksome and grievous, but pleasing and delightful: How merrily doth the wheel run down the hill, from its natural propensity? And with what delight doth the scholar plod even on those harder studies to which he is naturally affected? The generous wine with a kind of jollity and triumphant, mantles and sparkles upward, when, in Solomon's phrase, it moves it self Pro. 23. 31. aright, and the Sun in its natural course rejoiceth as a mighty man Psal. 19. 5. to run his race: but not so much as the man of God when his Psal. 119. 32. heart is enlarged to run the ways of God's Commandments. The generous spiritual Christian never thinks he mounts so right or with more delight than when he sparkles and moves upward. How merrily doth this sweet Bird sing when it moves upward, and soars aloft in Divine Meditations, Prayers, praises, and such like more pleasing uninterrupted outgoings of the Soul to God! yea, what melody in the heart doth it make both to God and it self, in its sweet sad notes, while it is tugging in the snare below!

Jo. foxox.
SERMON XVIII.

I have a complacency and take pleasure in infirmities, reproaches, persecutions, distresses for Christ's sake, faith Paul, 2 Cor. 12. 10. it's the same word that God the Father said of his Son, when he said he was well pleased in him, Matt. 3. 17. as though with the like natural complacency that the Father embraced Christ, the same doth his servant from the instigation of this Divine nature welcome even heaviest sufferings for Christ. With what delight doth this Scholar in Christ's School (who is Θεοπρόφθαλμος) read these hard Chapters with which he is so naturally taken? for all delight and pleasure ariseth from the suitableness of the faculty and the object, and therefore where a law of commands without doth so naturally suit with a law of love within us, how doth it hug and embrace? Then συμπνημονεῖ, I consent and approve for my judgment, Rom. 7. 16. and for my affections, συνιδιώματι, v. 22. I delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man: and when it is so within the heart, then I delights to do thy will O my God, Math. 11. 30. Psal. 40. 8. then it's meat and drink to do the will of God, John 4. 34. the yoke is easy and the burden light, and no command grievous: no task but a recreation; no distasteful Medicine but pleasing food, which the palate relisheth, and the stomach naturally closeth with.

I confess the Child is weak and may not be so well able for the time to digest so strong meat; and the man of God may be sick, and then it may not go down with so much delight. Weakness or distemper may sometimes weaken and hinder this actual complacental rejoicing, as sickness or a cut finger may take off the Musician from actual playing on his instrument, wherein yet he habitually much delighteth; but then that sickness maketh him more sick to think of it. Where there is habitual delight, such actual indisposition causeth actual and hearty grief for it; and so this grief for the presence of the contrary impediment proclaims aloud what love he bears and what delight he hath in that from which he is hindred.

And this sufficiently enough distinguizeth in this Case the true Divine Nature from a counterfeit form of Godliness: the one faith with them, Mal. 1. 13. Behold what a weariness is it? But the other cryeth out, oh how weary am I? A genuine Child of God crieth out of himself and his own uncomfortable weariness in that which he so naturally loveth and delighteth in, bewails his being so weakned and hinders as the sweet Bird mourns when it hath such a stone hung at its leg, which keeps it from being upon the wing to which it hath such a natural propensity. But
But the hireling thinks much at the work itself, which he hath no inward delight or complacency in, and that when not otherwise hindered, but by his own wilful avertedness, and hence it is, and from want of an heaven-born inward principle which might naturally mount him thitherward, whilst for fear or shame or natural conscience or the like extrinsical motive he is forced to it, all is up the hill, and then as weak and unsound bodies climbing up the mountain ζυγον μακροχειριν, μεν ος ταξις αυτος, as they, so he pants and blows fast but gets up very slowly and untowardly, till at last he tumbles down headlong into deepest guls of sin, which naturally he delights to swim in, and so with Judas goes into his own place, Acts 1. 25.

4. From this freedom and delight, in natural agents proceeds frequency in their operations. That which I delight to do, I do often, and what is natural, is frequent. How reiteratedly doth the heart and pulse beat? the fountain bubble, and one wave in the Sea come on in the neck of another? Nature is no sluggard, but like the good housewife is up every morning and afresh resumes her task, and perpetuis vicibus turns about her wheel του τεσσαρεως κοιτων, as S. James calls it. So the sun doth not, like Jam. 3. 6. the Persian King or great Mogul, to keep state appear abroad but seldom on some high days, or great Festivals, but every morning as the bridegroom cometh out of his chamber, and every day Psa. 19. 5.

repeats his race, and for the wind ימינו ימינו ליום יומיו as Solomon, Eccles. 1. 6. most elegantly expressteth it, in whirls about continually and returneth again according to his circuits, or (as Brougham renders it) the wind whirls, whirls, walketh, and into his circuits returneth the wind. Nor are the breathings of the Divine Spirit less restless and unceasing where he breathes freely. God in his own nature is a pure act, and therefore continually acting. My Father worketh hisberto, and I work, faith our Saviour, John 5. 17. and so doth his Spirit too. The Divine Nature is continually acting in the government of the world, nor is it less operative in the believer's heart, being (in the place before cited) a well of water אטניא in the present tense expressing a continued act of springing and bubbling up, and so working out sin as the troubled fountain doth defilement. The Divine Nature is continually offering up a juge sacrificium a daily sacrifice to God, David morning, and evening and at noon, Psal. 55. 17. even seven times a day, Psa. 119. 164. Paul had ζημαται διανω no rest or relaxation, or interervation.
million either in his flesh or spirit, 2 Cor. 2. 13. but would spend and be spent in the service of God and his people, 2 Cor. 12. 15. There was much of God, and of an heavenly Divine Nature in those worthies who (as the heavens) were in a perpetual motion. And although this height and degree many that are truly godly according to their lower attainments and less participation do not (it may be shall not) here rise up to till they arrive there where they rest not day and night, saying Holy, Holy, Holy, &c. yet whereever this Divine life is, the man is breathing, and the pulse beating, though in some sick fits sometimes too slowly and very weakly; even when asleep the heart is waking and silently working. But if on the contrary, instead of this frequency such intermitting pulses and Syncope's be frequent, the case is very dangerous: but if always stone-still, or but very seldom, and only in some few good moods at a Sacrament, or a searching Judgment on our selves or others, we faintly move Godward, here is dead nature, no quickning spirits, an ominous Comet, that sometimes in an Age appeareth to be gazed on, and forebodes some evil; no Sun of Righteousness here which ariseth every morning to run his daily course like a mighty man that faints not. Which leads to

5. The fifth Particular. For Nature, as it is frequent and instant in its work, so it is also constant, nay groweth stronger and quicker towards the end of its motion. The stone in its natural motion downward, if not hindred, slayeth not till it come to its centre, and the nearer it cometh to it, it moveth the faster. This Divine Nature is heavenly, and therefore moves amain heavenward up the hill, and yet finally stops not; is a spring of water springing or leaping up, and that is ζωή αἰωνίων even to everlasting life, in the place now so often mentioned, and which hath helped us in most of these Particulars. I deny not but this well by earthly cares and other occasions may for a time be stopped, that it floweth not so fully out, as the Philistims stopped Abrahams wells with earth: but that it did not so dry them up, but when Isaac digg'd them, again they gave out their water as formerly, Gen. 26. 18. Hindrances and stops from within and without the man of God may have in the way of God, but no total intercisions, no final Apostasies; but when at liberty, he mounteth up with wings as an Eagle; runneth, and is not weary; walketh, and doth not faint. And therefore (for trial) as the clock which for a while goeth right, but when weights are taken off, stands still and moves not, sheweth that it's not natural, but an artificial piece of workmanship:
mankind: so, seem we to move never so fast in the ways of God, if when outward compulsion and motives cease, we stand still or go backward, it plainly sheweth that all was but an artificer, and nothing of this Divine Nature, which as in God is eternal and unchangeable, so as it is in his children (as the seed it is begotten of, 1 Pet. 1:23) is incorruptible and immortal.

But yet in us may have its stops for a while and partial intermissions, as when there is life, yet in sickness and fainting fits the pulse may be very weak and sometimes intermitted. But even in that case.

6. In Nature there is a principle of recovery, as Eutychus though taken up dead, yet because life was in him, came again to himself, Acts 20:9, 10, 11. The Seed though corrupted under-ground, yet at last sprouts out again, and the live-spring though for the present defiled with filth cast into it, yet by little and little is still working out that pollution, and rests not till it hath wrought itself into its former clearness. Such falls and defilements may alive Christian, a saint sometimes fall into, as David, Peter, and others, but as you read of their falls so of their recoveries. The Sheep may fall in the dart, but it's the unclean Swine that continueth to lie and wallow in it. The seed of God may sometimes be under-ground; but if it abide in us (as the Apostle speaks) it will at last get up and out again. As there is hope of a tree, though when cut down the root thereof was old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, that through the scent of water it will sprout again and bud, and bring forth boughs as a plant, as Job speaks cap. 14:7, 8, 9. So, even a plant of righteousness may sometimes be so nipped and blasted that all may seem to be dead, but being planted by the river, implanted into Christ by the scent of water from this Divine nature and supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, after such a nipping Winter doth recover again its verdure in the spring. And lastly the faith the Apostle of his Philippians, Cap. 4:10. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care was refreshed again. Not like Japh's trees, twice dead; and plucks up by the roots, and so even dead without possibility of after-growth. Till nature be quite spent and extinct (which the Divine Nature never can be) it hath an inward natural Balsam in it, which helps on its cure and recovery: and as long as there is any breathing of the Divine Spirit, it will at last stir up that grace which seemed to be raked up under the dead ashes, and blow it up into a brighter flame. And therefore after such falls and fumbles,
As corrupt nature breeds these decayes, so let this Divine nature work these recoveries.

Nor doth it only play such after-games, but is much discovered by its beforehand quicknes. Grace is preventing as well as subsequent. And this adds—

A seventh particular. Nature hath its ἄγνωστον, συμπαθεῖς, antipathies, its hints, insinuunt, and impetus, which antecedent the Acts of Reason, prevent discourse and deliberation. At the first blush the heart closeth with this thing or person before it can think why, and riseth up in abhorrence and loathing of that other when it cannot tell wherefore.

Non amò te, Volufi, nec possum dicere quare.

It's so with the Divine Nature. It doth abstain, and on the sudden start back, and washes its face vigorous, from the very first appearance of evil, 1 Thess. 5. 22. quicquid maled fuerit coloratum, as Bernard phrased it. Some expound it of matters of Doctrine, and so the good Woman's Spirit rose against false Doctrine preached, though she could not say it was so: some understand it of practice, and so the chaste Soul hates even the garment spotted with the first, Jude v. 23. is troubled, sweats and faints at the first appearance of it as some naturally do at the presence of that against which they have a secret Antipathy: On the contrary at first sight or speech (by an animo animatum) closeth with perfons of the same spirit, and things that are as it were connatural, before it hath time or leisure to give a rational account of it. I know the word of God must be the standing rule both of our Faith and practice, and am far from indulging the wild phantasies and the sudden violent impetus of rash inconsiderate men; and yet in some cases give much to the first and propendency, as also to the aversion of the spirits of sober godly men, especially if of all or most, as having in them θύατερ, something of the workings of this Divine Nature in them, which anticipates their discourse, and (as John out-ran Peter) is got out before they can come to any deliberate resolution. By its nature the Lamb dreads the Wolf, when so young, that it cannot discern him; and we should discover more of this Divine Nature, if by the divine instinct of it we can loath sin, when we are otherwise so weak or surprized, that we have not time or ability to make a deliberate judgment of it.

8. As Nature sometimes anticipates Reason, so this Divine Nature always exceeds and goeth beyond that which is only humane. Divinity is above Humanity, Grace above Nature. A Christian is
not a bare man, but more than a man. And therefore to have or express no more than what Nature can work, or natural men by other helps can attain to, τό ἄνθρωπον ἄνωτά ἄνων, to walk as men with the Apostle, 1 Cor. 3. 3. terminus minimum, or (as Cap. 6. 7. he calls the like) it's ἡμα a defect, in which we fall much short of, and below that which a man of God that is made partaker of the Divine Nature, should arrive at, and come up to. For as man by nature and kind is and acts above other creatures, so a Christian man should even above himself, as a man, and above other men that want that Divine Principle. The widwives once said, that the Hebrew women were not as the Egyptian women, Exod. 1. 19. And truly the men of God should not be as other men, I mean not more proud, and froward, and worldly, but more holy, and humble, and unblamable than other men. Samson the Nazarite became then only like another man—when his locks were shaved off, and the Spirit of God departed from him, Judg. 16. 17, 20. But as long as the sanctifying Spirit acts and abides in us, we are true Nazarites, as by our holy Vows separated to God, so we should be (though not wholly separated, yet) very much distinguished from other ordinary men. Christ expects from us a τό ἄνθρωπον ἄνωτά ἄνων, Mat. 5. 47. Something singular, eminent, and transcendent, a proportionable distance from others in our lives, which may answer that ἡμα which we expect to be fixed between them and us after our deaths, Luke 16. 26. Consicratus (de Justificatis.) makes the comparison of the manners of a Rustick and of a Citizen or Courtier: and a like difference he faith there is between the carriage of an earth-born sinner and a Saint made partaker of the Divine Nature. The Sons of Princes should not be in the garb of Peasants children; but that comparison is too low. Between Nature and Grace there should be a more vast distance. A Child of God should be as much above a natural man as heaven is above the earth, and as much above a fouler sinner, as heaven is above hell. But how then cometh it to pass, that the roof of hell should be so nigh (as I may so speak) to the floor of heaven: that there should be so little difference between the Apogeeum and highest of moral Heathens, or other natural men, and the Epigaeum or lowest of a collapsed or go-by-ground Christian? Doth not this puff up proud Nature, and if not debaseth the Divine, yet make our Philosophical Christians think low and meanly of it? Make it in these mens esteem but a name, a thin fine notion, and them that are partakers of it, some Utopian fancies which Preachers talk of, but the world seeth little of?
AND therefore that we may either prevent or refute these their misprisions and blasphemies, and convince them that this we speak of is a very reality; be we exhorted to 3 things.

1. To aspire and endeavour really to attain to this high dignity of being indeed partakers of this divine nature.

2. Then to walk answerably to it and worthy of it.

3. Because both will be here imperfect, to long for heaven where both will be in their full perfection.

First (I say) let us with our whole might aspire to this highest dignity, and not rest till we arrive at this Divine Prerogative of being the Sons of God, and so partakers of the divine nature. And to quicken us hereto, consider,

1. How studious and ambitious men have always been of nearness to great Princes, and (for that purpose) of an imitation and likenesses of their deportment, fashions, gestures, and oftentimes even of their both moral, yea and natural vices and deformities. Poppea's yellow locks a beauty in the Court, Leonidas his gate and manners Alexander could not forbear to imitate, as his Courtiers did many things in him. A wry neck or a long hooked nose much doted on because it looked like an Emperours. And for the minds complexion Hierom from experience could say Quorum virtutes assequi nequeas citi imitatis visa, when we cannot reach their vertues, we are very prone to take up in imitating their vices, like foolish wanton children when we cannot stride their steps in fair way, we will follow them through the dirty puddle. Exempla exemplaria, so that the imitation of their manners and vices their subjects account to be a piece of the homage they owe to them, which therefore made Tully say that plus exemplo quam peccato nocent [3 de legibus] they do more mischief by their example than by their sin. Great
mens examples (I say) are Laws; and holy mens tempers and carriages have a kind of necessitating cogency in them to imitation, of which several testimonies, I said Paul to Peter, Why compellest thou the Gentiles to Judaize? Gal. 2. 14. So like do we desire to be to good at least to great men; but how much rather should we aspire and endeavour to be like to him who is Optimus Maximus, to the great King and most holy God, even God blessed for ever? whose nature is most holy, whose works are truth, and his ways judgments, Dan. 4. 37. in whose Divine Beauty is no deformity. And therefore as our Saviour said to his Disciples, *I believe in God, believe also in me*. I may well say to all, Do you imitate man? Shall we not imitate God and Christ rather? If foolish men glory in an Apish symbolizing with men like themselves, and that in their humane infirmities, how glorious, and therefore desirable should it be to us to partake with God in his Divine Nature and perfections?

2. And this the rather, because this high honour and happiness is attainable. The happy event puts it out of question. Many in all Ages of the Church have arrived at this height, who have shewn forth the virtues of God who hath called them, 1 Pet. 2. 9; who by emanations of Divine Grace in heart and life, have expressed a participation of the Divine Nature, and what in this kind hath been in some by the same Grace, may be in others [Ab esse & posse, &c.] did we but put forth the strength and activity of Pauls faith, who could be and do all things through Christ strengthening him, Phil. 4. 13. The Text in hand (had we nothing else) doth sufficiently clear this possibility; for it doth not only say that precious promises were given to them, that they may be partakers of the Divine Nature (and Gospel-promises do at least assure us of a possibility, and when by faith laid hold on, of a certainty of their accomplishment) but withal adds the happy event in their having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. In which this actual participation of this Divine Nature in part consisteth, and by which (according to the true sense and intention of the Apostle in his adding of those words) it is evidenced. Well then, it's hence plain, that such a participation of the Divine Nature may be had, and truly then, such a may-be of such a mercy should be enough to any awaked spirit to employ and improve its utmost endeavours for the attaining of it. It encouraged the Widow of Tekoah to make a great petition to David, because she said in her self, It may be the King will grant it, 2 Sam. 14. 15. And, It may be the Lord will look on mine affliction, said David himself, and upon that ground patiently
patiently endured it, 2 Sam. 16. 12. Who knoweth? faith the Prophet Joel 2. 14. and, Who can tell? said the people of Nineveh, Jonah 3. 9. whether God will turn and repent, and so the more seriously they set upon their duty, that he might. Truly Gods may-be's are better than mans shall-be's. A may-be of salvation is one of the first calls of faiths eye to justification. In matters of outward estate we much value even our possibilities; and they set the whole world upon busi action. What crowds of poor, where a doal may be had? What trudging over sea and land for a may-be of profit? And if such an height of honour or place may be got up to, what creeping up, though upon hands and feet, as Jonathan between sharp rocks to come at it, upon this very ground, it may be the Lord will work for us? As it was enough for Jacob to bear that there was corn in Egypt to be had (though he was not assured to have any of it) so say to his sons, Why do you look one upon another & get you down and buy for us, that we may live and not dye, Gen. 42. 1. 2. And why then should we look here and there, and like fools have our eyes in the ends of the earth to find out other vanities, when did we but lift up our eyes and hearts to heaven, we might both see and get that which will make us like the God of heaven. I say not therefore as Jacob there of Egypt, Get you down thither, but get we up bither, though it be with Jonathan and his Armour-bearer on our hands and knees, with humblest prayers and earnestest endeavours, though (as with them up sharp rocks) through greatest difficulties and dangers. But is it possible, that a child of wrath by nature may become a Son of God, and by Grace be partaker of the Divine Nature? One in himself so much the Beast and the Devil, be made like the blessed God? And so that am so vile and sinful, may I become holy as he is holy? perfect as my heavenly Father is perfect? Then sure the happiness of it would not be more inconceivable, than our neglect of it unexcusable. Let us therefore up and be doing.

3. And this yet the rather upon consideration of what others, even Heathens, have attempted in this kind, and when they have been so mantling the wing this way, let them shame us if we take not a further and an higher flight. How doth Plato up and down define the chiefest good of man to consist in a full conformity to God! and what a noise do they make with their θοοντις and ἀθοοντις, of their being God-like whilst they lived, and Dead when dead? Oh that what we read in their Books we might find in our hearts, and others may see in our lives, that we might really;
really be and do what they talked of. At least for shame let us exceed what they did or could attain to: whilst we do so much exceed them both for pattern and principle.

1. Our pattern is more fair, and our Copy far more clearly and legibly written before us in the word of truth, than theirs in the dim light of nature. It did more darkly discover to them the footsteps of God, that by following him therein they might grope after an Unknown God, and so they stumbled about a poor confus-

2. But upon us the day hath dawned, and the day-star is risen in our hearts, and the Sun of righteousness shineth forth, which hath more fully discovered to us the image and nature of God in the face of Jesus Christ, unveiled and clearly discovered to us in the glass and bright beams of the Gospel; the Deity in its nature, persons and properties evidently manifested, nor ever could the holiness, justice, power, truth and mercy of God be more fully declared than they are by Christ, and as they are held forth in the Gospel. In Christ God is manifested in the flesh, being the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express Image of His Person, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and Col. 2:9. all grace (which is this Divine nature in the Text) eminently and without measure for our participation & imitation. So that our better Abimelech (our King and Father) in his grace and life faith to us all, as the other Abimelech did to his followers, Judg. 9:48. What ye have seen me do, make haste and do like me. The word was made flesh and dwells among us, that we might at a nearer view behold His glory full of grace and truth, and walk among us on purpose that we should follow his steps. In a word, he be-

1. And being God, took upon him the nature, and was made in the likeness of man, that the like mind might be in us, and that whilst Phil. 2:7 we have such a perfect pattern so near our eye, according to our measure (in likeness and conformity) we might be made partakers of the divine nature. And if the rich man thought that one coming from the dead would work so great matters with his bre-

2. And it very openly and clearly held out to us in the Gospel. Whether by Christ's own ministry; he being the only begotten Son in his Fathers bosom could best declare him, John 1:18. And should we only consider his sermon on the Mount in the 5, 6, 7. Chapters of S. Matthew, we may understand so much of God's nature
nature and will, that were our hearts and lives answerable, we should therein very much partake of the Divine nature, and in our measure be perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect, as our Saviour there speaks, Matt. 5. 48. Or should we consider the Gospel of Christ as dispensed in the writings or preachings of his Apostles or other servants; Paul in the general speaks very full to our purpose, 2 Cor. 3. 18. that we all with open face as in a glass beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the spirit of the Lord. In which Text every clause is very strong and emphatical. We all not only Apostles and Ministers, (as some would expound it) but all true Christians; for they are not only such as we call Divines, that are made partakers of the Divine nature.

With open face ἀνάπαλαλημένῳ περιστύλῳ, not through Moses his darker veils.

Κατοπλάθυναν beholding the glory of God; that is, the glorious nature, wisdom, justice and mercy of God, most fully and perfectly expressed, and exposed and manifested in Christ.

And accordingly most clearly reflected and held forth in the glass and most clear mirrour of the Gospel. This ex parte objecli & medi.

But what ex parte subjecti is or should be the effect of it?

Μεταμορφοθεὶς we are or at least God expecteth that we should be changed into the very same image, not only there to see and behold him, but so as to represent him, in speculo representantes, as Erasmus translateth it, and so are transfigured into the same likenets sanitam secundaria sed quaedam imagines, as Beka well expresseth it.

And that from glory to glory, that is, not only from one degree of glorious grace to another, as most interpreters expound it, but as some add from the glory that is in God and Christ, from this reflexion of it, to a proportionable glory according to our manner and measure communicatd to us by it.

And all this as by the spirit of the Lord; that is, so really and gloriously that nothing but the all powerful spirit of God could effect it, for so that particle καθάπερ As by the spirit of the Lord signifieth causam congruam & dignam tanta transformationis, as C. à Lapide rightly observeth.

All cometh to this, and all fully to my present purpose, That now when God is in Christ so fully (as I may say) exhibited and exposed to our view, and in the Gospel so clearly manifested
and held forth to us: He expecteth, and where grace prevaleth he thereby effecteth such a change and transformation, that we are not like our former selves, but are molded into his likeness, and having laid aside our corrupt nature we are made partakers of his Divine Nature. This is (or should be) according to Paul's doctrine there, the effect of the Gospel, and (as Calvin observeth upon my Text) according to Peter's doctrine here, when he faith that the exceeding great and precious Gospel-promises are given to us Isa xi-totu that by them we should be partakers of the Divine Nature. He telleth us this is the end of the Gospel (Notemus hunc esse Evangelii finem, ut aliquando Deo conformes reddamus, id verò est quasi Deiscari) that at last we may be conformable to God, which is, as it were, to be Deified; or, as our Apostle phraseth it, to be made partakers of the Divine Nature. Which whilst we are so plentifully partakers of the Gospel, we should be exceedingly ashamed of, that we so far fall short of it, which yet the very Heathens so much aspired to, who fell so short of us: as thus in pattern, so

2. In principle; for as our pattern is more clear, so our principle is more high. This conformity to God in true Christians, (you heard from 2 Cor. 3. 18) is from the spirit of the Lord, whilst by the spirit of Christ enlightning and regenerating we are renewed after the Image of God, Col. 3. 10.

As also from faith in Christ laying hold of these exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel, and on Christ in them, from whole fulness alone God would have us receive grace for grace, grace in us answerable and conformable to grace in him, and to to be partakers of the Divine Nature. Now this faith, these promises, this Christ, and this Spirit of Christ those Heathens and their most sublime Philosophers were utter strangers to, him they knew not, to him by faith they went not, nay out of themselves they went not, but to their philosophical moral considerations, and their purgative virtues, to which they ever joined their heathenish idolatries and superstitious lustrations and sacrifices, and sometimes to their σουλιας and γυμνοπαθειας charms and sorceries, as utterly inconsistent with the Divine nature as the true God is contrary to a vain idol, and therefore it is no wonder that it was so wofully deformed a deformity which they arrived at, how trimly soever their admirers do trim it up and tuck it.

And therefore when there is so much more light and power in
the Gospel, when our both pattern and principle so far every
way exceed theirs. Surely God cannot but expect that it should
be another-kins likeness to him that we should attain to, than
what they arrived at. And on the contrary, let us sadly think
what a shame it is to us and to the Gospel too that when there is
so much of God in it, there should be so little in us who profess
it.

That when we read David's Psalms, and the other Prophets
writings in the old Testament, we should find so much light and
life, that they both breath and express so much of God in them,
and we so little, so that in truth although (as Ensebium observeth)
they were not called, yet indeed they were the true Christians,
and many of us are really as much without God as we are strangers
from that Commonwealth of Israel.

Especially that even Heathens should herein exceed us, that they
should so honourably speak of that God whom we so blaspheme;
that they should express more of God by the twilight of nature,
than we in the sun-shine of the Gospel; that Erasimus should so
hardly forbear to pray to Socrates as a Saint, whilst many who
are named Christians may (without breach of charity) be called
Atheists; that any of us should have upon us such black marks
of the Devil, when on many of them we may discover (though
ruder, yet) very lovely characters and lineaments (by the help only
of their natural Divinity) of the Divine nature, which we who
have better means in all reason should be more possessed of.
SERMON XX.
ON
2 PEt. 1. 4.

And should it be here asked what those means are which we should make use of whereby to attain to this high honour and happiness?

I must answer, that all that we of ourselves can do as to any inward worth or efficacy operative of so great an effect, is just nothing. We that can do nothing to make our selves men, surely can do as little to make our selves men of God; can less concur to the producing of this Divine nature, than we did to our humane: both are a Creation, and therefore the work of God only: but yet so as we are to make our addresses to him for the one now that we have a natural being, which we could not for the other when he had none.

And here as the Divine nature essentially considered in God is common to all the three persons, so this communicated Symbolical Divine nature in us is the common work of them all, and therefore to them all we are to make our applications for it.

1. To God the Father, who as he is Fons Deiatis, and communicates that Divine nature to the Son and the Spirit, so he is Fons Gratiae, and through the Son by the Spirit imparts this Divine nature to all his children. It was his breath that breathed into Adam at first that soul in which especially was his image, and it must be his breathing still that must breath into our hearts that Divine grace in which consists that his image renewed and this Divine nature. God our Creator is the Author of this new Creature.

And here the means of it on our parts is by humble and earnest prayer to breath after him for it, as the dying man gaspeth for breath that is going away, or rather as the dry earth gaspeth for heavens rain and influence which it wanteth, and so in this systole and diastole upon the out-breathing of our souls and desires following.
SERMON XX.

followeth in God's way the breathing in of this Divine breath of life, the quickning spirits by which we are made spiritual living souls. In this case it was said of Saul, Be bold be prayer, Acts 9. 11.

For, although it be true, that the prayers of the wicked, whilst they purpose to go on in sin, are an abomination to the Lord;

And as true that the prayer of any in an estate of corrupt nature, as it cometh from such is so desiled, that in regard of any worth in it instead of meriting an answer it justly deserveth a denial. Whereupon our Antinomians and others do wickedly forbid such to pray:

Yet in such sinners that lie under the burden of sin and misery and are looking out for help and mercy; to look up to God in prayer for it,

As it is the homage which is due from the creature to its Creator, and so to be tendered to him;

So it is the way ordained by God, in and by which the creature in want and misery may come to receive mercy. Which therefore God commands, and that to a Simon Magus, and that upon only a Perhaps to receive mercy, Acts 8. 22. pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.

And which therefore in obedience to such a command to perform, is (both in God's intention and ordination on his part, and as to the happy success and event on our parts) the direct suitable and successful means of our obtaining as all other mercies, so of this which is one of the chief of all, of being made partakers of the Divine nature, and that upon a double account.

1. As in a way of moral causality it prevaleth with God, and through his indulgence procureth of him the grant of this inestimable gift of the new creature, this divine nature, as Manasseb in this case by his prayer prevailed with God for his return both from his sin and captivity together, 2 Chron. 33. 12, 13. and so still, the child is born crying:

2. So also in a kind of physical efficiency (as I may call it). In the very act of praying we so nearly converse with God that by looking up to him we are made like him, as the thung Israelite by looking to the Brazen Serpent was healed, and Moses by near approaches to God and communing with him on the Mount had irradiations of his glory reflected on him; so in near and frequent addresses to God by prayer there is much communication of
of God by such close communion with him. Papists are wont to picture their Saints praying with a Glory on their head; but true Saints that are much with God have much of God and his glorious grace on their hearts, and none more than those that come into his presence oftner, get nearest and keep closest. Our Saviour when he was praying in the Mount was transfigured, Luke 9. 29. Nor are we ever more transformed into the image of God and Christ, than when we have got up our hearts highest and nearest in that duty. Be much therefore with God our Father in prayer for this mercy.

2. Make nearest applications to Christ the Son and our Saviour by faith in his promises, for

By the promises (we read in the Text) we come to be partakers of the divine nature: which when sealed to us, there is an impress of Christ stamped on us. And Christ is wrapt up in those promises, who as in his Incarnation was made partaker of our nature, so by him and his grace alone we are made partakers of his.

And faith is the eye and hand which seeth and taketh hold of Christ in the promises, and so by beholding him in that glass, as insipient us sit idem cum objecto, we come to be changed (as we heard) into the same image from glory to glory. There is an image of the thing seen in the eye that looks on it, and we by faith wisely eying of Christ have his image so imprinted on us, that we prove no longer like ourselves. As the wise men, Matt. 2. when they had seen him, turn'd back another way, v. 12. So they that by him are made wise to Salvation, never savagely saw him, but went away with another heart, not their former selves, but changed into another, that is to say, this divine nature.

To these promises and Christ in them apply we ourselves; for it's from his fulness (as before we heard) that we must only receive grace for grace, grace in us answerable to the grace in him.

And content we not our selves with moral and Philosophical considerations as able to work such a change. Gebazā may lay 1 King. 4. 38. the staff on the child's face, and no life come: the water will not rise higher than from whence it descended. Nature in its highest elevations will not be able of itself to rise up to saving grace, nor will any moral speculations or qualifications lift us up to a divine nature. Christ is the fountain-head. He came down from heaven to work it, and therefore to him in heaven by faith.
must we rise up, if ever we would have it wrought in us.

3. And to the spirit of Christ, for this changing into the same image (as we also heard) is by the spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18. It was this spirit that breathed the image of God into us in our first creation, and it must be the same spirit that must breathe into us this new life, the finger of this spirit, that only can draw upon us these fair and lovely characters and lineaments of this Divine image; the spirit of regeneration that must beget us to this new nature.

And therefore here again rest not in highest either natural or moral considerations; they are but airy, and their birth will be answerable, prove abortions, or like that of the Spanish mare which (they say) conceive by breathing in the South-wind, but their Foals (they say too) presently languish and die, and so (at last to be sure) will all such births of our own begetting.

Especially take heed of grieving and resisting the spirit in these his Divine workings. If the child would be born, if it cannot further its own birth, let it not hinder it by working backward; because it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do, let us not mar his work, but in and by his strength work out our own salvation, by not being fain to God, but as was to yield to, and to receive his Divine impressions. Thus applying our selves to God this happy work may and will be wrought, and rather than fail, God can make even afflictions a means to effect it, that what are in themselves and plainly common to men may further this Divine nature, and (as the ball) struck down to the earth in the rebound rise as high as heaven. So by them we are made partakers of his holiness, Heb. 12. 10. (and that is no less than to be partakers of the divine nature) and whilst we do suffer, Peter saith, the spirit of glory, yes and of God resteth upon us; and so most happy participations of the divine glory and nature are communicated to us. Never was more of God seen in any, than in the Martyrs by the light of the fire they were consumed in.

Thus upon these considerations and in the use of these and the like means, our first duty is to endeavour to come to be partakers of this divine nature.

2. And then secondly walk worthy of it, and answerable to it, that we forego forth the virtues of God, as our Apostle exhorted chap. 2. v. 9. of the former Epistle, that in our spirits and carriages more of God may appear than of our selves; as in red-
nothing there is more fire seen than iron. Otherwise whilst the
Sons of God walk like other children of men, express as much cor-
rupation, and as little grace, whilst (according to the Text) we
say and preach that they are partakers of the divine nature, men
will be ready to think that the Citizens of Zion, and of Plato's
Commonwealth are much a-kin if not the same; but Ideas and
fancies, and like as the Painters pictures of Angels, and the Papiots
of the Virgin Mary, in which they intend not to make them
like, but only brave and beautiful: so we say rather what they
should be than what they are, but (it may be) the quite contra-
sy, as Polydor Virgil observes that the Popes had usually names
given them which were quite contrary to their temper and prac-
tice: but although Art may paint, yet Nature is real, and there-
fore if thou sayest that thou art partaker of this divine Nature;
Logique ut videam, say, and then do and be what may really and
substantially prove and manifest it, otherwise an Ape will be an
Ape though with a child's coat put upon it, and (as it is in the
story) will shew as much when almonds are cast before it. Nat-
uram expellas furet licet, quies. Nature may be disguised and disas-
bled for a while and for ends, and upon design thou must mask
and keep it in; but it will out; so will corrupt nature, and so will
the Divine too, which we should labour what we can to exert
and manifest, and that so evidently and fully that both our selves
and others may be convinced that what we are or do can proceed
from no lower a principle. By wallowing in sensual lusts and
pleasures we take part with the beast: to be proud, envious, blam-
phemous and malicious, is to partake of the Devil; that is bruis-
tish, this devilish; to be kind and courteous is indeed humanity,
but if there be no more, it falleth exceeding short of the Divine
Nature and our walking up to it and worthy of it.

That in general is a more full imitation of God and Christ, and
of his more peculiar properties. When the same mind is in us as
was in Christ, Phil. 2. 5. When humble and meek as he was,
when spiritual and holy as God who hath called us is holy, Christia-
nismus est imitatio Divina Natura (Nyssen adv. Eunomium) Chi-
ritianity in its proper formality is nothing but the imitation of the
Divine Nature, and fully to imitate God and Christ is in the gen-
eral both to be partakers of it and to walk worthy of it. In par-
ticular I name only three things:

1. Abound in those fruits of the Spirit, Love, peace, long-suffer-
ing, gentleness, goodness, meekness, &c. Gal. 5. 22, 23. for whereas

---
the Apostle, 1 John 4. 16. faith that God is love, it telleth us that love is of his nature, and that therefore he that abounds in love doth abundantly partake of it, even dwelleth in God, and God in him. What they use to say of *forma angusta*, of a goodly Majestick Personage, is much more true of a loving heart and carriage, *multum de calo tribis*; it hath much of Heaven in it, and partakes much of God's Divine Nature and Majesty, whereas on the contrary, *wrath, strife, envy and malice*, though sometimes miscalled ingenious, the Apostle James assures us if it be wisdom, it is earthly, sensual, and devilish, Chap. 3. 14, 15, 16. instead of Heavens serene light, hath much of Hells smothered fire in it, much of the Devil, who since his fall is of all other of God's Creatures the most troubled and discontented himself, and is somatchievous thereupon, that his main endeavour is to make others like him, and in nothing more than in these hellish heats, and these devilish diuiemipers. Have therefore, and express much of this grace of love if we would evidence that we partake of the nature of God, the God of love.

2. Labour to get and keep above the world, for Heaven is high above the Earth, and God above the Creature: were we aloft in Heaven what a poor little point would the Earth be in our eye? To God it's less than nothing and vanity. Isa. 40. 17. and were we more like God, the World would have less both room and esteem in our heart, and the greatest and goodliest enjoyments of it (especially in compare with God in Christ) would be *exilia, vilis*, poor little worthless nothings, as he laith upon the Text. *Qui simile se in Divinitatem immersis animis, non nisi Deo* & *Divinitatis pastitur*. Were we once as it were swallowed up in God we should not be so immered in these miry puddles below: if fed with this Heavenly Manna, we should not surfeit on these Leks and Onions of Egypt. This one Meditation faith Calvin on the Text would abundantly suffice, *ut mundo renucentes toti in calum feramur*, to make us overlook and despise the World, and to have eye and heart up to God and Heaven. Were we partakers of the Divine Nature, and so up in Heaven with God, we should be far above the Earth and Worldly contentments.

3. But far higher above Hell in sinful defilements, which is the third particular of our worthy deportment, answerable to so high a grandeur and exaltation. This the words immediately following the Text hold out to us, when having said that we are made partakers of the Divine Nature, presently telling you wherein that consis...
consists and appears, he adds, ἄνωθεν λαβοντες, or, Cum augeaturis, or, as Pagninus, *rendir it, si refugieritis, when you have escaped, or if you shall flee from the corruption that is in the world through lust, with the like speed and earnestness that you would fly from fire, sword, or pestilence, as the word imports it, and some interpret it. Sin is strong and we are weak, and therefore our safety is by flying. That is one strong argument for us to fly, but this we *fugiendo vel now speak of is stronger. Are we made partakers of the Divine nature? or, and what Communion then hath light with darkness? or *2 Cor. 6. 14. Christ with Belial? or God, or those that are godly with the Devil? Sin makes us like the Beast or Devil, and *I would not that you should have fellowship with Devils, saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 10. 20. Sinful lusts are sensual, low, base, filthy, but God is a most pure and holy spirit: and truly therefore those that profess themselves to be partakers of his spirit and nature, should, in this labour to be like him.

Otherwise,

Either with *Enthusiasts to pretend not only to Divinity but even to a Deity, and yet to wallow in all loathsome filthiness with the *Beggars, Gnostics, and our abominable Ranters, what is it else but a piece of Atheistical nonsense and blasphemous contradiction, to make Gods of incarnate Devils, and men believe (what he *Ps. 50. 21 thought) that God is like us whom in such a way we so far pretend to?

Or as others sometimes do, when they have no mind to leave their sins, to plead that they are but flesh and blood, not Saints and Angels to be able to obtain from such lusts, or to be so holy as you would have them be; is also in a proportionable measure alike vain and senseless, and to such I only say, that if they be but flesh. *Ex or tuo seris and blood, they are not as yet partakers of the Divine nature, for that is not carnal, and if they continue such, the Apostle tells them they shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven ( *1 Cor. 15. 50) where the holy God is. If thou beest so far from the grace thee of an holy Saint, thou art much farther off from the nature of an holy God: and if thou canst contentedly say that thou canst not perform such duties or obtain from such sins, it's but little, it's nothing that thou partakest of this honour and happiness: for where there is a *Ωσις quia a Divine Nature as in the Text, there is Θεός, as it is in the foregoing verse, a Divine Power whereby through Christ with Paul thou wilt be able to do all things, *Phil. 4. 13. in his strength to grapple with Sin, and Satan, and the world.
SERMON XX.

Rom. 8. 37. And therefore here let me make use of Leo's words. 


Agnosca dignitatem tuam (O Christiane) et Divinae consors fidelis naturae nobis in uterem vilitatem degeneri conversionem radire. Heaven-born Christian, but art thou indeed made partaker of the Divine Nature? walk then answerable to thy birth and breeding, and best nature, and by a sinful life do not degenerate into thy former beloneness.

When tempted to sin, Divine Nature should look at the first blush of it as from a natural instinct, with an holy Antipathy and abhorrence.

At least when thou thinkest of it, reason it out of countenance with such thoughts as these, shall such a man as I do this? with Nebuchadnezzar, Cap. 6. 11. Shall I that in my kind and measure partake of the Nature of God, be the Devils work? Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? 1 Cor. 6. 15. Nay this Nature of God in me formally forbids it. Doth not even nature itself teach you? So Paul argued against men wearing of long hair, 1 Cor. 11. 14. and doth not this Divine Nature much rather teach men to abstain from more soul deformities? Sins against common nature were the abominations of the Heathens, Rom. 1. 26. and therefore sins against this Divine Nature should be esteemed more unnatural and abominable to Christians. Thus let the consideration of this Divine Nature antidote and prevent sin that it infect not.

But if through our carelessness it have, let it however strengthen the heart to expel and eject it, that it kill not. How will nature (till it be overcome) be sick of bad humours, and thrust out corruption as a fountain works out pollution? Nature (I said) is a principle of recovery: and so will this Divine Nature be also from those peccant humours which it's sometimes oppressed with.

But because, as long as we live here, that will be too much and too often, this should make us weary of the World, and sigh and breath after Heaven, for it will not be till we get thither, that this will be made perfect. Blessed be God, that we have any tastes and beginnings of it here, that in any degree and measure we partake of God in grace and holiness, are any whit like to God, but alas! all that's done here is but first rude draughts, poor imperfect lineaments of that Divine Image, and they too often and too much blotted out by our sins, it's not till we come in Heaven
Heaven to see God as he is, that we shall be most fully like him, 1 John 3:2. it will not be to the life, till we live with him in glory. How ugly in our own eyes mean while should our present disconformities to God be? How weary should we be of them? oh how happy will that day be, and how earnestly should we breath after it, when we shall be fully transformed into Christ's Image, most perfectly be made like God, and as far as our finite nature is capable of, become partakers of the Divine Nature, when God shall be all in all? Lord Jesus come quickly.

Amen.

Salus non aliter consitère potest nisi illi qui salutem consequuntur, Dei sint. Deificationem autem est Dei quod ejus fieri potest, imitatio, & cum eo commixtio, & (ut ita dictum est) unitio. Dionys. de coelest. hierarch. Cap. 1.