

PRIVATE THOUGHTS UPON A CHRISTIAN LIFE; OR, NECESSARY DIRECTIONS

by William Beveridge

William Beveridge's exploration of faith and grace in Christian doctrine and practice.

13 Chapters

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Chapter 0

Private Thoughts Upon a Christian Life; or, Necessary Directions

ANNE R — THE

WHEREAS Our Trusty and Well-beloved Richard Smith, of Our City of London, Bookseller, has humbly represented unto Us, that he has, with great Labour and Expense, prepared for the Press, a new Edition of the Sermons, and other Works, written in English by the Right Reverend Father in God, Dr. William Beveridge, Bishop of St. Asaph, Deceased; and has therefore humbly besought Us to grant him Our Royal Privilege and License, for the sole Printing and Publishing thereof, for the Term of Fourteen Years: We being willing to give all due Encouragement to Works of this Nature, tending to the Advancement of Piety and Learning, are graciously pleas'd to condescend to his Request: And do therefore, by these Presents, grant to him the said Richard Smith, his Executors, Administrators, and Assigns, Our Royal License for the sole Printing and Publishing the English Works of the said late Bishop of St. Asaph, for the Term of Fourteen Years, from the date hereof; strictly forbidding all our Subjects, within Our Kingdoms and Dominions to reprint the same, either in whole or in part; or to import, buy, vend, utter, or distribute any Copies thereof re-printed beyond Seas, during the aforesaid Term of Fourteen Years, without the Consent and Approbation of the said Richard Smith, his Heirs, Executors, and Assigns, under his or their Hands and Seals first had and obtained, as they will answer the contrary at their Perils. Whereof the Master, Wardens, and company of Stationers are to take notice, that the same may be entered in their Register, and that due Obedience be rendered thereunto. Given at our Court at Kensington, the 5th day of June, 1708, in the Seventh Year of Our Reign.

By Her Majesty's Command,

SUNDERLAND.

PREFACE

THE kind Reception which has been given to all the other Works of this incomparable Author, particularly to his Private Thoughts, written in his younger Years; has encouraged the Publishing of another Volume of his Thoughts, upon Subjects of the most importance to the Christian Life, in all the chief Scenes of it; and those compos'd when Age and Experience in the Course of his Parochial Ministry had taught him, what Directions were most necessary for the Conduct of every Disciple of Christ, through all the Stages of that Race that is set before us, that he so run that he may obtain. Accordingly the Reader is here furnish'd, not only with such Instructions, as are most proper for the Entrance upon this Race, and the early Discipline of those who are new listed under Christ's Banner; but also with such other Points both of Faith and Practice, as are most fit to be afterwards inculcated and press'd upon them, for their successful carrying on of this Holy Warfare, and finishing their Course, so as at last to attain the Crown of Righteousness, laid up for all those that continue Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants to their lives end.

AS in, his Private Thoughts and Resolutions, this Excellent Bishop seems to have chiefly aim'd at settling his own Principles, and regulating his Practice, as became a Follower of the Holy Jesus, and a Minister of his Gospel: So in These which are more Publick, he carries on the same pious Design with respect to others, and Executes that Sacred Office, for which Those were to prepare him. Indeed, great and indefatigable as his Labours were (for few ever labour'd more) the End of them was always the Salvation of Souls. And as that Spirit of Piety which runs through all his Writings, together with his plain, unaffected, familiar, and yet most solid way of Argument and

Perswasion, are both admirably adapted to this great End: (to say nothing of all his other daily and unwearied pains in the Ministry while living) so, through God's great Blessing upon his Endeavours, they were then, and have been since crowned with great Success; and it is the Hopes and Prayers of all good Men, that they may continue so to be, to the End of the World, and daily add to our Holiness, and his Happiness.

AMONG many Instances that might be given of this happy Success, I have now one before me in a Relation of the Behaviour of one of this vigilant Pastor's Flock, in his last Sickness, as it is Attested by Eye-witness of it, I will not trouble the Reader with the Particulars; the sum is, That this pious Gentleman, with his last Breath, expressed so much Resignation to God's Will, and so little fear of Death, such Comfort in reflecting upon the better part of his Life, especially his Charity to the Poor; and so much Zeal in recommending that Duty to those about him; and above all, such an Anticipation of those Extasies of Joy and Happiness which he was going to in another World, and so uncommon and enlarg'd an Understanding of the great Mysteries of Religion; that if, in the midst of these Holy Raptures, he had not own'd his great Obligations to Dr. Beveridge, for these Spiritual Blessings, yet we might have easily judg'd that so great a Proficient in the School of Religion, could be indebted, under God, to the Care and Instruction of no less a Master for such extraordinary Acquirements.

AND, with respect that Good, which it is piously hop'd this great Prelate's Works have done since his Death, and may continue to do daily; it has been observ'd by some devout Persons, that since the Publication of them, our Churches have been generally fuller than they us'd to be; to which, as nothing would contribute more, than that

Spirit of Devotion and true Piety, which in all his practical Writings this Holy Man both expresses himself, and labours to create in others: So, if after all these Pious Endeavours to Cultivate and Promote it in the World, we are sensible of the least growth of it, I know not why we may not ascribe so good an effect to the Blessing of God upon so probable a Cause.

HOWEVER, if the Piety of some among us, which we hope increaseth, be not a sufficient Argument of a probable increase of true Religion, to be expected from the Influence of this great Man's Works, yet I am sorry to say, that the Wickedness of others does abundantly make up that Defect; I mean the restless Endeavours of all the Enemies of God and Religion, to Discredit and Defame them; if by any means they could be able to ward such a Blow to the Kingdom of Darkness, as they seem to apprehend from his pious Labours. And what wonder if those who mock God, and would bring Religion itself into Contempt, use their utmost Endeavours to blast the Reputation of an Author, whose Writings are so eminently serviceable to Religion, and tend so much to advance the Glory of God? All their Attempts of this Nature, are so many Arguments of the Excellency of what they would decry; they are the Testimonies even of Enemies, in behalf of those admirable Books which they pretend to Ridicule: And all the Scorn and Contempt they express upon this Occasion, reflects more Honour upon Bishop Beveridge and his Works; I had almost said, even than the Approbation and Esteem of all his and Religion's Friends. So, much Good does God in his Infinite Wisdom and Mercy produce out of the greatest Evil, by turning all the Wit and Malice of these Reprobates against themselves, and making them, even against their own Wills, Instruments of sounding forth the Praises of this Excellent Writer, at the same Time, and by the very same Means, that they vainly attempt to Dishonour and Reproach him. As the Devils

themselves were forc'd to own our Blessed Saviour, though they knew he came on purpose to destroy them. It were only to be wished, that in this, as in most other Instances, those Children of this Word were not in their Generation, so much wiser than the Children of Light. 'Tis true, we may as well fear, that Dogs should bark out the Moon, as that the utmost Malice of these Enemies to Truth, shall ever be able to sully a Reputation, that has long shin'd, with so much brightness, among all Learned and Good Men, both at home and abroad: Insomuch, that when this Illustrious Prelate was dying, one of the Chief of his Order, deservedly said of him, There goes one of the greatest, and of the best Men that ever England bred. No, we have seen that all their Attempts against him, do but add lustre to his Fame: However, it cannot be less the Interest of Religion to promote the Works of so able a Divine, than it is that of Atheism and Irreligion to oppose them; and if all good Men would shew as much Zeal in the defence of them and their great Author, and be as industrious to recommend both his Writings and Example, as Atheists and Libertines are to Obstruct the Influence of both, this would still be another Addition to the Glory of so great a Name; and the good Effects we might hope or, on the Lives of Men, from such Excellent Books, dispersed into many Hands, would be, at once, the best Attestation that could be given to the wondrous Benefit and Usefulness of them, and also the most effectual Means to stop the Mouths of Gainsayers, by lessening the number of them daily, and bringing them over from Infidelity, and Atheism; to the Cause of God and Religion.

AND, I cannot close this Preface better, than with earnest Prayers to God, that this, and all the other Works of Bishop Beveridge may have that Blessed effect; and that in return to all the Malice of those, who seem to Envy us the great Good we may hope for from such Pious and

Instructive Discourses, they may, by degrees, instill even into their Breasts, some of that Spirit of Piety, diffus'd through every Page; and of Atheists and Libertines, make them sober Men, and Christians.

ERRATA., — THE

Pag. 51. l. 2. for Pretends, r. I pretend. Line 9. r. and read.

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THOUGHTS

UPON

Christian Education.

IF the Principles of the Christian Religion were well rooted in the Hearts of all Mankind, what excellent Fruit would they produce! The Earth would put on another Face, bearing some resemblance of Heaven it self: Idolatry, with all sorts of Wickedness and Vice; would be every where discountenanced and suppressed for all would worship the one living and true God, and him only: There would be no more Wars, nor rumors of Wars; Kingdom would not rise against Kingdom, nor Nation against Nation, but all Princes would be at Peace with their Neighbours, and their Subjects at Unity among themselves, striving about nothing but which should serve God best, and do most good in the World. Then Piety, and Justice and Charity, would revive and flourish again all the World over, and particularly in the Church and Kingdom to which we belong. Then the Prayers would be read twice a Day in every Parish, as the Law requires, and all People would heartily joyn together in offering them up to the Almighty Creator of the World. Then all that are of riper Years would, at least every Lord's-Day, celebrate the Memory of the Death of Christ, by which their Sins are expiated,, and the Most High God reconciled to them, and become their God and Father: And as all sorts of People would thus continually worship God in his own house, so wheresoever they are, they would do all they could to serve and honour him; Whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they would do all to his glory. And as for their Fellow-servants, they would all love as Brethren, and every one seek another's good as well as their own: Whatsoever they would that men should do to them,

they would do the same to all other Men. In short, all would then deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts; and live soberly, righteously and godlily in this present world, and so walk Hand in Hand together in the narrow way that leads to everlasting Life. This would be the happy state of all Mankind, if they were but well grounded in that Religion which the Eternal Son of God hath planted upon Earth.

But not to speak of other People, we of this Nation rarely find any such effect of this Religion among our selves, though it be as generally professed, and as clearly taught among us, as ever it was in any Nation, there are but few that are ever the better for it; the most being here also as bad both in their Principles, and Practices, as they which live in the darkest Corners of the Earth, where the light of the Gospel never yet shined: Tho' the Kingdoms in general be Christian, there are many Heathens in it, People that were never Christened many that were once Christened, and are now turned Heathens again, living as without God in the world: Many that would still be thought Christians, and yet have apostatized so far as to lay aside both the Sacraments which Christ ordained, and every thing else that can shew them to be so: Many that privily bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and so bring upon themselves swift Destruction: Many that follow their pernicious Ways, by reason of whom the way of Truth is evil spoken of, and through Covetousness wish feigned works, make merchandise of men,, as St. Peter foretold, 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2, 3. Many who will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts, heap to themselves Teachers, having itching ears, and so fulfil the Prophecy, of St. Paul; 2 Tim. 4. 3. And of those who still continue in the Communion of the Church, and in the outward profession of the true Christian Faith, There are many who although they profess to know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto

every good Work reprobate, Tit. 1. 16. Many, did I say? I wish I could not say almost all: But alas! it is too plain to be denied.

For, of that vast Company of People that are called Christians in this Kingdom, how few are there that live as becometh the Gospel of Christ? that finish the Work which God hath given them to do, even glorifie him in the World? How many that refuse or neglect to worship and serve him upon his own Day? how few that do it upon any other Day, when they have any thing else to do? How many that never received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in their whole lives? How few that receive it above two or three times in the Year, how often soever they are invited to it? How many are the Proud, the Passionate, the Covetous; the Intemperate, the Incontinent, the Unjust, the Prophane and Impious, in comparison of the Humble and Meek, and Liberal, and Sober, and Modest, and Righteous, and Holy among us? The disproportion is so vastly great, that none but God. himself can make the Comparison: So little of Christianity is now to be found amongst Christians themselves; to our shame be it spoken. It is indeed smatter of so much Shame as well as Grief, to all that have any regard for the Honour of Christ their Saviour, that they cannot but be very solicitous to know how it comes to pass, that his Doctrine and Precepts are so generally slighted and neglected as they are in our Days? and how they may be observed better for the future than now they are? Both which Questions maybe easily resolved; for we cannot wonder, that of the many which profess the Christian Religion, there are so few that live up to it, when we consider how few are duly instructed in the first Principles of it.

The Religion which Christ hath revealed to the World, is by his Grace and Blessing settled and established among us, so as to be made the Religion of the Kingdom in general: And therefore all that are Born in it, are, or ought to be, according to his Order or Institution, soon

after baptized, and so made his Disciples, or Christians by Profession, And the Church takes Security of those who thus bring a Child to be baptized, that when it comes to be capable of it, it shall be instructed in the Catechism, which she for that purpose hath set forth, containing all the Principles of that Religion into which it was baptized. But notwithstanding this hath been neglected for many Years, whereby it is come to pass that the far greatest part of the People in this Kingdom, know little or nothing of the Religion they profess, but only to profess it as the Religion of the Country where they live; they may perhaps be very zealous for it, as all People are for the Religion in which they are born and bred, but take no care to frame their Lives according to it, because they were never rightly informed about it; or, at least, not soon enough, before Error or Sin hath got possession of them, which one or other of them commonly doth before they are aware of it; for they are always as Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, Eph. 4. 14. And whatsoever Sin gets dominion over them, there it reigns and domineers in their mortal Bodies, so that they obey it in the Lusts thereof, in spite of all that can be said to them out of God's own Word; for they are no way edified by any thing they hear, in that the Foundation is not first laid upon which they should build up themselves, in that most holy Faith that is preached to them. The Word they hear is as Seed that falls by the way side, or upon a rock, or else among thorns,, and so never comes to perfection; their Hearts not being prepared before-hand, and rightly disposed for it, by having the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ first infused into them.

This therefore being the great cause of that shameful Decay of the Christian Religion that is so visible among us, we can never expect to

see it repaired, unless the great Duty of Catechising be revived, and the Laws that are made about it, be strictly observed all the Kingdom over; as most certainly they ought to be, not only as they are the Laws both of the Church and State, under which we live, but likewise for that they are grounded upon the Word of God himself, who expressly commands the same thing by his Apostle, saying, Fathers provoke not your Children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

For here, by nurture, we are to understand, as the Greek Word *paideia* signifies, that Discipline which Parents ought to exercise over their Children, to prevent their falling into, or continuing in any wicked course. And by the Admonition of the Lord, is meant the Catechising, or putting them in mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of what he would have them believe and do, that they may be saved. For the Original Word *nouthesia*, which we translate Admonition, properly signifies Catechising. (*Katekizein nouthetein* Hesych.) And therefore to catechise or instruct Children in the Knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, is a Duty here laid upon all Parents by Almighty God himself; and all that neglect to educate or bring up their Children in the Admonition of the Lord, by catechising or teaching them the Principles of his Religion, they all live in the breach of a plain Law, a Law made by the supreme Law giver of the World, and must accordingly answer for it at the Last-day.

Wherefore all that are sensible of the great Account which they must give of all their Actions, at that time, to the Judge of the whole World, cannot but make as much Conscience of this as of any Duty whatsoever, so as to use the utmost of their Care and Diligence, that their Children may grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and so be wise unto Salvation. Neither is this

any hard matter for those to do, who live in the Communion of our Church, having such a Catechism or Summary of the Christian Religion drawn up to their Hands, which is easie both for Parents to teach, and for Children to learn: And yet full and comprehensive, that it contains all things necessary for any Man to know in order to his being saved. As you may clearly see if you do but cast your Eye upon the Method and Contents of it; which may be all reduced to these five Heads, The Baptismal Vow, the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments, ordained by our Lord Christ.

It begins where a Child begins to be a Christian, and therefore hath a Christian Name given him, even at his Baptism, wherein he was made a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven: Which great Privileges belong to all that are baptized, and to none else. None else being in the number of Christ's Disciples; for our Lord Christ, a little before his Ascension into Heaven, left Orders with his Apostles, and in them, with all that should succeed in the Ministry of the Church to the End of the World, to make all Nations his Disciples, by baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the Original Words plainly import, Mat. 28. 19. And therefore as People of all Nations are capable of being made his Disciples, so none now are, nor ever can be made so any other way, than by being baptized according to his Order. But they who are not thus made his Disciples by being baptized unto him, are not the Members of Christ; and if they be not the Members of Christ, they cannot be the Children of God, nor have any right to the Kingdom of Heaven, that being promised only to such as believe and are baptized, Mark 16. 16. And our Saviour himself elsewhere also saith, That except a man be born again of water, and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God,

John 3. 5. Whereby we may perceive the great Necessity of this Sacrament, where it may be had, as our Church observes in her Office for the Ministration of it, to such as are of riper Years.

It is to be further observed, that when our Saviour ordained Baptism to be the Way or Means of admitting Persons into his Church, or the Congregation of his Disciples, lest we should think, as some have done, that he meant it only of those who are of riper Years, he used the most general Terms that could be invented, requiring that all Nations should be so baptized, and if all Nations, then Children also, which are a great, if not the greatest part of every Nation. And accordingly his Church hath always baptized Children as well as adult Persons: When any who were come to Years of Discretion, were willing and desirous to become Christ's Disciples, that they might learn of him the Way to Heaven, they were made so by being baptized; and if they had Children, they were also baptized at the same time with their Parents And so were the Children which were afterwards born to them; they also were baptized soon after they were born: And that it is our Saviour's pleasure that Children also should be brought into his Church, appears likewise in that when his Disciples rebuked those who brought Children to him, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little Children, to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven, Mark 10. 14.

But seeing they who are thus baptized according to the Institution of Christ, are thereby made his Disciples, and in him the Children of God, it is necessary they should then promise to believe, and live from that time forward according as he hath commanded; which Promise therefore all that are grown up, always used to make everyone in his own Person, and for that purpose were, and ought to be catechized before hand, and put in mind of what they were to promise when they were baptized; and

therefore were called Catechumens. But Children not being capable of making any such Promise themselves, in their own Persons, they were always admitted, and required to do it by their Guardians, that is, by their Godfathers and Godmothers, which brought and offer'd them to be baptized; and are therefore obliged to take care that they be afterwards catechised, or instructed in the Principles of that Religion into which they were admitted, and put in mind of the Promise which they then made of framing their Lives according to it.

This Promise therefore which Children make at their Baptism by their Sureties, and which is implied in the very nature of the Sacrament, whether they have any Sureties or no, it consists of Three general Heads.

First, That they will renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.

Secondly, That they will believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

Thirdly, That they will keep God's holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life.

Which Three Things, under which the whole substance of the Christian Religion is contained, being all promised by Children when they are baptized into it, it is absolutely necessary that they be afterwards put in mind so soon as they are capable of the Promise which they then made, and of the Obligation which lies upon them to perform it: For otherwise it can never be expected, that they should either do, or so much as know it; whereas the instructing them in this the first Part of the Catechism will prepare and dispose them for the understanding all the rest.

Particularly the Apostles Creed, which is next taught them, containing

all those Articles of the Christian faith, which they promised to believe, and nothing else; nothing but what is grounded upon plain Texts of Scripture, and hath been always believed by the whole Catholick Church, in all Ages and Places all the World over: Here are none of those private Opinions and controverted Points which have so long disturbed the Church, and serve only to perplex Mens Minds, and take them off from the more substantial and necessary Duties of Religion, as we have found by woful Experience, which our Church hath taken all possible care to prevent, by inserting no other Articles of Faith into the Chatechism which her Members are to learn, than what are contained in this Creed, received and approved of by the whole Christian World; and then acquainting them what they chiefly learn in it, even to believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, in whose Name they were Christened, and therefore must continue in this Faith, or cease to be Christians.

The other thing which they who are baptized promise; is, That they will keep God's Commandments, which therefore are next taught in the Catechism, without any mixture of Humane Inventions or Constitutions: Those Ten Commandments which the supreme Lawgiver himself proclaimed upon Mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote with his own Finger upon two Tables of Stone. These they all are bound to learn, because they are bound to keep them all, as they will answer it at the Last-day, when all Mankind shall be judged by them.

But no Man can keep these Commandments without God's special Grace, which we have no ground to expect, without praying to him for it. And therefore Children are in the next place taught how to pray according to that Form which Christ himself composed, and commanded us to say, whensoever we pray, Luke 11. 2. And as he who believes all that is in the Apostles Creed, believes all that he need believe; and that keeps

all the Ten Commandments, doth all that he need to do; so he that prays this Prayer aright, prays for all things which he can have need of: So that in this short Catechism, which Children of five Years old may learn, they are taught all that is needful for them, either to believe or do, or pray for.

The last Part of the Catechism, in concerning the two Sacraments which Christ hath ordained in his Church, as generally necessary to Salvation; that is to say, Baptism and the Lord's Supper: Both which our Church hath there explain'd with such extraordinary Prudence and Caution, as to take in all that is necessary to be known of either of them, without touching upon any of the Disputes that have been raised about them, to the great prejudice of the Christian Religion.

Seeing therefore this Catechism is so full, that it contains all that any Man needs to know, and yet so short, that a Child may learn it: I do not see how Parents can bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, better than by instructing them in it. I do not say, by teaching them only to say it by rote, but by instructing them in it, so that they may understand, as soon and as far as they are capable, the true Sense and Meaning of all the Words and Phrases in every Part of it; for which purpose it will be necessary to observe these Rules.

First, You must begin betime, before your Children have got any ill Habits, which may be easily prevented, but are not so easily cured. When Children are baptized, being born again of Water and of the Spirit, as the Guilt of their Original Sin is washed away in the laver of Regeneration, so that it will never be imputed to them, unless it break forth afterwards into actual Transgressions; so they receive also the Spirit of God to prevent all such Eruptions, by enabling them to resist the Temptations of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, to

believe and serve God according as they then promised; so far at least, that sin shall not have dominion over them, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, seeing now they are not under the Law, but under the Grace of Christ, Rom. 6. 12, 14. But that the Seeds of Grace which were then sown in their Hearts, may not be lost, or stifled, butt grow up to perfection. Great care must be taken that they may be taught, so soon as they are capable to discern between Good and Evil, to avoid the Evil and do the Good, and to believe and live as they promised, when they were endued with Grace to do it. Hast thou Children? saith the Son of Sirach, Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth, Eccles. 7. 23. Give thy Son no Liberty in his youth, and wink not at his Follies. Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat him on the sides while he is a child, lest he wax stubborn and be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart, cap. 30. 11, 12. Whereas he that gathereth Instruction from his youth, shall find Wisdom till his old age. c. 6. 18. According to that of the Wise Man: Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Prov. 22. 6. As Timothy from a Child had known the holy Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3. 15. And that was the reason that he was so expect in them when he became a Man: Which therefore that your Children may also be, the first thing they learn, must be their Catechism, where they are taught all the great Truths and Duties that are revealed in the Holy Scripture; as necessary to Salvation.

But how can such Parents do this, that cannot read, nor say the Catechism themselves? This, I fear, is the case of too many among us: There are many who having not been taught to read when they were young, neglect or think scorn to learn it afterwards, and so lose all the Benefit and Comfort which they might receive by reading of the Holy Scriptures: But this, I confess, is not so necessary, especially in our

Church, where the Holy Scriptures are so constantly read in publick; that if People would as constantly come and hearken to them, they might be wise unto Salvation, although they cannot read; as few heretofore could, at least in the Primitive times, when notwithstanding they attained to the Knowledge of God, and of their Duty to him, as well as if they had been the greatest Scholars in the World. But then considering that they could not read, they supplied that Defect by attending more diligently to what they heard out of God's Holy Word, and laying it up in their Hearts, so that they understood all the Principles of the Christian Religion, and were able to instruct their Children in the same, as well as if they could read. But this is not our case; for now there are many who can neither read, nor so much as say the Catechism, having never learned it themselves, and therefore cannot possibly teach it their Children. Such as the Apostle speaks of, who when, for the time, they ought to be Teachers, they have need that one teach them again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God, and are become flesh as have need of Milk, and not of strong meat, Heb. 5. 12. And what must such do? They certainly, as they tender their own good, must be doubly diligent in the use of all means that may tend to their Edification and Instruction: And as they desire the good of their Children, they must send them to School, or provide some other Person to teach them; which if the Parents neglect to do, the Godfathers and Godmothers of every Child, should put them in mind of it, and see that the Child be taught so soon as he is able to learn, what a solemn Vow, Promise and Profession he made by them at his Baptism. And that he may know these things the better, they must call upon him to hear Sermons; and chiefly they must provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in the vulgar Tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and

believe to his Soul's health, as they are contained in the Church Catechism, and then to bring him to the Bishop to be Confirmed by him. But for that purpose, when Children have been taught the Catechism, they must be sent to the Minister or Curate of the Parish where they live, that he may examin and instruct them in it: Examin whether they can say it, and instruct them so as to make them understand it. For though the Words be all as plain as they can be well made, yet the things signified by those Words, are many of them so high, that it cannot be expected that Children should reach and apprehend them without help: Which therefore they must go to their Minister for, whose Duty and Office it is to acquaint them with the full Sense and Meaning of every Word, what is signified by it, and what ground they have to believe it in God's Holy Word. But to do this to any purpose, requires more time than is commonly allowed for it in our Days: And that is one great Reason there are so few among us that are built up, as they ought to be, in their most holy Faith. Many refuse or neglect to send their Children to be Catechized at all; and they who send them, send them so little, and for so little a time, that it is morally impossible they should be much the better for it: As many have found by Experience; who, although in their Childhood they were taught the Catechism, and could say it readily, yet having not been sufficiently instructed in it, they afterwards forgot it again, and knew no more than as if they had never learnt it. I wish this be not the Case of too many Parents; Wherefore that this great Work may be done effectually, so as to answer its End, as Children should begin as soon as ever they are able to learn the Catechism, and go on by degrees till they can say it perfectly by heart, so when they can do that, they are still to continue to be instructed in it all along, till they understand it all so well, as to be fit to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,

which usually may be about 16 or 17 Years of Age, more or less, according to their several Capacities. By this means, as they grow in Years, they would grow also in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3. 18. This likewise would be a great Encouragement to the Minister to take pains with them, when they are such as can understand what he saith to them, and will continue under his Care and Conduct 'till they are settled and grounded in the Faith, and have their Senses exercised to discern between Good and Evil; and so shall be every way qualify'd to serve God, and do their Duty to him in that state of life, to which he shall be pleased afterwards to call them, upon Earth, and then to go to Heaven.

If this could once be brought about throughout the Kingdom, that all Children that are born and bred up in it, were thus fully instructed in the Knowledge of Christ, and of that Religion which he hath revealed to the World, till they are fit for the Holy Communion, and ready to engage in the Affairs of the World, the next Generation would be much better than this, and Christianity would then begin to flourish again, and appear in its native Beauty and Lustre. And verily, whatsoever some may think, such especially as were never catechized themselves, this is as great and necessary a Duty as any that is required in all the Bible. For God himself by his Apostle, expressly commands all Parents to bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord; that is, as I have shewed, to catechize or instruct them in the Principles of the Doctrine of our Lord Christ. And therefore they who do it not, live in the breach of a known Law, yea, of many Laws. There being many Places in God's Holy Word, where the same thing is commanded in other Terms by Almighty God himself, saying, These Words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thy Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently thy Children, Deut. 6. 7. And again, Therefore shall ye lay up these

Words in your Heart, and in your Soul, and bind them for a Sign upon your Hand, that they may be as Frontlets between your Eyes, and ye shall teach them your Children, ch. 11. 18, 19. So also ch. 4. 10. This is that which he commands also by the wise Man, Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, Prov. 22. 6. The Word in the Original which we translate, train up, signifies also to dedicate or devote a Child to the service of God, by instructing him how to do it, and exercising him continually in it; and therefore in the Margin of our Bibles, it is translated Catechize a Child: So that we have here both the Necessity and Usefulness of this Duty: The Necessity, in that it is commanded to train up, or catechize a Child in the Ways of God: And the Usefulness, in that what a Child is thus taught, will remain with him all his Life long.

Seeing therefore that God hath laid so strict a Command upon all Parents; to bring up their Children in the Knowledge of himself, and of their Duty to him, they can expect no other, but that he should take particular notice whether they do it or not; and reward or punish them accordingly. As we see in Abraham, what a special Kindness had God for him upon this account? Shall I hide from him, said the Lord, that thing which I do? Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations upon Earth shall be blessed in him. But why had he such an extraordinary Favour for Abraham above all other Men? God himself gives us the Reason of it, saying: For I know that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, Gen. 18. 19. This was the Reason that Abraham was so much in his favour, that he was called the Friend of God, Jam 2. 23. And how much God is displeased with Parents neglecting to bring up their Children in his true Faith and Fear, and suffering them to grow up and go on in a course of Vice and Prophaneness, appears sufficiently

from that severe Judgment which he inflicted upon Eli and his whole House for it, saying to Samuel, For I have told him, even Eli, that I will judge his House for ever, for the Iniquity which he knoweth, because his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn to the House of Eli, That the Iniquity of Eli's House shall not be purged with Sacrifice nor Offering for ever, 1 Sa.

3. 13, 14. The Execution or which dreadful Judgment is left upon Record in the Holy Scriptures, as a standing Monument and Caution to all Parents, to take heed how they educate their Children.

Be sure the Saints of God in all Ages have taken as much care to bring up their Children well, as to live well themselves; making as much Conscience of this, as of any Duty whatsoever which they owe to God: That the Children which he hath given them, may answer his End in giving them; that they may not be insignificant Cyphers in the World, or as fruitless Trees that serve only to cumber the ground, but that they may serve and glorify God whilst they are upon Earth, so as to be meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light.

And verily all Parents would make this their continual care and study, if they minded either their own or their Childrens good, Many complain, not without cause, that their Children are Disobedient and Undutiful to them; but the cause is chiefly in themselves. When they have neglected their Duty to their Children, how can they expect their Children should perform their Duty to them? They were never taught it, how then can they do it? If therefore they prove stubborn and obstinate, if they give themselves up to all manner of Vice and Wickedness, if instead of a Comfort they be a Grief and Trouble to their Parents, their Parents must blame themselves for it: And when they come to reflect upon it, their Sin in neglecting their Duty to God and their Children in their Education, will be a greater trouble to them, than any their Children

can give them. Whereas when Parents bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, if their Children notwithstanding happen to miscarry afterwards, they have this to comfort them, that they did their Duty, and have nothing to answer for upon that account. But what a mighty Advantage would it be to the Children themselves, to be thus continually put in mind of their Baptismal Vow, the Articles of our Faith, the Duties of Religion, and what else is contained in the Catechism, from their Childhood all along till they come to be Men or Women? Their Minds would be then filled with such Divine Truths, and with so great a sense of their Duty, that there would be no room left for Heresy or Sin to enter, at least not so as to get possession, and exercise any dominion there. The first Impressions that are made upon us, are not soon worn out; but usually remain as long as we live. As the Wise Man observes, Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Prov. 22. 6. When one hath been all along from his Childhood brought up in the Knowledge of God and his holy Will, it will stick by him so as to be a constant check upon him, to keep him within the compass of his Duty in all ordinary cases; and if any thing extraordinary happen to draw him aside it will make him restless and uneasy, till he hath recovered himself, and got into the right way again; and so it will either keep him Innocent, or make him penitent. In short, by the Blessing of God attending, as it usually doth, this great Duty, when it is conscientiously performed, this is the best means that Parents can use, whereby to breed up their Children for Heaven, to make them Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houshold of God, both in this World, and for ever.

Wherefore, If we have any regard either to our own, or to our Childrens Eternal Welfare, let us set upon this Duty in good earnest; let us bring up our Children so long in the Nurture and Admonition of the

Lord, till they fully know him, and all that he would have them believe and do, that they may be saved: but we must be sure to teach them by our Example as well as Instructions; we must not tell them one thing and do another our selves; but shew them how to keep the Faith and the Laws of God, by keeping them our selves before their Eyes, all the while we live together upon Earth: That when we are all got, one after another, out of this troublesome and naughty World, we and our Children may at last meet together in Heaven, and there praise and glorify Almighty God, we for them, and they for us, and all for his Grace and Truth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

After this general Instruction in the Principles of our Holy Religion, it will be necessary, as soon as our young Christian is capable of it, to inform him more particularly in the Nature of God, and the great Mystery of the Trinity, into which we are all Baptiz'd which therefore shall be my next Subject.

THOUGHTS

UPON THE

Knowledge of GOD.

THOUGH Religion in general be a thing that all Men naturally agree in, yet there is nothing, I think, that Men differ so much about, as about the particular Acts and Exercise of it: For all Nations in the World have some Religion; but there is scarce two amongst them all that have the same; yea, in one and the same Nation too, there are divers Modes of Religion professed and practised. No Nation or Country in the World but will afford us Instances of this; and our own, I think, as many as any other whatsoever: For could we but cast our Eyes into the several Corners of this Land, at this very Moment, what variety might we observe in these Acts which the several Parties amongst us account to be Religious! Some we should see sitting silently for a while together, without either speaking, or hearing of a Word spoken, until at length up starts a Man or a Woman, or some such thing, and entertains them with a Discourse made up of Censures and Malice, Blasphemy and Nonsense; and this is all the Religion they pretend to. Others we should find crowded together in several Corners, sometimes praying, sometimes discoursing, as it were, sometimes arguing the Case with Almighty God, and acquainting him with what happens in the World, and that with as much Confidence and Malapertness, as if he was their Fellow-Creature, and then very gravely walk home and please themselves with a vain conceit that they are more Religious than their Neighbours. Another sort of People there are amongst us, who are as Superstitious as the former were slovenly and irreverent in their Devotions: For these having been sprinkled with a little Holy Water, and performed

their Obeisance to a Crucifix or Picture, presently fall a pattering over Ave Maria's and Pater Nosters: to themselves, as fast as they can, whilst the Priest, in the mean while, says something too, but the People generally know not what it is, nor indeed what themselves say, it being all in an unknown Tongue. But howsoever, though they know not what they say, they think that God doth, and therefore satisfy themselves, that they have said something, though they know not what, and think that God is well pleased with what they have done, because themselves are so.

Others there are, and by the Blessing of God, far more than all the rest, in this Nation, who presenting themselves before the great Creator and Possessor of the World, in that solemn and reverent manner as the Constitutions of our Church directs, humbly confessing their manifold Sins against God, begging Mercy and Pardon from him, imploring his Favour, and praising his Name for all the expressions of his undeserved Love to Mankind: And all this in our vulgar Tongue, that we all understand, and so perform a reasonable Service unto God.

And, verily, if we consider the Institution on itself, of that religious Worship which we thus perform, it is certainly the best that ever was prescribed by any Church, as being most consonant to the general Rules of Devotion laid down in Scripture; as also most conformable to the Discipline and Practice of the Primitive Church. But we must not think that we serve God aright, because we be present with them that do so. I do not doubt but that there are many amongst us, who sincerely endeavour to worship God, whensoever they present themselves before him in publick. I wish that all of us would do so. But we must still remember, that we should serve the Lord elsewhere, as well as at Church, and on all other Days as well as upon the Lord's Day And that if we would be truly Religious, our whole Man must be devoted to the

Service of God, yea, and our whole Time too. We must not think that it is enough to do something, but we must do all things that are required of us, which notwithstanding we can never do, unless we know both that GOD whom we ought to serve, and that Service which we ought to perform unto him. And therefore David directs his Son to the right and only way to true Religion, saying, 1 Chron. 28. 9. And thou Solomon my Son, know thou the God of thy Father, and serve him with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind: Which Words, did we apply them to ourselves, would, by the Blessing of God, put us upon sincere Endeavours after real and universal Obedience to all the Commands of God: And persuade us not to content ourselves with vain Pretences to, and Professions of Religion, as most do; but strive to live up unto our Profession, and carry and behave ourselves so as becometh those who desire to be religious, and to serve God in good earnest. Which that we may do, let us observe the Rule and Method which David here prescribes to his Son: First to know God, and then to serve him with a perfect Heart and a willing Mind.

I shall not trouble the Reader with any critical division of the Words, for they naturally divide themselves into two Parts.

First, That we should know, and then that we should serve God with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind.

I shall begin with the First, not only because it is first placed, but because it necessarily must precede the Second; it being impossible for us to serve God aright unless we know him: For without this, all our Services will be but like the Altar which the Athenians Dedicated, To agnosto Theo, To the unknown God. By which, Inscription, they manifested to the World, that they knew that they ought to serve some God, but that they knew not that God whom they ought to serve. But that we may so know him as to serve him aright, I shall first shew what it

is a God which we must know, in order to our serving him aright.

First, Therefore he that would serve God aright, must believe and know that he is, Heb. 11. 6. that is, That there is such a supreme and all-glorious Being in, and over the World that we call God, that made, preserves, governs, and disposes of every Thing in the World, as seemeth best to him: And that it is not only probable that there is such a One, but that it is the most certain and necessary Truth in the World; without which, there would be no such thing as Truth or Certainty. For indeed if God was not, nothing could be; He alone being the Basis and Foundation of all Being in the World, yea, and of all Motion too, Acts 17. 28. And therefore every thing that lives, every thing that moves, nay, every thing that is, argues God to Be, which therefore is the first great Truth, upon which all the rest depend; without which nothing would be True, much less wou'd our Services be so: So that the first thing to be done in order to our serving God, is to know and believe that he is, and that he ought to be served and adored by us.

Secondly., It is necessary to know his Essence too, as well as his Existence; what, as well as that he is; what he is in himself, and what he is to us; that in himself he is what he is, in and of himself, the source of all Wisdom, the Abyss of all Power, the Ocean of all Goodness, the Fountain of all Happiness, the Principle of all Motion, and the Center, yea, Perfection of all Perfections in the World; whose Nature or Essence is so Pure, so Glorious, so Immense, so Infinite, so Eternal, so every way Perfect, Transcendent, and Incomprehensible, that the more we think of him, the more we contemplate upon him; the more we praise and admire him, the more we may. And the highest Apprehensions that we can have of him, is still to apprehend him infinitely higher than all our Apprehensions of him. And therefore that Man best knows

God, that knows him to be beyond his Knowledge; and that knows he can never know him enough.

But we must know too what he is to us, even the Author and Giver of every good thing we have, and who in himself is whatsoever we can desire to make us happy: And therefore it is that in the Covenant of Grace, when he would assure us that we shall have all things that we can enjoy, he only promises to be our God, Heb. 8. 10. which is as much as we can desire, and indeed as himself can promise; for in promising himself, he hath promised whatsoever he is, whatsoever he hath, whatsoever he doth, nay, whatsoever he can do as God. And thus are we to look upon God as the only Object of all true Happiness, and the only Centre wherein all the Desires and Inclinations of our Souls can rest.

Thirdly, It is necessary also to know the several Attributes and Perfections which he hath revealed of himself in Scripture; that he is so Wise as to know whatsoever can be known; so Powerful as to do whatsoever can be done: So Great and Glorious in himself, that we have all just cause to fear him; so Kind and Gracious in his Son, that it is our Duty also to trust in him; so True, that whatsoever he says is True because he saith it; so Good, that whatsoever he doth is good because he doth it; so Just as to punish every Sin that is committed, and yet so Merciful as to pardon every Sinner that repenteth; that he is Pure without mixture, Infinite without Bounds, Eternal without Beginning, Everlasting without End, and every way Perfect, without Comparison.

Fourthly, We must know also the Works of God, what he hath done, wherein he hath manifested himself to us. But what hath God done? or rather, what hath he not done? It was he that raised this stately Fabrick of the World we live in, out of the Womb of Nothing, It was he that extracted Light out of Darkness, Beauty and Perfection out of a confused Chaos. It was he that bedecked the glorious Canopy of Heaven

with those glittering Spangles the Stars. It was he that commanded the Sun to run his course by Day, and the Moon to ride her Circuit by Night about the World, to shew the Inhabitants thereof the Glory of their All-glorious Maker. It was he that hung the Earth upon Nothing, and spread upon the Surface of it a curious Carpet, embroidered with all manner, not of painted, but real Flowers, and Plants, and Trees. It was he that at first produced all Things out of Nothing; and it is he that still preserves all Things in their Being. It is he that orders the Affairs of Kingdoms, manageth the Intrigues of State, directeth the Events of Wars, and disposes of every particular Person as himself sees good. In a word, Whatsoever was ever made in Heaven above, or on Earth beneath, it was he that made it; and whatsoever is still done in Heaven above, or on Earth beneath, it is he that doth it, so that nothing ever was, or is, or ever will be, or can be done, but what is done by him, as the First and Universal Cause of all Things.

Fifthly, It is necessary also to know so as to believe, that though there is but One God, yet there are Three Persons; all and every one of which is that One God. I do not say it is necessary to understand, or comprehend this Mystery, for that we cannot do; but we are not therefore the less to believe it, because we cannot understand it: For there are many other things in Divinity; yea, many things in Natural Philosophy, and in Geometry itself, which we cannot understand, and yet for all that, both know and believe them to be true. But how much more cause have we to believe this, which God himself hath asserted of himself! Nay, and besides that, we have the same Obligations to serve and honour every Person, as we have to serve and honour any one Person in the Sacred Trinity, our Saviour himself having expressly told us, That all Men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father, Joh.

5. 23. But that we cannot do, unless we believe the Son to be God as

well as the Father; and, by consequence, unless we acknowledge this Fundamental Article of our Christian Faith, into which we were all baptized.

Secondly, We must consider what kind of Knowledge we ought to have of God, in reference unto our serving him aright.

For we must not think that it is enough to know in general that there is a God, and that he is Wise and Powerful, Great and Glorious, True and Faithful, Good and Gracious; these things a Man may know in general, so as to be able to discourse of them, and dispute for them too, and yet come short of that Knowledge which is requisite to our true serving of God: Which should be such a Knowledge as will not only swim in the Brain, but sink down into the Heart; whereby a Man is possessed with a due sense of those things he knows, so that he doth not only know, but in a manner feel them to be so. Thus David, who, in the Text, calls upon his Son to know the God of his Fathers, intimates elsewhere, what Knowledge he means; saying, Oh taste and see that the Lord is good, Psal. 34. 8. Where we may observe, how he requires our Spiritual Senses to be employ'd in our Knowledge of God, so as to see that he is good, yea, and taste it too; that is, feel and experience it in our selves; which though it may seem a Paradox to many of us, yet there is none of us but may find it to be a real Truth, and attain unto it, if we be but careful and constant in our Meditations upon God, and sincere in performing our Devotions to him; for, by these means, our Notions of God will be refined, our Conceptions cleared, and our Affections, by consequence, so moved towards him, that we shall taste and experience in our selves, as well as know from others, that he is Good, and that all Perfections are concentred in him.

But this practical and experimental Knowledge of God, doth necessarily presuppose the other, or the general Knowledge of him, so as to be

acquainted with the several Expressions which God in Scripture hath made use of, whereby to reveal himself and his Perfections to us; as when he is pleased to call himself the Almighty God, the All-wise and Infinite, the Just and Gracious God, and the like; or to say of himself, I am that I am, that is, in and of my self Eternal. Unless we first know that these and such like Expressions belong to God, and what is the true meaning and purport of them, it is impossible for us to arrive at that Knowledge of him, which is necessary to our serving him aright. And so I come to the last thing to be consider'd here concerning the Knowledge of God, even that it is necessary to our serving him; so that none can serve him that does not first know him, and therefore that the Method as well as Matter of David's Advice is here observable, Know thou the God of thy Fathers, and serve him; or, first know him, and then serve him with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind.

And, verily, one would think that this is a Truth so clear, so evident of it self, that it needs no Proof or Demonstration; for how is it possible for us to know how to serve God, unless we first know that God whom we ought to serve? For all our Services unto god should be both proper to his Nature, and suitable to his Perfections; and therefore unless I first know his Nature and Perfections, how can I adjust my Services to them? As for Example, I am to fear his Greatness and trust on his Mercy, and rejoyce in his Goodness, and desire his Favour: But how can I do this, unless I know that he is thus Great and Merciful, Good and Favourable.

Moreover, as a Man cannot serve God. when he hath a Mind to do it, so neither will he have a Mind or Heart to serve him unless he unless knows him. For the motions of the Will are always regulated by the ultimate Dictates of the practical Understanding, so that a Man chuses

or refuses, loves or hates, desires or abhors, according as he knows any Object that is presented to him to be Good Or Evil. And therefore how can I chuse God as my chiefest Good, unless I first know him to be so; or love him as I ought, above all things, unless I first know him to be better than all things; or perform any true Service to him, unless first know him to be such a one, as deserves to have true service performed unto him.

Nay, Lasty, Nothing that we do can be accepted as a Service to God, unless it be both grounded upon, and directed by a right Knowledge of him. God would not accept of blind Sacrifices under the Law; much less will he accept of blind Services now under the Gospel and therefore he expects and requires now, that whatsoever we do, either to or for him, be a *logiken latreia*,. a reasonable Service, Rom. 12. 1. That our Souls as well as Bodies, yea, and the Rational as well as Sensitive Part be employ'd in all the Services which we perform to him; which certainly can not be, unless we first know him; so that there is an indispensable Connection betwixt our knowing and serving God; it being as impossible for any Man to serve him, that doth not first know him, as it is to know him aright, and not to serve him.

But howsoever indispensable this Connection be in its own nature, the Church of Rome can make a shift to dispense with it; yea, so far as to assert, That Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion: But you must excuse them, for they do not mean by Devotion as we do, the real serving of God, but only the performing of some outward Services to him. And such a kind of Devotion, I confess, Ignorance may be the Mother of: But a Man must be grosly ignorant that thinks this to be Devotion, which is but a piece of Pageantry, a mocking instead of serving God. And, for my part, I cannot but tremble to think what a dismal, what a dreadful Account the Heads of that Church must hereafter give for daring to keep

the People in so much Ignorance as they do; so as to render them incapable of serving God, that so they may be the more ready to serve the Church; that is, the Interests and Designs of the Court of Rome.

But let them look to that; whilst we, in the mean while, study to know God before all things else, considering,

First, God therefore made us that we might know him, and that we might know that he made us. And therefore it is that he hath made Rational Creatures capable of reflecting upon him that made us so: Neither did he only make us at first, but he still preserves us; we feed daily at his Table, and live upon his Bounty. And the very Beasts, that any of us keep, know those that keep them; and shall we be more brutish than Brutes themselves, and not know him that keeps and maintains us? O how justly may God then call Heaven and Earth to witness against us, as he did once against his People Israel! Isa. 1. 2, 3, 4.

Secondly, There is none of us but have attained to Knowledge in other things: Some of us have searched into Arts and Sciences, others are acquainted with several Languages, none of us but are, or would be expect in the Affairs of this World, and understand the Mysteries of our several Trades and Callings; what, and shall he alone, by whom we know other things, be himself unknown unto us? What is, if this be not, a just Cause, wherefore God should infatuate and deprive us of all our Knowledge in other things? seeing we labour more to know them, than him from whom we receive our Knowledge.

Thirdly, Ignorance of God is itself one of the greatest Sins that we can be guilty of, and which God is most angry for, Hos. 4. 4. And there God himself imputes the Destruction of his People, to the want of Knowledge, v. 6. Nay, and it is that Sin too that makes way for all the rest. For what is the Reason that many so frequently Blaspheme God's Name, slight his Service, transgress his Laws, and incense his Wrath

against them, but meerly because they do not know him, how Great, how Glorious, how Terrible a God he is? For did they but thus rightly know him, they could not but regard the Thoughts of doing any thing that is offensive to him: And therefore the true Knowledge of God would be the best Security and the most sovereign Antidote in the World against the Infection of Sin, and the prevalency of Temptations over us; neither would it only preserve us from Sin, but put us upon Duty and Service, and direct us also in the performance of it. Insomuch that the hardest Duty will be easy to one that knows God; the easiest will be hard to one that knows him not. Hard, did I say? Yea, and impossible too; for although a Man may know God, and yet not serve him, it is impossible that any Man should serve God unless he knows him; Knowledge itself being both the first Duty that we owe to God, and the Foundation of all the rest.

And therefore, to conclude, if any desire to perform the Vow they made in their Baptism, to love and fear, to honour and obey the Eternal God that made them? If any desire to be Christians indeed, and holy in all manner of Conversation? If any desire to trust on the Promises, and observe the Precepts of the Great Creator and Possessor of the World, to live above the Snares of Death, and to antedate the Joys of Heaven? If any desire to live the Life, and to die the Death of the Righteous, to serve God here, so as to enjoy him hereafter? Let all such but study the Scriptures, and frequent the publick Ordinances; be constant and sincere in Prayer and Meditation, neglecting no Opportunity of acquainting themselves with God, but make use of all means possible, to get their Hearts possessed with a reverential Apprehension of God's Greatness and Glory, and with a due sense of his Goodness and Perfections, and their Work will soon be done; for if they thus know God, they will serve him too with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind.

We have seen how we ought to know God; we are now to consider how we ought to serve him; without which, indeed, our Knowledge of him will avail us nothing. For, as the Apostle argues, though I speak with Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal, 1 Cor. 13. 12. So here: Though we should have the highest Notions and Speculations in Divinity, that Men or Angels ever had; though we should understand the highest Mysteries in Religion, and dive into the profoundest Secrets of Christian Philosophy; though we should excel the greatest School-Men, and the most learned Doctors that ever lived; and were able to baffle Heresies, dispute Error and Schism out of the Christian Church, and evince the Truth of the Articles of our Faith, by more than Mathematical Demonstrations; Yet, if after all this, our Knowledge be only Notional, not moving our Affections, nor putting us upon the Practice of what we know, it is but as sounding Brass, and tinkling Cymbal; it may make a noise in the World, and get us Applause amongst Men, but it will stand us in no stead at all before the Eternal God; yea, it will rise up in judgment against us another Day, and sink us lower into the Abyss of Torments. And therefore, tho' Men may, God doth not look upon this as the true Knowledge of himself. Neither can any one be properly said to know God that doth not serve him with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind. And therefore having discoursed of that Knowledge which is necessary to our serving God, I shall now endeavour to shew, how we ought to serve God according to our Knowledge. In speaking unto which, I must beg the Reader's most serious and Christian attention, as to a Matter which concerns our Lives; yea, our Eternal Lives in another World: I hope there is none of those that pretends to Instruct, so Brutish and Atheistical, as not to desire to serve God: None so Proud and Self-conceited, as to think that they

serve him well enough already, or at least know how to do it. I write only to such as desire to be instructed, read Books of practical Religion with no other Design but to serve God, and to learn how to serve him better. And if this be our only Design, as I hope it is, let us manifest it to the World, and to our Consciences, by attending to, and fixing what we read upon our own Hearts. For I may venture to say, that this is the noblest and most necessary Subject that I can write, or any one can read of; and that which, if seriously weighed, rightly considered, and truly practised, will most certainly bring us to the highest Happiness which our Natures are capable of, or our Persons were at first designed for.

Now, for our clearer proceeding in a Matter of so great Importance, we will best consider, what it is to serve God? A Question very necessary to be treated of and resolved, because of the general Mistakes that are in the World about it: Many People fancying the Service of God to consist in some few particular Acts; as in saying their Prayers, reading the Scriptures, going to Church, and giving an Alms now and then to the Poor, especially if they be but zealous and resolute in the Defence of the Party or Faction they are of, so as to promote it to the highest of their Parts, Estates, or Power, then they think they do God good service, and that this is all he requires of them. Others think they serve God by serving of his Creatures, as in praying to Saints, bowing to Images, and falling down before the Eucharist, when it is carried in Procession: Nay, many there are, who think they serve God when they dishonour him, wresting his Scriptures, corrupting his Doctrines, opposing his Vicegerents, seducing his People and Servants into Error, and all for the promoting of some Temporal Interests, or groundless Opinions. But we might know that the Service of God is a Thing of an higher Nature, and nobler Stamp than such silly Mortals

would persuade us it is: Consisting in nothing less than,

1. In devoting of our selves, and all we have, or are, or do unto the Honour of the Eternal God; resigning our Hearts wholly to him, and subduing all our Passions and Affections before him. For seeing we were wholly made by him, and wholly depend upon him, if we would serve God at all, we must serve him with all we are; every Faculty of our Souls, and Members of our Bodies employing themselves in those Services which he hath set them, so as to live as none of our own, but as wholly God's; his by Creation, it was he that made us; his by Preservation, it is he that maintains us; and his by Redemption, it is he that hath purchased us with his own most precious Blood; and therefore being thus bought with a price, we should glorify God both in our Souls and Bodies which are his, 1 Cor. 6. 20.

And as we are to serve him with all we are, so also with all we have, Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase, Prov. 3. 9. Whatsoever we have, we receive from his Bounty, and therefore whatsoever we have we should employ for his Glory: Our Parts, our Gifts, our Estates, our Power, our Time; whatsoever we can call ours, is his in our Hands, and therefore to be improved, not for our selves but him; as our Saviour shews in the Parable of the Talents which the Master of the House distributed amongst his Servants, to some he gave one, to some five, to others ten, that every one might employ his Proportion to his Master's use, neither squandering it away, nor yet laying it up in a Napkin. It is God that to the grand Master and Possessor of the World, who parcels it out amongst his Creatures, as himself sees good; but wheresoever he entrusteth any thing, he expects the improvement of it for himself, And so, I suppose, doth every one of us from such Servants as we keep; we expect that what we put into their Hands, be laid out, nor for

themselves, but for us; and that they spend their Time in our service, not their own: And if they do otherwise, none of us but will say, they do not serve us, but themselves. How then can we expect that God should look upon us, as serving him, when we do not do so much for him, as we expect from our own Servants, though our Fellow-Creatures? Or how can we think that we serve him as we ought, unless we serve him as much as we can? Or that God should look upon us as his Servants, unless we employ and improve whatsoever we have, not for our own Pleasure, Profit or Applause, but for his Honour and Glory, from whom we did receive it? Let us remember our Saviour's Words, Mat. 5. 16. Let your Light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

2. Hence the serving of God consisteth also in the performing of sincere and universal Obedience to all his Laws and Commands, which is but the natural consequent of the former: For if our whole Man, both Soul and Body, and whatsoever we have, or are, ought to be devoted to his Glory; it must needs follow, that whatsoever we do, should be conformable to his Precepts; which also is no more than every one of us expects from our Servants: For those whom we have covenanted with to be our Servants, and whom we keep upon that very account; that they may serve us, we all expect that they should observe all our Commands, and do whatsoever in Justice, and by our Covenants, we can enjoyn them. But how much more more then must we ourselves be obliged to obey all the Laws and Precepts of him that made us, whose Creatures we are, and whose Servants, by consequence, we ought to be.

I say, all his Laws and Precepts, for we must not think to pick and chuse, to do some things, and leave other things undone: For we should take it ill if our Servants should serve us so; if when we send them upon several Businesses, they should mind only one of them, and neglect

all the other, we should questionless look upon them as very idle and careless Servants: But let us consider and bethink ourselves, whether we have not served our Master, the Eternal God, as bad as our Servants have, or can serve us. He hath given us several Laws to observe, and hath set us several Works to do, and we, perhaps, can make a shift to do something that is required of us; but never think of the other, and perhaps, the principal things too that he expects from us.

Just as if when Moses had broke the two Tables of Stone, whereon the Ten Commandments were written, one Man should have come and snatched away one piece, a second ran away with another piece, and a third with another, till at length ten several Persons had gotten several Pieces, wherein in the Ten Commandments were severally written; and when they had done so, every one of them should have striven to keep the Law that was written in his own Piece, never minding what was written in the others. Do you think that such Persons as these are, could be reputed the Servants of God, and to observe his Laws, when they minded only one particular Branch or Piece of them. The Case is our own; we hearing of several Laws and Commands which the most high God hath set us, get some one of them by the end, and run away with that, as if we were not concerned in any of the rest. But let us still remember, that the same Finger that wrote one of the Commands, wrote all the other too. And therefore he that doth not observe all, as well as one, cannot properly be said to observe any at all. Neither indeed doth he serve God in any thing: For though he may do something that God requires, yet it is plain, that he doth not therefore do it, because God requires it; for if he did so, he would do all things else too that God requires. And therefore such a Person doth not serve God at all in what he doth no, he serves himself rather than God, in that he doth it not in obedience to God, but with respect unto himself; as to get himself a Name and

Credit amongst Men, or perhaps to satisfy his troublesome Conscience, which would not let him be at quiet unless he did it.

But now one that would serve God indeed, hath respect to all his Commandments, Psal. 119. 6. And walks in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless, as Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have done, Luke 1. 6. And thus, Whosoever would serve the Lord in any thing, must serve him in all things that be requireth. And this is that which David means in this Advice to his Son, saying, Know thou the God of thy Fathers and serve him; that is, observe and do whatsoever he enjoyns, and that too, with a perfect Heart and a willing Mind.

And so I come to the Second thing to be consider'd here; that is, The manner how we ought to serve God, even with a perfect heart and with a willing Mind.

First, With a perfect Heart: That is, With Integrity and Sincerity of Heart, not from any By-ends, or sinister Designs but out of pure Obedience to the Laws of God, as he is the Sovereign of Heaven and Earth, and, in Christ, our Lord and our God. A thing much to be observed in all our Services, without which, indeed, they are no Services at all. Insomuch, that should we pray our Tongues to the Stumps, and fast our Bodies into Skeletons; should we fill the Air with Sighs, and the Sea with Tears for Sin; should we spend all our Time in hearing of Sermons, and our whole Estates in relieving the Poor; should we hazard our Lives, yea, give our Bodies to be burnt for our Religion, yet nothing of all this would be accepted as a Service unto God, unless it be performed out of sincere Obedience to his Laws, and with a single Eye, aiming at nothing but his Glory, which ought to be the ultimate End of all our Actions, 1 Cor. 10. 31.

Secondly, We must not only serve with a perfect Heart, but with a willing Mind too; vnphs chphtsh properly with a willing Soul; that is,

our Will, and all the Affections of our Souls should be carried after, and exercised in the Service of Almighty God. Our Desires are to be enflamed towards it, our Love fixed upon it, and our Delight placed in it. Thus the Israelites are said to have sought the Lord with their whole desire, 2 Chron. 15. 15. And we are commanded to love the Lord our God, and so to serve him with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, Deut. 10. 12. Yea, we are to delight to do the Will of God, Psal. 40. 8. As our Saviour did, saying, It is my Meat to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work, Joh. 4. 34. Thus are we too to esteem the Service of God above our necessary Food, pleasing our selves in pleasing him, and so make his Service not only our Business, but our Recreation too; and whosoever doth not so, whatsoever he doth for God, he cannot be said to serve him, because he doth it against his Will, and against the Bent and Inclination of his Soul. And therefore, though, as to the outward Act, he may do that which God commands, yet inwardly he doth it not; because his Soul is still averse from it, by which means it ceaseth to be the Service of God; because it is not performed by the Whole Man, even Soul and Body, both which are necessarily required in our Performance of real Service to him that made them both.

Thirdly, What is the Reason why we ought to serve God so? Because he searcheth the Hearts, and understandeth all the Imagination of the Thoughts: that is, He is throughly acquainted with every Thought in our Hearts, and with every Motion and Inclination of our Souls, infinitely better than our selves are. And therefore it is in vain for us to think to put him off with outward and formal, instead of inward and real Service. For he doth not only see what we do, but knows too what we think, while we are doing of it; and doth not only observe the Matter of our Actions, but the manner also of our performing them. It being

his great Prerogative to search the heart, and to try the reins, and to have all things naked and open unto him, Heb. 4. 13. So that he sees what the Soul doth within doors, in the secret Closets of the Heart, as clearly as what it doth without, in the open Streets of the World; every Affection of the Soul being as manifest unto him, as the Actions of the Body are: And therefore Hypocrisy is the most foolish and ridiculous Sin imaginable, making as if we could Cheat and Deceive God, and hide our Sins from the All-seeing Eyes of Omniscience itself, or make God believe that we are Holy, because we appear to be so to Men. But to bring this home more closely to ourselves. We have been all at Church, perhaps, performing our Service and Devotions to him that made us; it is true, as to our outward Appearance, there hath been no great difference betwixt us, we have been equally present at these Publick Ordinances, and we do not know but one hath prayed and heard the Word of God both read and preached as well as another; so that seemingly our Services are all alike as to us; but are they so to God too? that I much question: For he hath taken especial notice all along, not only of the outward Gestures of our Bodies, but likewise of the inward Behaviour of our Hearts and Souls before him: And therefore, as I hope he hath seen many of us serving him with a perfect heart, and willing mind; so, I fear, he hath found too many of us tardy, coming before him as his People come, and sitting before him as his People sit, while our Hearts in the mean time have been about our Covetousness; and hath plainly seen, that though your Bodies have been at Church, our Souls have been elsewhere, thinking upon our Relations, or Estates, or something or other, besides what our Thoughts should have been employ'd about in so solemn a Duty as the Publick Worship. But know this, Oh vain man, whosoever thou art, art, that God will not be mocked: And though thou hast not seen, or perhaps so much as thought of him, he

hath seen thee and thy Thoughts too; yea, at this very Moment looks upon thee. And what wilt thou answer him, the great Judge of the whole World, when he shall tell thee to thy Face, and call his Omniscience to witness, That he saw thee at this, as at other times, play the Hypocrite with him, making as if thou servedst him, when thou servedst him not; and instead of serving him with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind, servedst him neither in Heart nor Mind. Let us all remember this when we approach God's House, and also bethink ourselves afterwards whether we have not been guilty of this Sin? if we have, we may be sure God knows it, and we shall hear of it another Day. But to prevent what justly may be our Doom, let us repent of our former neglects in this kind; and, for the future, whensoever we are serving God, let us still look upon him as looking upon us, and fix in our Hearts this one thing, That God knows all things in the World. And therefore let us not think to put God off with such careless and perfunctory Services as heretofore too many of us have done but if we desire to serve him at all, let us serve him with a perfect Heart and a willing Mind.

Thus I have endeavoured to shew both what it is to serve God, and how we ought to do it: Now let us not think it sufficient that we know how to serve God, unless we serve him according to our Knowledge. Let us remember our Saviour's Words: If ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them, Joh. 13. 17. Which Happiness, that all who read this, may attain unto, let me advise them, in the Name of the Eternal God that made them, to renounce and forsake their former Masters, Sin, Satan and the World, whoever may have hitherto been inflaved to them, and now dedicate themselves wholly to the Service of him, that made them for that very purpose, that they might serve him; yea, and who hath composed our Natures so, that the highest Happiness that we are capable of, consists in our serving him And therefore let us not think that he

calls upon us to serve him, because he wants our Service; no, be it known unto all, that he is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his own Perfections, and needs not the Services of such poor silly Mortals as we are, who have nothing but what we receive from him: And therefore he doth not call upon us to serve him, because he cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy without him: Not because he wants our Service, but because we want it; it being impossible for us to be Happy, unless we be Holy; or to enjoy God, unless we serve him.

Wherefore all ye that desire to go to Heaven, to have him that made you reconciled unto you, and smile upon you; or that desire to be really and truly Happy, set upon the Work which God sent you into the World about, put it not off any longer, make no more vain Excuses, but from this Day forward, let the Service of God be your daily, your continual Employment and Pleasure: Study and contrive each Day how to advance his Glory and Interest in the World, and how you may walk more strictly, more circumspectly, more conformably to his Laws than ever. But whatsoever Service you perform unto him, be sure to do it with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind. Think not to put him off with Fancy instead of Faith, or with outward Performances instead of real Duties: But remember that he searcheth the Hearts, and tryeth the Reins of the Sons of Men, and observes the inward Motions of the Soul, as well as the outward Actions of the Life: And therefore wheresoever you are, whatsoever you bethink your selves, that he that made you, still looks upon you; taking notice, not only of the matter of the Actions which you do perform, but also of the manner of your performing them; and therefore be sure to have a special care in all your Services for, or unto God, that your Hearts be sincere before him, and your Minds inclined to him, that so you may serve him with a perfect Heart and a willing Mind.

But to conclude; Whoever ye are that read this Discourse, I have here shewn you the things that belong unto your Everlasting Peace, having acquainted you with the Method and Manner of your serving God in Time, in order to your Enjoyment of him to Eternity; how you are affected with what you have read, and whether you be resolved to practice it, yea, or no, 'tis only the Eternal God that knows. But this I know, that if you will not be perswaded to serve God, yea, and to serve him too with a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind, you will one Day wish you had, but then it will be too late. And therefore if you will put it to the venture, go on still, and with the unprofitable Servant, hide your Talents in a Napkin, or lavish them out in the Revels of Sin and Vanity; let thy Belly be still thy God, and the World thy Lord, serve thy Self or Satan, instead of the living God: But know that for all this, God will bring thee into Judgment; after which, expect nothing else but to be overwhelmed with Horror and Confusion to Eternity. Whereas on the other side, such amongst you as shall sincerely endeavour from henceforth to serve God with a perfect Heart, and with a willing Mind, I dare, I do assure them, in the Name of God, their Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord: For God suffers not his Enemies to go unpunish'd, nor his Servants unrewarded. And therefore go on with joy and triumph in the Service of so Great and so Good a Master, and devote your selves wholly to his Service, and employ your Talents faithfully for his Glory. Remember the time is but short and Christ himself will receive you into Eternal Glory, saying, Well done, good and faithful Servant,

THOUGHTS

UPON THE

Mystery of the Trinity.

THOUGH there be many in the World that seem to be Religious, there are but few that are so: One great Reason whereof is, because there are so many Mistakes about Religion, that it is an hard matter to hit upon the true Notion of it: And therefore desiring nothing in this World, so much as to be an Instrument in God's Hand to direct Men unto true Religion, my great Care must, and, by the Blessing of God, shall be to instil into them right Conceptions of him, that is the only Object of all Religious Acts, without which, it is impossible to continue, or indeed to be Religious. The true Nature and Notion of Religion consisting in the right Carriage and Deportment of our whole Man, both Soul and Body, towards him that made us; whom therefore, unless we truly know, we can never be truly Religious; and therefore they that begin their Religion with Zeal and Passion, begin at the wrong end; for indeed they begin where they shou'd end: Our Zeal for God, and love unto him being the highest Acts of Religion, and therefore cannot be the first: But they necessarily presuppose the true Knowledge of God, without which our Zeal will be blind, and our Love both groundless and transient.

But as it is impossible to be truly Religious, unless we know God, so is it very difficult so to know him, as to become truly Religious. It is true that there is such a Supreme Being in and over the World, as we call God; the the very Light of Nature teaches, and Reason itself demonstrates it to be most certain and undeniable. But what he is, and what Apprehensions we ought to have of this glorious Being, none but

himself is able to describe and manifest unto us, so that our Conceptions of him are still to be regulated by the Discoveries that he hath made of himself to us; without which, though we may have some confused Notions of him, yet we can never so know him; as to serve him faithfully, and, by consequence, be truly Religious.

Hence therefore if we would know God, we must search the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, wherein God hath been pleased most clearly to manifest and discover himself unto us: I say, both the Old and New Testament; for otherwise, our Knowledge of God may be very Defective and Erroneous, there being several things which God, in the New Testament, hath most plainly revealed of himself, which in the Old Testament are more darkly and obscurely delivered to us. As for Example, The great Mystery of the Trinity; though it be frequently intimated in the Old Testament, yet it is an hard matter rightly to understand it without the New: Insomuch, that the Jews, tho' they have had the Law above three Thousand, and the Prophets above two Thousand Years amongst them, yet, to this Day, they could never yet make this an Article of Faith; but they, as well as the Mahometans, still assert, That God is only one in Person as well as Nature: Whereas nothing can be more plain from the New Testament, than that there is but One God, and yet there are Three Persons, every one of which is that One God: And so that though God be but One in Nature, yet he is Three in Persons; and so Three Persons, as yet to be but One in Nature. And, verily, although there was no other Text in all the Scripture, whereon to ground this Fundamental Article of our Christian Faith; that of Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is a sufficient Foundation for it; there being nothing, I think, necessary to be believed concerning the glorious Trinity, but what may

easily and naturally be deduced from these Words, which were spoken, it is true, by our Saviour before his Ascension, but I question whether they were thoroughly understood, till after the Holy Ghost was come down to Earth. It being only by God himself that we can come to the true Knowledge of him, much less are we able rightly to apprehend, and firmly to believe Three Persons in the Godhead, without the assistance of one of them, that is, of the Holy Ghost; by whom the other two are wont to work; he being the Issue, as I may so say, and Breath of both. Hence it is, that the Wisdom of the Church, for these many Centuries, hath thought fit to Order, That this great Mystery be celebrated the next Lord's Day after the Commemoration of the Holy Spirit's coming down upon the Disciples, and in them, upon all true Believers; both because all Three Persons have now manifested themselves to Mankind; the Father in his Creation of them, the Son in his Conversing with them, and the Holy Ghost by his coming down upon them: And also to shew, that it is only by the Grace and Assistance of God's Spirit, that we can rightly believe in this Glorious and Incomprehensible Mystery, which our Saviour hath so clearly revealed to us in these Words, Go ye, and teach all Nations, &c.

For the opening of which, we must know that our Saviour in the foregoing Verse, acquaints his Disciples, that now all Power was given him in Heaven and in Earth; by vertue whereof, he here issueth forth his Commission to his Apostles, and, in them, to all that should succeed them, to supply his room, and be his Vicegerents upon Earth, he being now to reside in his Kingdom of Heaven. For, saith he, All Power is given to me in Heaven and Earth; Go ye therefore and teach all Nations: As he also saith elsewhere to them, As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you, John xx. 21. as if he should have said, My Father having committed to me all Power and Authority both in Heaven and

Earth, I therefore authorize and commissionate, yea, and command you to go and teach all Nations, &c.

This therefore is part of the Commission which our Lord and Master left with his Apostles immediately before he parted from them. Those being the last words which St. Matthew records him to have spoken upon Earth; and therefore they must needs contain matter of very great Importance to his Church; and it must needs highly concern us all to understand the true Meaning and Purport of them. Which that we may the better do, in treating of them, I shall observe the same Method and Order as he did in speaking them.

First, Therefore, here is the Work he sends his Apostles about; Go ye therefore and teach, *ἄναθητευσάτε*, which more properly may be rendered, Go ye therefore and disciple all Nations, or, make the Persons of all Nations to be my Disciples, that is, Christians. That this is the true meaning of the words, is plain and clear, from the right notion of the word here used, *ἄναθητεο*, which coming from *μαθητής*, a Disciple, it always signifieth either to be, or to make Disciples, wheresoever it occurs in all the Scriptures, as *ἄναθητευθεῖς*. Mat. xiii. 52. which is Instructed, say we, the Syriack better, [image of script] that is, made a Disciple, a *tlmyd* that is, not only a Scholar or Learner, but a Follower or Professor of the Gospel, here called the Kingdom of Heaven. Another place where this Word occurs is, Matt. xxvii. 57. *ἄναθητευθεῖς* to *ἰησοῦ*, where we rightly translate it, was Jesus Disciple. Another place is, Acts xiv. 21. *καὶ ἄναθητευσάτε* *ἑκάνοις*, which we improperly render, having taught many, the Syriack and Arabick, more properly, having made many Disciples. And these are all the places in the New Testament where this Word is used, except those I am now considering, where all the Eastern Languages render it according to its notation, Disciple. The Persian

paraphrastically expounds it, Go ye and reduce all Nations to my Faith and Religion. So that whosoever pleads for any other Meaning of these words, do but betray their own Ignorance in the Original Languages, and, by consequence, in the true Interpretation of Scripture.

I should not have insisted so long upon this, but that the false Exposition of these words hath occasioned that no less dangerous than numerous Sect of Anabaptists in the World; for the old Latin translation having it, Euntes ergo docete omnes Gentes; hence the German, where Anabaptism first began; and all the modern Translations render it as we do, Go ye therefore and teach Nations, baptizing them. From whence it was supposed by some that were not able to dive into the true Meaning of the Words, that our Saviour here commanded, that none should be baptized, but such as were first taught the Principles of the Christian Religion, which is the greatest Mistake imaginable; for our Saviour doth not speak one word of Teaching before Baptism, but only after, ver. 20. didaskontes. his Meaning being only that his Apostles should go about the World, and persuade all Nations to forsake their former Idolatries and Superstitions, and to turn Christians, or the Disciples of Jesus Christ; and such as were so should be baptized. And therefore Infant-Baptism is so far from being forbidden, that it is expressly commanded in these words; for all Disciples are here commanded to be baptized; nay, they are therefore commanded to be baptized, because Disciples. And seeing all Disciples are to be baptized, so are Infants too, the Children of Believing Parents, for they are Disciples as well as any other, or as well as their Parents themselves: For all that are in Covenant with God must needs be Disciples: But that Children were always esteemed in Covenant with God, is plain in that God himself commanded the Covenant should be sealed to them, as it was all along by Circumcision. But that Children are Disciples as well as

others, our Saviour puts it out of all doubt, saying of Children, of such is the kingdom of God, Mark x. 14. And therefore they must needs be Disciples, unless such as are not Disciples can belong to the Kingdom of God, which a Man must be strangely distemper'd in his Brain before he can so much as fancy.

And besides, that Children, so long as Children, are looked upon as part of their Parents; and therefore as their Parents are, so are they: If the Parents be Heathen, so are the Children; if the Parents be Jews, so are the Children; if the Parents be Christian, so are the Children too; nay, if either of the Parents be a Christian or Disciple, the Children of both are denominated from the better part, and so looked upon as Christians too, as is plain, 1 Cor. vii. 14. But now are they holy, that is, in a Federal or Covenant-sense they are in Covenant with God; they are Believers, Christians, or Disciples, because one of their Parents is so.

Now seeing Children are Disciples as well as others, and our Saviour here commands all Disciples to be baptized, it necessarily follows, that Children must be baptized too. So that the Opinion which asserts, That Children ought not to be baptized, is grounded upon a meer Mistake, and upon gross Ignorance of the true meaning of the Scripture, and especially of this place, which is most ridiculously mistaken for a Prohibition, it being rather a Command for Infant Baptism.

But I must crave the Reader's Excuse for this Disgression from the Matter principally intended, tho' I could not tell how to avoid it; nothing being more needful than to rescue the words of our blessed Saviour from those false Glosses, and horrible Abuses which these last Ages have put upon them, especially it coming so directly in my way as this did.

Secondly,, Here is the extent of their Commission, which is very large

indeed, not being directed to some few particular Persons, but to Nations; nor to some particular Nations only, but to all Nations, Go ye therefore and disciple all Nations; or, all the World, as it is, Mark xvi. 15. This was that which the Prophet Isaiah, or rather God by him, foretells, Isaiah xlix. 6. which our Saviour himself items to have respect unto, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. The meaning whereof, in brief, is this, That though the Jews hitherto had been the only People of God, and none but they admitted into Covenant with him, now the Gentiles also are to be brought in, and made Confederates or Copartners with them in the Covenant of Grace; that the Partition-Wall being now broke down, the Gospel is to be preached to all other Nations, as well as the Jewish; Christ being now come to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his People Israel.

But though the words of the Commission be so clear to this purport, yet the Apostles themselves understood it not, till God had interpreted it from Heaven to St. Peter, shewing him in a Vision, that he should call no Man common or unclean, Acts x. 28. From which time forward, he, with the rest of the Apostles, observed their Commission exactly in preaching to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. And this was one End wherefore the Holy Ghost came down amongst them, even to enable them to do what their Master had commanded them. For he had here commanded them to preach unto all Nations, but that they could not do, unless they could speak all Languages, which therefore the Holy Ghost enabled them do, Acts ii. 4, 5. which also is clear demonstration of the the true Meaning and Purport of these words: For there was no necessity that the Spirit should teach the Apostles all Languages, but that the Son had first enjoined them to preach unto all Nations.

Thirdly, Hence is the manner whereby they are to admit all Nations into the Church of Christ, or into the Christian Religion, by baptizing them

in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For the opening whereof, we must know that Baptism was a Rite in common use amongst the Jews before our Saviour's Time, by which they were wont to admit Proselytes into their Religion, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, or of God. A little before our Saviour's appearance in the World, John Baptist being sent to prepare the way for him, baptized the Jews themselves; As many as came unto him in the Name of the Messiah to come, which was called, the Baptism of Repentance. I indeed baptize you, says he, with Water, to Repentance; but he that comes after me, is mightier than I, Mat. iii. 11. But when our Saviour was to go to Heaven, he left Orders with his Apostles to make Disciples; or, admit all Nations into the Religion which he had preached, confirmed with Miracles, and sealed with his own Blood, by baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which Form of Baptism, questionless, his Apostles faithfully observed all along, as may be gathered also from Acts xix. 2, 3. where we may observe, how when they said, they had not so much as heard of an Holy Ghost; he wondering at that, asked them, Unto what then were ye baptized? plainly intimating, that if they had been baptized aright, according to Christ's Institution, they could not but have heard of the Holy Ghost, because they had been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but v. 5. as also Acts ii. 38, c. viii. 16. we read of Baptism administered in the Name of the Lord Jesus. From whence some have thought, that the Apostles baptized only the Gentiles, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Ghost but the Jews in the Name of the Lord Jesus only; because they believing in the Father already, if they were but baptized in the Name of Jesus, and so testified their Belief, that he was the Messiah, they could not but believe in his Spirit too; but this Expression of baptizing in the Name

of the Lord Jesus, seems to me rather to intimate that Form of Baptism which the Lord Jesus instituted: for doubtless, the Apostle observed the Precepts of our Lord better than so, as to do it one Way, when he had commanded it to be done another; and baptized only in the Name of Jesus, when he had enjoined them to baptize in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Neither did the Church ever esteem that Baptism valid, which was not administred exactly according to the Institution, in the Name of all the Three Persons; which the Primitive Christians were so strict in the observance of, that it was enjoined, that all Persons to be baptized should be plunged three times into the Water, first at the name of the Father, and then at the name of the Son, and lastly, at the name of the holy Ghost; so that every Person might be distinctly nominated, and so our Saviour's Institution exactly observed, in the Administration of this Sacrament.

Hence also it was, That all Persons to be baptized; were always required, either with their own Mouths, if adult, or if Infants, by their Sureties, to make a publick Confession of their Faith in the Three Persons, into whose Names they were to be baptized: For this indeed was always looked upon as the Sum and Substance of the Christian Religion, to believe in God the Father, in god the Son, and in god the Holy Ghost, and they who believed in these Three Persons, were still reputed Christians; and they who did not, were esteemed Infidels or Hereticks.

Yea, and our Saviour himself hath sufficiently declared how necessary it is for us to believe this great Mystery; as also how essential it is to be Christian, seeing that he requires no more in order to our Initiation into his Church, but only that we be baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In which Words we may observe,

First, A Trinity of Persons, into whose Names we are baptized, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: This is that Mystery of Mysteries which is too high for Humane Understandings to conceive, but not too great for a divine Faith to believe, even that although there be but One God, there are Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, every one of which is that One and the self-same God; and therefore it is, that Baptism is here commanded to be administred in the Name of all three. Now to confirm our Faith in this great Mystery, whereinto we were all baptized, I shall endeavour to shew; in few terms, what Grounds we have in Scripture to believe it. For which end we must know, that though this Mystery hath received great Light, by the rising of the Son of Righteousness upon the World, yet it did not lie altogether undiscovered before, yea, from the very Foundation of the World, the Church, in all Ages, hath had sufficient ground whereupon to build their faith on this great and Fundamental Truth: For in the very Creation of the World, he that created it is called, 'Ich in the plural Number: And in the Creation of Man, he said, Let us make Man in our own Image; from whence, though not a Trinity, yet a Plurality of Persons is plainly manifest; yea, in the Beginning of the World too, we find both Father, Son and Spirit concurring in the making of it. For, First, It is said, that God Created Heaven and Earth, and then, that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the Waters, Gen. i. 2. There are Two Persons, God, and the Spirit of God. And then we read how God made the World by his Word: he said let there be light, and there was light. From which Expression, St. John himself concludes, That all Things were made by the Son of God, or his Word, Joh. i. 3. and so does St. Paul, Col. i. 16. Thus we read afterwards, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word by my Tongue, 2 Samuel xxiii. 2. where we have Jehovah, the Spirit

of Jehovah, and the Word of Jehovah, plainly and distinctly set down.

As also in Psal. xxxiii. 6. and Isai. xlii. 1. where there is the Lord speaking of his Son, and saying, That he will put his Spirit upon him:

And this also seems to be the Reason, why the Holy Angels, when they praise God,. say, Holy, holy, holy Lord of Host, Isaiah vi. 3.

Revelations iv. 8. saying, Holy thrice, in reference to the Three Persons they Adore.

Thus we might discover this Truth in the Old Testament, but in the New we can scarce look over it: For when Jesus was baptized, Matth. iii.

16. had we, who know nothing but by our Senses, been present at this time with Jesus at Jordan, our very Senses would have conveyed this Truth to our Understandings, whether we would or no. Here we should have heard a Voice from Heaven; whose was it, but God the Father? Here we should have seen one coming out of Jordan; who was that but God the Son? Here we should have seen something else too, in the Form of a Dove, who was that but God the Spirit? Thus was God the Father heard speaking; God the Son was seen ascending out of the Water; and God the Holy Ghost descending from Heaven upon him. The first was heard in the sound of a Voice, the second was seen in the form of a Man, and the third was beheld in the Shape of a Dove.

Voce Pater, natus Corpore, flamen Ave.

But there are many such Places as this all the New Testament over, where the Three Persons of the Godhead are distinctly mentioned, as Luke i. 35. John xiv. 16, 26. Chapter xvi. 7. Galatians iv. 6. But the Words of Saint Paul are very remarkable too, 1 Corinthians xiii. 14.

And yet that all these Three Persons were but One God, Gen. xviii. 2, 3. John x. 30. Saint John expressly asserts, saying, There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit, and these Three are One, 1 John v. 7. Which certainly are as plain, and

perspicuous Terms as its possible to espress so great a Mystery in. But I need not have gone so far to have proved, That there are Three distinct Persons in the Godhead: The Words I am treating of, being a sufficient Demonstration of it: For as all the Three Persons met together at our Saviour's Baptism; to doth our Saviour here command, That all his Disciples be baptized in the Name of all Three: And therefore I cannot but admire how any one should dare to profess himself to be a Christian, and yet deny, or oppose the Sacred Trinity, into which he was baptized when he was made a Christian; For, by this means, he renouncing his Baptism, blasphemes Christ, unchristians himself, blotting his own Name out of the Catalogue of those who were made Christians, only by being baptized, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

II. Here is the Godhead of the Trinity, or of every Person in the Trinity, that one as well as the other is God: For here we see Divine Worship is to be performed to them all; and all that profess the true Religion must be baptized in the Name of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father which certainly would be the greatest Absurdity, yea, the most horrid Impiety imaginable, was not they God as well as he. For if they be not God, they are Creatures; if they be Creatures, Reason as well as Scripture forbids the same Honour and Worship to be conferred on them, which is given to God himself, and only due to him; which here, notwithstanding, we see is given to them, and that by our Lord himself, commanding Baptism to be administred in his own Name, and in the Name of the Holy Ghost, as well as in the Name of the Father; and so making himself and the Spirit equal Sharers in the same Honour that is given to the Father. So that was there no other place in the whole Scripture to prove it, this alone would be fufficient to convince any Gainsayer, that the Son and Spirit are God as well as the Father,

or rather the same God with him. But that I may unvail this Mystery, and confirm this Truth more clearly; we will consider each Person distinctly, and shew, that one as well as the other is really and truly God.

That the Father is God, none ever deny'd it, and therefore we need not prove it. But if the Father be God, the Son must needs be God too; for the same Names, Properties, Works, and Worship, which, in Scripture, are ascribed to the Father, are frequently ascribed to the Son also in Scripture: The Father is called Jehovah in Scripture, so is the Son, Hos. i. 7. Jerem. xxiii. 6. The Father is called God, so is the Son, John i. 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: with God, as to his Person; God as to his Nature. So also John xx. 28. Acts xx. 28, &c, Moreover, Is the Father Alpha and Omega, the first and the last? So is the Son, Rev. i. 8. Is the Father Eternal so is the Son, Isaiah ix. 6. Revel. i. 8, Is the Father Almighty? so is the Son, Heb. i. 3. Is the Father everywhere? so is the Son, Matt. xviii. 20. Doth the Father know all things? so doth the Son, John xxi. 17. Chap. ii. 24. Did the Father make all things? so did the Son, John i. 3. Doth the Father preserve all things? so doth the Son, hebr. i. 3. Doth the Father forgive Sins? so doth the Son, Matthew ix. 6. Is the Father to be worshipped? so is the Son, Hebrews i. 6. Is the Father to be honoured? so is the Son, John v. 23. No wonder therefore that Christ being thus in the Form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, Philippians ii. 6. He did not rob God of any Glory by saying himself was equal to him. The greatest Wonder is, How any one can believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and yet deny this great Truth, than which nothing can be more plain from Scripture: Nothing being more frequently and more clearly asserted than this is. And, verily, it is well for us that it is so; for if Christ was not

God, neither could he be our Saviour. None being able to free us from our Sins; but only he against whom they were committed. And therefore I cannot imagine how any one can doubt of Christ's Divinity, and yet expect Pardon and Salvation from him: All Our Hopes and Expectations from him depending only upon his assumption of our Humane Nature into a Divine Person.

And that the Holy Ghost also is God, is frequently asserted in the Holy Scriptures, which himself Indited. Indeed his very Inditing of the Scriptures, was a clear Argument of his Deity, as well as the Scriptures indited by him. What Man, what Angel, what Creature, who but God could compose such Articles of Faith, enjoin such Divine Precepts, fortel and fulfil such Propheesies as in Scripture are contained, who spake unto, or by the Prophets? Whom did they mean, when they said, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts? Who was this Lord of Hosts that instructed them what to speak or write? Was it God the Father, or God the Son? No, but it Was God the Holy Ghost; For the Prophecy came not in old time by the will of Man, but Holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Peter i. 21. Acts xxviii. 25; 21:11. Chapt. xxi. 11. The Holy Ghost therefore being the Lord of Hosts, he must needs be God, there being no Person that is or can be called the Lord of Hosts, but He that is the very and eternal God.

This also may be gathered from 1 Corinth. iii. 16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwelleth in you; for none can be the Temple of God, but he in whom God dwells; for it is God's dwelling in a place, that makes that place the Temple of God; and yet we are here said to be the Temple of God, because the Spirit dwelleth in us. And so elsewhere, Know ye not, saith the Apostle, that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you? 1 Cor. vi. 19. which could not be unless the Holy Ghost was God.

Another express Scripture we have for it in Acts v. 3, 4. where St. Peter, propounds this Question to Ananias, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lye to the Holy Ghost? And then tells him in the next Verse, Thou hast not lyed to men but to God: And so expresly asserts the Holy Ghost to be God.

Moreover, That the Holy Ghost is truly God, coequal to the Father and Son, is plain, in that the Scriptures assert him to be, to have, and to do whatsoever the Father or Son is, hath, or doth, as God. For, Is the Father and Son eternal? so is the Spirit. Hebrews ix. 14. Is God the Father and the Son everywhere? so is the Spirit, Psalm cxxxix. 7. Is God the Father, and the Son, a wise, understanding, powerful, and knowing God? so is the Spirit, Isaiah xi. 2. Are we baptized in the Name of the Father, and the Son so are we baptized in the Name of the Holy Ghost. May we Sin against the Father and the Son? so may we Sin too against the Holy Ghost. Nay, the Sin against this Person only is accounted by our Saviour to be a Sin never to be pardoned, Matthew xii. 31, 32. We may Sin against God the Father, and our Sin may be pardoned: We may Sin against God the Son, and our Sin may be pardoned: But if we Sin or Speak against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor yet in that which is to come. But if the Holy Ghost be not God, how can we Sin against him? or how comes our Sin against him only to be unpardonable, unless he be God? I know it is not therefore unpardonable because he is God, for then the Sins against the Father and the Son would be unpardonable too, seeing they both are God as well as he: Yet though this Sin is not therefore unpardonable, because he is God, yet it could not be unpardonable unless he was God. For, supposing him not to be God, but a Creature, and yet the Sin against him to be unpardonable, then the Sin against a Creature would be unpardonable, when Sins against God himself are pardoned: Which, to

say, would, itself, I think, come near to the Sin against the Holy Ghost. But seeing our Saviour describes this unpardonable Sin, by blaspheming or speaking against the Holy Ghost, let them have a care that they be not found guilty of it, who dare deny the Holy Ghost to be really and truly God, and so blaspheme and speak the worst that they can against him.

III. We have seen what Ground we have to believe, that there are Three Persons in the Godhead, and that every one of these Persons is God, we are now to consider the Order of those Persons in the Trinity, described in the Words before us,

First, The Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost; every one of which is really and truly God; and yet they are All but One real and true God. A Mystery which we are all bound to believe, but yet must have a great Care how we speak of it; it being both easy and dangerous to mistake in expressing so mysterious a Truth as this is. If we think of it, How hard is it to contemplate upon one numerically Divine Nature, in more than one and the same Divine Person? or, upon Three Divine Persons in no more than One and the same Divine Nature? If we speak of it, How hard is it to find out fit Words to express it? If I say, The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be Three, and every One distinctly God, it is true: But if I say, They be Three, and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say, The Divine Persons are distinct in the Divine Nature: But I cannot say, That the Divine Nature is divided into the Divine Persons. I may say, God the Father is One God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghost is One God: But I cannot say, That the Father is One God, and the Son Another God, and the Holy Ghost a Third God. I may say, The Father begat another who is God; yet I cannot say, That he begat another God. And from the Father and the Son proceeded another who is God; yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son

proceedeth another God. For, all this while, though their Nature be the same, their Persons are distinct; and though their Persons be distinct, still their Nature is the same. So that though the Father be the First Person in the Godhead, the Son the Second, and the Holy Ghost the Third; yet the Father is not the First, the Son a Second, and the Holy Ghost a Third God. So hard a thing is it to word so great a Mystery aright; or to fit so high a Truth with Expressions suitable and proper to it, without going one way or another from it. And therefore I shall not use many words about it, lest some should slip from me unbecoming of it: But, in as few Terms as I can, I will endeavour to shew, upon what account the Father is the First, the Son the Second, and the Holy Ghost the Third Person in the Trinity.

First, therefore, The Father is placed. first, and really is the First Person, not as if he was before the other Two, for they are all Coeternal; but because the other Two received their Essence from him: For, the Son was begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceedeth both from Father and Son: And therefore the Father is termed by the Primitive Christians, *riza kai pege Theotetos*, the Root and the Fountain of Deity. As in Waters there is the Fountain or Well Head; then there is the Spring that boils up out of that Fountain; and then there is the Stream that draws both from the Fountain and the Spring; and yet all these are but one and the same Water: So here, God the Father is the Fountain of Deity; the Son, as the Spring that boils up out of that Fountain; and the Holy Ghost, that flows from both, and yet all Three is but one and the same God. The same also may be explained by another familiar Instance: The Sun, you know, begets Beams, and from the Sun and Beams together, proceed both Light and Heat: So God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together, proceeds the Spirit of Knowledge and Grace: But as the Son is not before the

Beams, nor the Beams before the Light and Heat, but all are together:

So neither is the Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost, but only in order and relation to one another: In which only respect, the Father is the first Person in the Trinity.

Secondly, The Son is the second Person, who is called the Son, yea, and the only begotten Son of God, because he was begotten of the Father, not as others are by Spiritual Regeneration, but by Eternal Generation, as none but himself is: For the opening whereof, we must know, that God that made all things fruitful, is not himself Steril or Barren, but he that hath given Power to Animals, to generate and produce others in their own Nature, is himself much more able to produce one, not only like himself, but of the self-same Nature with himself, as he did in begetting his Son by communicating his own unbegotten Essence and Nature to him. For the Person of the Son was most certainly begotten of the Father, otherwise he would not be his Son; but his Essence was unbegotten, otherwise he would not be God. And therefore the highest Apprehensions that we can frame of this great Mystery, the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, is only by conceiving the Person of the Father to have communicated his Divine Essence to the Person of the Son. And so of himself begetting his other Self the Son, by communicating his own Eternal and unbegotten Essence to him. I say, by communicating of his Essence, not of his Person to him, for then they would be both the same Person, as now they are of the same Essence: The Essence of the Father did not beget the Son by communicating his Person to him, but the Person of the Father begat the Son by communicating his Essence to him; so that the Person of the Son is begotten, not communicated; but the Essence of the Son is communicated not begotten. This Notion of the Father's begetting the Son by communicating his Essence to him, I ground upon the Son's own Words, who certainly best

knew how himself was begotten; for, as the Father, saith he, hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, John v. 26. To have Life in himself, is an Essential Property of the Divine Nature, and therefore wheresoever that is given, or communicated, the Nature itself, must needs be given, and communicated too.

Now here we see how God the Father Communicated this his Essential Property, and so his Essence to the Son; and, by consequence, though he be a distinct Person from him, yet he hath the same unbegotten Essence with him: And, therefore, as the Father hath Life in himself, so hath the Son Life in himself; and so all other essential Properties of the Divine Nature, only with this Personal Distinction, that the Father hath this Life in himself, not from the Son, but from himself; whereas the Son hath it, not from himself but from the Father: Or, the Father is God, of himself, not of the Son; the Son is the same God, but from the Father, not from himself; and, therefore, not the Father, but the Son is rightly called by the Council of Nice, God of God, Light of Light, yea, very God of very God.

Thirdly, Having thus spoken of the two first Persons in the Sacred Trinity, we now come to the last, the Holy Ghost. The last, I say, not in Nature or Time, but only in Order: For, as to their Nature, one is not better or more God than another; neither, as to Time; is one before another; none of them being measured by Time, but all and every one of them Eternity itself. But though not in Nature or Time, yet in Order, one must needs be before another; For the Father is of himself, receiving his Essence neither from the Son, nor from the Spirit, and therefore is, in Order, before both; the Son received his Essence from the Father, not from the Spirit, and therefore, in Order, is before the Spirit, as well as after the Father; but the Spirit receiving his Essence both from the Father and the Son, must needs, in Order, be

after both.

I confess, the Spirit is nowhere in Scripture said to proceed from the Son, and therefore the inserting this into the Nicene Creed, was the occasion of that Schism betwixt the Western and Eastern Churches, which hath now continued for many Ages; in which, I think, both Parties are blameworthy; the Western Churches for inserting this Clause following into the Nicene Creed, without the Consent of a General Council and the Eastern for denying so plain a Truth as this is: For though the Spirit be not said to proceed from the Son, yet he is called the Spirit of the Son, Galatians iv. 6. Rom. viii. 9. which, questionless, he would never have been, did not he proceed from the Son, as well as from the Father. And, verily, the Father communicating his own individual Essence, and so whatsoever he is (his Paternal Relation excepted) to the Son, could not but communicate this to him also, even to have the Spirit proceeding from him, as it doth from himself. So that as whatsoever the Father hath Originally in himself, that hath the Son by Communication from the Father: So hath the Son this, the Spirit's proceeding from him by communication from the Father, as the Father hath it in himself: And the Spirit thus proceeding both from the Father and the Son, hence it is that he is placed after both, not only in, the Words before us, but also in 1 John v. 7. and so elsewhere.

From what I have hitherto discoursed concerning this great Mystery, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, I shall gather some few Inferences, and so conclude.

1. Is the Son God, yea, the same God with the Father? Hence I observe what a strange Mystery the Work of Man's Redemption is, that God himself should become Man. And he that was begotten of his Father, without a Mother, from Eternity, should be Born of his Mother, without a Father, in Time; that he who was perfect God, like unto the Father,

in every thing, his Personal Properties only excepted, should also be perfect Man, like unto us in all things, our personal Infirmities only excepted; that he that made the World, should be himself made in it; that Eternity should stoop to Time, Glory be wrapt in Misery, and the Son of Righteousness hid under a Clod of Earth; that Innocence should be betrayed, Justice condemned, and Life itself should die, and all to redeem Man from Death to Life. Oh Wonder of Wonders! how justly may we say with the Apostle, without Controversy, great is the Mystery of Godliness, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

2. Is the Spirit also GOD? Hence I observe, That it is God alone that can make us Holy; for seeing the Scripture all along ascribes our Sanctification unto the Spirit of God, and yet the Spirit of God is himself really and truly God, it necessarily followeth, that the special Concurrence and Influence of Almighty God himself is necessary to the making us really and truly Holy.

3. Are all Three Persons in the Trinity one and the same God? Hence I inferr, They are to have one and the same Honour conferred upon them, and one and the same Worship performed unto them. Or, as our Saviour himself saith, That all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John v. 23. And ye believe in God, believe also in me, John xiv. 1. And as we pray to the Father, so should we pray to the Son too, as the Apostles did, Luke xvii. 5. and St. Stephen, Acts vii. 59. and St. Paul to all Three, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

4. Is Baptism to be Administred in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? Hence I observe, how necessary it is to believe in these Three Persons, in order to our being real and true Christians: For we being made Christians in the Name of all Three, that Man ceaseth to be a Christian that believes only in One: For Faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is necessary to

the very Constitution of a Christian; and is the Principal, if not the only Characteristical Note whereby to distinguish a Christian from another Man; yea, from a Turk: For this is the chief thing that the Turk both in their Alcoran, and other Writings, upbraid Christians for, even because they believe a Trinity of Persons in the Divine Nature. For which Cause they frequently say they are People that believe God hath Companions; so that take away this Article of our Christian Faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but a little difference betwixt a Christian and a Turk: But by this means, Turks would not turn Christians, but Christians Turks, if this Fundamental Article of the Christian Religion was once removed: For he that doth not believe this, is no Christian upon that very account, because he doth not believe this by which a Christian is made: And whatsoever else Errors a Man may hold, yet if he believes in God the Father, God the Son, and God. the Holy Ghost, I cannot, I dare not but acknowledge him to be a Christian in general, because he holds fast to the Foundation of the Christian Religion, though perhaps he may build upon it Hay and Stubble; and so his Superstructure be infirm and rotten.

I shall conclude with a Word of Advice to all such as call themselves by the Name of Christ: I suppose and believe they are all Christians, from their taking that Name; and therefore I need not use any Arguments to perswade them to turn Christians, for so they are already by Profession; But, seeing that they are Christians, let me desire them to consider bow they came to be so? even by being baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And if they desire to be Christians still, I must advise them to continue stedfast in that Faith whereby they were made so. Of all the Errors and Heresies which Satan hath sowed amongst us, let us have an especial care to avoid such as strike at the very Foundation of our Religion; I mean the Arrians,

Macedonians, Socinians, and all, manner of Antitrinitarians, such as deny the most Sacred Trinity.

But I hope we have better learned Christ, than to hearken to such Opinions as these are; and therefore my next Advice in brief is only this, That as we excel others in the Truth of our Profession, so we would excel them also in the Holiness of our Life and Conversation: Let us manifest our selves so be Christians indeed, by believing the Assertions, trusting on the Promises, fearing the Threatnings, and obeying the Precepts of Christ our Master, that both Infidels and Hereticks may be convinced of their Errors, by seeing us outstripping them in our Piety towards God, Equity to our Neighbours, Charity to the Poor, Unity amongst ourselves, and Love to all: For this would be a clear Demonstration, that our Faith is better than theirs is, when our Lives are holier than theirs are; and for our Encouragement thereunto, I dare engage, That if we believe thus, as Christ hath taught us, and live as he hath commanded us, we shall also obtain what he hath promised, even Eternal Happiness in the World to come; where we shall see, enjoy, and praise that God, into whose Name we are baptized, even Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for evermore. There, with Angels and Arch-Angels, with the Heavens and all the Powers therein; with Cherubin and Seraphin, and all the blessed Inhabitants of those everlasting Mansions; with the glorious Company of the Apostles, the goodly Fellowship of the Prophets; the noble Army of Martyrs; all the Company of Heaven, and the Holy Church throughout all the World, we shall Eternally laud and magnify thy Sacred Name: "O God, the Father of Heaven; O God, the Son, Redeemer of the World; O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son; O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons and One God, evermore praising thee, the Father of an Infinite Majesty; together with thine Honourable, True and Only

Son; thee the King of Glory, O Christ; and thee, O Holy Ghost, the Comforter; still joyning with the heavenly Choire, and saying, "Holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory; Glory be to thee, O Lord, most high. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give Thanks to thee for thy great Glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesu Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the Sins of the World, and sittest at the Right-hand of God the Father, O Blessed, Glorious, and Eternal Spirit; for thou only art Holy, thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the Glory of God the Father; for thine, O Lord, is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy Servants, Grace by the confession of a true Faith to acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the Power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this Faith, and evermore defend us from all Adversities, who livest and reignest one God, World without End. Amen.

And now having led the Christian through this first Stage of his Course, and instructed him in the Principles of his Religion, and in the great Mystery of the Trinity, into which he was baptized, it may be fit to bring him into the World, and shew him how he ought to demean himself in regard to the Things of it.

Thoughts upon Worldly Riches.

Sect. I.

HE that seriously considers the Constitution of the Christian Religion, observing the Excellency of its Doctrines, the Clearness of its Precepts, the Severity of its Threatnings, together with the Faithfulness of its Promises, and the Certainty of its Principles to trust to; such a one may justly be astonished, and admire what should be the reason that they who profess this not only the most excellent, but only true Religion in the World, should notwithstanding be generally as wicked, debauched and prophane, as they that never heard of it. For that they are so, is but too plain and obvious to every one that observes their Actions, and compares them with the Practices of Jews, Turks, and Infidels. For what Sin have they amongst them which we have not as rise amongst our selves? Are they intemperate and luxurious? Are they envious and malicious against one another? Are they uncharitable and censorious? Are they given to Extortion, Rapine, and Oppression? So are most of those who are called Christians. Do they they blaspheme the Name of God, profane his Sabbaths, contemn his Word, despise his Ordinances, and trample upon the Blood of his only Son? How many have we amongst ourselves that do these things as much as they? But how comes this about, that they who are baptized into the Name of Christ, and profess the Religion which he established in the World, should be no better than other People, and in some respects far worse? Is it because though they profess the Gospel yet they do not understand it? Nor know what Sins are forbidden, nor what Duties are enjoined in it? That none can plead, especially amongst us who have the Gospel so clearly revealed, so fully interpreted, so constantly preach'd to us as

we have. Insomuch that if there be any one Person amongst us, that understands not what is necessary to be known, in order to our everlasting Happiness, it is because we will not: wilfully shutting our Eyes against the Light.

BUT what then shall we impute this wonder to, that Christians are generally as bad as Heathens? Does Christ in his Gospel dispence with their Impieties, and give them Indulgences for their Sins, and License to break the moral Law? It is true, his pretended Vicar at Rome doth so, but far be it from us to father our Sins upon him, who came into the World on purpose to save us from them. Indeed if we repent and turn from Sin, he hath both purchased and promised Pardon and Forgiveness to us, but not till then: But hath expresly told us the contrary, assuring us that except we repent we must all perish, Luc. xiii. 3. I confess there have been such blasphemous Hereticks amongst us, called Antinomians, who are altogether for Faith without good Works, making as if Christ by erecting his Gospel destroy'd the moral Law; but none can entertain such an horrible Opinion as that is, whose sinful Practices have not so far depraved their Principles, that they believe it is so only because they would have it to be so, directly contrary to our Saviour's own Words, Matth. v. 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come not to destroy, but to fulfil. But I hope there is none of us but have better learned Christ than to think that he came to patronize our Sins, who was sent to bless us, by turning away every one of us from our Iniquities, Act. iii. 26. But how come Christians then to be as bad and sinful as other Men? Is it because they are as destitute as other Men of all Means whereby to become better? No, this cannot possibly be the reason: For nothing can be more certain, than that we all have, or at least may, if we will, have whatsoever can any ways conduce to the making us either holy here

or happy hereafter. We have the way that leads thereto revealed to us in the Word of God, we have that Word frequently expounded and applied to us; we have all free Access not only to the Ordinances which God hath appointed for our Conversion, but even to the very Sacraments themselves, whereby our Faith may be confirmed, and our Souls nourished to eternal Life. And more than all this too, we have many gracious and faithful Promises, that if we do but what we can, God for Christ's sake will afford us such Assistances of his Grace and Spirit, whereby we shall be enabled to perform universal Obedience to the moral Law, such as God for Christ's sake will accept of, instead of that Perfection which the Law requires. So that now, if we be not all as real and true Saints, as good and pious Christians as ever lived, it is certainly our own Faults: For we have all things necessary to the making of us such, and if we were not wanting to our selves, it is impossible we should fail of having all our Sins subdued under us, and all true Grace and Vertue implanted in us. Insomuch that since the Christian Religion was first revealed to the World, there have been certainly Millions of Souls converted by it, who now are glorify'd Saints in Heaven, which once were as sinful Creatures upon Earth as we now are. But it seems they found the Gospel an effectual Means of Conversion and Salvation; and therefore it cannot be imputed to any Defect in the Gospel, or the Christian Religion, that we are not all as good Men as ever lived, and by consequence better than the Professors of all other Religions in the World.

Bur what then shall we say to this wonder of wonders, that Christians themselves in our Age live such loose and dissolute Lives, as generally they do? What should be the reason that all manner of Sin and Evil should be both practised and indulged amongst us, as much as in the darkest Corners of the World, upon which the Gospel never yet shined?

Why when we have searched into all the reasons that possibly can be imagined, next to the Degeneracy and Corruption of our Nature, this must needs be acknowledged as one of the chief and principal, that Men living upon Earth, and conversing ordinarily with nothing but sensible and material Objects, they are so much taken up with them, that those divine and spiritual Truths, which are revealed in the Gospel, make little or no Impression at all upon them, though they hear what the Gospel saith and teacheth, yet they are no more affected with it, nor concerned about it, than as if they had never heard of it, their Affections being all bent and enclined only to the things of this World. And therefore it is no wonder, that they run with so full a Career into Sin and Wickedness, notwithstanding their Profession of the Gospel, seeing their natural Propensity and Inclination to the things of this World, are so strong and prevalent within them, that they will not suffer them to think seriously upon, much less to concern themselves about any thing else.

THE Apostle, in his Epistle to Timothy, Chap. vi. endeavouring to persuade Men from the over eager Desire of earthly Enjoyments, presses this Consideration upon us, that such an inordinate Desire of the things of this World betrays Men into many and great Temptations, Ver. 8, and 9. And then he gives this as the reason of it, Ver. 10. For the Love of Money is the Root of all Evil; that is, in brief, The Love of Riches and temporal Enjoyments is the great reason why Men are guilty of such great and atrocious Crimes as generally they are; there being no Evil but what springs from this, as from its Root and Origine; which is so plain a Truth, so constantly and universally experienced in all Ages, that the Heathens themselves, the ancient Poets and Philosophers, could not but take notice of it. For Bion the Philosopher was wont to say that philarguria the Love of Money was kakias metropolis the

Metropolis of Wickedness. And Apollodorus, *alla echedon te to kaph?laion ton kakon eirekas ek philarguri?, gar pant' eni*; When thou speakest of the Love of Money, thou mentionest the Head of all Evils, for they are all contained in that. To the same purpose is that of the Poet Phocylides, *he de philochremosuie meter kakotetos apases*, The Love of Riches is the Mother of all Wickedness. What these saw by the Light of Nature, hath here divine Authority stamped upon it; God himself asserting the same thing by his Apostle, *?rhiza gar panton ton kakon estin he philarguria*, The Love of Money is the Root of all Evils; which, that we may the better understand, we must consider.

1. WHAT is here meant by Money.
2. WHAT by the Love of Riches.
3. HOW the Love of Money is the Root of all Evils.

As for the first, I need not insist long upon it, all Men knowing well enough what Money is. But we must remember that by Money is here understood not only Silver and Gold, but all earthly Comforts, Possessions, and Enjoyments whatsoever, whether Goods, Lands, Houses, Wares, Wealth, or Riches of any sort or kind whatsoever.

2. By the Love of Money we are to understand that Sin which the Scriptures call Covetousness, and the true nature and notion of it consisteth especially in three things.

1. IN having a real Esteem and Value for Wealth or Money, as if it was a thing that could make Men happy, or better than otherwise they would be; as it is plain all covetous Men have their Desire of Riches proceeding only from a groundless Fancy, that their Happiness consists in having much, which makes them set a greater Value upon Riches, preferring them before other things, even before God himself. Hence the Love of Money is altogether inconsistent with the Love of God, 1 Joh.

- ii. 15. If any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in

him. It being impossible to love God as we ought, above all things, and yet to love the World too at the same time.

2. HENCE the Love of Money supposeth also a Delight and Complacency in the having of it, proceeding from the foresaid Esteem they have for it: For being possessed with a fond Opinion, that the more they have the better they are, they cannot but be pleased with the thoughts of their present Enjoyments, as the rich Man was in the Gospel, Luk. xii. 16, 17, 18, 19. who because his Ground brought forth plentifully, resolv'd to enlarge his Barns, and lay up Stores for many Years, and bid his Soul take her Ease. How many such Fools have we amongst us, who please and pride themselves with the thoughts of their being rich?

3. FROM this Esteem for, and Complacency in Money or Wealth, it follows that Men are still desirous of having more, placing their Happiness only in Riches, because they think they can never be happy enough, therefore they think too they are never rich enough. Hence how much soever they have, they still desire more, and therefore Covetousness in Scripture is ordinarily expressed by pleonexia, which properly signifies an inordinate Desire of having more, which kind of Desires can never be satisfied, because they are able to desire more than all the World, and to raise themselves as high and as far as the infinite Good itself. Now such a Love of Money as this is, consisting in having a real Esteem for it, in taking Pleasure and Delight in it, and in longing and thirsting after it; this is that which the Apostle here saith is the Root of all Evil; that is, it is the great and principal Cause of all sorts of Evil that Men are guilty of, or obnoxious to; which that I may clearly demonstrate to you, we must first know in general that there are but two sorts of Evil in the World, the Evil of Sin, and the Evil of Punishment or Misery; and the Love of Money is the Cause of them both.

To begin with the Evil of Sin, which is the only Fountain from whence all other Evils flow, and itself doth certainly spring from the Love of Money, as much or more than front any thing else in the whole World. Insomuch that the greatest part of those Sins which any of us are guilty of, proceeds from this Master Sin, even the Love of Money, as might easily be shewn from a particular Enumeration of those Sins which Men generally are addicted to. But that I may proceed more clearly and methodically in demonstrating this, so as to convince Men of the Danger of this above most other Sins, I desire it may be consider'd that there are two sorts of Sins that we are all guilty of, Sins of Omission and Sins of Commission, under which two Heads all Sins whatsoever are comprehended.

FIRST for Sins of Omission. It is plain that our Love of Money is the chief and principal Cause that makes us neglect and omit our Duties to God and Man, as it is manifest we most of us do. In speaking unto which I must take leave to deal plainly, for it is a matter that concerns our eternal Salvation; and therefore howsoever some may resent it, I am bound in Duty and Conscience to mind Men of their Sins, and particularly of this great prevailing Sin of Covetousness, or inordinate Love of Money, which most Men give but too much reason to fear they are guilty of, and therefore I may tell them of it without any breach of Charity. It is true, I cannot pretend to be a searcher of Hearts, that is only God's Prerogative, and therefore I shall not take upon me to judge or censure any particular Persons; but I shall speak to all in general, and leave every one to make the particular Application of it to himself. Neither shall I speak of things at random, but I shall instance only in such Sins which I can assert upon my own Knowledge that most Men allow themselves, and that upon this account only, because they love Money.

FOR first, what is the reason that so few, indeed scarce any of us, are at Prayers at Church upon the Week-Day, to perform our Devotion to him that made us? Is it because we think it impertinent to pray unto him? No, our Presence there on Sundays contradicts that, and I have more Charity than to think that any are so atheistical as to imagine it to be superfluous to pay our Homage to the supreme Governour of the World, and to implore his Aid and Blessing upon us? But what then should be the reason of it? in plain Terms it is nothing else but because Men love Money, and therefore are loth to spare so much time from their Shops or Callings, as to go to Church to pray to God for what they want, and praise his Name for what they have. Let us search into our own Hearts, and we shall acknowledge this to be the only reason of it. But it is a very foolish one, for who can bless us but God?

2. WHAT is the reason that so many neglect the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Do not we all look upon it as our Duty to receive it? I dare say we do; Christ himself having commanded it, Luk. xxii. 19. and it being the only way whereby to manifest our selves to be Christians, what then can be the reason of this Neglect of it, but merely the Love of Money, which makes Men loath to spend time in preparing and fitting themselves for it.

BUT seeing Men thus excommunicate themselves by not coming to the Communion, in plain Terms, they deserve to be excommunicated by the Censures of the Church. And if God should in his Providence deprive them of ever having an Opportunity of receiving the Sacrament again, they must even thank themselves for for it. Howsoever this shall be their present Punishment, that they shall be deprived of it, until they think it worth their while to come unto it.

WHAT is the reason that the Sabbath is so profaned? That so many take their Recreations upon the Lord's Day, but because they cannot spare

time for it from getting Money upon other Days? thinking the Day long, because they can get little in it, as Amos viii. 5. And why do so many profane the Sabbath, while at Church, by thinking upon the World, but because they love it? Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

3. WHAT is the reason that Charity is so cold, but that the Love of Money is grown so hot amongst us? For do not we all know it is our Duty to relieve the Poor? Hath not God expressly commanded it Hath not he threatned a Curse to them that do it not, and promised a Blessing to them that do it? what then can be the reason that so many neglect it, but because they love their Money more than God?

To these might be added many other Sins, which the Love of Money daily occasions. For what is the reason that many read the Scriptures so seldom, and so cursorily as they do? What is the reason that they either have none, or commonly neglect their Family Duties? That every slight Occasion will make them omit their private Devotions; that they can find no time to look into their own Hearts, to consider their Condition, and meditate upon God and Christ, and the World to come. What is the reason that many know their Shops better than their Hearts, and are acquainted with the temper of their Body more than with the constitution of their Souls? That they are so careful and industrious in the Prosecution of their worldly Designs, so negligent and remiss in looking after Heaven? What is or can be the reason of these things, but that inordinate Love, and Affection they have for Money, or the things of this World, which makes them so eager in the pursuit of them, that they forget they have any thing else to mind, and so much taken up with worldly Business, that God, and Christ, and Heaven, and Soul and all, must give way to it? Oh, the Folly and Madness of sinful Men! what a strange corrupt and degenerate thing is the Heart of Man become! that we should be so foolish and unwise as to prefer our Bodies before our

Souls, Earth before heaven, Toys and Trifles before the eternal God, the worst of Evils before the best of Goods, even Sin itself, with all the Miseries that attend it, before Holiness and that eternal Happiness which is promised to it! And all for nothing else but the love of a little Pelf and Trash, which hath no other worth but what our own distracted Fancies put upon it.

AND if the Love of Money be the Root of so many Sins of Omission, how many Sins of Commission must needs sprout from it? Indeed they are so many that it would be an endless thing to reckon them all up, and therefore I shall not undertake it, but shall mention only such of them as every one upon the first reading shall acknowledge to be the cursed Offspring of this one fruitful and big-bellied Sin of Covetousness, or the Love of Money, of which Cicero observes, that *Nullum est Officium tam sanctum atque solemne, quod non avaritia: comminuere atque violare soleat*. So we may say on the other side too, That there is no Sin so great and horrid, but Covetousness will sometime put Men upon it. Is Idolatry a Sin? yea certainly, one of the greatest that any Man can be guilty of, and yet nothing can be more plain, than that Covetousness, wheresoever it comes, draws it along with it; insomuch that every covetous Man is asserted by God himself to be an Idolater, Eph. v. 5. and Covetousness to be Idolatry itself, Col. iii. 5. And the reason is plain; for what is Idolatry but to give that Worship to a Creature which is due only unto God? But what higher Acts of Worship can we perform to God, than to love him and to trust on him which it is certain every covetous Man gives to his Money; and therefore Covetousness is here called *philarguria*, the Love of Money. And we cannot but be all sensible what Trust and Confidence Men are wont to repose in their Estates and Incomes. But such will say, we do not fall down before our Money, nor pray unto it; but they trust on it, and that

is infinitely more than bare praying to it: And though they do not bow down before it in their Bodies, yet they make all the Faculties of their Souls to bow and stoop unto it; they love and desire it, they rejoyce and delight in having of it, they are grieved and troubled for nothing so much as the parting with it, nor fear any thing so much as the losing of it.

BUT they will say again, we do not sacrifice to our Bags, nor burn Incense to our Estates; we never did, nor intend to offer so much as a Lamb or Calf unto it! It is true, they do not, but they offer that which is far better, they offer the Poor to it, suffering them to perish with Hunger, Thirst and Cold, rather than relieve them with that necessary Maintenance which God hath put into their Hands for them; they offer their own Bodies to it, exposing them to Heats and Colds, to Dangers and Hazards both by Sea and Land, and all for Money; yea, they offer their own Souls to it likewise, as a whole Burnt-Offering, giving them to lie scorching in Hell Flames to Eternity, and that upon no other Account but to get Money: And tell me which are the greatest Fools, and the most odious Idolaters, such as offer Beasts to the Sun and Flames, or such as offer themselves both Soul and Body to Dirt and Clay? We cannot but all acknowledge the latter to be far the worse, and by Consequence the covetous Man to be the greatest Idolater in the World, and that too only because he is a covetous Man.

MOREOVER, is not Extortion and Oppression a Sin? and yet we all know that it is the Love of Money that is the only cause of it. Is not Strife and Contention a Sin? whence comes it but from our lusting after Money, Jac. iv. 1. Is not Perjury a Sin? Is not Corruption of Justice a Sin? Is not Cheating and Cousenage a Sin? Is not Pride and Haughtiness a Sin? Is not unrighteous dealing betwixt Man and Man a Sin? Is not Theft and Robbery a Sin? Is nor Treason and Rebellion a Sin? Are not

all these Sins,. and great ones too? But whence spring these poysonous Fruits into the Lives of Men, but from the bitter Root of Covetousness in their Hearts? It is the Love of Money that makes these Sins so rise among us: It is this that makes Men forswear themselves, and couzen others: It is this that oft-times makes Fathers ruin their Children, and Children to long for the Death of their Fathers: It is this that makes Neighbours go to Law, and Brethren themselves to be at variance: It is this that makes Men strive to over-reach each other, and to blind the Eyes of those they deal with: It is this that hath caused some to murder others, and others to destroy themselves. What shall I say more? There is no Impiety that can be committed against God, nor Injury that can be offered unto Men, but the Love of Money hath been the Cause of it in others, and will be so in us unless it be timely prevented, and therefore it may well be termed the Root of all Evil of Sin.

AND it being the Root from whence all the Evil of Sin springs, it must needs be the Root of the Evil of Punishment and Misery too: Misery and Punishment being the necessary consequent of Sin. Indeed this Sin carries its Misery along with it, as Seneca himself saw by the mere Light of Nature, saying, *Nulla avaritia sine pænâ est, quamvis satis sit ipsa pænarum*, Avarice is without Punishment, tho' it be itself Punishment enough. For what a Torment is it for a Mab to be always thirsty, and never able to quench his thirst? Yet this is the Misery of every covetous Man, whose thirst after Money can never be satisfied, and who is so desirous of having more, that he can never enjoy with Comfort what he hath; loving Money so well that he grudgeth himself the oft of it. Hence the foresaid Author observed, *That in nullum avarus bonus est, in se ipsam pessimus*, The covetous Man is good to none, but worst of all to himself. And as this is the natural Consequent of this Sin in itself, so is it the ordinary Punishment that God inflicts upon

Men for it, not suffering them to take any Pleasure in the use of what they love, Eccles. vi. 1, 2. And besides that, what Cares and Fears, what Labours and Travels, what Dangers and Hazards doth the Love of Money put Men upon? How do they rack their Brains, and break their Rest to get it; and when it is gotten, what Fears are they always in lest they should lose it again? What Grief and Trouble do the poor Wretches undergo for every petty Loss that befalls them? So that every covetous Man is not only miserable, but therefore miserable because covetous. BUT if their Misery be so great in this Life, how great will it be in that to come? Concerning which there are two things to be observed: First, that the very having of Riches makes it very difficult to get to Heaven, Matth. xix. 23, 24, 25. Luk. xvi. 19, 22. Hence Agar was afraid of them, Prov. xxx. 8. Neither do we ever read of any of the Patriarchs, Prophets, or the Saints recorded in Scripture, to have been guilty of this Sin, unless Baruch, who is reprov'd for it, Jer. xlv. 5. AND as the having of Money makes it difficult to get to Heaven, so the loving of it makes it impossible to keep out of Hell. For so long as a Man is covetous, he is liable to every Temptation, ready to catch at every Bait that the Devil throws before him; so that he is led by him as he pleaseth, till at length he be utterly destroyed, 1 Tim. vi. 9. And therefore the same Apostle elsewhere tells us, that the Covetous have no Inheritance in the Kingdom of God, but the Wrath of God will most certainly fall upon them, Eph. v. 5, 6. But the Wrath of God is the greatest Evil of Punishment that it is possible for Men to bear: Indeed it is that which being once incensed makes Hell-fire: And yet we see that the heat of our Love to Money will enkindle the flames of God's Wrath against us, yea and such flames too as will never be quenched, Mark ix. 44. And so for the little seeming transient Pleasure they take in getting, or keeping Money now; they must live in Misery

and Contempt, Shame and Torment forevermore.

THUS now we see that the Love of Money will not only put us upon the Evil of Sin, but it will also bring the Evil of Punishment upon us; both which the Apostle here, Ver. 9, 10. imputes to this Sin. And therefore he both well may and must be understood of both there sorts of Evil, when he saith, that the Love of Money is the root of all Evil; which, the Premises consider'd, I hope none can deny. And need I then heap up more Arguments to dissuade Men from this Sin, and to prevail with them to leave doting upon the World and loving Money? Is not this one Argument of it self sufficient? For is it possible for us to indulge our selves in this Sin, now we know it is the root of all Evil? And that if we still love Money there is no Sin so great but we may fall into it, and no Misery so heavy but it will fall upon us. Surely if this Consideration will not prevail upon us to despise and contemn, rather than to love and desire this World, for my part I know not what can. Only this I know, that so long as Men continue in this Sin, all Writing and Preaching will be in vain to them; and so will their Hearing be, their going to Church, their reading the Scriptures, their hearing them read and expounded to them, all this will signify nothing, this root of all Evil is still within us, and it will bring forth its bitter fruit, do what we can. And therefore as ever we desire to profit by what we hear, as ever we desire to avoid any one Sin whatsoever, to know what happiest means to escape either present Torment or eternal Misery, as ever we desire to be real Saints, and to manifest our selves to be so, to go to Heaven, and live with God and Christ for ever, let not our Affections be entangled any longer in the briars and thorns of this lower World, let us beware of loving Money: If Riches encrease, let us not set our hearts upon them, Psal lxii. 10. but scorn and despise them hereafter as much as ever heretofore we have desired or

loved them.

Bur I cannot, I dare not but in Charity believe and hope, that by this time my Readers are something weaned from their doting upon this present World, and desire to know how they may for the future get off their affections from it, so as to have this root of all Evil extirpated, and quite plucked up from within them. I hope this is now the desire of all, or at least of most of them; and therefore I shall now endeavour to shew them how they may infallibly accomplish and effect it. In order thereto,

1. LET such Persons often consider with themselves how unsuitable the things of this World are for Affections and Love, which was design'd only for the chiefest Good. When God implanted the Affection of Love within us, he did not intend it should be the root of all Evil, but of all Good unto us; and therefore he did not give it us to place it fondly upon such low and mean Objects as this World presents unto us, but that we should love Himself with all our hearts and Souls, Deut. vi. 5. And surely he infinitely deserves our Love more than such Trash can do.
2. LET them remember that so long as they love Money, they may pretend what they please, they do not love God, 1 Joh. ii. 14. nor Christ, Mat. x. 37. Luk. xiv. 26. and by consequence they have no true Religion at all in them, Jam. i. 27.
3. LET them often read and study our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount, where he pronounces the meek and low, not the rich and mighty, to be blessed, Mat. v. 3, 4. and weigh those strong and undeniable Arguments which he brings, to prevail upon us not to take thought for the World, not trouble our Heads about the impertinent Concerns of this transient Life, Mat. vi. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.
4. LET them labour to, confirm and strengthen their Trust and

Confidences on the Promises of God, who hath assured us, that if we love and fear him, he will take care of us, and provide all things necessary for us, Mat. vi. 33. This is the great Argument which the Apostle uses, Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

5. LET them remember that they are called to higher things than this World is able to afford them: The Christian is an high and heavenly Calling; we are called by it, and invited to a Kingdom and eternal Glory, 1 Thess. 2. 12. and therefore ought not to spend our time about such low and poultry Trash as Riches and Wealth.

6. LET them get above the World, let their Conversation be in Heaven, and then they will soon look down upon all things here below as beneath their Concern. *Viliscunt temporalia, cum desiderantur æterna*, He that seriously thinks upon and desires Heaven, cannot but vilify and despise Earth. Oh what Fools and Madmen do the blessed Angels, and the glorified Saints in Heaven, think us poor Mortals upon earth to be, when they see us busying our selves about getting a little refin'd Dirt, and in the mean while neglecting those transcendent Glories which themselves enjoy, although they be offer'd to us!

7. Let them never suffer the Vanity of all things here below to go out of their minds; but remember still, that get what they can, it is but Vanity and vexation of Spirit, as Solomon himself asserted upon his own Experience, though he be sure had more than any of us are ever likely to enjoy. And them not only often repeat the words, but endeavour to get themselves convinced throughly of the truth of them, which their own Experiences duly weigh'd, and rightly applied will soon do.

8. LET it be their daily Prayer to Almighty God, that he would take off their Affections from the World and incline them to himself, as David did, saying, *Incline my heart to thy Testimonies, and not to Covetousness*, Psal. cxix. 36.

To all these means, let them add the constant and serious Consideration of what they have here read, that the Love of Money is the root of all Evil; assuring themselves that if they will not believe it now, it is not long before they will all find it but too true by their own sad and woful Experience; when they shall be stripp'd of their present Enjoyments, and so turn Bankrupts in another World, where they will be cast into Prison without ever having a farthing to relieve themselves, or so much as a drop of water to cool their enflamed tongues.

By these and such like means none of us but may suppress the Love of Money in us, which is the root of all Evil, and so avoid or prevent all the Evil which otherwise will proceed from it. Whether any of my Readers will be persuaded to use these means or no, I know not; howsoever let me tell them, that if they are loath to strive to get their Affections deaden'd to the World, it is an infallible sign that they are too much in love with it, and that this root and seed of all manner of Evil remains in them; nor can it be expected they will be persuaded to any one Duty whatsoever, until they are first prevailed upon to do this, even to mortify their Lusts and Affections to the things of this World. For so long as those are predominant within us, no Grace whatsoever can be exerted, nor Duty performed, nor any Sin avoided by us.

BUT oh how happy would it be, if it should please the most high God to set what I have said so home upon any, as to induce them to set themselves seriously for the future, to the eradicating or rooting up this Love of Money out of their hearts! what a holy, what a blessed, what a peculiar People should we then be, and how zealous of good works! Then we should take all opportunities of performing our Devotions to Almighty God; then we should have as many at the Sacrament, as at a Sermon; then our Churches would be filled all the

week, as well as on Sundays, and the eternal God constantly worshipped with Reverence and godly Fear; then we would take delight in cloathing the Naked, feeding the Hungry, and relieving the Oppressed; Then there would be no such thing as cheating and cousenage, as lying and perjury, as strife and contention amongstl us. But we should all walk hand in hand together in the ways of Piety, Justice, and Charity upon Earth, until at length we shall come to Heaven, where we shall be so far from loving or desiring Money, that we shall account it as it is, even dross and dirt; where our Affections shall be wholly taken up with the Contemplation of the chiefest Good, and we shall solace our selves in the Enjoyment of his Perfections forevermore.

Thoughts upon Worldly-Riches.

SECT. II.

TIMOTHY after his Conversion to the Christian Faith, being found to be a Man of great Parts, Learning, and Piety, and so every way qualified for the work of the Ministry, St. Paul who had planted a Church at Ephesus the Metropolis or chief City of all Asia, left him to dress and propagate it, after his departure from it, giving him Power to ordain Elders or Priests, and to visit and exercise Jurisdiction over them, to see they did not teach false Doctrines, 1 Tim. i. 3. That they be unblameable in their Lives and Conversations, 1 Tim. v. 7. and to exercise Authority over them, in case they be otherwise, 1 Tim. v. 19. And therefore it cannot in reason but be acknowledged that Timothy was the Bishop, Superintendent, or Visiter of all the Asian Churches, as he was always asserted to have been by the Fathers of the Primitive Church, as Eusebius reports, saying, Timotheos tes ek epheso paroikias hisoreitai proto ten episkropen eilechenai, that Timothy is reported to have been the first Bishop of the Province of Ephesus. Be sure he had the oversight of all the Churches that were planted there, and not only in Ephesus it self, but likewise in all Asia, which was subject then to his Ecclesiastical Power and Jurisdiction.

AND hence it is that the Apostle St. Paul in his first Epistle to him, gives him Directions how to manage so great a Work, and to discharge so great a Trust as was committed to him, both as Bishop and Priest; both how to ordain and govern others, and likewise how to preach himself the Gospel of Christ. And having spent the whole Epistle in Directions of this sort, in the close of it, as it were at the foot of the Epistle, he subjoins one general Caution to be constantly observed by him:

Charge them that are rich, &c. Which words, though first directed to Timothy, were in him intended for all succeeding Ministers, and Preachers of the Gospel; such I mean who are solemnly ordained and set apart for this work. We are all obliged to observe the Command which is here laid upon us, as without which we are never likely to do any good upon them that hear us: For so long as their minds are set altogether upon Riches, and the things of this World, we may preach our hearts out, before we can ever persuade them to mind Heaven and eternal Happiness in good earnest. This St. Paul knew well enough, and therefore hath left this not only as his Advice and Counsel, but as a strict Command and Duty incumbent upon the Preachers of the Gospel in all Ages, that they charge them that are rich, &c. where it may be observ'd in the first place, how we are expressly enjoined to charge them that are rich, &c. a word much to be observed. The Apostle doth not say, desire, beseech, counsel, or admonish, the Rich; but *parangelle tois plousiois*, charge and command them that are rich. The word properly signifies such a Charge as the Judges at an Assize or Sessions make in the King's Name, enjoining his Subjects to observe the established Laws and Statutes of the Kingdom. And so the word is always used in Scripture for the strictest way of commanding any thing to be observed or done, as Acts v. 28. *ou parangelia parengelamen humin*; Did not we straitly command you. Luc. v. 14. *parengelien auto*. He charg'd him to tell no Man. Thus Therefore it is that we are here enjoined to charge the Rich in the name of the King of Kings, not to be high minded, nor to trust in uncertain Riches, &c.

And this is the proper notion, and the only true way of preaching the word of God; which therefore in Scripture is ordinarily expressed by the word *keruosein*, which properly signifies to publish or proclaim, as Heralds do, the Will and Pleasure of the Prince, and in his Name to

command the People to observe it. Thus we are enjoined to preach the word of God, by publishing his Will and Pleasure to Men; charging them in his Name, to obey and practise it. For we come not to them in our own Names, but in his that created and redeemed them; and therefore, altho' we neither have, nor pretend to any Power or Authority over them, from our selves; yet by vertue of the Commission which we have received from the universal and supreme Monarch of the World, we not only lawfully may, but are in duty bound, to charge and enjoin all in his Name, to observe what he hath commanded them. Insomuch, that although we pretend not to divine Inspiration, or immediate Revelations from God, such as the Prophets had; yet we, preaching the same Word which they did, may, and often ought to use the same Authority which they used, saying, as they did, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts. For whatsoever is written in the Scriptures, is as certainly God's word now, as it was when first inspired or revealed to them. And therefore it cannot be denied, but that we have as much Power to charge upon all, the Observation of what is there written; as they ever had, we being sent to preach and proclaim the Will of God unto all, by the same Person as they were. Hence it is that the Apostle, in the name of God, commands Titus, and in him all succeeding Ministers of the Gospel, to speak or preach the Word of God, to exhort and rebuke with all Authority, Tit. ii. 15. From whence nothing can be more plain, than that it is our Duty to preach with Authority, as those who have received Power from God, to make known his Will and Pleasure to all Men; or as the Apostle here expressly words it, to charge them not to be high minded, and the like.

BUT this I fear may be a very ungrateful Subject to many, and therefore I should not have insisted so long upon it, but that there is a kind of necessity for it. For I verily believe, that the Non-observance of

this, hath been, and still is, the principal Reason why People receive so little benefit by hearing of Sermons, as they usually do. For they look upon Sermons only as popular Discourses, rehears'd by one of their Fellow-Creatures, which they may censure, approve or reject, as themselves see good. And we our selves, I fear, have been too faulty, or at least remiss, in this particular; in that when we preach, we ordinarily make a long Harangue or Oration concerning some point in polemical, dogmatical, or practical Divinity, and use only same moral Persuasions to press upon our Auditors, the observance of what we say, without interposing, or exercising the Authority which is committed to us, so as to charge them in the Name of the most High God, to observe and practise what we declare and prove unto them to be his Will, and by consequence their Duty. But for my own part, did I think that Preaching consisted only in explaining some point in Divinity, and using only moral Arguments to persuade Men to perform their Duty to God and Man, I should not think it worth my while to do it, because I could not expect to do any good at all by it. For all the moral Arguments in the World, can never be so strong to draw us from Sin, as our own natural Corruptions are to drive us into it. And therefore we can never expect to do any good upon Men, either by our Logick or Rhetorick; but our Arguments must be fetched from on high, even from the eternal God himself, or else they are never likely to profit or prevail upon them. We must charge and command them in God's Name, or else we had as good say nothing.

IT is true, did we, who preach God's Word, propose nothing else to our selves, but to tickle Mens ears, and please their fancies, and so to ingratiate our selves into their love and favour, it would be easie to entertain them with Discourses of another nature, stuffed with such fine Words, quaint Phrases, and high Notions, as would be very pleasing

and acceptable unto them. But I must take leave to say, that we dare not do it; for we know, that as our Auditors must give an account of their hearing, so it is not long before we also must give an account of our preaching too, for so God himself hath told us before hand by his Apostle, Heb. 13. 17. But how shall we be able to look the eternal God in the face, yea, or to look our Auditors in the face at that time, if instead of charging their Duty upon them, in order to their eternal Salvation, we should put them off with general Discourses, which signifie nothing, only to please and gratifie them whilst we remain with them; no, we dare not do it, and therefore I wish Men would not expect it from us; for we must not hazard our own eternal Salvation, to gain their temporal favour or applause. And therefore, seeing God hath been pleased to entrust us so far with Mens Souls, as to direct them in the way to eternal Life, howsoever they resent it, we are bound in Duty, both to God, to them, and our selves, to deal plainly with them, and to use the Authority which he hath here committed to us, where he hath expressly commanded us in his Name, to charge them that are rich in this world, &c.

WHERE I desire the Reader to observe in the next place, that we of the Clergy are not only empower'd to charge the poorer, or meaner sort of People, who by reason of their extream poverty and want, may seem inferior to us, but even rich Men too; Charge them, saith the Apostle, that are rich in this world. And the reason is, because we come unto them in his Name, who gives them all the Riches they do enjoy, and can take them away again when he himself pleaseth; so that he can make the poor rich, and the rich poor, when he pleaseth, and therefore the poor and rich are all alike to him; his Power and Authority is the same over both; and therefore we, coming in his Name, are ordered to make no distinction, but to charge the one as well as the other; yea, here we

are particularly commanded to charge them that are rich.

WHICH is the next thing to be considered in these words, even whom the Apostle means by them that are rich in this world? Which is a Question that needs a serious Resolution. For many Men, not thinking themselves as yet to be rich enough, will be apt to conclude from thence, that they are not to be reckoned amongst those whom the Apostle here calls rich in this World. But whatsoever they may think of themselves, I believe there are but few, except the very poor, who in a Scripture sense are not rich Men. For whatsoever any have over and above their necessary maintenance, that the Scriptures call Riches, as is plain from Agar's wish, Give me neither poverty, nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me, Prov. xxx. 8. From whence it is easie to observe, that as nothing but the want of convenient Food is Poverty; so whatsoever a Man hath over and above his convenient or necessary Food, is properly his Riches; and so he that hath it, is in a Scripture sense a rich Man, who is therefore called here in my Text ploutos, quasi poluousios, one that hath much Substance, or more than he hath necessary occasion for. And therefore, although some may be richer than others, yet I believe the generality may be justly reckoned in the number of the rich Men here spoken of, at least all such, as by the Blessing of God, have not only what is necessary for their present maintenance, but likewise something to spare, and so may all come under the notion of those whom we are here commanded to charge not to be high minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, &c.

HAVING thus considered the Act which we are here commanded to exert, and the Object, the rich of this World, we are now to consider the Subject matter, what that is which we are here commanded to charge upon them, but that is here expressly set down in several Particulars, all which I shall endeavour to explain as they lie in order.

1. THAT they be not high minded; a necessary caution for rich Men. For Riches are very apt to puff Men up with vain and foolish conceits of themselves, so as to think themselves to be so much better, by how much they are richer than other People; but this is a grand mistake, which we are here enjoined to use the utmost of our power and skill to rectifie, by charging them that are rich not to be high minded; that is, not to think highly and proudly of themselves, because they are richer or wealthier than other Men, but to be every way as humble in their own eyes, and as lowly minded in the enjoyment of all temporal Blessings, as if they enjoyed nothing; as considering, 1. how much soever they have, they are no way really the better for it.

1. NOT in their Souls; they are never the wiser nor holier, nor more acceptable unto God by their being rich, Eccles. ix. 1. Job xxxiv. 19 .

2. NOR in their Bodies; they are never the stronger, nor healthier, nor freer from pain and trouble, nor yet longer lived than others.

3. NOR, in their Minds; their Consciences are never the quieter, their Hearts never the freer from cares and fears, neither can they sleep better than other People, Eccl. v. 12.

4. NOR yet in their Estate and Condition.

1. NOT in this Life. For Riches can never satisfie them, nor by consequence make them happy; but they may still be as miserable in the enjoyment, as in the want of all things, Eccl. v. 11.

2. NOR yet in the Life in come; they are never the nearer Heaven, by being higher upon Earth; their Gold and Silver can never purchase an Inheritance for them in the Land of Canaan, Jac. ii. 5.

2. THEY are so far from being better, that they are rather much worse for their having abundance here below.

1. THEY have more Temptations to Sin, to Luxury, to Covetousness, to the love of this World, to the neglect of their Duty to God, to Pride

and Self-conceitedness, to Security and Presumption, Luk. xii. 19.

2. IT is harder for them to get to Heaven, than it is for others; and by consequence, the richer they are, the more danger they are in of being miserable for ever, Mat. xix. 23. Whence our Saviour himself denounceth a Wo upon them that are rich, Luk. vi. 24. and St. James bids than weep and howl for their miseries, Jac. v. 1. And therefore advises us en rejoice rather at Poverty than Riches, Jac. i. 9, 10. Now these things being considered, as spoken by God himself, none can deny but that the rich are most certainly in a worse condition than the poor; and by consequence, that Men have no cause to be proud, or high minded, nor to glory in their riches, Jer. ix. 23. And therefore whatsoever outward Blessings God hath bestowed upon us, Let us not be high minded, but fear, Rom. xi. 20.

2. NOR trust in uncertain Riches, which I confess is a very hard Lesson for a rich Man to learn, nothing being more difficult than to have Riches, and not to true in them, as our Saviour himself intimates, in explaining the one by the other, as things very rarely severed, Mark x. 23, 24. But certainly it is altogether as foolish a thing to trust in Riches, as it is to be proud of them. For,

1. THEY of themselves can stand us in no stead, they cannot defend us from any evil, nor procure us any good; they cannot of themselves either feed us, or cloath us, or refresh us, or be any ways advantageous to us, without God's Blessing, Prov. xi. 4. How much less can they be able to deliver us from wrath to come. No, we may take it for a certain truth, our Riches may much further our eternal Misery, but they can never conduce any thing to our future happiness.

2. IF we trust in them, be sure they'll fail us, and bring us into Misery and Desolation, for to trust in any thing but God, is certainly one of the highest Sins we can be guilty of, it is in plain terms

Idolatry; and therefore He that trusteth in riches, is sure to fall,
Prov. xi. 28. For this is to deny God, Job xxxi. 24, 25, 28.

3. THEY are but uncertain Riches, they make themselves wings and fly away, Prov. xxiii. 5. They are in continual motion, ebbing and flowing, and never continuing in one stay. So that you are never sure of keeping them one day; and what reason then can we have to trust on them?

Especially considering, that they are not only uncertain, but uncertainty it self, as the word here signifies, Trust not in the uncertainty of riches.

BUT in the living God; He, he is to be the only Object of our trust, whether we have, or have not any thing else to trust on; or to speak more properly, there is nothing that we can upon good Grounds make our trust and confidence, but only him, who governs, and disposeth of all things, according to his own pleasure. So that it is he, and he alone that giveth us all things richly to enjoy. It is not our Wit or Policy, it is not our Strength or Industry, it is not our trading or trafficking in the World, it is none but God that giveth us what we have, Deut. viii. 18. Prov. x. 22. And as it is he that maketh Men rich, so he can make them poor again, when he himself pleaseth; and they have cause to fear he will do so too, unless they observe what is here charged upon them.

THERE are four Duties still behind, which we are here commanded to charge all those who are rich to observe.

1. THAT they do good. In treating of which I might shew the several Qualifications required to the making up of an Action good, as that the matter of it must be good, as commanded, or at least allowed by God, that the manner of performing it be good, as that it be done obedientially, understandingly, willingly, chearfully, humbly, and sincerely; and that the end be good too, so as that it be directed

ultimately to the Glory of God. But not to insist upon that now, I shall only consider what kind of good Works the Rich are here commanded to do, as they are rich Men. And they are two, Works of Piety, and Works of Charity.

1. THEY are here commanded to do works of Piety; where by works of Piety; I mean not their loving and fearing, and honouring of God, nor yet their praying to him, their hearing his Word, or praising his Name, for such works of Piety as these are, the poorest as well as the richest Persons amongst us are bound to do; whereas the Apostle here speaks only of such works as they who are rich are bound to do, upon that account because they are so. And therefore by works of Piety here, I understand such works as tend to the Honour of his Name, to the Performance of Worship and Homage to him, to the Encouragement of his Ministers, the propagating of his Gospel, and the Conversion of Sinners to him; all which they are bound to do, to the utmost of their Power, out of the Estates which for these purposes he hath entrusted with them. For thus they are expressly commanded to honour the Lord With all their Substance, or Riches, and with the First-Fruits of all their Increase, Prov. iii. 9. And the reason is, because God is the universal Proprietor, the Head Landlord of all the World, and we have nothing but what we hold under him; neither are we any more than Tenants at will to him, who may fine us at his own Pleasure, or throw us out of Possession whensoever he sees good. Now lest we should forget this, even upon what Tenure it is that we hold our Estates, God hath enjoined us to pay him, as it were, a Quit-rent, or Tribute out of what we possess as an Acknowledgment that it is by his Favour and Blessing alone that we do possess it. So that whatsoever we do, or are able to offer to him, is but a due Debt which we owe him, which if we neglect to pay him, we lose our Tenure, and forfeit what we have to the Lord of the Mannor,

the supreme Possessor of the World. Hence it is, that in all Ages, they who were truly pious, and had a due sense of God upon their Hearts, were always very careful to pay this their Homage unto God; insomuch that many of them never thought they could give enough to any pious Use, wherein to testify their Acknowledgment of God's Dominion over them, and his Right and Propriety in what they had. A notable Instance whereof we have in the Children of Israel; for when the Tabernacle was to be built for the Service and Worship of God, they were so far from being backward in contributing towards it, that they presently brought more than could be used in the building of it, Exod. xxxvi. 5, 6, 7. So it was too in the building of the Temple, which David, and the Chiefs or Nobles of Israel, made great Preparations for, 1 Chron. xxix. 6, 7, 8. And that they did this, thereby to acknowledge God to be the Lord and Giver of all, is plain from the following words, Ver. 11, 12, 13.

The same was also observed in the building of the second Temple, as the raising the first out of its Rubbish, wherein it had lain for many Years. And as for Christians, I need not tell you how forward those who have been truly pious, have always been in doing such works of Piety, seeing most of the Churches in Christendom, or be sure in this Nation, have been erected by particular Persons. And it is very observable, that the more eminent any Place or Age hath been for Piety and Devotion, the more pious works have been always done in it, for the Service and Worship of Almighty God; which plainly shews, that where such works are wanting, whatsoever Pretences they may make, there is no such thing as true Piety, and the Fear of God. And therefore, as ever we desire to manifest our selves to be what we profess, true Christians indeed, Men fearing God, and hating Covetousness, we must take all Opportunities to express our Thankfulness unto God for what we have, by devoting as much as we can of it to his Service and Honour.

2. BESIDES these works of Piety towards God, the Rich are enjoined also works of Charity towards the Poor, which though they have an immediate reference to the poor, yet God looks upon them as given to himself, Prov. xiv. 31. Ch. xix. 17. Math. xxv. 40. Hence it is that God accepts of such works as these also, for part of the Tribute which we owe him; whereby we acknowledge the Receipt of what we have from him, and express our Thankfulness unto him for it, without which we have no ground to expect a Blessing upon what we have, nor that it should be really good to us. For, as the Apostle tells us, every Creature of God is good, if it be received with Thanksgiving, not else, 1 Tim. iv. 4.

But no Thanksgiving is acceptable but that which is expressed by works as well as words. And therefore it is necessary for us to pay this Duty and Service to God, out of what we have, in order to the cleansing and sanctifying the Residue of our Estates unto us, without which we have not the lawful use of what we possess; but every thing we have is polluted and unclean to us, as our Saviour himself intimates, Luk. xi. 41. A thing much to be considered. For I verily believe that the great reason why so many Estates are blasted so soon, and brought to nothing amongst us, is because Men do not render unto God his Duty and Tribute out of what they have, and therefore it is no wonder that God in his Providence turns them out of Possession, and gives their Estates to other Persons, who shall be better Tenants to him, and be careful to pay him the Duties which he requires of them. And therefore, in order to Mens securing their Estates to themselves and Posterity, it is absolutely necessary that they observe the Duty which we are here recommended to charge upon all that are rich in this World, even to do good with what they have, and not only so, but

2. To be rich too in good works; that is, not only to do good, but to do as much good as they are able with their Riches, so as to proportion

their good works to the Riches which God hath given them wherewith to do them, according to the Apostle's Direction, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Thus in the place before quoted, Luc. xi. 41. where our Saviour bids the Pharisees to give Alms of such things as they have. His words are ta enonta dote tou eleemosunen, Give Alms as much as ye are able, for so the words properly signify. And verily whatsoever we do, unless it be as much as we can, God will not look upon us as doing any thing at all: For we must not think to compound with him. When he hath given us all we have, he expects that we render all that he requires of us, that is as much as we are able to pay unto him. As if a Man owes you Money, you will not accept of part instead of the whole; so neither will God from us; we all owe him as much as we are able to devote to his Service and Honour, and we must not think to put him off with part of it: For he reckons that he receives nothing from us, unless it be proportionable to what he hath bestowed upon us. But how little soever it is that we give or offer to him, if it be but answerable to our Estates, it will be accepted by him. This our Saviour himself hath assured us of, Mark xii. 43, 44. From whence we may certainly conclude, that there is not the poorest Person whatsoever but may be as rich in good works as the richest, because God doth not measure the goodness of our works by their bulk or quantity, but by the proportion which they bear to our Estates: So that he that gives a penny may do as good a work as he that gives a pound, yea and a better too, because his may be as much as he is able, whereas the other's is not. I with all Men would seriously weigh and consider this, lest otherwise they go out of the world without ever having done one good work in it: For we may assure our selves, he that is not thus rich in good works, doth no good at all with his Riches.

BUT it is farther to be considered here that this Expression, rich in

good works, implies that good works are indeed our principal Riches; and that Men must not compute their Riches so much from what they have, as from what they give and devote to God. For what we have is not ours, but God's in our hands; but what we give is ours in God's hands, and he acknowledgeth himself our Debtor for it, in that he tells us that we lend it to him, and promiseth to pay it us again, Prov. xix. 17. And therefore they who cast up their Accounts to know how rich they are, ought not to reckon upon what they have lying by them, nor upon their Houses and Lands that are made over to them, nor yet upon what is owing to them by Men; but should reckon only upon what they have given to pious or charitable Uses, upon what Treasure they have laid up in Heaven. For whatsoever they may think at present, I dare assure them, that will be found to be their only Riches another day. And therefore if any one desires to be rich indeed, let him take my Advice, do what good he can with the Riches he hath, and then he will be rich enough: For this is the way to be rich in good works. But in order unto that, he must likewise observe what follows, to be

3. Ready to distribute; that is, ready upon all occasions to pay his Tribute unto God, whensoever he in his Providence calls for it; taking all opportunities of doing good, and glad when he can find them, Gal. vi. 10. Thus therefore whensoever any opportunities present themselves of expressing our thankfulness unto God, by works either of Piety or Charity, whatsoever other business may be neglected, we must be sure to lay hold on that. For I dare say, that there is none but will grant me that there is all the reason in the world that God should be served in the first place, and that he should have the first fruits of all our Increase, Prov. iii. 9. Exod. xxiii. 19. Deut. xxvi. 2. And therefore we cannot but acknowledge, that works of Piety towards God, and of Charity to the Poor, or as the Scripture calls them in general good

works, are always to be done in the first place; and whatsoever other works may be omitted, be sure they must not. But we ought still to be as ready to pay our Duties unto God, as we are to receive any thing from him, as ready to give as to receive; and by consequence as Men let no opportunities slip wherein they can encrease their Estates, they are much less to let any opportunities pass wherein they can any way improve their Estates for God's Glory and others Good; but they ought to be ready upon all Occasions to distribute what they can upon charitable and pious Uses.

4. Willing to communicate; as we must do it with a ready hand, so we must do it with a willing Heart too. Thus we are enjoined to serve God willingly, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. and chearfully, 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. Indeed God accepts of none but Freewill Offerings. If we be not as willing to do good works as we are to have wherewith to do them, we may be confident God will never accept of them. And therefore in plain Terms, if any would be rich in good works as becometh Christians, and as it is our interest to be, they must not stay till they be compelled, persuaded, or intreated by others to do them; but they must set upon them of their own accord, out of pure obedience unto God, and from a due sense of their constant dependence upon him, and manifold obligations to him; yea so as to take pleasure in nothing in the World so much as in paying their Respects and Service to Almighty God, 1 Chron. xxix. 14, 15, 17.

Now to encourage the Rich to employ their Estates thus in doing good, the Apostle adds in the last place, that this is the way to lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life. A strange Expression! yea such a one, that had not St. Paul himself spoke it, some would have been apt to have excepted against it for an Error or Mistake. What, good Works the

Foundation of eternal Life? No, that is not the meaning of it; but that good works are the Foundation of that blessed Sentence which they shall receive who are made Partakers of eternal Life, as is plain. from our Saviour's own words, Mat. xxv. 34, 35. 36.

AND verily although there be no such intrinsick value in good works, whereby they that do them can merit any thing from God by their doing of them; yet nothing can be more certain, than that God of his infinite Mercy in Jesus Christ will so accept of them as to reward us for them in the World to come. For this our Saviour himself doth clearly intimate to us, in the Place before quoted, as also, Mat. vi. 20. Luk. xii. 33. Luk. xvi. 9. that is, distribute and employ the unrighteous or deceitful Riches you have in this World in such a way as is most pleasing and acceptable unto God, that so he may be your Friend, and receive you into everlasting Habitations, when these transient and unstable Riches fail you. From whence I beg leave to observe, that to do good with what we have is the only way whereby to improve our Estates for our own good, so as to be the better for them both in this and also in the World to come. The Rabbins have a good Saying, that mlch mmvn tsrqh good works are the Salt of Riches, that which preserves them from Corruption, and makes them savoury and acceptable unto God, as also useful and profitable to the Owners. Unless we do good with our Estates, we forfeit our Title to them by the Non-payment of the Rent-charge which God hath reserved to himself upon them; and therefore we may justly expect every moment to be call out of Possession; of howsoever though he may forbear us a while, yea so long as we are in this World, what good, what benefit, what comfort shall we have of our Estates in the World to come? Certainly no more than the rich Man in the Gospel had, when he lay scorching in Hell-fire, and had not so much as a drop of water to cool his enflamed tongue. Whereas on the other

side, if we do good with our Estates, if we devote them to the Service of God, and to the Relief of the Poor, by this means we shall not only secure the Possession of them to our selves here, but shall also receive comfort and benefit from them in the World to come; so that our Estates will not die with us, but we shall receive benefit by them, and have cause to bless God for them unto all Eternity. The Apostle himself assuring us. that by this means we shall lay up for our selves a good foundation for the time to come, so as to lay hold on eternal Life.

THIS one Argument being duly weighed, I hope I need not use any more to persuade Men to do good with what they have, and to make the best use of it they can. For I know I write to Christians, at least to such as profess themselves to be so; and therefore to such as believe there is another World besides this we live in, and by consequence that it concerns them to provide for that, which, as I have shewn, we may do in a plentiful manner, by the right Improvement of what God hath entrusted with us in this World. What then do the generality of Men mean to be so flack and remiss in laying hold on all opportunities of doing good! What, do they think it possible to lose any thing they do for God! or do they think it possible to employ their Estates better than for his Service and Honour who gave them to us! I cannot believe any think so; and therefore must needs advise the Rich again and again not to lay up their Talent in a Napkin, but to use their Estates to the best advantage for God and their own Souls, that so when they go from hence into the other World, they may be received into eternal Glory, with a Well done good and faithful Servants, enter you into your Master's Joy. BUT fearing lest these moral Persuasions may not prevail so much upon my Readers as I desire they might, they must give me leave farther to tell them, that I am here commanded to charge them that are rich in this World, to be rich also in good works: And therefore seeing, as I

have shewn, there are few but who in a Scripture-sense are rich in this world, in obedience to this Command which here is laid upon me, in the Name of the most high God, I charge you, and not I only, but the eternal God himself, he wills and requires all those whom he hath blessed with Riches in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but that they put their whole Trust and Confidence only in the Living God, whose all things are, and who gives us whatsoever we have: That they do good with what he hath put into their hands, laying it out upon works of Piety towards him, and of Charity to the Poor, that his Worship may be decently performed, and the Poor liberally relieved; that they be rich in good works, striving to excel each other in doing good in their Generation; that they be ready every moment to distribute, and always willing to communicate to every good work, wherein they can pay their Homage and express their Thankfulness to him for what they have,

Thoughts upon Self-denial.

THE most glorious Sight questionless that was ever to be seen upon the face of the Earth, was to see the Son of God here, to see the supreme Being and Governour of the World here; to see the Creator of all things conversing here with his own Creatures; to see God himself with the nature, and in the shape of Man; walking about upon the surface of the Earth, and discoursing with silly Mortals here; and that with so much Majesty and Humility mixed together, that every expression might seem a demonstration that he was both God and Man. It is true, we were not so happy as to see this blessed Sight; howsoever, it is our Happiness that we have heard of it, and have it so exactly described to us, that we may as clearly apprehend it as if we had seen it: Yea, our Saviour himself hath pronounced those in a peculiar manner blessed, who have not seen, and yet have believed, Joh. xx. 29. that is, who never saw Christ in the Manger, nor in the Temple, who never saw him prostrate before his Father in the Garden, nor fastned by Men unto his Cross; who never saw him preaching the Gospel, nor working Miracles to confirm it; who never saw him before his Passion, nor after his Resurrection, and yet do as firmly believe whatsoever is recorded of him, as if they had seen it with their Eyes. Such Persons our blessed Saviour himself asserts to be truly blessed, as having such a Faith as is the Substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. HENCE therefore, although we lived not in our Saviour's time, and therefore saw him not do as never Man did, nor heard him speak as never Man spake, we may notwithstanding be as blessed, or rather more blessed than they that did. If we do but give credit to what is asserted of him, and receive and believe what is represented to us in his holy

Gospels, where by Faith we may still see him working Miracles, and hear him declaring his Will and Pleasure to his Disciples, as really as if we had then been by him. And therefore whatsoever we read in the Gospel that he spake, we are to hearken as diligently to it; as if we heard him speak it with our own Ears, and be as careful in the performance of it, as if we had received it from his own Mouth: for so we do, though not immediately, yet by the infallible Pen of them that did so. And seeing he never spake in vain, or to no purpose, nor suffered an idle or superfluous word to proceed out of his sacred and divine Mouth; whatsoever he asserted, we are to look upon as necessary to be believed, because he asserted it. And whatsoever he commanded, we are to look upon as necessary to be observed, because he hath commanded it; for we must not think that his Assertions are so frivolous, or his Commands so impertinent, that it is no great matter whether we believe the one and obey the other or no: No, if we expect to be justified and saved by him, he expects to be believed and obeyed by us, without which he will not look upon us as his Disciples, nor by consequence as Christians, but Strangers and Actions to him, whatsoever our Professions and Pretences are.

It is true, we live in an Age wherein Christianity in the general notion of it is highly courted, all Sects and Parties amongst us making their Pretences to it, whatsoever Opinions or Circumstances they differ in, be sure they all agree in the external Profession of the Christian Religion, and by consequence in the acknowledgment that they ought to be Christians indeed. But I fear that Men are generally mistaken about the notion of true Christianity, not thinking it to be so high and divine a thing as really it is; for if they had true and clear conceptions of it. they would never fancy themselves to be Christians, upon such low and pitiful grounds as usually they do, making as if

Christianity consisted in nothing else, but in the external performance of some few particular Duties, and in adhering to them that profess it; whereas Christianity is a thing of a much higher and far more noble nature, than such would have it; insomuch, that did we but rightly understand it, methinks we could not but be taken with it, so as to resolve for the future to the utmost of our power to live up to it, to which could I be an instrument of persuading any, how happy should I think my self? Howsoever it is my Duty to endeavour it; and for that purpose I shall now clear up the true notion of Christianity, that we may know, not what it is to be Professors and Pretenders to Christianity, but what it is to be real Christians, and true Disciples of Christ Jesus, such as Christ will own for his in another World. NOW to know whom Christ will accept for his Disciples, our only way is to consult Christ himself, and to consider what it is that he requires of those that follow him, in order to be his Disciples; a thing as easily understood, as it is generally disregarded; for nothing can be more plain, than that Christ requires and enjoins all those that would be his Disciples, to observe not only some few, but all the Commands that he hath laid upon us. Ye are my friends, saith he, and therefore my Disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you, Joh. xv. 14. So that unless we do whatsoever he commands, us, we are so far from being his Disciples, that we are indeed his Enemies. Nay, they that would be his Disciples, must excel and surpass all others in Vertue and good Works. Herein, saith he, is my father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples, Joh. xv. 8. yea and continue in them too, Joh. viii. 31. He tells us also, that they that would be his Disciples, must love him above all things, or rather, hate all things in comparison of him, Luc. xiv. 26. And that they love one another, as he hath loved them, Joh. xiii. 35. To name no more; read but St. Mat.

xvi. 24. and there you may see what it is to be a Christian indeed, or what it is that Christ requires of those who would be his Disciples. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me. Did we but understand the true meaning of these words, and order our Conversations accordingly, we should both know what it is to be true Christians, and really be so our selves. For I think there is nothing that Christ requires of those who desire to be his Disciples, but we should perform it, could we but observe what is here commanded; which that we may all do, I shall endeavour to give the true meaning of them, and of every particular in them, as they lie in order. First, saith he, If any man will come after me, that is, If any Man will be my Disciple; for Masters ye know use to go before, Scholars and Disciples to follow after. And our Saviour here speaks of himself under the notion of a Master, that hath Disciples coming after him, and saith, that if any one would be one of his Disciples, so as to go after him, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow him. So that here are three things which our blessed Saviour requires of those that would be his Disciples, and by consequence of us who profess to be so; for I dare say, there is none of us but desires to be a Christian, or at least to be thought so; for we all know and believe Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour of Mankind, that none can save us but he, and that there is none of us but he can save, and that all those who truly come to him for Pardon and Salvation, shall must certainly have it: Hence it is that we would all be thought at least so wise, and to have so much Care of our own Souls as to go after Christ, and be his Disciples. I hope there are but few but who really desire to be so. But I would not have any think that it is so easy a Matter to be a Disciple of Christ, or a real and true Christian, as the World would make it; no, we may assure ourselves, that as it is the highest Honour and Happiness we can

attain unto, so we shall find it the hardest matter in the World to attain unto it; not in its own Nature, but by reason of its Contrariety to our natural Temper and Inclinations. For here we see what it is that our blessed Saviour requires of those that would go after him, even nothing less than to deny themselves, take up their Crosses, and follow him. All which are far greater things than at the first sight or reading they may seem to be.

FOR first, saith he, If any one will come after me, let him deny himself; which being the first thing which Christ requires of those that go after him, it is necessary that we search more narrowly into the Nature of it. For if we fail in this, we cannot but fail in all the rest. And therefore, for the opening of this, I shall not trouble the Reader with the various Expositions, and the divers Opinions of learned Men concerning these words, but only mind him in general, that the Self-denial here spoken of is properly opposed to Self-love, or that corrupt and vicious Habit of the Soul, whereby we are apt to admire and prefer our own Fancies, Wills, Desires, Interests, and the like, before Christ himself, and what he is pleased either to promise to us or require of us. And therefore, when he commands us to deny our selves, his Will and Pleasure in general is this, That we do not indulge, or gratify our selves in any thing that stands in Opposition against, and comes into Competition with his Interest in the world, or ours in him, howsoever near and dear it may be unto us. But to deny our selves whatsoever is pleasing to our selves, if it be not so to God and Christ too, so as not to live to our selves, but only unto him that dyed for us, to live as those who are none of our own, but are bought with a Price, and therefore should glorify God both in our Souls and in our Bodies, which are his, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. But seeing this is not only the first Lesson to be learnt by Christ's Disciples, but that which is

necessarily required in order to whatsoever else he commands from us, I shall shew you more particularly what it is in your selves that you are to deny.

FIRST, you must deny your own Reasons in Matters of divine Revelation, so as to use them no farther than only to search into the Grounds and Motives that we have to believe them to be revealed by God. For this being either proved or supposed, we are not to suffer our Reasons to be too curious in searching into them, but believe them upon the Word and Testimony of God himself, who is the supreme Truth, or Verity itself.

FOR we who by all our Art and Cunning cannot understand the reasons of the most common and obvious things in Nature, must not think to comprehend the great Mysteries of the Gospel, which tho' they be not contrary to our Reasons, are infinitely above them. For the natural Man received not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. So that to the understanding of the things of the Spirit, or which the Spirit of God hath resealed to us, there is a great deal more required than what we have by Nature, even the supernatural Assistance of the Spirit himself that revealed them. And therefore if any Man amongst us seemeth to be wise in this World, let him become a Fool that he may be wise, 1 Cor. iii. 18. that is, He that would be wise unto Salvation, must look upon himself as a Fool, as one incapable by Nature of understanding the things that belong unto his everlasting Peace, without both the Revelation and Assistance of God himself, and therefore must not rely upon his own Judgment, but only upon God's Testimony in what he doth believe; not believing what his Reason, but what God's Word tells him; looking upon it as reason enough why he should believe it, because God hath said it.

I know this is an hard Doctrine to Flesh and Blood. For as Job tells

us, Vain Man would be wise, though Man be born like a wild Ass's Colt, Job xi. 12. Though by nature we be never so foolish, vain and ignorant; understanding the great Mysteries of the Gospel no more than a wild Ass's Colt doth a mathematical Demonstration, yet howsoever we would fain be thought very wise Men, yea so wise as to be able to comprehend Matters of the highest, yea of an infinite Nature, within the narrow compass of our finite and shallow Capacities. But this is that which we must deny our selves in, if we desire to be Christ's Disciples, so as to acquiesce in his Word, and believe what he asserts, only because he asserts it; without suffering our Reason to interpose, but looking upon his Word as more than all the Reasons and Arguments in the World besides.

2. YOU must deny your own Wills. Our Wills, it is true, at first were made upright and perfect, every way correspondent to the Will of God himself, so as to will what he wills, that is what is really Good, and to nill what he nills, that is what is really Evil. But being now perverted, and corrupt with Sin, our Wills are naturally inclined to the Evil which they should be averse from and averse from the Good which they should be inclined to. So that instead of chusing the Good and refusing the Evil, we are generally apt to chuse the Evil and refuse the Good: Yet for all that our Wills are thus crooked and perverse, we cannot endure to have them crossed or thwarted in any thing, but would needs have our own Wills in every thing, so as neither to do any thing our selves, nor yet have any thing done to us, but just as our selves will, who Will usually just contrary to what we should. But now they that would be Christ's Disciples, must not be thus self-willed, but deny themselves the fulfilling of their own Wills, when it doth not consist with the Will of God to have them fulfilled. This our Lord and Master hath taught us by his Example as well as

Precept, saying, Father, if thou be willing remove this Cup from me, nevertheless not my Will but thine be done, Luk. xxii. 42. Where we may observe that our blessed, Saviour, as Man, could not but have a natural Averseness from Death, as all Men by Nature have, and that without Sin. Yet though Christ's Will, as Man, was never so pure and perfect, yet he wholly submits it to the Will of God. he manifested indeed that it was the Will of that Nature which he had assumed, not to suffer Death, saying, if it is possible let this Cup pass from me, but he shews withal that the Will of Man must still be subject to the Will of God; and that Man, even as Man, must deny his own Will, whensoever it runneth not exactly parallel with God's, saying, nevertheless, not my Will but thine be done.

AND if Christ himself denied his own most pure and perfect Will, that his Father's might be accomplished, how much more Cause have we to deny our Wills, which by nature are always contrary to his Will, yea and to our own Good too, preferring generally that which is evil and destructive to us, before that which is truly good and advantageous for us? And verily a great part of true Christianity consisteth in thus resigning our Wills to God's, not minding so much which way our own Inclinations bend as what his Pleasure and Command is. A notable Instance whereof we have in old Eli, who questionless could not but be very willing that the Iniquity of his Sons might be forgiven, and his Family prosper in the World, yet howsoever when God had manifested his Pleasure to him, that his House should be destroyed, he submitted his own Will wholly unto God's, saying, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. iii. 18. And whosoever of us would be Christ's Disciple indeed, must be sure thus to deny and renounce his own Will, whensoever it appears to be contrary unto God's, so as even to will, that not his own Will but God's be fulfilled, as our Lord and Master

himself hath taught us each Day to pray, Thy Will done in Earth as it is in Heaven. And whosoever hath learn'd this Art of making his own Will bow and stoop to God's, hath made a very good Progress in the Christian Religion, especially in that part of it which requires us to deny our selves

AND seeing we must deny our Wills, we must needs deny our Affections too, which are indeed nothing else but the several Motions of the Will towards Good and Evil, but usually they are so disorderly and irregular, as to place themselves upon Objects directly opposite to what they were designed for; so that we ordinarily love what we ought to hate, and hate what we ought to love; desire what we ought to abhor, and abhor what we ought to desire; rejoyce in those things which we ought to grieve for, and are grieved at such things as we ought to rejoyce in. So that if we suffer our Affections to move, according to their natural Tendency and corrupt Inclinations, we shall be so far from going after Christ, that we shall continually be running from him. And therefore it must be our great Care and Study to bridle our Affections, deny them their unlawful, and fix them upon their proper Objects; yea, and to deny our selves too the lawful use of such things as our Affections are apt to be unlawfully placed upon. As for Example: It is lawful, yea our Duty to love our Relations, but if our Love to them becomes exorbitant, so as to love them more than God, our Love to them must be turned into Hatred in Comparison of our Love to him, Luk. xiv. 26. And whatsoever lawful thing it is that we take Pleasure in, if once we find that our Pleasure in that extinguisheth, or but damps that Pleasure which we used, or ought to have in God, we are to deny our selves such Pleasures as these are, and rather displease our selves than God.

YEA we must deny our selves moreover the Use and Enjoyment of our

Estates and earthly Possessions, whensoever they come into Competition with his Glory. So that if it comes to that Point, that we must either leave our Estates to enjoy Christ, or leave Christ to enjoy our Estates; we must be willing and ready, without any more ado, to abandon and renounce whatsoever else we have, rather than our Interest in Christ. For indeed he is not worthy to be Christ's Disciple that doth not prefer him before all things else; neither he that loves the World at all in Comparison of Christ: For if any Man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 Joh. ii. 15. And therefore he that would be Christ's Disciple indeed, must fix his Heart so fast on Christ, that it hang loose and indifferent as to all things here below, being no more proud of them, no more delighted in them, no more concerned about them, than as if he had them not. So that though he have all things besides Christ, he must have nothing but him, or at least in Comparison of him; yea, be ready to part with all that he may gain Christ. And though many of us may think this an hard Saying, we may assure our selves, it is no more than what we must do, if we, desire to be Christ's Disciples;

FURTHERMORE, we must deny our selves those Sins especially, and Lusts which we have or do still indulge our selves in, for thus the Gospel teacheth you in a particular manner, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, Tit. ii. 12. And therefore we in vain pretend to be true Christians, so long as we live in any one known Sin with any love unto it, or delight in it. I suppose none of my Readers guilty of all Sins, and I fear there are few but live in some. No Man but may be naturally averse from some Sins, but it is very rare to find one that is inclined to none; for ordinarily every Man hath his darling, his beloved Sin, his own Sin, as David himself once had, though he afterwards, kept himself from it, Psal. xviii. 23. So I fear none of my Readers but have

some Sin, which he may in a peculiar manner call his own, as being that which his thoughts run most upon, and his desires are carried most unto, which he labours most after, and takes most pleasure in; which he is most loth, to be reprov'd for and most easily overcome by. Now this and whatsoever other Sins any of us are addicted to, we must wholly leave, and utterly renounce, if ever we desire to be Christ's Disciples. And therefore, so long as any of us live in any known Sin, as in Pride or Prodigality, in Oppression, or Covetousness, in Malice or Uncleaness, in Drunkenness, Uncharitableness, or any other Sin whatsoever, we must not think our selves to be Christians indeed, Christ will never own us for his Disciples, for so long as we live in any known Sin, it is that Sin, not Christ that is our Master, and therefore if we would list our selves into his Service, we must be sure to deny our selves whatsoever we know to be offensive to him.

THERE is still another thing behind wherein we must deny our selves, if we desire to go after Christ, and that is, we must deny and renounce all our Self-righteousness, and all hopes and confidences from our selves, and from what we have done, which I look upon as a very great piece of Self-denial, for naturally we are all prone to sacrifice to our own Nets, to burn incense to our own Drags, to boast of our own good Works, and to pride our selves with the conceit of our own Righteousness. Though we be never so sinful, we would not be thought to be so, but would very fain be accounted righteous, not only by Men, but by God himself, for something or other which our selves do, though when all comes to all, we know not what that should be; but howsoever the pride of our Hearts is such, that we are loth to go out of our selves to look for Righteousness, or to be beholden to another for it. And this is the reason that Justification by Faith in Christ hath had so many Adversaries in the World; Mankind in general being so much in love

with themselves, and doting upon what themselves do, that they cannot endure to renounce and vilifie then own Obidience and good Works, so much as to think that they stand in need of any other Righteousness besides their own; as if their own Righteousness was so perfect, that God himself could find no fault with it, nor make any Exceptions against it, but must needs acknowledge them to be just and righteous Persons for it.

WHEREAS, alas! there is not the best Action that ever a mere Mortal did, but if examined by the strict Rules of Justice, it is far from being good, yea so far, that God himself may justly pronounce it evil, and by consequence condemn the Person that did it, for doing of it. And therefore I cannot but wonder what it is that any Man doth or can do, for which he can in reason expect to be justified before God, our very Righteousness being as the Prophet tells, but as filthy rags, and our most holy Performances fraught With Sin and Imperfection, and therefore so far from justifying us, that we may justly be condemned for them; but this Mankind doth not love to hear of, the pride of our Hearts being such, that by all means we must have something in our selves whereof to glory before God himself. But wo be to that Person who hath no other Righteousness but his own, wherein to appear before the Judge of the whole World. For howsoever specious his Actions may seem to Men, they will be adjudged Sins before the eternal God.

He therefore that would come to Christ, although he must labour after Righteousness to the utmost of his Power, yet when he hath done all, he must renounce it and look upon himself as an unprofitable Servant, For Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Mat. ix. 13. that is, he came not to call such Persons as think they have Righteousness enough of their own to serve their turns, for such Persons think they have no need of him, and therefore it would be in

vain to call them; but he calls Sinners, that is, such as may perhaps be as righteous as the other, but they do not think themselves to be so, but look upon themselves as undone for ever, unless they have something else to trust to, than their own good Works and Obedience to the Moral Law. Such Persons therefore Christ came to call, and if they come to him, they cannot but find Rest and Righteousness in him; and if any of us desire to go after Christ, so as to be his Disciples, we must be sure to look upon our selves as Sinners, as deserving nothing but Wrath and Vengeance for whatsoever we have done, we must renounce all our own Righteousness, and be so far from depending upon it, as to think that we have none to depend upon, for so really we have not. And when we have laid aside all thoughts of our own Righteousness, as to the matter of our Justification before God, then, and not till then, shall we be rightly qualified so embrace anothers, even that Righteousness which is by Faith in Christ. Thus St. Paul, though he had as much, yea more reason to trust in the Flesh or in himself than others; for himself saith, that as touching the righteousness which is of the law, he was blameless. Phil. iii. 6. Yet saith he, what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, v. 7, 8, 9. Thus therefore it is that all those must do, who desire to be as St. Paul was, real Disciples of Jesus Christ, as we must forsake our Sins, so we must renounce our Righteousness too. It is true, this is a great and difficult part of Self-denial, thus to deny our selves all that Pride, Pleasure and Confidence, which we used to

take in the thoughts of our own Righteousness and Obedience to the Law of God. But we must remember that the first thing which our Saviour enjoins those that come after him, is to deny themselves.

THUS I have shewn what it is in our selves that we must deny, and how it is that we must deny our selves, if we desire to go after Christ; we must deny our selves the curiosity of searching too much into the Mysteries of the Gospel, by the light of our own clouded Reasons, we must deny our Self-conceit, our Self-will, our Self-love, Self-interests, Self-confidences, and whatsoever proceeds from and terminates in our sensual and sinful selves, so as to have no delight in nor dependence upon our selves; yea, we must so deny our selves, as to be quite taken off of our former selves, and become other Creatures than what before we were. Thus St. Ambrose explains these words, saying, *Seipsum sibi homo abneget & totus mutetur*, Let a Man deny himself to himself, so as to be wholly changed from what he was. But then you'll say, what need is there of all this trouble, what reason can be given that a Man must deny himself before he can be a true Christian.

TO that I answer, it is reason enough that Christ hath commanded us to do it, and surely he best knows whom he will accept of as his Disciples, and what is necessary to be done in order to our being so. And he hath said in plain terms, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, implying, that he that doth not deny himself, cannot go after him.

BUT before that, there is an impossibility in the thing it self, that any one should be a true Christian, or go after Christ, and, not deny himself, as may be easily perceived, if we will but consider what true Christianity requires of us, and what it is to be a real Christian. A true Christian we know is one that lives by Faith, and not by Sight,

that looks not at the things which are seen, but at those things which are not seen, that believes whatsoever Christ hath said, trusteth on whatsoever he hath promised, and obeyeth whatsoever he hath commanded, that receiveth Christ as his only Priest to make atonement for him, as his only Prophet to instruct, and as his only Lord and Master to rule and govern him. In a word, a Christian is one that gives up himself and all he hath to Christ, who gave himself and all he hath to him; and therefore the very notion of true Christianity implies and supposes the denial of our selves, without which it is as impossible for a Man to be a Christian, as it is for a Subject to be rebellious and loyal to his Prince at the same time; and therefore it is absolutely necessary that we go out of our selves before we can go to him, we must strip our selves of our very selves before we can put on Christ, for Christ himself hath told us, that No man can serve two masters, for either he hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other, Mat. vi. 24. We cannot serve both God and Mammon, Christ and our selves too; so that we must either deny our selves to go after Christ, or else deny Christ to go after our selves, so as to mind our own selfish ends and designs in the World.

WHEREFORE I hope I need not use any other Arguments to persuade any to deny themselves in the sense already explained; I dare say there is none amongst us but would willingly be what we profess, even a real Christian, and so go after Christ here, as to come to him hereafter.

But we have now seen how Christ himself hath told us, that we must deny our selves, if we desire to serve and enjoy him. And verily it is an hard case it we cannot deny our selves for him, who so far denied himself for us, as to lay down his own Life to redeem ours. He who was equal to God himself, yea who himself was the true God, so far denied himself as to become Man, yea, A man of sorrows and acquainted with

griefs, for us, and cannot we deny our selves so much as a Fancy, a Conceit, a Sin or Lust for him? How then can we expect that he should own us for his Friends, his Servants or Disciples? No, he'll never do it, neither can we in reason expect that he should give himself and all the Merits of his Death and Passion unto us, so long as we think much to give our selves to him, or to deny our selves for him. And therefore if we desire to be made Partakers of all those glorious things that he hath purchased with his own most precious Blood for the Sons of Men; let us begin here, indulge our Flesh no longer, but deny our selves whatsoever God hath been pleased to forbid. And for that end, let us endeavour each Day more and more to live above our selves, above the temper of our Bodies, and above the allurements of the World, live as those who believe and profess that they are none of their own, but Christ's, his by Creation, it was he that made us, his by Preservation, it is he that maintains us, and his by Redemption, it is he that hath purchased and redeemed us with his own Blood. And therefore let us deny our selves for the future to our very selves, whose we are not, and devote our selves to him whose alone we are; by this we shall manifest our selves to be Christ's Disciples indeed, especially if we do not only deny our selves, but also take up our Cross and follow him; which brings me to the second thing which our blessed Saviour here requires of those who would go after him, even to take up their Cross.

WHERE, by the Cross, we are m understand whatsoever Troubles or Calamities, inward or outward, we meet with in the performance of our Duty to God or Man, which they that would go after Christ must take up as they go along, without any more ado, neither repining at them, nor sinking under them; for we must not think that Christ invites us into an earthly Paradise of Idleness and outward Pleasures, as if we had nothing to do or suffer for him. For even as Men, we cannot but find

many Crosses in the World, but as Christians we must expect more, for Christ himself hath told us, that in the World we shall have Tribulation, John xvi. 33. And therefore whatsoever we meet with, is no more than what we are to look for; especially if we walk uprightly in the way that leads to Heaven, we cannot but expect to meet with many a rub, for God himself hath told us that it is through many tribulation that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, Act. xiv. 22. And therefore we must not think to be carried up to Heaven with the breath of popular Applause, nor to swim through a deluge of carnal Pleasures into the haven of everlasting Happiness. No, we must look to be tossed to and fro in this World, as in a raging and tempestuous Ocean, and never look for perpetual Calmness and Tranquillity, until we are got above the Clouds, yea even above the Sun and Stars themselves. This World was always a World of trouble, and ever will be, its very Friends, and they that have their Portion here, can find no quiet nor satisfaction in it; but the Disciples of Christ they are not of this world, as Christ himself tells us, John xvii. 4. And therefore no wonder if the World frowns more upon them than others. The way they walk in is opposite to the World, it is enmity it self to the Flesh, and therefore no wonder if they meet with so much Enmity and Opposition here; the way wherein they go after Christ is a cross way, it is cross to Sin, cross to Satan, cross to the World, cross to our very selves as we are by Nature, and by consequence cross to all Men in the World but Christ's Disciples, and therefore it is no wonder they meet with so many crosses in it. But howsoever, if we desire to go after Christ, he hath told us before hand what we must expect, as he hath born the Cross before us, he expects that we now bear it after him; yea we must not only bear it, but take it up too: Not that we should run our selves into danger, but that we should baulk no Duty to avoid it, so as to be

willing and ready to undergo the greatest suffering, rather than to commit the least Sin, and to run the greatest danger rather than neglect the smallest Duty. If whilst we are walking in the narrow path of Holiness, there happens to lie a Cross in the way, we must not go on one side nor on the other side of it out of the path we walk in, neither must we kick and spurn at it, but we must patiently take it up and carry it along with us; if it be a little heavy at first, it will soon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further our progress towards Heaven.

BUT here we must have a great care to understand our Saviour's meaning, and so our own Duty aright; for we must not think that every trouble we meet with in the World is the Cross of Christ, for we may suffer for our fancy or humour, or perhaps for our Sin and Transgression of the Laws of God or Men, and if so, it is our own Cross, not Christ's which we take upon us; we may thank our selves for it, I am sure Christ hath no cause to thank us: For this is thankworthy, saith the Apostle, if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully, 1 Pet. ii. 19, 20. And therefore the Duty which our Saviour here imposeth on us, in few terms is this, that we be ready not only to do, but to suffer what we can for the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel, and that we omit no Duty, nor commit any Sin for fear of suffering; not to think much of any trouble that befalls us for Christ's sake, but rather to rejoice at it, even as the Apostles rejoiced, that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name, Act. v. 41. Which was a clear instance of their performing the Duty here enjoined both them and us, under the name of taking up our Cross.

AND I hope there is none of us can take it ill that Christ hath imposed so severe a Duty upon us; for we may assure our selves he requires no more of us than what himself hath undergone before, so that we can

suffer nothing for him, but what he hath suffered before for us. Have we grief and trouble in our Hearts? so had he, Mat. xxvi. 38. Have we pains and tortures in our Bodies? so had he, Mat. xxvii. 29, 30. Are we derided and scoffed at? so was he, Mat. xxvii. 31. Are we arraigned or condemned, yea do we suffer death it self? it is no more than what our Lord and Master hath done before. And let us remember what he told us when he was upon the Earth, The disciple is not above his master, nor the fervent above his lord, Mat. x. 24. If we be Christ's Disciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the World than Christ himself did, neither indeed can we fare so bad; for it is impossible that we should undergo so much for him as he hath undergone for us, ours being only the Sufferings of Men, his the Sufferings of one who was God as well as Man, whereby Sufferings in general are sanctified to our human nature, it having already undergone them in the Person of the Son of God, so that it can be now no disparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea death it self, or any other Calamity whatsoever in this World, seeing the Son of God himself, he that made the World, underwent the same while himself was in it. And therefore we need not think it below us to stoop down and take up the Cross of Christ, as considering that Christ having born it before us, hath so blessed and sanctified it unto us; that it is now become an honourable, an advantageous, yea and a pleasant Cross, to them that bear it patiently, thankfully and constantly as they ought to do, especially seeing it is such a Cross as leads unto a Crown; and whatsoever we can do or suffer for Christ here, will be fully recompensed with Glory hereafter, and therefore instead of being troubled to take up our Cross, we are rather to rejoice that we have any to take up.

THUS we see in few words what it is which our Saviour commands from us

when he enjoins us to deny our selves, and take up our Cross, even that we do not gratifie our selves in any thing that is ungrateful unto him, nor grudge to take up any Cross, or suffer any trouble we meet with in the World for his sake, thinking nothing too dear to forsake, nor any thing too heavy to bear for him, who thought not his own Life too dear, nor the Cross it self too heavy to bear for us; what now remains, but that knowing our Saviour's pleasure, we should all resolve to do it. There is none of us but hope and desire to be saved by him, but that we can never be, unless we observe what he hath prescribed in order to our Salvation: And amongst other things, we see how he hath commanded us, to deny our selves, and take up our Cross; as any of us therefore desires to be Christians indeed, so as to see Christ's face with comfort in another World, let us bethink our selves seriously what Sins we have hitherto indulged our selves in; I fear there are but few, if any amongst us, but are conscious to themselves, that they have and do still live, either in the constant neglect of some known Duty, or else in the frequent commission of some beloved Sin; what that is, I dare not undertake to tell, but leave that to God and to Mens own Consciences; only I desire them to deal faithfully with their own Souls, and not suffer themselves to be fooled into a fond and vain persuasion that they have any interest in Christ, or are truly his Disciples, until they deny themselves that Sin, whatsoever it is, which they have hitherto indulged themselves in. And let us not think that we shall deny one selves any real pleasure or profit, by renouncing our Sins; for what pleasure can we have in displeasing God, or profit in losing our own Souls? No, we shall gratifie our selves more than we can imagine, by denying our selves as much as we are able, whatsoever is offensive or displeasing unto God; for we may be sure, he that came into the World on purpose to save us from evil, commands us nothing but

for our own good, neither would he ever have oblig'd us to deny our selves, if we could have been saved without it, and as for the Cross that he was so well acquainted with, that he would never have imposed it upon us to take it up, but that it is indispensably necessary for us. And therefore if we be what we pretend, real and true Christians, let us manifest it to the World and to our own Consciences, by denying our selves whatsoever Christ hath denied us, and by observing whatsoever he hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any Cross, that he for his own sake shall suffer to be laid upon us, still remembering, that Self-denial, though it be unpleasant, is a most necessary Duty; and the Cross, though it be never so heavy, it is but short, and hath nothing less than a Crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal Crown, which all those shall most certainly obtain, who deny themselves.

Thoughts upon Striving to enter at the strait Gate.

AS certainly as we are here now, it is not long but we shall all be in another World, either in a World of Happiness, or else in a World of Misery, or if you will, either in Heaven or in Hell. For these are the two only places which all Mankind from the beginning of the World to the end of it, must live in for evermore, some in the one, some in the other, according to their carriage and behaviour here; and therefore it is worth the while to take a view and prospect now and then of both these places, and it will not be amiss if we do it now; for which end, I desire the Reader in his serious and composed Thoughts to attend me first into the celestial Mansions, above yonder glorious Sun and the Stars themselves, where not only the Cherubins and Seraphins, Angels and Archangels, but many also of our Brethren, the Sons of Men, at this very moment are enjoying the Presence, and singing forth the Praises of the most high God. There are the Spirits of just Men made perfect, perfect in themselves, and perfect in all their Actions, perfectly free from all both Sin and and Misery, perfectly full of all true Grace and Glory, all their Faculties being reduced to that most perfect and excellent frame and constitution, that their Understandings are continually taken up with the contemplations of the supreme Truth, and their wills in the embracement of the chiefest Good; so that all the Inclinations of their Souls rest in God as in their proper Centre, in whom by consequence they enjoy as much as they can desire, yea as much as they can be made capable of desiring. For all those infinite Perfections that are centred in God himself, are now in their possession, to solace and delight themselves in the full and perfect enjoyment of them; by which means they are as happy as God himself can

make them, insomuch that at this very moment methinks we may all behold them so ravished, so transported with their celestial Joys, that it may justly strike us into admiration, how ever Creatures which once were sinful, could be made so pure, so perfect, and altogether so happy as they are. And could we but leave our Bodies for a while below, and go up to take a turn in the new Jerusalem that is above, we could not but be ravish'd and transported at the very sight both of the Place and Inhabitants, every one being far more glorious than the greatest Emperors of this World, with nothing less than Crowns of Glory on their Heads, and Scepters of Righteousness in their Hands, where they think of nothing but of the Glory of God, discourse of nothing but praising him, do nothing but adore and worship him; in a word, whatsoever is agreeable to our Natures, whatsoever is desirable to our Souls, whatsoever can any way conduce to make Men happy, is fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed, by all and every Person that is in Heaven. Whereas on the other side, if we bring down our thoughts from Heaven, and send them as low as Hell, to consider the most deplorable estate and condition of those who inhabit the Regions of Darkness, them we shall find as miserable as the other are happy; not only in that they are deprived of the Vision and fruition of the chiefest good, but likewise in that they are in continual pain and torment, as great as infinite Justice can adjudge them to, and infinite Power inflict upon them; insomuch, that could we lay our Ear to the entrance of that bottomless Pit, what howlings and shriekings should we hear, what weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the midst of those infernal Flames, where, as our Saviour himself tells us, The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, Mar. ix. 44. That is, where their Consciences are always gnawed and tormented with the remembrance of their former Sins, and the Fire of God's Wrath is continually burning in them, never to be

quenched or abated. For certainly as the smiles and favour of the eternal God, constitute the Joys of Heaven, so do his frowns and anger make up the Flames of Hell. To see him that made us displeased with us, to see Mercy it self to frown upon us, to see the great and all-glorious Creator of the World, the chiefest Good to look angrily upon us, and to mean himself offended at us, and incensed against us! Methinks the very thoughts of it are sufficient to make the stoutest Heart amongst us tremble: But then what shall we think of those poor Souls that see and feel it? What shall we think of them? Questionless they are more miserable than we are able to think them to be. For we cannot possibly conceive either the greatness of Heavens Glory, or the sharpness of Hell Torments, only this we know, and may be certain of, that whatsoever is ungrateful to their Minds, whatsoever is troublesome to their Thoughts, whatsoever is contrary to their Desires, whatsoever is painful to their Bodies, or whatsoever is or can be destructive and tormenting to their Souls, that all they who are once in Hell, shall fear and feel that for ever.

BUT this is too sad and doleful a Subject to insist on long, neither should I have mentioned it, but for our own Good; and to prepare us the better, both for the understanding and improving the Advice of our Saviour, Matth. vii. 13, 14. Enter ye in at the streight Gate, &c. The meaning of which Words, in brief, may be reduced to these three Heads. FIRST, that it is an easy matter to go to Hell, that Place of Torments we have now been describing, and by Consequence that many go thither; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leadeth thither. SECONDLY, that it is a hard and difficult thing to get to Heaven, that Place of Joys we before spake of, and by Consequence that but few get thither, For strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to it.

LASTLY, howsoever difficult it is, our Saviour would have us strive to get to Heaven, so as to press through that strait gate, and walk in that narrow way that leadeth into life.

AS for the first, that the gate is wide, and the way broad, that leads to Hell, or that it is an easy matter to go thither, I need not use many Words to prove it. For though there be but few that mind it, dare say there is scarce any one but believes it, yea and hath oftentimes found it too true by Experience, even that it is an easy matter to sin, and that, we know, is the broad way that leads to Hell; so broad, that they that walk in it can find no Bounds or Limits in it, wherewithin to contain themselves; neither are they ever out of their way, but go which way they will, they are still in the ready way to Ruine and Destruction. And usually it is as plain as broad, so that Men rarely meet with any Roughness or Trouble in it, but rather with all the Pleasures and Delights which they desire, who look no higher than to please the Flesh; yea whatsoever it is that they naturally desire, they still meet with it in the Road to Hell; and whatsoever is ungrateful irksome to them, they are never troubled with it in the ways of Sin. There are no Crosses to be taken up, no self to be denied; but rather indulged and gratified; there are no such tedious and troublesome things as examining our Hearts, and mortifying our Lusts, as praying or hearing, as fasting or watching: These are only to be found in the narrow Path that leads to Heaven, the broad way to Hell is altogether unacquainted with them, being strewed all along with carnal Pleasures and sensual Delights, with popular Applause, and earthly Riches, and such fine things as silly Mortals use to be taken with.

AND hence it is, that as our Saviour tells us, many there be which find this way, and go in at this wide Gate that leads to Ruin, because they see not whither it leads, but they see the Baits and Allurements which

are in it, which they cannot but crowd about as Fishes about the Hook, or as Flies about a Candle, till they be destroyed. Yea, this way to Destruction is so broad, that almost all the World is continually walking in it; the Gate so wide that thousands at a time pass through it. And therefore we may well conclude it is an easy thing to go to that Place of Torments which even now we spake of, or rather that it is an hard, a difficult matter to keep out of it; the way being so narrow that carries from it that it is a difficult thing to find it, and the way so broad that leads unto it that none can miss of it that hath but a mind to walk in it.

BUT I hope none of my Readers have so, God forbid they should have a mind to go to Hell; their taking religious Books into their Hands is rather an Argument that they have a mind to go to Heaven, and read on purpose to learn the way thither. And we do well to take all Opportunities of finding out the way to Bliss; for we may assure our selves it is a very narrow one, it is hard to find it out, but touch more hard to walk in it; for it is a way very rarely trodden, so that there is scarce any Path to be seen, most People going either on one side, or else on the other side of it; some running into the By-paths of Error, Heresy, or Schism, others into the broad way of Profaneness or Security: Insomuch that there are but very few that hit upon the right Path that leads directly to the New Hierusalem, the Place of rest. I speak not this of my self; no, Christ himself, that came from Heaven to Earth, on purpose to shew us the way from Earth to Heaven, saith, That strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

AND let not any think that Christ spoke these Words in vain, or that it is no great matter whether we believe what he said or no. For questionless, one great Reason why so few ever come to Heaven, is

because most think it so easy to get thither that they need not take any Care or Pains about it. For even amongst our selves, to whom the Gospel is so clearly revealed, Men generally think if they do but read the Scriptures, and hear Sermons, and live honestly with their Neighbours so as to harm no body, but pay every one their own, then they shall as surely come to Heaven as if they were there already; nay, many are so simple as to think that their Separation from the Church Militant on Earth is the way to bring them to the Church Triumphant in Heaven; and others so ridiculous as to believe that a Death-bed Repentance is sufficient to entitle them to eternal Life. But stay a while: It is not so easy a matter to get to Heaven. Indeed to me it seems one of the greatest Mysteries in the World, that ever any Man or Woman should come thither, that such sinful Worms as we are, who are born in Sin, and live so long in Sin and Rebellion against the great Creator of the World, should ever be received so far into his Grace and Favour as to enjoy Life and eternal Happiness in him. And did we look no farther than our selves, we might justly despair of ever obtaining so transcendent Glory which we are so altogether unworthy of. But the Goodness of God both is and hath been so great to Mankind, that there is none of us but in and through the Merits of Christ Jesus, is in a Capacity of it. But we must not think that it is so easy a thing to come to Heaven, as the Devil, the World, and our own base Hearts, would persuade us it is: if we do, we are never likely to come thither; no, we may assure our selves, as Heaven is the greatest Good that we can attain, so doth it require our greatest Care and Study imaginable to attain it.

THIS therefore is that which I shall endeavour to convince Men of, and account my self happy if I can do it. For, I dare say, there is none of us but desire to see Christ in Glory, and to be happy with him and in

him for ever; but that we can never be, unless we do whatsoever is required of us in order to it; and if we think it is so easy a matter to do whatsoever is required of us, I have just Cause to suspect that we never yet made tryal of it, nor set our selves seriously upon the Performance of those Duties which are enjoyned us here in Reference to our being happy for ever. For if we have set upon it in good earnest, we cannot but have found it very hard and difficult, by reason of our natural averseness from what is Good, and inclinations unto Evil. For we all know, that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii.

14. So that Holiness is the way, the direct and only way that leads to Heaven neither is there any way imaginable of being happy hereafter but by being holy here. And though it be an easy thing to profess Holiness, and to perform some external Acts of it; yet to be truly pious and holy indeed, so as we must be if ever we would go to Heaven, this is every whit as difficult as the other is easy.

FOR, first, I suppose, all will grant that he is not truly holy that lives in any known Sin, as the Apostle also intimates, saying, He that is born of God doth not commit sin, 1 Joh. iii. 9. And therefore he that still indulgeth himself in the Commission of any known Sin, he is not yet regenerate or born of God, he is not truly holy. So that to our being so holy here, as that we may be happy hereafter, it is absolutely and indispensably necessary that we forsake and avoid to the utmost of our Power whatsoever is offensive unto God and contrary to his Laws. But it is as difficult as it is necessary to forsake Sin as we ought to do. It is an easy matter, I confess, to rail at Sin, to backbite others, or blame our selves for it. But that is not the Business; but to loath our Sins as much as ever we loved them, to abhor as much as ever we desired them, and to be as much averse from them as ever we were inclined to them, to forsake Sin as Sin, and by consequence all

Sin whatsoever, one as well as another; so as to deny our selves all that Pleasure we were wont to take in any Sin, and all that seeming Profit which we used to receive by it, and that too, out of love to God and fear of his Displeasure. This is to forsake Sin indeed, but it is sooner spoken of than done; and it requires a great deal of time and skill, and pains to get so great a Conquest over our selves as this is, to cut off our Right Hand, pluck out our Right Eye, and cast it from us; even renounce and forsake those very beloved and darling Sins, which the Temper and Constitution of our Bodies, the Corruption of our Hearts, and constant Custom and Practice hath made in a manner natural to us. So that our very Natures must be changed, before we can ever leave them. And therefore it must needs be a matter of as great Difficulty as it is of Moment, to master and subdue those Sins and Lusts that have been long predominant in us, which I dare say many of us have found by their own sad and woful Experience, having struggled perhaps many Years against some Corruption, and yet to this Day have not got it under, nor totally subdued it. And it is such, and such alone, who are competent Judges in this Case; for they that never strove against their Sins, cannot know how strong they are, nor how hard it is to conquer them. And therefore it is to those who have made it their Business to destroy and mortify their Lusts, that I appeal, Whether it be not hard to do it. I am confident they cannot but have found it, and therefore must needs acknowledge it to be so; and by Consequence that it is no easy matter to get to Heaven, seeing it is so hard to keep out of Hell, and to avoid those Sins which otherwise will certainly bring us thither; every Sin unrepented of having eternal Punishment entailed upon it.

AND if it be so hard to forsake Sin, how difficult must it needs be to perform all those Duties, and to exert all those Graces which are

necessarily required, in order to our attaining everlasting Happiness. It is true, praying and hearing, which are the ordinary means for the obtaining true Grace and Holiness, are Duties very common and customary amongst us, but they are never the easier because they are common, but rather far more difficult. For we being accustomed to a careless and perfunctory performing these Duties, cannot but find it an hard and difficult matter to keep our Hearts so close unto them, as to perform them as we ought to do, and so as that we may be really said to do them. For we must not think that fitting at Church while the word of God is preached, is hearing the word of God, or that being present there whilst Prayers are read, is real praying. No, no, there is a great deal more required than this to our praying to the great God aright; insomuch that for mine own part, I really think that Prayer, as it is the highest, so is it the hardest Duty that we can be engaged in. All the faculties of our Souls, as well as members of our Bodies, being obliged to put forth themselves in their several Capacities, to the due performance of it.

AND as for those several Graces and Virtues which our Souls must be adorned withal, before ever they can come to Heaven, though it be easie to talk of them, it is not so to act them, I shall instance only in some few; as to love God above all things, and other things only for God's sake, to hope on nothing but God's Promises, and to fear nothing but his Displeasure; to love other Mens Persons, so as to hate their Vices, and so to hate their Vices as still to love their Persons; not to covet Riches when we have them not, nor trust on them when we have them; to deny our selves that we may please God, and to take up our Cross that we may follow Christ; to live above the World whilst we are in it, and to despise it while we use it; to be always upon our watch and guard, strictly observing not only the outward Actions of our Life,

but the inward Motions of our Hearts; to hate those very Sins which we used to love, and to love those very Duties which we used to hate; to chuse the greatest Affliction before the least Sin, and to neglect the getting of the greatest gain, rather than the performing of the smallest Duty; to believe Truths which we cannot comprehend, merely upon the testimony of one whom we never saw; to submit our wills to God's, and delight out selves in obeying him; to be patient under sufferings, and thankful for all the troubles we meet with here below; to be ready and willing to do or suffer any thing we can for him, who hath done and suffered so much for us, to cloath the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the indigent, and rescue the oppressed to the utmost of our power: In a word, to be every way as pious towards God, as obedient to Christ, as loyal to our Prince, as faithful to our Friends, as loving to our Enemies, as charitable to the Poor, as just in our Dealings, as eminent in all true Grace and Virtue, as if we were to be saved by it, and yet have no confidence in it, but still look upon our selves as unprofitable Servants, and depend upon Christ; and and Christ alone for Pardon and Salvation.

I suppose I need not tell any one that it is hard and difficult to perform such Duties, and to act such Graces as these are; but this let me tell the Reader, that how hard, how difficult soever it is, it must be done if ever we desire to come to Heaven, and by consequence it is no easie matter to come thither. Seeing therefore the way that leads to Heaven is thus narrow, and hard, it is no wonder that there are but few that walk in it, or indeed that find it out, as our Saviour himself assures us; for People generally love to swim with the Stream, to run with the Multitude, though it be into the Gulph of Sin and Misery. It is very rare to find one walking in the narrow way, and keeping himself within those bounds and limits wherewith it is enclosed; and this seems

to have been the occasion of these words the Gospel of St. Luke, where one said unto Christ, Lord, are there few that be saved? and our Saviour answered in these words, Strive to enter in at the strait Gate. For many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able, Luk. xiii. 23, 24. Intimating not only that there are but few that shall be saved, but likewise that many of those that seek to be saved shall not attain it; not as if any of those who really and cordially made it their business to look after Heaven, can never miss of it; but that many of those who presuming upon their seeming Obedience and good Works, shall think and seek that way to enter into the Kingdom of God, shall not be able. For many will say unto me at that Day, saith he, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you, Depart from me ye that work iniquity, Mat. vii. 22, 23. And if many of those who are great Professors of Religion, and make a plausible shew of Piety in the World, than notwithstanding come short of eternal Happiness, and if of those many which are called there are but few chosen, Mat. xx. 16. we may well conclude there are but few, but very few indeed that walk in the narrow path that leads to Life, in comparison of those innumerable multitudes that continually flock together in the broad way that leads to Ruin and Destruction. One great reason whereof is because Men generally, though they desire to go to Heaven, yet will not believe it to be so hard a thing as really it is, to get thither and therefore setting aside the superficial performance of some few external Duties, they give themselves no trouble, nor take any pains about it; as if Heaven was so contemptible a thing, that it is not worth their while to look after it; or howsoever, as if it was so easie a thing to attain it, that they cannot miss of it whether they look after it or no.

Whereas questionless, as Heaven is the greatest Happiness that we are capable of, so is it the hardest matter in the World for any of us to attain it.

I say not this to discourage any one, bur rather to excite and encourage all to a greater care and diligence in the prosecution of eternal Happiness, than ordinarily Men seem to have. It is my hearty Desire and Prayer that every Soul among us may live and be happy for ever; but that we can never be, unless we be serious, earnest and constant in looking after it, more than after all things in the World besides. And therefore it is that I have endeavoured to convince Men that it is not so easie a thing as they seem to make it to go to Heaven, the Path being so exceeding narrow that leads unto it: Which I hope by this time we are all persuaded of, so as to be resolved within our selves to play no longer with Religion, but to set upon it in good earnest, so as to make it not only our great but our only business and design in this World, to prepare for another, and to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, and by consequence to walk in that narrow way of true Piety and Virtue that leads to Heaven, without going aside into the Vices on either hand, or howsoever to use the utmost of our endeavour to observe the Rules which Christ hath prescribed us, in order to our living with him for ever. And oh that I knew what Words to take unto my self, and what Arguments to use, whereby to prevail with every Soul of us, to make it our business to get to Heaven; and by consequence to walk directly in the narrow way, and through the strait Gate that leads unto it. What influence or effect they may have upon the Readers, I know not, howsoever I shall endeavour to present them with some such Considerations, as I hope by the blessing of God, and the Assistance of his Grace, may be so forcible and prevalent upon them, if seriously. weighed, that they should not methinks be able to

resist them.

LET us consider therefore in the first place, that though it be never so hard to get to Heaven, yet it is possible; and tho' there be but few that come thither, yet there are some; and why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others? There are many perfect and most glorious Saints in Heaven at this moment, which once were sinful Creatures upon Earth as we now are; but it seems the way thither was not so narrow but they could walk in it, nor the Gate so strait but they could pass through it, and why may not we as well as they? We have the same Natures whereby we are capable of Happiness as they had, we have the same Scriptures to direct us to it as they had, we have the same Promises of Assistance as they had, we have the same Saviour as they had, and why then may not we get to the same place where they are? Is the Way more narrow, and the Gate more strait to us than it was to them? No surely, it is every way the same, why then should we despair of ever attaining everlasting Glory, seeing we are as capable of it as any one who hath yet attained it: It is true, if no mortal Men had ever got to Heaven, or God had said none should e'er come thither, then indeed it would be in vain for us to expect it, or to use any means to attain unto, it; but seeing many of our Brethren are already there, and many more will follow after them, and we are as capable of coming to them as any other, the straitness of the Gate, the narrowness of the Way, or the difficulty of getting thither, should never discourage us from endeavouring after it, go more than it did them, but rather make us the more diligent in the prosecution of it: Especially considering in the next place, that we are not only as yet in a capacity of getting to Heaven, but we are all invited thither, and that by God himself; for he would have all Men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. Yea, he hath sworn by himself, saying, As I

live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live; and therefore calls upon us all, Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Hence it is that he sent his Prophets to invite us, Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, Isa. lv. 1. Yea he came down in his own Person to Earth, on purpose to invite us to Heaven, and to direct us the way thither, Come to me, saith he, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Mat. xi. 29. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, Joh. iii. 16. Whence we may observe, that there is no exceptions made against any Person whatsoever, nor by consequence against any of us. It is the will, yea and command of God too, that we all turn from our evil ways and live, and that every Soul amongst us walk in that narrow way that leads unto eternal Bliss; and therefore if any of us do perish, Our blood will be upon our own heads, our destruction is from our selves, Hos. xiii. 9. For it is nothing but the perverseness of our own Wills, and the hardness, pride and obstinacy of our own Hearts, that can keep any Soul of us out of Heaven, howsoever difficult it is to come thither. For God hath shewn how desirous he is to have our Company there, in that he is still pleased to grant us both the space and means of Repentance. If he had no mind to have us saved, he could have shut us up long ago in Hell; but he is so far from that, that he doth not only as yet continue our abode on Earth, and lengthen our Tranquillity here, but he still vouchsafes unto us whatsoever is necessary, yea whatsoever can any ways conduce to our eternal Happiness; we have his Scriptures, we have his Sabbaths, we have his Ordinances, we have his Sacraments, we have his Ministers, we have the promise of his Spirit, we have the overtures of

Christ, and of all the merits of his Death and Passion made unto us, and what can be desired more to make Men happy? And yet as if all this had not been enough, he still continues calling upon us, exhorting, commanding, yea and beseeching us most affectionately to turn that our Souls may live; for we his Ministers, are Embassadors to Mankind for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; We pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 20. And he hath sent me unto you that read this in a particular manner at this time, to call you back out of the broad way that leads to Death, into the narrow way that leads to Life and Happiness; In his name therefore I exhort, yea and beseech you by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, and never leave until you have got possession of eternal Glory.

NOR let us be discouraged at any difficulties that we meet with in the way, for they will soon be over howsoever hard and difficult any Duty may seem at first, by Use and Custom it will soon grow easy. The worst is at first setting out, when once we have been used a while to walk in this narrow way, we shall find it to be both easy and pleasant: For as the wise Man tells us, The ways of Wisdom or true Piety, are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. iii. 17. Though it be rough at first, by treading it will soon grow plain, we shall soon find the words of Christ to be true, that his yoke is easy, and his burden light, Matt. xi. 39. All is, but to be willing and obedient, and resolved upon it, to press through all Duties and Difficulties whatsoever to get to Heaven, and then by the Merits of Christ's Passion, and the Assistance of his Grace, we need not fear but we shall come thither.

AND verily although the way to Heaven should prove not only narrow, but

hedg'd in with Bryars and Thorns, so that we should meet with nothing but Crosses and Troubles in our going to it, yet Heaven will make amends for all. For we may well reckon with the Apostle, that the sufferings of this Life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that idea be revealed in us, Rom. viii. 18. So that whatsoever Pains we are at, whatsoever Trouble we suffer in order to our attaining everlasting Happiness, bears no proportion at all to the Happiness we attain by it; which is so great, so exceeding great that our Tongues can neither express, nor our Minds as yet conceive it, consisting not only in the freedom from all Evil, but also in the enjoyment of whatsoever is really and truly Good; even whatsoever can any way conduce to the making us perfectly and completely happy: So that no Duty can be too great to undertake, no Trouble too heavy to undergo for it. Wherefore, that I may use the words of the Apostle to my Readers, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

BY this time I hope we are all resolved within our selves, to follow our Saviour's Counsel and Advice, even to strive to enter in at the strait Gate, and to walk in that narrow way that leads to Life. If we be not we have just cause to suspect our selves to be in the Gall of Bitterness and in the Bond of Iniquity; but if we be resolved in good earnest, we cannot but be very solicitous to know what we must do in order to it? or how everyone of us may enter in at the strait Gate, so as to be happy for ever? A Question of the highest importance imaginable: So that it is absolutely necessary for every Soul amongst us to be throughly resolved in it; for it concerns our Life, our immortal and eternal Life, and therefore I shall endeavour to resolve it in as few and perspicuous terms as portably I can, that the meanest

Capacity may understand it. But I must take leave to say beforehand, that our knowing of it will signify nothing, unless we practice it, neither will you be ever the nearer Heaven because you know the way to it, unless you also walk in it.

AND therefore the first thing that I shall propound, in order to our eternal Salvation, is, that we would resolve immediately in the Presence of Almighty God, that we will for the future make it our great care, study and business in this World, to seek the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof in the first place, according to our Saviour's advice and command, Matth.. vi. 33. that we would not halt any longer between two Opinions, and think to seek Heaven and Earth together, things diametrically opposite to one another. If we really think Earth to be better than Heaven, what need we trouble our selves any farther, than to heap up the Riches, and to enjoy the Pleasures of this World: But if we really think Heaven to be better than Earth, as all wise Men must needs do, then let us mind that, and concern not our selves about this. We know what our Saviour told us long ago, No Man can serve two Masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold with the one and despise the other: you cannot serve God and Mammon, Matth. vii. 24. that is, in plain English, we cannot mind Heaven and Earth both together; for we can have but one grand and principal design in the World, and therefore if our principal design be to get Wealth or any earthly Enjoyment, we deceive our selves, if we think that we mind Heaven at all. For that we can never properly be said to do, until we mind it before all things whatsoever in the World besides; and let us not say, or think within our selves, that this is an hard saying, for we may assure our selves it is no more than what we shall all find to be really true, and that never a Soul of us shall ever know what Heaven is, that doth not first prefer it before

all things here below, and by consequence make it his principal, if not only design to get thither.

SUPPOSING us, therefore to be thus resolved within our selves, my next Advice is, that we break off our former Sins by Repentance and shewing Mercy to the Poor, and that for the future we live not in the wilful commission of any known Sin, nor yet in the wilful neglect of any known Duty. Where it is evident I advise to no more than what all Men know themselves to be obliged to do; for I dare say, there is none of us knows so little, but what if he would but live up to what he knows, he could not but be both holy and happy. Let us but avoid what we our selves know to be Sin, and do what we know to be our Duty, and though our knowledge may not be so great as others, yet our Piety may be greater and our Condition better. But we must still remember, that one Sin will keep us out of Heaven as well as twenty; and therefore if we ever desire to come thither, we must not only do some or many things, but all things whatsoever is required of us, to the best of our knowledge. I speak not this of my self, but Christ himself hath told us the same before, even that we must keep the Commandments, all the Commandments, if we desire to enter into eternal Life, Matth. xix. 16, 17. Not as if it was indispensably necessary to observe every Punctilio and Circumstance of the Moral Law, for then no Man could be saved; but that it must be both our stedfast Resolution, and our chief Study and Endeavour to avoid whatsoever we know to be forbidden, and to perform whatsoever we know to be commanded by God.

AND though by this we shall make a fair progress in the narrow way to Life, yet there is still another step behind, before we can enter in at the strait Gate, and that is to believe in Jesus Christ, as our Saviour himself hath taught us, Matth. xix. 21. The sum of which Duty in brief is this, That when we have done all we can in obedience to the Moral

Law, yet we must still look upon our selves as unprofitable Servants, and not expect to be justified or Caved by vertue of that Obedience, but only by the Merits of Christ's Death and Passions; humbly confiding, that in and through him, the defects of our Obedience shall be remitted, our Persons accepted, our Natures cleansed, and our Souls eternally saved. This is not only the principal but the only thing which Paul and Silas directed the Keeper of the Prison to, in order to his Salvation, as comprehending all the rest under it, or at least supposing them, Acts xvi. 31.

THUS therefore though Obedience be the way, Faith is the Gate through which we must enter into Life. But seeing the Gate is strait as well as the Way narrow, and it is as hard to believe in Christ as to observe the Law, we must not think to do either by our own strength, but still implore the Aid and Assistance of Almighty God, and depend upon him for it. For Christ himself saith, No Man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him, John vi. 44. But we can never expect that he should draw us, unless we desire it of him. And therefore it must be our daily Prayer and Petition at the Throne of Grace, that God would vouchsafe us his especial Grace and Assistance, without which I cannot see how any one that knows his own Heart, can expect to be saved. But our Comfort is, if we do what we can God will hear our Prayers, and enable us to do what otherwise we cannot; for he never yet did, nor ever will fail any Man that sincerely endeavours to serve and honour him.

LASTLY, Although we are to trust in God for the answer of our Prayers in this particular, yet we must not expect that he should do it immediately from himself, but we must use those means which himself hath appointed whereby to work Faith, and by consequence all other Graces in us. Now the Scriptures tell us that Faith comes by hearing,

Rom. x. 17. Wherefore if we desire to believe, so as to be saved, we must wait upon God in his publick Ordinances, and there expect such influences of his Grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to walk in the narrow way, and enter in at the strait Gate that leads to life.

THUS I have shewn you in few terms, how to do the great Work which you came into the World about, even how to get to Heaven. For howsoever hard it is to come thither, let us but resolve, as we have seen, to mind it before all things else, fear God and keep his Commands to the utmost of our Power, believe in Christ for the pardon of our Sins, and the acceptance both of our Persons and Performances; pray sincerely unto God, and wait diligently upon him for the assistance of his Grace, to do what he requires from us. Let us do this and we need not fear but our Souls shall live. If we leave this undone we our selves shall be undone for ever. And therefore let me advise all to dally no longer in a matter of such consequence as this is, but now we know the way to Heaven to turn immediately into it, and walk constantly in it. Though the way be narrow it is not long, and though the Gate be strait, it opens into eternal Life. And therefore to conclude. Let us remember we have now been told how to get to Heaven, it is not in my power to force Men thither whether they will or no, I can only shew them the way. It is their Interest as well as Duty to walk in it, which if they do I dare assure them, in the name of Christ, it is not long but they will be admitted into the Choir of Heaven, to sing Halleluja's for evermore.

Thoughts upon the Imitation of Christ.

IF we seriously consider with our selves that Wonder of all Wonders, that Mystery of all Mysteries, the Incarnation of the Son of God, it may justly strike us into Astonishment, and an Admiration what should be the reason and the end of it; why the great and glorious, the almighty and eternal God, should take our weak and finite Nature into his infinite and incomprehensible Person; why the Creator of all things should himself become a Creature; and he that made the World be himself made into it; why the supreme Being of all Beings, that gives Essence and Existence to all things in the World, whose Glory the Heaven of Heavens is not able to contain, should cloath himself with Flesh, and become Man, of the self same Nature and Substance with us, who live and move and have our Being in him! Certainly it was not upon any frivolous or ordinary account, that the most high God manifested himself to the Sons of Men in so wonderful and extraordinary a manner as this was. But he did it questionless upon some Design that was as great and glorious as the Act it self. And if we would know what his End and Design in coming into the World was, the Scripture assures us in general, that it was for the Salvation of Mankind, whose Nature he assumed: For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. And he himself tells us, That God so loved the World, that he sent his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. Now for the accomplishment of this no less glorious than gracious Design, there are two things which it was necessary he should do for us, whilst he was upon Earth, even expiate our former Sins, and direct unto Holiness for the future; both which he hath

effected for us: the one by his Death and the other by his Life.

FOR, by his Death he hath paid that Debt which we owed to God, having made complete satisfaction to God's Justice for those Sins, whereby we have incurred his Displeasure For Death was threatned to all Mankind in case of Disobedience, and by consequence all Mankind being disobedient, are obnoxious to it. Neither would it stand with the Justice of God, to falsify his Word, nor yet with his Glory, to put up the Injuries that we have committed against him, without having satisfaction made unto him for them. But it being impossible that a finite Creature should satisfy for those Sins which were committed against the infinite God: Hence the infinite God himself was pleased to undertake it for us, even to satisfy himself for those Sins which were committed against him; which he did, by undergoing that Death which he had threaten'd to us in our own Nature, united to the Person of his own and only Son, God coequal, coessential, coeternal with himself, who is therefore said to be a propitiation for our sins, 1 John ii. 2. Neither can there any reason imaginable be alledged, why the Son of God himself should suffer Death, unless it was upon our account, and in our stead, whose Nature he assumed, and in which he suffered it. But not to insist upon that now. The humane Nature in general; having thus suffered that Death in the Person of the Son of God, which all Mankind was otherwise bound to have undergone in their own Persons; hence it comes to pass, that we are all in a Capacity of avoiding that Death which we have deserved by our Sins, if we do but rightly believe in Christ, and apply his Sufferings to our selves.

AND as Christ by his Death and Passions hath thus satisfied for our Sins, so hath he by his Life and Actions, given us an exact Pattern of true Piety and Vertue. And although I cannot say it was the only, yet questionless one great End wherefore he continued so long on Earth, and

conversed so much amongst Men, and that so many of his Actions are delivered to us with so many Circumstances as they are, was, that we by his Example, might learn how to carry and behave our selves in this lower World. For as from that time to this, so from the beginning of the World to that time, there had been never a Man upon the face of the Earth, that had lived so conformably to the Law of God, that it was safe or lawful for another to follow him in all things. For all Flesh was corrupt, and the very best of Men were still but Men, subject to failures in their Lives as well as to Errors in their Judgments, yea those very Persons whom the Scriptures record, and God himself attesteth to have been eminent in their Generations for Piety and Justice, did oftentimes fail in both. Noah is asserted by God himself, to have been righteous in his Generation, Abraham to be the Father of the Faithful, Moses to be the meekest Man upon Earth, David to be a Man after God's own Heart, Solomon to have been the wisest Man that ever liv'd, and Job to be a perfect and upright Man, one that feared God and eschewed Evil: yet none of these most excellent Persons but had their Vices as well as Virtues: And it is observable, that the more eminent any were in Piety, the more notorious Sins God hath sometimes suffered them to slip in to, to keep them humble. So that from the first to the second Adam, there never lived a Man of whom it could be said, This Man never sinned, never transgressed the Laws of God, and therefore may in all things be imitated by Men.

BUT now as the First was made, the second Adam continued all along most pure and perfect, both in Thought, Word and Action: For he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,, 1 Pet. ii. 22. Never so much as a vain Thought ever sprang up in his most holy Heart, nor so much as an idle Word ever proceeded out of his divine Lips, nor so much as an impertinent or frivolous Action was ever performed by his sacred and

most righteous Hands; his whole Life being nothing else but one continued act of Piety towards God, Justice towards Men, Love and Charity towards all. And as himself lived, so would he have all his Disciples live whilst they are here below; and therefore enjoyns them that go after him, not only to deny themselves, and take up their Crosses, but also to follow, or imitate him, unto the utmost of their Power in their Life and Actions. So that he now expects that all those who profess themselves to be his Disciples, do first deny themselves whatsoever is offensive unto him; and then that they take up their Cross so as to be ready and willing to do or suffer any thing for him, that hath done and suffered so much as he hath for us. And then lastly, that they write after the Copy that he hath set them; and walk in the Steps wherein he is gone before them; even that they follow him through all Duties and Difficulties whatsoever, so as still to do unto the utmost of their Power as he did, otherwise they in vain pretend to be his Disciples. For he that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked, 1 John ii. 6. that is, he that professeth to believe in Jesus Christ, should live as he lived while he was upon Earth. Hence St. Paul, a true Disciple of Christ saith, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1. As he followed Christ, he would have others to follow him; but he would have them follow him no farther than as he followed Christ.

IT is true, we were bound to be holy and righteous in all our ways, whether we had ever heard of Christ's being so or no, the Law of God first obliging us to be so; but howsoever, we have now an additional Obligation upon us to be holy, As he who hath called us was holy in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. i. 15. For the Scripture tells us expressly, that Christ hath left us an example that we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21. And our Saviour himself commands all that

come to him to learn of him, Mat. xi. 29, 30. And therefore we can never expect that he should own us for his Disciples, unless we own him for our Lord and Master, so far as to obey and follow him; he having commanded all those that come to him, to deny themselves, take up their Crosses and follow him. And seeing we all I hope desire to be Christians indeed, as I have explained the two former of these Duties, I shall now endeavour to give the true meaning of the latter too, that we may all so follow Christ here, as to come to him hereafter.

NOW for the opening of this, we must know that we neither can nor ought to follow Christ in every thing he did when he was here below; for even whilst he was here below, he was still the most high and mighty God, the same that he had been from Eternity, and often manifested his Power and Glory to the Sons of Men, whilst he was conversing with them in their own Natures, wherein it would be horrid presumption for us to pretend to follow him. As for example, He knew the very thoughts of men, Mat. xii. 25. which I suppose is something past our skill to do. Hence also he judged and censured others, Wo unto you, saith he, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto painted sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead mens bones and of all uncleanness, Mat. xxiii. 27, 28. But this we could not do though we might, not being able to search into others hearts, neither may we do it though we could, Christ himself having expressly commanded us the contrary, saying, Judge not that ye be not judged, Mat. vii. 1. Our Saviour also as God foretold future events, Luk. xxi. 6. and wrought Miracles, such as were clear demonstrations of his infinite Power and Godhead; but in this he is to be believed and admired, not followed or imitated by us. Thus also when he sent his Disciples to loose another Man's Colt, and bring him away, Luk. xix. 30. That he did as Lord and Sovereign of the World, or as the

supreme Possessor and universal Proprietor of all things; as when he commanded the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians, and carry away their Jewels and Raiment, for all things being his, he may give them to whom he pleaseth; and tho' it would have been a Sin to have taken them away without his command, yet his command gave them a propriety in them, a Right and Title to them, and they had sinned unless they had obeyed the command. So here, our Saviour sent for the Colt, as if it had been his own, for so really it was; as he is God, which he manifested himself to be at the same time, in that he inclined the hearts, of the civil Owners thereof to let him go, only upon the Disciples saying that the Lord had need of him, Luk. xix. 33, 34. But this he did not for our Example, but to shew forth his own Power and Glory.

THERE are some things also which our blessed Saviour did as God-man, or as the Mediator betwixt God and Man, as his making attonement and satisfaction for the Sins of Mankind, his instituting Offices and Ordinances, and Sacraments in his Church, and the like; which having an immediate respect to his Office of Mediator, and being done upon that account, we neither may nor can imitate him in such things. But the things which he would have us to follow him in, are such and such only as he did as mere Man, that had no immediate dependence upon or reference to either his Godhead or Mediatorship. For he having honoured our Nature so far, as to take it into his own divine Person, so as to become really and truly Man; as so, he did whatsoever Man is bound to do, both as to God himself, and likewise as to Men. And being absolutely perfect in all the Faculties of his Soul, and Members of his Body, he infinitely surpassed all other Men both in divine Graces, and moral Virtues, so that he never committed any one Sin, so neither did he ever neglect any one Duty, which as Man he was bound to perform either to God Or Men, but still observed every punctilio and

Circumstance of the Moral Law; by which means he hath left us a complete Pattern of true and universal Holiness, and hath enjoined us all to follow it.

HOPING therefore that all who profess themselves to be the Friends and Disciples of Jesus Christ, desire to manifest themselves to be so, by following both his Precepts and Example, I shall give the Reader a Short Narrative of his Life and Actions, wherein we may all see what true Piety is, and what real Christianity requires of us; and may not content our selves, as many do, with being, Professors, and adhering to Parties or Factions amongst us, but strive to be thorow Christians, and to carry our selves as such, by walking as Christ himself walked; which that we may at least know how to do, looking upon Christ as a mere Man, I shall shew how he did, and by Consequence how we ought to carry our selves both to God and Man, and what Graces and Vertues he exercised all along for our Example and Imitation.

NOW for our more clear, and methodical proceeding, in a matter of such Consequence as this is, I shall begin with his Behaviour towards Men, from his Childhood to his Death.

FIRST therefore, when he was a Child of twelve Years of Age, it is particularly recorded of him, this he was subject or obedient to his Parents, his real Mother and reputed Father, Luc. ii. 51. It is true, he knew at that time that God himself was his Father, for, said he, wist ye not that I must be about my Father's Business, ver. 49. And knowing God to be his Father, he could not but know likewise that he was infinitely above his Mother; yea, that she could never have born him, had not he himself first made and supported her. Yet howsoever, though as God he was Father to her, yet as Man she was Mother to him; and therefore he honoured and obeyed both her and him to whom she was espoused. Neither did he only respect his Mother whilst he was here,

but he took Care of her too when he was going hence. Yea, all the Pains that he suffered upon the Cross could not make him forget his Duty to her that bore him; but seeing her standing by the Cross, as himself hung on it, he committed her to the Care of his beloved Disciple, who took her to his own home, Joh. xix. 27. Now as our Saviour did, so are we bound to carry our selves to our earthly Parents, whatsoever their Temper or Condition be in this World. Though God hath blessed some of us perhaps with greater Estates than ever he blessed them, yet we must not think our selves above them, nor be at all the less respectful to them. Christ, we see, was infinitely above his Mother, yet as she was his Mother, he was both subject and respectful to her. He was not ashamed to own her as she stood by the Cross, but in the view and hearing of all there present, gave his Disciple a Charge to take Care of her; leaving us an Example, that such amongst us as have Parents, provide for them if they need it, as well as for our Children, both while we live and when we come to die.

AND as he was to his natural, so was he too to his civil Parents, the Magistrates under which he lived, submissive and faithful; for though as he was God he was infinitely above them in Heaven, yet as he was Man he was below them on Earth, having committed all Civil Power into their hands, without reserving any at all for himself. So that though they received their Commission from him, yet now himself could not act without receiving a Commission from them. And therefore having no Commission from them to do it, he would not entrench so much upon their Privilege and Power, as to determine the Controversy betwixt the two Brethren contending about their Inheritance; Man, saith he, who made me a judge or a divider over you? Luc. xii. 14. And to shew his Submission to the Civil Magistrate, as highly as possibly he could, rather than offend them, he wrought a Miracle to pay the Tax which they had charged

upon him, Matth. xvii. 27. And when the Officers were sent to take him, though he had more than twelve Legions of Angels at his Service to have fought for him if he had pleased, yet he would not employ them, nor suffer his own Disciples to make any Resistance, Matth. xxvi. 52, 53. And though some of late Days, who called themselves Christians, have acted quite contrary to our blessed Saviour in this Particular, I hope better things of my Readers, even that they will behave themselves more like to Christ, who though he was the supreme Governor of the World, yet would not resist, but submitted to the Civil Power, which himself had entrusted Men withal.

MOREOVER, although whilst he was here he was really not only the best but greatest Man upon Earth, yet he carryed himself to others with that Meekness, Humility, and Respect, as if he had been the least; as he never admired any Man for his Riches, so neither did he despise any Man for his Poverty; the poor Man and rich were all alike to him. He was as lowly and respectful to the lowest as he was to the highest that he conversed with. He affected no Titles of Honour, nor gaped after popular Air, but submitted himself to the meanest Services that he could for the Good of others, even to the washing his own Disciples Feet, and all to teach us that we can never think too lowly of our selves, nor do any thing that is beneath us; propounding himself as our Example, especially in this Particular, Learn of me, saith he, for I am meek and lowly in heart, Matth. xi. 29.

HIS Humility also was the more remarkable, in that his Bounty and Goodness to others was so great, for he went about, doing good, Acts x. 38. Wheresoever you read he was, you still read of some good Work or other which he did there, Whatsoever Company he conversed with, they still went better from him than they came unto him, if they came out of a good end. By him, as himself said, the Blind received their sight,

and the Lame walked, the Lepers were cleansed, and the Deaf heard, the Dead were raised up, and the Poor had the Gospel preached unto them, Matth. xi. 5. Yea, it is observable, that we never read of any Person whatsoever that came unto him, desiring any real Kindness or Favour of him, but he still received it, and that whether he was Friend or Foe. For indeed though he had many inveterate and implacable Enemies in the World, yet he bare no Grudge or Malice against them, but expressed as much Love and Favour to them as to his greatest Friends. Insomuch that when they had gotten him upon the Cross, and fastened his hands and feet unto it, in the midst of all that Pain and Torment which they put him to, he still prayed for them, Luc. xxiii. 34.

OH! how happy, how blessed a People should we be, could we but follow our blessed Saviour in this Particular! How well would it be with us, could we but be thus good and loving to one another, as Christ was to all, even his most bitter Enemies! We may assure our selves it is not only our Misery, but our Sin too, unless we be so. And our Sin will be the greater now we know our Matter's Pleasure, unless we do it. And therefore let all such amongst us, as desire to carry our selves as Christ himself did, and as becometh his Disciples in the World, begin here.

BE submissive and obedient both to our Parents and Governors, humble in our own sight, despise none, but be charitable, loving, and good to all. By this shall all Men know that we are Christ's Disciples indeed.

HAVING thus seen our Saviour's Carriage towards Men, we shall now consider his Piety and Devotion towards God, not as if it was possible for me to express the Excellency and Perfection of those religious Acts which he performed continually within his Soul to God, every one of his Faculties being as entire in it self, and as perfect in its Acts, as it was first made or designed to be. There was no darkness, nor so much as

gloominess in his Mind, no error or mistake in his Judgment, no bribery or corruption in his Conscience, no obstinacy or perverseness in his Will, no irregularity nor disorder in his Affections, no spot, no blot, no blemish, not the least imperfection or infirmity in his whole Soul. And therefore even whilst his body was on Earth, his head and heart were still in Heaven. For he never troubled his head, nor so much as concerned himself about any thing here below, any farther than to do all the Good he could, his thoughts being wholly taken up with considering how to advance God's Glory and Man's eternal Happiness. And as for his heart, that was the Altar on which the sacred fire of divine love was always burning, the flames whereof continually ascended up to Heaven, being accompanied with the most ardent and fervent Desires of, and Delight in, the chiefest Good.

BUT it must not be expected that I should give an exact Description of that eminent and most perfect Holiness which our blessed Saviour was inwardly adorned with, and continually employed in; which I am as unable to express, as desirous to imitate. But howsoever, I shall endeavour to mind the Reader in general of such Acts of his Piety and Devotion, which are particularly recorded, on purpose for our Imitation.

FIRST therefore, it is observed of our Saviour, that from a Child he increased in Wisdom, as he did in Stature, Luc. ii. 52. Where by Wisdom we are to understand the Knowledge of God, and of divine things. For our Saviour having taken our Nature into his Person, with all its Frailties and Infirmities, as it is a created Being, he did not in that nature presently know all things which were to be known. It is true, as God, he then knew all things as well as he had from all Eternity. But we are now speaking of him, as a Man, like one of us in all things except Sin. But we continue some considerable time after we are born

before we know any thing, or come to the use of our Reasons; the rational Soul not being able to exert or manifest itself, until the natural Phlegm and radical Moisture of the Body, which in Infants is predominant, be so digested, that the Body be rightly qualified, and its Organs fitted for the Soul to work upon and to make use of. And though our Saviour questionless came to the use of his Reason, as Man, far sonner than we are wont to do, yet we must not think that he knew all things as soon as he was born; for that the Nature he assumed was not capable of; neither could he then be said, as he is, to encrease in Wisdom, for where there is Perfection there can be no Encrease.

BUT here before we proceed farther, it will be necessary to answer an Objection which some may make against this. For if our Saviour as Man knew not all things, then he was not perfect, nor absolutely free from Sin, Ignorance it self being a Sin.

TO this I have these things to answer, first, It is no Sin for a Creature to be ignorant of some things, because it is impossible for a Creature to know all things, for to be omniscient is God's Prerogative, neither is a Creature capable of it, because he is but finite, whereas the knowledge of all things, or Omniscience, is it self an infinite Act, and therefore to be performed only by an infinite Being. Hence it is that no Creature in the World ever was or ever could be made Omniscient, but there are many things which Adam in his Integrity, and the very Angels themselves are ignorant of; as our Saviour speaking of the Day of Judgment, saith, Of that day and hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father, Mark xiii. 32. But the Angels are never the less perfect because they know not this. Nay, it is observable, that the Son himself as Man knew it not, neither saith he, the Son, but the Father; and if he knew it not, then much less was it necessary for him to know it when a Child.

SECONDLY, As to be ignorant of some things is no Sin, so neither is any Ignorance at all sin, but that whereby a Man is ignorant of what he is bound to know, For all sin is the transgression of a law. And therefore if there be no Law obliging me to know such or such things, I do not sin by being ignorant of them, for I transgress no Law. Now though all Men are bound by the Law of God to know him, and their Duty to him, yet Infants, so long as Infants, are not, neither can be obnoxious or subject to that Law, they being in a natural incapacity, yea impossibility to perform it, but as they become by degrees capable of knowing any thing, they are obliged questionless to know him first, from whom they receive their knowledge.

AND thus it was that our blessed Saviour perfectly fulfilled the Law of God, in that although he might still continue ignorant of many things; yet howsoever he all along knew all that he was bound to know, and as he grew by degrees more and more capable of knowing any thing, so did he increase still more in true Wisdom, or in the knowledge of God; so that by that time he was twelve years old, he was able to dispute with the great Doctors and learned Rabbies amongst the Jews; and after that as he grew in Stature, so did he grow in Wisdom too, and in favour both with God and Man.

AND verily, although we did not follow our blessed Saviour in this particular when we were Children, we ought howsoever to endeavour it now we are Men and Women, even to grow in Wisdom, and every day add something to our spiritual stature, so as to let never a day pass over our heads, without being better acquainted with God's goodness to us, or our Duty to him. And by this example of our Saviour's growing in Wisdom when a Child, we should also learn to bring up our Children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and not strive so much to make them rich, as to use all means to make them wise and good, that they

may do as their Saviour did, even grow in wisdom and in stature, and in the favour both of God and Man.

AND as our Saviour grew in wisdom when a Child, so did he use and manifest it when he came to be a Man, by devoting himself wholly unto the service of the living God, and to the exercise of all true Grace and Virtue, wherein his blessed Soul was so much taken up, that he had neither time nor heart to mind those toys and trifles which silly Mortals upon Earth are so much apt to dote on. It is true all the World was his, but he had given it all away to others, not reserving for himself so much as an House to put his head in, Mat. viii. 20. And what Money he had hoarded up, you may gather from his working a Miracle to pay his Tribute or Poll Money, which came not to much above a Shilling. Indeed he came into the World and went out again, without ever taking any notice of any Pleasures, Honours or Riches in it, as if there had been no such thing here, as really there was not, nor ever will be; all the Pomp and Glory of this deceitful World having no other Being or Existence, but only in our distempered Fancies and Imaginations, and therefore our Saviour, whose Fancy was found, and his Imagination untainted, looked upon all the World and the Glory of it as not worthy to be looked upon, seeing nothing in it wherefore it should be desired. And therefore instead of spending his time in the childish pursuit of Clouds and Shadows, he made the Service of God not only his Business, but his Recreation too, his Food as well as Work. It is my meat, saith he, to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work, Joh. iv. 34. This was all the Riches, Honours and Pleasures which he sought for in the World, even to do the will of him that sent him hither, and to finish the Work which he came about, and so he did before he went away; Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou sentest me to do, Joh. xvii. 4. If therefore we would

be Christ's Disciples, so as to follow him, we see what we must do, and how we must behave and carry our selves whilst we are here below; we must not spend our rime, nor throw away our precious and short lived Days upon the trifles and impertinencies of this transient World, as if we came hither for nothing else but to rake and scrape up a little dust and dirt together, or to wallow our selves like Swine in the mire of carnal Pleasures and Delights. No we may assure our selves we have greater things to do, and far more noble Designs to carry on whilst we continue in this vale of Tears, even to work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, and to make our calling and election sure; to serve God here, so as to enjoy him for ever. This is the work we came about, and which we must not only do, but do it too with pleasure and delight, and never leave until we have accomplish'd it; we must make it our only pleasure to please God, account it our only Honour to honour him, and esteem his love and favour to be the only wealth and riches that we can enjoy; we must think our selves no farther happy, than we find our selves to be truly holy, and therefore devote one Lives wholly to him, in whom we live. This is to live as Christ lived, and by consequence as Christians ought to do.

I might here instance in several other Acts of Piety and Devotion, which our Saviour was not only eminent for, but continually exercised himself in, as his humble and perfect Submission and Resignation of his own will to God's, his most ardent Love unto him, and zeal for him, as also his firm and stedfast Trust and Confidence on him; so that nothing could ever disquiet or discompose his Mind, but still his Heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. In all which, it is both our Duty and Interest to follow him, our Happiness as well as Holiness consisting in our dependence upon God, and Inclinations to him.

BUT we should do well to observe withal, that our Saviour performed

external as well as inward Worship and Devotion unto God; particularly we often find him praising God and praying unto him, and that with his Eyes lift up to Heaven in a most humble and reverential Posture, John xvii. i. Luke xxii. 4. Matth. 26. 39. yea when he was to chuse and ordain some of his Disciples to the Work of the Ministry, and to succeed him after his departure, under the name of Apostles, he spent the Night before in Prayer to God, Luke vi. 12. I confess the words there used *en te proseuche tou theou*, will scarce admit of that Interpretation or Exposition, signifying rather in a strict sense, that he went into a place appointed for Prayer, which was usually called *proseuche*, a place of Prayer, which kind of Places were very frequent in Judæa, and some of them continued till Epiphanius's time, as himself asserts; and they were only plots of Ground enclosed with a Wall; and open above, and were ordinarily, if not always upon Mountains, whither the Jews used to resort to pray together in great Multitudes. And this seems to be the proper meaning of these words, where our Saviour is said to go into a Mountain, and to continue all Night, *en te proseuche tou theou*, a place dedicated to his Service. Yet howsoever we cannot suppose but that he went thither to do what the place whither he went, was designed for, even to pray. And by consequence, that seeing he stayed there all Night, questionless he spent the whole Night in Prayer and Meditation, in order to so great a Work as the ordaining his Apostles was.

Here therefore is another Copy which our Master Christ hath set us to write after, a Lesson that all must learn and practise that would be his Disciples. Though we ordinarily converse with nothing but Dirt and Clay, and with our fellow Worms on Earth, yet as Christ did, so should we often retire from the Tumults and Bustles of the World, to converse with him that made us; both to praise him for the Mercies we have

received, and to pray unto him for what we want; only we shall do well to have a care that we do not perform so solemn a Duty as this is, after a careless and perfunctory manner, because none sees us but God; for his seeing us is infinitely more than if all the World besides should see us, and we must still remember that Prayer is the greatest Work that a Creature can be engaged in, and therefore to be performed with the greatest seriousness, reverence, and earnestness that possibly we can raise up our Spirits to. And besides our daily Devotions which we owe, and ought to pay to God whensoever we set upon any great and weighty Business, we must be sure to follow our Saviour's steps, in setting some time apart, proportionably to the Business we undertake, wherein to ask God's Counsel, and desire his Direction and Blessing in the most serious and solemn manner that possibly we can. I need not tell the Reader what benefit we shall receive by this means, none of us that shall try it but will soon find it by experience.

I shall observe only one thing more concerning our Saviour's Devotion, and that is, that although he took all occasions to instruct or admonish his Disciples and Followers, whether in the Fields or upon the Mountains, or in private Houses, even wheresoever he could find an opportunity to do it; yet upon the Sabbath-days he always frequented the publick worship of God; he went into the Synagogues, Places appointed for publick Prayers, and reading and hearing of the Word, a thing which I fear many amongst us do not think of, or at least not rightly consider it; for if they did, they would not dare methinks to walk so directly contrary to our blessed Saviour in this particular; for St. Luke tells us, that when he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as his custom was, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day, Luc. iv. 16. From whence none of us but may easily observe, that our Saviour did not go into a Synagogue, or Church, by

the by to see what they were doing there; neither did he happen to go in by chance upon the Sabbath-day, but it was his custom and constant practice to do so, even to go each Sabbath-day to the publick Ordinance, there to join with the Congregation in performing their publick Service and Devotions to Almighty God.

AND here I must take leave to say, that was there no other Law, nor any other Obligations upon us (as there be many) to frequent the publick Worship of God, this Practice and Example of our blessed Saviour, doth sufficiently and effectually oblige us all to a constant attendance upon the publick Ordinance. For as we are Christians, and profess our selves to be his Disciples, we are all bound to follow him; he commands us here and elsewhere to do it; and certainly there is nothing that we can be obliged to follow him in, more than in the manner of his Worshipping God. And therefore, whosoever out of any humour, fancy or sloathfulness, shall presume to neglect the publick worship of God, he doth not only act contrary unto Christ's example, but transgresses also his Command, that enjoins him to follow that example. What they who are guilty of this will have answer for themselves, when they come to stand before Christ's Tribunal, I know not. But this I know, that all those who profess themselves to be Christians, should follow Christ in all things that they can, and by consequence in this particular, and that they sin who do not.

BUT in whatsoever other things we may fail, I know the generality of us do herein follow our Saviour's steps, that we are usually present at the publick worship of God; but then I hope this is not all that we follow him in, but that as we follow him to the publick Ordinances, so we do likewise in our private Devotions, yea and in our behaviour both to God and Man. Which that we may the better do, I have endeavoured to shew wherein especially we ought to follow Christ, in being obedient to

our Parents, subject to our Governours, lowly to the lowest, loving and charitable unto all; as also, in growing in Wisdom and the Knowledge of God, in contemning the World, in devoting our selves wholly to the service of God, in resigning our Wills to his, in loving of him, in trusting on him above all things else, in daily praying unto God, and frequenting his publick Ordinances; to which I may also add, in denying our selves, and taking up our Crosses, which himself hath done before us, as well as required of us.

WHAT now remains, but that seeing the steps wherein our Saviour walked, we should all resolve to walk together in them. And I hope that I need not use Arguments to persuade any to it; it is enough one would think, that Christ himself, whose name we bear, expects and commands it from us. And in that the sum of all our Religion consisteth in obeying and following Christ, the Circumstances of whose Life are recorded on purpose that we may imitate him unto the utmost of our power, not only in the matter but manner of our actions, even in the circumstances as well as in the substance of them.

BUT this I dare say we all both know and believe, even that it is our duty to follow Christ; and therefore it is a sad, a dismal thing to consider, that amongst them that know it, there are so few that do it: But even those that go under the name of Christians themselves, do more generally follow the Beasts of the Field, or the very Fiends of Hell, rather than Christ our Saviour. For all covetous Worldlings that look no higher than Earth, and all luxurious Epicures that labour after no other but sensual Pleasures, whom do they imitate but the Beasts that perish. And as for the proud and arrogant, the deceitful and malicious, Seducers of their Brethren, and Oppressors of their Neighbours, all Backbiters, and False-accusers, all Deriders of Religion, and Apostates from it, they are all of their Father the Devil, and his works they do.

And if all such Persons should be taken from amongst us, how few would be left behind that follow Christ? very few indeed! but I hope there would be some. And oh that all who read this would be in the number of them, even that they would all from this Day forward resolve to come as near our blessed Saviour in all their Actions both to God and Man, as possibly they can, which if we once did, what holy, what happy lives should we then lead? how should we antedate both the work and joys of Heaven! and how certain should we be to be there e'er long, where Christ that is the pattern of our Lives here, will be the portion of our Souls for ever,

THUS I have shewn what Christ requires of those who would be his Disciples, enjoining them to deny themselves, take up their Cross, and follow him. And now I have done my Duty in explaining these Words, 'tis all my Readers as well as mine to practise them, which I heartily wish we would all resolve to do; and I must say, it highly concerns us all to do so, for we can never be saved but by Christ, nor by him unless we be his Disciples; neither can we be his Disciples, unless we do what here is required of us. And therefore if we care not whether we be saved or no, we may think no more of these things, nor trouble our heads about them; but if we really desire to come to Heaven, let us remember he who alone can bring us thither, hath told us, that we must deny our selves, take up our cross, and follow him.

Thoughts upon Our Call and Election.

MANY are called, saith our Saviour, Mat. xxii. 14. but few chosen. Oh dreadful sentence. who is able to hear it without trembling and astonishment! If he had said, that of all the Men that are born in the World, there are but few saved, this would not have struck such fear and horror in us; for we might still hope, that though Turks, Jews, and Heathens, which are far the greatest part of the World, should all perish, yet we few in comparison of them, who are baptized into his Name, who profess his Gospel, who enjoy his Ordinances, who are admitted to his Sacraments, that all who are called to him, might be chosen and saved by him; but that of those very Persons who are called, there are but few chosen: What a sharp and terrible Sentence is this! Who can bear it? Especially considering by whom it was pronounced, even by Christ himself. If a meer Man had spoken it, we might hope it was but a human Error; if an Angel had uttered it, we might think it possible he might be mistaken; but that Christ himself the eternal Son of God, who is Truth, and Infallibility itself, that he should assert it, that he who laid down his own Life to redeem ours, that he who came into the World on purpose to call and save us, that he in whom alone it is possible for us to be chosen to Salvation, that he should say, Many are called but few chosen. This is a hard saying indeed, which may justly make our Ears to tingle, and our Hearts to tremble at the hearing of it. And yet we see our Saviour here expressly saith it, and not only here neither, but again, Mat. xx. 16. Whence we may gather, that it is a thing he would have us often think of, and a matter of more than ordinary importance, in that he did not think it enough to tell us of it once, but he repeated it in the same words again, that we

might be sure to remember it, and take especial notice of it, that many are called, but few chosen.

IN which words, that we may understand our Saviour's meaning aright, we must first consider the occasion of them in this place, which in brief was this. Our Saviour, according to the custom that obtained in those days amongst the Wise Men of the East, delighting to use Parables, thereby to represent his heavenly Doctrine more clearly to the understanding of his Hearers, in this Chapter compares the Kingdom of God to a certain King that made a marriage for his son, and sent his servants to call them, that were bidden to the wedding, v. 2, 3. Where, by the King he means the eternal God, the universal Monarch of the World, who intending to make a Marriage betwixt his Son and the Church, styled the Spouse of Christ, he first sent to his Guests before bidden, even the Jews, the Seed of Abraham his Friend, and at that time his peculiar People. But they not hearkening to the first Invitation, he sends to them again, v. 4. Yet they still made light of it, having it seems, as we most have, other business to mind, and therefore went their way, some to their Farms, others to their Merchandize, v. 5. By which our Saviour intimates, that one great reason why Men accept not of the Overtures of Grace made unto them in the Gospel, is because their Minds are taken up with the Cares of this World, looking upon their Farms, their Trades, and Merchandize, as things of greater moment than Heaven and eternal Glory. Yea, some of them took the Servants which were sent to invite them, and treated them spitefully, and slew them, v. 6. Why, what is the matter? what Injury have the Servants, the Prophets, the Apostles, or the Ministers of Christ done them? What do they come to oppress them, to take their Estates from them? To disgrace, or bring them into bondage? No, they only come to invite them to a Marriage Feast, to tender them the highest Comforts and

Refreshments imaginable both for their Souls and Bodies. And is this all the recompence they give them for their kindness, not only to refuse it, but to abuse them that bring it? Well might this glorious King be angry and incensed at such an affront offered him as this was and therefore He sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city, v. 7. as we all know he did to the murdering Jews, who soon after this were destroyed, and their royal City Jerusalem burnt. But now the Feast is prepared, shall there be none to eat it? Yes, for seeing they who were first bidden were not worthy to partake of his Dainties, he orders his Servants to go into the high ways and bid as many as they could find to the marriage, v. 6. 9. The Jews having refused the Gospel, God sends to invite the Gentiles to it, who hitherto had been reckoned Actions to the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. But now they also are bidden to the Wedding, they are called to Christ, and invited to partake of all the Privileges of the Gospel. For the Servants having received the command, went out into the high ways, even into all the by-places and corners of the World, and gatherer together all as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests, ver. 10. But amongst these too, when the King came to see his Guests, he saw one that had not on a wedding Garment, ver. 11. Under which One are represented all of the same kind, who have not on their wedding Garment, that is, who walk not worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, not being cloathed with Humility, Faith, and other Graces suitable for a Christian. All which, notwithstanding they were invited, yea and came in too upon their Invitation, yet they are cast out again into utter Darkness, Matth. xxii. 12, 13. And then he adds, for many are called, but few chosen; as if he should have said, The Jews were called but

would not come, the Gentiles are called they come, but some of them are cast out again; so that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen. For many are called, but few chosen.

WHICH short, but pithy Saying, of our blessed Saviour, that we may rightly understand, we shall first consider the former part of it, Many are called, and then the latter, but few chosen. That we may apprehend the full meaning of the first part of this Proposition, Many are called, there are three things to be considered.

1. WHAT is here meant by being called,
2. HOW Men are called.
3. HOW it appears that many are called.

AS for the first, what we are here to understand by being called. We must know that this is meant only of God's Voice to Mankind, making known his Will and Pleasure to them, calling upon them to act accordingly; and so inviting them to his Service here, and to the Enjoyment of his Presence hereafter.

BUT to explain the Nature of it more particularly, we must consider the terminus a quo, and the terminus ad quad, what it is God calls us from, and what it is he calls us to; both which we shall speak to, jointly or together.

1. HE calls us from Darkness to Light, from Error and Ignorance to Truth and Knowledge: As he made us rational and knowing Creatures at first, so he would have us to be again, so as to understand and know him that made us, and that gave us the power of understanding and knowing; and not employ the little Knowledge we have only about the affairs of our Bodies, our Trades, and Callings in this World, nor yet in learning Arts and Sciences only, but principally about the concerns of our immortal Souls, that we may know him that is the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; without which, all our other Knowledge

will avail us nothing. We are still in the dark, and know not whither we are going; out of which dark, and by consequence uncomfortable as well as dangerous Estate, God of his infinite Mercy is pleas'd to call us, that we should shew forth the Praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

2. GOD calls us from Superstition and Idolatry, to serve and worship him. For we are called to turn from Idols, to serve the living and true God, 1 Thess. i. 9. Thus he called Abraham out of Chaldea, and his Posterity the Israelites out of Egypt, Places of Idolatry, that they might serve and worship him, and him alone. Thus he called our Ancestors of this Nation out of their heathenish Superstitions, to the Knowledge and Worship of himself, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And thus he called upon us to flee from Idolatry, 1 Cor. x. 14. not only from Heathenish or Popish, but from all Idolatry whatsoever, and by consequence from Covetousness, which God himself tells us in plain Terms is Idolatry, Col. iii. 5. And so indeed is our allowing our selves in any known Sin whatsoever; for we idolize it by setting it up in our Hearts and Affections, instead of God; yea, and bow down to it, and serve it, though not in our Bodies yet in our Souls, which is the highest kind of Idolatry which God calls us from.

3. HENCE he also calls us from all manner of Sin and Profaneness to Holiness and Piety, both in our Affections and Actions. For as the Apostle saith, God hath not called us to uncleanness but to holiness, 1 Thess. iv. 7. Where by Uncleanness he means all manner of Lusts and Corruptions which defile the Soul, and make it unclean and impure in the sight of God. These God doth not call us to, but from. It is Holiness and universal Righteousness that he calls us to, and commands us to follow. This is the great thing that Christ in his Gospel calls for, For the grace of God which is in his Gospel, hath now appeared to

all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. ii. 11, 12. He now commandeth, all men every where to repent, and turn to God, Act. xvii. 30. Hence he is said to have called us with an holy Calling, 2 Tim. i. 9. And as he who hath called us is holy, so ought we to be holy in all manner of Conversation, 1 Pet. i. 15. Thus therefore we all are called to be an holy People, a People zealous of good Works, a People devoted wholly to the Service of the living God. In brief, we are called to be Saints, a People consecrated unto God; and therefore, as every Vessel in the Temple was holy, so we being called to be the Temples of the Holy Ghost, every thing in us should be holy; our Thoughts should be holy, our Affections holy, our Words holy, our Desires holy, every Faculty of our Souls, every Member of our Bodies, and every Action of our Lives should be holy, every thing within us, every thing about us, every thing that comes from us should be holy, and all because our Calling is holy; and we ought to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called, Eph. iv. 1.

4. GOD calls us from all carnal and temporal things, to mind Heaven and eternal Glory. He sees and observes how eager we are in prosecuting of this World's Vanities, and therefore calls upon us to leave doting upon such transitory and unsatisfying Trifles, and to mind the things that belong to our everlasting Peace; not to be conformed to this World, but transformed by the renewing of our Minds, that we may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God, Rom. xii. 2. To set our Affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon earth, Col. iii. 2. To seek the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness in the first Place, Matth. vi. 33. Hence it is stiled an heavenly calling, Heb. iii. 1. and an high calling, Phil. iii. 14. because we are called by it to look after high and heavenly things. He that made

us hath so much Kindness for us, that it pities him to see us moil and toil, and spend our Strength and Labour, about such low and pitiful, such impertinent and unnecessary things, which himself knows can never satisfy us, and therefore he calls and invites us to himself, and to the Enjoyment of his own Perfections, which are able to fill and satiate our immortal Souls.

5. HENCE lastly, we are called from Misery and Danger to a state of Happiness and Felicity. As he called Lot out of Sodom, when Fire and Brimstone was ready to fall upon it, so he calls us from the World and Sin, because otherwise Wrath and Fury will fall upon our heads. Or as he called Noah into the Ark, to preserve him from the overflowing Flood, so he calls us into his Service, and to the Faith of his Son, that so we may escape that flood of Misery which will suddenly drown the impenitent and unbelieving World. And therefore we must not think that he calls and invites us to him, because he stands in need of us, or wants our Service; no, it is not because he cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy without him, nor in him neither, unless we come unto him. This is the only reason why he calls us so earnestly to him, For as I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel! Ezech. xxxiii. 11. Let us not stand therefore pausing upon it, and considering whether, we shall hearken to God's call or no, nor say severally within our selves, How shall I part with my Profits? How shall I deny my self the Enjoyment of my sensual Pleasures? How shall I forsake my darling and beloved Sins? But rather say, how shall I abide the Judgment of the great God? How shall I escape if I neglect so great Salvation as I am now called and invited to. For we may assure our selves, this is the great and only end why God calls so pathetically upon us to come unto

him, that so we may be delivered from his Wrath, and enjoy his Love and Favour for ever.

THUS we see what it is that God calls Mankind both from and to; he calls them from Darkness to Light, from Idolatry to true Religion, from Sin to Holiness, from Earth to Heaven, and from the deepest Misery to the highest Happiness that they are capable of. The next thing to be considered is, how God is pleased to call us, for which we must know that

1. HE hath vouchsafed to call some with his own Mouth, as I may so speak, even by immediate Revelations from himself. Thus he called Abraham and Moses, and several of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament. And thus he called Paul, Christ himself calling from Heaven to him, Saul, Saul, why. persecutest thou me? Act. ix. 4. And it is observable, that whosoever were thus called, they always obeyed. But this is not the Calling here spoken of.
2. GOD calls all Mankind by his Works and Providences. All the Creatures in the World are as so many Tongues declaring the Wisdom, Power, Goodness, and Glory of God unto us, and so call upon us to praise, honour, and obey him. And all his Providences have their several and distinct Voices; his Mercies bespeak our Affections, and his Judgments our Fear. Hear ye, saith he, the rod, and who hath appointed it, Mich. vi. 9. The Rod, it seems, hath a Voice, which we are bound to hear. But though many, yea all the World be called this way, yet neither is this the Calling our Saviour means, when he saith, many are called, but few chosen.
3. LASTLY, therefore God hath called many by the Ministry of his Word, and of his Servants the Prophets, the Apostles and their Successors declaring it, and explaining it to them. Thus God spake to our fathers by the Prophets, rising up early and sending them to call Sinners to

Repentance, by shewing them their sins, and the dangerous consequents of them. As when he sent his Prophet Isaiah, he bids him Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy Voice as a Trumpet, and shew my people their Transgressions, and the house of Jacob their Sins, Isa. lviii. 1. And they being convinced of, and humbled for their sins, then he sent his Prophets to invite them to accept of Grace and Pardon from him, saying in the Language of the same Prophet, Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come buy wine and milk without money and without price, Isai. lv. 1, 2, 3. And God having thus at sundry times, and in divers manners spoken in time-past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, Heb. i. 1, 2. who therefore said with his own Mouth, that he came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance, Matth. ix. 13. Hence as soon as ever he entered upon his Ministry, he called to Mankind, saying, Repent, and believe the Gospel, Marc. i. 5. and Come unto see all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, Matth. xi. 28. And when he was to depart hence he left order with his Apostles, to go and call all Nations, and teach them what he had commanded, promising that himself would be with them to the end of the World, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. By vertue therefore of this Commission, not only the Apostles themselves, but all succeeding Ministers in all Ages to the end of the World, are sent to call Mankind to embrace the Gospel, and to accept of the Terms propounded in it. So that when we his Ministers preach unto them, or call upon them to repent and turn to God, they must not think that we come in our own Name; for as the Apostle tells the Corinthians, We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 20. Hence in Scripture we are called also

kerukes Heralds, and our Office is keruosein to proclaim as Heralds, the Will and Pleasure of Almighty God unto Mankind, to offer Peace and Pardon to all that have rebelled against our Lord and Master the King of Heaven, if they wilt now come in, and submit themselves unto him, if not, in a most solemn and dreadful manner, to denounce his Wrath and heavy Displeasure against them. So that as the Angel was sent to call Lot out of Sodom, when the Lord was going to rain Fire and Brimstone from Heaven upon it; So God being ready every Moment to shower down his Fury and Vengeance upon the impenitent and unbelieving World, he sends us to call Men out of it, to open their Eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, Act. xxvi. 18. and to invite them to his Court, to live with him and be happy for ever.

AND that this is the proper meaning of our blessed Saviour, in this Place, where he saith many are called, is plain from the Parable whereon there Words are grounded; where the King is said to have sent his Servants to call the Guests which were bidden to the Marriage Feast, and put Words into their Mouths, telling them what to say, ver.

4. as he hath given us also Instructions how to call and invite Mankind in his holy Word. And when of the many which were called, there would but few come, hence our Saviour uttered this Expression, that many are called, but few chosen. From whence it is clear and obvious, that our Saviour means not such as were called immediately from God himself, for they were but few, nor yet such as are called by the works of Creation and Providence, for so not many only, but all are called; but he means such as are called by his Word, and by his Servants and Ministers reading, preaching, and explaining of it.

AND verily that many have been and still are called in this sense, which is the next thing I promised to shew, I need not stand long to prove. For our Saviour having commanded his Apostles to go and call all

Nations to his Faith, which is the proper meaning of that place, Mat. xxviii. 19. it cannot be denied but that the Apostles presently dispersed themselves, and preached the Gospel to all Nations, which they did so effectually, that in few Years after, even in St. Paul's time, The mystery of the Gospel was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. xvi. 26. and in St. John's time, some were redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, Rev. vii. 9. Yea, so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, that the Ancients compared it to Lightning, that immediately dispersed it self, and was seen all the World over. So that in less than two hundred Years, *ab ortu solis ad occasum lex Christiana suscepta est*, The Christian Religion was received all the world over from East to West, as Lacantius who then lived asserts. From which time therefore, how many thousands of millions of Souls have been called to the Faith of Christ, by the preaching of his Gospel. And not to speak of other Nations, how soon did the Sun of Righteousness arise upon these Western parts of the World, and particularly upon this Nation, wherein we dwell, several of Christ's own Disciples and Apostles, as Simon Peter, Simon Zelotes, James the Son of Zebedee, Joseph of Arimathea, Aristobulus, and St. Paul himself, being all recorded by Ecclesiastical Writers, to have preached the Gospel to this Nation. Be sure in less than two hundred Years the Christian Faith was here received, Tertullian himself saying expressly, *Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo subdita*, The Romans could scarcely come at Britany, but Christ hath conquered it. And soon after him, Arnobius., saith, that the Gospel, *Nec ipso Indos latuit à parte orientis, nec ipsos Britannos à parte occidentis*, Was not conceal'd either from the Indians in the Eastern part of the World, nor from the Britons themselves in the West. And since the Gospel was first here planted, how many have been called

by it to the Faith of Christ? Yea through the Mercy of the most high God, how many at this moment are called all the Nation over? And to come still closer to our selves, all that read this have I doubt not been often called heretofore, and now are called again. For in the Name of the most high God, and of his Son Christ, I pray and beseech you all as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshy lusts which war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. to repent of your Sins, and believe the Gospel. I call and invite you also to accept the offers of Grace and Pardon which are made you in Jesus Christ, to sit down with him at his own Table, and feed by Faith upon his Body and Blood, that so you may partake of the Merits of his Death and Passion, and so live with him for evermore. Thus you are all called, but I fear there are but few chosen.

HAVING thus explained and proved the first part of this Proposition, that many are called, we must now consider the meaning, truth and reasons of the other part of it, but few are chosen,. Polloi gar eisi kletoi, oligoi de eklektoi.. For many are called, but few chosen; that is, there are but few which are so approved of by God, as to be elected and chosen from the other part of the World, to inherit eternal Life.

That this is the main drift and scope of our blessed Saviour in these words, is plain from the foregoing Parable, which gave him occasion to pronounce them. For there all that were first called refused to come to the Marriage Feast which they were invited to, and of them which came some had not on their wedding garment; that is, although they came in to the outward profession of the Gospel, yet did not walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they were called, and therefore they likewise were excluded, upon which our Saviour adds. these words, For many are called, but few chosen. From whence it is easie to observe his meaning in general to be only this, that although many were called to partake

of the Privileges and Graces of his Gospel, yet seeing of those who were called, many would not come at all, and of those who come, many do not come so as the Gospel requires of them, with their wedding garment on; hence of the many who are called, there are but few chosen to partake of the Marriage Feast, that is, of the glorious Promises made in the Gospel, to those that come aright unto it. Few, not absolutely in themselves considered, but few comparatively in respect of the many which are not chosen; or rather few in comparison of the many which are called. For if we consider them absolutely in themselves, they are certainly very many, our Saviour himself saith, Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, &c. Mat. viii. 11. And in the Revelations you read of many thousands that were sealed of every Tribe, Yea, There was a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the lamb, cloathed with white, and palms in their hands, Apoc. vii. 9. Insomuch that for all the numberless number of fallen or apostatized Angels, St. Austin was of opinion, that there will be as many Men saved, as there are Angels damned, or rather more. For, saith he, upon the fall of the Angels and Men, he determined to gather together by his infinite Grace, so many out of the mortal Progeny, *ut inde suppleat & instauret partem quæ lapsa est Angelorum*, That be might from thence make up and restore that part of Angels which was fallen; *ac sic illa dilecta & superna Civitas non fraudetur suorum numero civium, quin etiam fortassis & uberiore lætetur*. And so that beloved City which is above, may not be deprived of the number of its Citizens, but perhaps rejoice in having more, Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. xxii. c. 1. which notion he grounds upon those words of our Saviour in this Chapter, For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are *isangeloi*, as the Angels of God in heaven, Mat.

xxii. 30. Or as the words may be interpreted, they are equal to the Angels, and equal in number to the fallen, as well as in quality to the elect Angels, as that learned and pious Father expounds it. But howsoever that be, this is certain, that the number of Men chosen and saved, will be very great, considered absolutely in themselves, and yet notwithstanding; if they be compared with .the many more which are called, they are but very few, Christ's flock is, as himself stiles it, mikron poimnion, a very little, little Flock, Luk. xii. 32. that is, in comparison of the vast multitudes of Souls that flock after the World and Sin. As in a Garden there are but few choice Flowers, in comparison of the Weeds that grow in it; there are but very few Diamonds and precious Stones, in comparison of Pebbles and Gravel upon the Seashore; in the richest Mines there is far more dross than Gold and Silver: So is it in the Church of Christ; there is but little Wheat, in comparison of the Tares that come up with it; Christ hath a great many hangers on, but few faithful and obedient Servants; there are many that speak him very fair, and make a plausible profession of the Faith and Religion which he taught, but where shall find one that praiseth it? If there be here one and there another, two or three in a Parish, or perhaps in a whole City, what is this to the innumerable company of such as are called by him, and baptized into his Name, and yet leave him to follow after the World and Vanity: Oh what just ground had our Saviour to say, Many are called, but few chosen?

BUT to demonstrate the truth of this Proposition still more fully, and as clearly as possibly I can, I must first lay down one Principle as a Postulatum, which I suppose all will acknowledge to be true, and that is this, that whatsoever profession a Man makes of the Christian Religion, it will avail him nothing without the practice of it; or if you will take it in our Saviour's own words, Not every one, saith he,

that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, Mat. vii.

21. Or as the Apostle expresseth it, For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified, Rom. ii.

13. That is, it is not our hearing and knowing our Duty that will stand us in any stead before God, but our doing of it; it is not our believing that we may be saved by believing in Christ, whereby we can be saved without actual believing in him, without such a Faith whereby we depend upon him, for the pardon and salvation of our immortal Souls, and consequently for the assistance of his Grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to obey his Gospel, and to perform all such things as himself hath told us are necessary in order to our everlasting Happiness: And whatsoever Faith we pretend to, unless it comes to this, that it put us upon universal Obedience to all the Commands of God, we may conclude it will do us no good, for it is not such a Faith as Christ requires, which always works by Love; conquers the World, subdues Sin, purifies the Heart, and sanctifies the whole Soul wheresoever it comes. It is such a Faith as this which is the wedding Garment, without which no Man is chosen nor admitted to partake of those celestial Banquets, which Christ our Saviour hath provided for us. And therefore no Man can have any ground at all to believe or hope himself to be defied or chosen to eternal Salvation, that is not holy in all manner of Conversation; God himself having told us expressly, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. So that having God's own word for it, we may positively and confidently assert, that no Man in the world can upon just grounds be reputed as chosen by God, that doth not in all things to the utmost of his power, conform himself, and adjust his Actions to the Laws and Commands of God. So that how many soever are called, how many soever come in to the outward

profession of the Christian Religion, yet none of them can be said to be chosen, but such as are real and true Saints. And how few those are, is a matter which we have more cause to bewail than to prove.

Howsoever, that we may see that we have but too much reason to believe this Assertion of our blessed Saviour, that many are called, but few chosen, I desire we may but consider the estate of Christendom in general, and weigh the Lives and Actions of all such as profess to believe in Christ, view them well, and examine them by the Gospel Rules, and then we shall soon conclude that there are but few chosen; or to bring it home more closely to our selves, who are all called, and take out from amongst us all such Persons as come not up to the terms of the Gospel, and we shall find that there are but few behind, but few indeed who can be discerned and judged by the light either of Reason or Scripture to be chosen by God to eternal Life. For take out from amongst us,

1. ALL atheistical Persons, who though they are baptized into the name of Christ, and so are called to the Faith of Christ, yet neither believe in Christ nor God, such Fools as say in their Heart there is no God, Psal. xiv. 1. For all will grant, that they are not chosen by God, who do not so much as believe that there is any God to chuse them. Neither can it be imagined that the all wise God should chuse such Fools as these to be with him, who will not so much as acknowledge him to be. And yet how many such Fools have we amongst us, whose practises have so depraved their Principles, that they will not believe there is any God, because they wish there was none? And when these are taken from amongst the called, I fear the Number of the Chosen amongst them will be much lessened.

2. TAKE out from amongst us all ignorant Persons, that understand not the common Principles of Religion, nor the Fundamental Articles of that

Faith which they are called to: For that these are not chosen, is plain, in that though they be called by Christ, yet they know not what he would have them do, nor yet who it is that calls them. And therefore as God would have all Men to be saved, so for that end he would have them come to the knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. that is, he would have them know all such Truths as himself hath revealed to them in his Gospel, as necessary to be known in order to their eternal Salvation, without which knowledge it is impossible for a Man to perform what is required of him; for though a Man may know his Duty and not do it, no Man can do his Duty unless he first know it. And therefore gross Ignorance and saving Faith, cannot possibly consist or stand together; for saving Faith is always joined with, or puts a Man upon sincere Obedience to all the Commands of God. But how can any Man obey the commands of God, who neither knows that God whose Commands they are, nor yet what these Commands are which God would have him to obey? No certainly, a blind Man may as well follow his temporal Calling, how intricate soever it be, as he that is grossly ignorant, the high Calling of a Christian; for he is altogether incapable of it, and so not only unworthy, but unfit to be chosen to it. Hence God himself hath told us, that he is so far from chusing such as live and dye in this manner without understanding, that he will never shew them any Mercy or Favour. For it is a people, saith he, of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour, Isa. xxvii. 11. Neither doth he ever blame Mankind for any thing in the World more than for not knowing, and therefore not considering him that made and feeds them, Isa. i. 2, 3. Hos iv. 1. And that we may be still farther assured that he chuseth no such Persons to dwell with him, as do not know him and his Commands, he hath given it us under his hand, that he rejects them,

saying, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children, Hos. iv. 6.

THAT therefore no Persons that are grossly ignorant, and live and die in that Condition, are chosen to eternal Salvation, I suppose, the Premises considered, all will acknowledge. But alas! how many such Persons are there in the World, how many amongst our selves? How many who are very cunning and expert in the management of any worldly Business, but are mere Novices or rather Idiots in matters of true Religion? Or as the Prophet words it, Who are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge, Jer. iv. 22. How many such ignorant and sottish People are there in every corner of the Land? and in this City it self! where they do, or may hear the Word of God read and expounded to them every day, and yet all them seriously of the Grounds of the Christian Religion, and the Reason of the Hope that is in them, and they are no more able to give a satisfactory or rational answer, than if they had never heard of any such Book as the Bible in the World, or had been born and bred in the remotest Corners of America, where the sound of the Gospel never yet came. But all such, how many soever they be, though they be called, they must stand aloof off, for so long as they are such we may be confident they are not chosen. Insomuch that should we take away no other from the number of the called, but only such as know not what they are called to, it would appear but too clearly to be true, that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen.

3. TAKE, out from amongst us all vicious, profane, debauched and impenitent Persons, all that make a mock of Sin, and that jear at Holiness, that live as without God in the World, as if they had neither

God to serve nor Souls to save; as if there was neither a Hell to avoid nor Heaven to enjoy, and therefore make it their business to gratifie their Flesh, and to indulge their Appetite with carnal and sensual Pleasures, looking no higher than to be fellow sharers with the Brutes that perish such as in their bewitching Cups stick not to fly in the face of Heaven it self, and dare challenge God himself to damn them, that make lying their usual Dialect, and swearing their pleasing Rhetorick; and are so far from being troubled for these their Sins, that they take pleasure and delight in them, so far from being ashamed of them, that they make them their Pride and Glory, and so make it their Pleasure to displease God, and their highest Honour to dishonour him that is Honour and Perfection it self. For that no such Persons as these who live and dye in such notorious Crimes upon Earth, are chosen to live with God in Heaven, none can deny that believes the Scriptures to be true, which in plain Terms assure us of the contrary. Know ye not, saith the Apostle, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And St. John tells us, that only they who do the Commandments enter into the City of Heaven: but without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, Rev. xxii. 14, 15. So that all such Persons without timely Repentance, are most certainly excluded from the number of the chosen. And how many are there amongst us, who allow themselves in some such Sin or other; or rather where shall we find a Man that doth not? But to all Persons that continue in such Sins, I may say, stand you by, you have no ground as yet to think that you are chosen, but have rather

all the reason in the World to believe, that if you go on in such a sinful course, you will never know what Heaven or Happiness is. But when all such are taken out of the number of the called, what a pityous scouting will be left behind! In plain terms, we have just cause to fear that ignorant and dissolute Persons make the greatest part of those who are called Christians.

4. TAKE out from amongst us all hypocritical and false hearted Persons, that seem indeed to be honest and good Men, but still retain some secret Sin or other which will as certainly keep them out of Heaven as the most notorious or scandalous Crime that is: such as our Saviour compares to whited Sepulchres, which outwardly appear very beautiful, but are within full of dead Mens Bones, and of all uncleanness, Matth. xxiii. 27. Such whose outward Conversation is altogether unblameable; so that no Man can charge them with Theft, Perjury, Drunkenness, Uncleanness, and the like; but in the mean while, they are malicious, uncharitable, censorious, proud, self-conceited, disobedient to Parents or Magistrates, Covetous, Ambitious, and the like. And so tho' they be free from those Sins which others are guilty of, yet they are guilty of as bad Sins, which the others may be freed from. To which also may be added all such as make indeed a greater shew of Piety, and seem mighty zealous for the little Circumstances of Religion, but neglect the weightier Matters of the Law, the Love of God, Mercy, Justice, and the like. But for all the vain Hopes and high Conceits that such Persons may have of themselves, they are far from being such as the Gospel requires them, and by consequence from the number of the chosen here spoken of. For the Pharisees were such Persons as these, and yet our Saviour himself tells us, That except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God, Matth. vi. 20. And when he tells us elsewhere,

That except we repent we must all likewise perish, Luke xiii. 3. his meaning is, not that we must repent of some, or many, or most, but of all our Sins, and so repent of them as to turn from them; and so turn from all Sin, as for the future to be holy in all manner of Conversation, otherwise our Saviour himself assures us, that he will never save us, but we must perish without remedy.

LET any Man consider this, and then tell me what he thinks of the Number of the chosen, whether it be not very small indeed, in comparison of the many which are called. For not to speak of other parts of Christendom, all the People of this Nation are called to the Faith of Christ; and how many they are I cannot say we all know, for it is past any Man's knowledge. But where is the Man amongst us all, that doth not harbour some secret Lust or other in his Bosom; yea, of the many Men in this Nation, where is he that can say with David, I have kept my self from mine Iniquity? Or to use the words of the Prophet, Run ye to and fro through the streets of this city, and see now and know, and seek if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, that serveth the Lord with a perfect heart and a willing mind. I do not deny but there are a great many professors of Religion amongst us, who would fain be accounted more strict and holy than their Neighbours, so as to be reckoned the Religious; as the Friars and Nuns are in the Church of Rome; But are they therefore to be esteemed the elect and chosen of God because they fancy themselves to be so? Or rather is not their Pride and Self-conceitedness an Argument, that they are not so? Blessed be God for it, I have no Spleen nor Rancour against any of them, but heartily wish they were as truly good and holy as they would seem to be. But what? Is not Pride a Sin? Is not Self-conceitedness a Sin? Is not Irreverence in God's worship a Sin? Is not Disobedience to Magistrates

a Sin? Is not Uncharitableness or Censoriousness a Sin? Certainly all these will be found to be Sins another Day. And therefore whatsoever pretences Men make unto Religion, if they allow themselves in such Sins as these, they are as far from being in the Number of the chosen, as the most dissolute and scandalous Persons in the World, But when these two are removed from the Number of the called, how few of them will appear to be chosen.

5. YET once again. Take out all such as believe not in our Lord Jesus Christ, but being morally honest and faithful in performing their Duty to God and Man, trust more in their own good Works than to his Merit and Mediation. For that all such are to be excluded, is plain from the whole tenour of the Gospel, which assures us, that there is no Salvation to be had but only by Jesus Christ; nor by him neither, but only by believing in him. But if Christ should come this Day to Judgment, would he find Faith upon Earth? Verily, I fear, he would find but very little if any at all amongst us: He might I believe; find some pretty strict and circumspect in obeying of his other Laws, or at least endeavouring to do so. But for a Man to do all that is required of him, and yet to count himself an unprofitable Servant; for a Man to do all he can and yet rest upon nothing that he hath done, but to depend wholly upon another, even upon Jesus Christ for Life and Happiness, this is hard indeed to Flesh and Blood, and as rare to find as it is to find a Rose amongst the Weeds and Thistles of a barren Wilderness, or a Diamond amongst the Gravel upon the Sea shoar; here and there I believe there may be found one, but so rarely, that they can scarce be termed any, be sure but very few in comparison of the many which are called. NOW let us put these things together and we shall easily grant that this saying of our Saviour was but too true, that many are called but few chosen. And to bring it closer to our selves, we are all called to

repent and believe the Gospel: Now take out from amongst us all ignorant Persons that then should be the reason that so many of them should be called and invited to the chiefest Good, the highest Happiness their Natures are capable of, yet so few of them should mind or prosecute it, so as to be chosen or admitted into the Participation of it? What shall we ascribe it to, the will and pleasure of Almighty God, as if he delighted in the ruin of his Creatures, and therefore although he calls them, he would not have them come unto him? No, that cannot be; for in his revealed Will, which is the only Rule that we are to walk by, he hath told us the contrary in plain terms, and hath confirmed it too with an Oath; saying, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his way and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And elsewhere he assures us, that he would have all Men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. And therefore if we believe what God saith, nay if we believe what he hath sworn, we must needs acknowledge that it is his will and pleasure, that as many as are called, should be all chosen, and saved. And indeed if he had no mind we should come when we are called to him, why should he call us all to come? Why hath he given us his word, his Ministers, his Ordinances, and all to invite and oblige us to repent and turn to him, if after all he was resolved not to accept of us, nor would have us come at all? Far be it from us, that we should have such hard and unworthy thoughts of the great Creator and Governor of the World; especially considering that he hath told us the contrary, as plainly as it was possible for him to express his mind unto us. I do not deny, but that according to the Apostle, Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world, Acts xv. 18. And that there are several passages in Scripture which intimate unto us God's eternal Election of all that are truly pious, to live with him

for ever. But it is not for us to be so bold and impudent, as to pry into the secrets of God, nor so curious as to search into his eternal and incomprehensible Decrees; but we must still remember the words of Moses, That secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but these things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of his law, Deut. xxix. 29. Whatsoever is necessary for us to believe or do, in order to our eternal Salvation, is clearly revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, and therefore what we there read belongs unto us to know, neither are we to look any farther than to his revealed Will. But God in the Scriptures doth plainly tell us, not only in the places before quoted, but elsewhere, that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance, 2 Pet. iii. 9. This is the revealed Will of God, which we are to acquiesce in, and rest fully satisfied with, so as to act accordingly, without concerning our selves about things that are too high for us, and no way belong unto us. And therefore it is not in his secret, but revealed Will, that we are to search for the reasons of this Proposition, that many are called, but few chosen.

NOW in consulting the word of God, to find out the reasons of this so strange Assertion, that many are called, but few chosen, I know no better or fitter place to search for them, than this Parable, which gave our blessed Saviour the occasion of asserting it; in which it is very observable, that he meddles not at all with any reasons a priori, deduced from the eternal Decrees of his Father, but he only suggests to us the reasons a posteriori, drawn from the disposition and carriage of Men, why so many of them are called, and yet so few chosen.

FOR the opening whereof we must know, that the end and intent of this Parable, was only to shew the entertainment which his Gospel had then, and should still meet with in the World; many refusing to embrace it at

all, and of those who embrace it, many still walking unworthy of it. So that the Issue and Consequence of it will be, that though many be called to it, there are but few chosen. And he hath so worded the Parable, that we need not look any farther for the reasons of this his conclusion from it, they being almost clearly couched in the Parable it self, which that we may the better understand, I shall open and explain them particularly, so as to make them intelligible, I hope, to the meanest Capacity.

THE first reason therefore why so many are called, but so few chosen, is because they who are called to Christ, will not come unto him; for this is the first reason which our Saviour himself in the Parable assigns for it; The King, saith he, sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage, and they, would not come, Mat. xxii. 3. And they would not come, so that that the great fault is still in the wills of Men, which are generally so depraved and corrupt, that though they be called never so oft, and cannot but in reason acknowledge that it is their interest to come, yet they have so strange an averseness to the Holiness and Purity of the Gospel which they are called to, that they will not come unto it only because they will not; for here, they who were first bidden, give no reason of their refusal, only it is said, they would not come. And good cause why, for when we have searched into all the reasons imaginable, why Men do not fully submit themselves to the Obedience of the Gospel, they will all resolve and empty themselves into this, that they will not because they will not. Let Ministers say what they can, let the Scripture say what it will, let God himself say what he pleases, yet Sinners Men are, and Sinners they will be, in spite of them all, as the Prophet rebuking the People for their Sins, said, But thou saidst, there is no hope; No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go, Jer. ii. 25. And so it is to

this day, we tell them of their Sins, and the dangerous consequences of them; we tell them that they must not love the World, but seek the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness in the first place; we tell them from Christ's own Mouth, that except they repent and forsake their Sins, they must perish; but they say in effect, that we had as good hold our tongues; for they have loved the World, and after it they will go, they have found pleasure in the commission of their Sins, and therefore they will commit them; Christ calls them to come unto him, and they know no reason why they should not, but howsoever they will not come. If we were but once willing, the work was done; for what our Wills are really inclined to, we cannot but use the utmost of our endeavour to attain. But the mischief is, Men read the Gospel, they hear Christ calling upon them to believe and obey it, but their Wills are still averse from it, there is a kind of antipathy and contrariety within them, against such exact and real Holiness as the Gospel requires from them. So that if they perish, they must blame themselves for it, it is their own choice, they chuse and prefer their Sins with all the Miseries which attend them, before the Gospel of Christ, with all the Glory and Happiness which is offered in it; and therefore as God said to his People, Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die; O house of Israel? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. So say I to these Men, repent and believe the Gospel, for why will ye die, why will ye perish eternally? Have you any reason for it? none in the world but your own Wills. Christ hath told you in plain terms, Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out, Joh. vi. 35. But if you will not come unto him, who can help that? Are not your selves only in the fault? Will not your blood be upon your own heads? What could Christ have done more for you than he hath done? What could he have suffered more for you than he hath suffered? How could he call you to him more plainly or pathetically than he doth? But

if after all this, you will not come unto him, you must even thank your selves for all the Torments you must e'er long suffer and undergo. And this is indeed the case of the greatest part of Mankind, that though they be called and invited to partake of all the Merits of Christ's Death and Passion, yet they will not come unto him. And this is the first and great reason why so many are called, and yet so few chosen, Joh. v. 40.

2. The second reason is because Men do not really believe that they are invited to such glorious things as indeed they are, as our Saviour himself intimates in the Parable. For when they who were bidden, would not come upon the first Invitation, as not believing the Message which these Servants brought them, the King sent forth other Servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen, and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage, Mat. xxii. 4. When the first Servants were not believed, he sent others with fuller Instructions, giving them orders to acquaint the Guests, that all things were now ready, and to assure them that it was to a Marriage-Feast they were invited. But it seems, whatsoever the first or second Servants could say, it was to no purpose, they would not believe them, and therefore sent them away as they came; whereby our Saviour exactly discovers to us the entertainment that his Gospel always did, and still would meet with in the World. Before his own coming into the World, he sent his Prophets to invite Mankind to accept of the terms propounded in it, and to call upon them to repent and turn to God, that their Sins might be blotted out, and their Souls admitted into the grace and favour of Almighty God, and so partake of eternal Glory, which the Prophets called Men to, under the notion of a Feast, A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well

refined, Isa. xxv. 6. which they called all Men to, saying, Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, Isa. lv. 1. But how their Message was received, the same Prophet declares, saying, Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed, Isa. liii. 1. and so it is since. For when the Prophets could not be credited, God afterwards sent his Apostles, and still to this Day is sending Servant after Servant to invite Men to Grace and Pardon, to Heaven and eternal Happiness. But we his Ministers may still say with the Prophet, Who hath believed our report? We tell Men, that unless they repent and turn to God, Iniquity will be their ruin; we tell them also, that if they believe in the Lord Jesus they shall be saved, and if they be holy here, they shall be happy hereafter. But what signifies our telling them of these things, if they believe not what we say? And yet who doth? Men give us the hearing, censure what they have heard, and that is all the use they make of it, never really or firmly believing any one truth that we make known or expound unto them; and this being the case not only of some few, but of the greatest part of Mankind, hence it comes to pass that so many are called and so few are chosen, even because they who are called do not believe it, and so it is all one with them whether they be called or no. Be sure God chuseth none but such as believe the word he sends unto them; for as the Apostle saith, God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, Jac. ii. 5. If they be not rich in faith, they are not for his purpose; and seeing there are but few that are so; hence of the many which are called, there are but few chosen.

3. ANOTHER reason why of the many, which are called there are so few chosen, is because they have no real esteem or value for the things they are called to; as it is in the Parable, when the Servants were sent to call upon them to make haste to the Feast because all things

were ready, it is said that they made light of it, v.5. They did not think it worth their while to go, though it was to a Feast, to a Marriage Feast, yea to the Marriage Feast of so great a Person as a King's Son; no, not though they were invited by the King himself unto it. Thus it was in ancient times, and thus it is still; the King of Heaven sends to invite Men to his Court, to lay aside their filthy Garments, and to put on the Robes that he hath prepared for them, that they may be holy as he is holy, and so live with him and be happy for ever. But they make light of such things as these, they can see no such Beauty in Christ, why they should desire him, no such excellency in God himself, why they should be in love with him; and as for Heaven, they never were there yet, and therefore care not whether they ever come there or no; though they be called, they matter not whether they be chosen to it or no; and hence likewise it is that of the many which are called, there are so few chosen.

4. ANOTHER reason is, because they who are called are generally addicted to the things of this Life, they have the Serpent's Curse upon them, to feed upon the Dust of the Earth, and therefore slight all the Overtures that are made them of Heaven and eternal Happiness. As our Saviour himself intimates in this Parable, saying, that when they were invited they made light of it, and went their way, one to his Farm, another to his Merchandise ver. 5. Thus we read of the Pharisees, that they being covetous, when they heard the Words of Christ, they derided him, Luc. xvi. 14. And thus it is to this Day, though Men be called to Christ, they are so much taken up with worldly Businesses, that they can find no time to come unto him; but away they go again, one to his Trade, another to his Merchandise. These are the things that most Mens Minds are wholly bent upon, and therefore they will not be persuaded to leave them to go to Christ. It is true, if he called them to great

Estates, if he called them to a good Bargain, if he called them to Crowns and Scepters in this World, that they would all arise which should be chosen first. But the things that he calls us to are quite of another nature; he calls us to repent of our sins, to believe in him, to condemn the World, to have our Conversations in Heaven. But these are things which Men do not love to hear of; as being contrary to their earthly temper and inclinations; and therefore we who are God's Ministers may call our hearts out before they will set themselves in good earnest to mind them. Or to bring it home closer to us, how often have we all been invited to that spiritual Feast, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but how few are there that come unto it, when the whole Congregation is called to partake of it? Scarce one in twenty think it worth their while to stay, to have their share in it. What can be the reason of this, but that our Minds are taken up with other things, which we fancy to be of far greater Concernment to us than all the Merits of Christ's Death and Passion. And therefore it is no wonder that so many of us are called, and so few chosen, seeing we ourselves chuse the Toys and Trifles of this transient World, before all these real Joys which in the Gospel we are called and invited to.

5. IN the next Place, many of them which are called, have so strange an antipathy to God and Goodness, that they do not only neglect and slight their heavenly, in companion of their earthly Calling, but they hate and abuse such as are sent to call them, as our Saviour himself intimates, ver. 6. O barbarous Cruelty! What hurt, what injury is done unto them? They are invited to a Feast, and for this they are angry, and kill the Messengers which are sent to invite them. Thus it hath been in all Ages. This was the Entertainment, this the Requital that most of the Prophets received for the divine Message they brought to Mankind, Mat. xxiii. 37. Yea Christ himself, the Son and Heir of God,

was put to death for inviting Men to Life and Happiness, and so were his Apostles too: And so it is to this Day. There is still a secret malice and hatred in Mens hearts against such as sincerely endeavour to preach the Gospel clearly and fully unto them. We tell them of their Sins, we acquaint them with the Danger they are in, we call upon them to forsake and avoid them, we invite them to Christ, and so to Heaven and eternal Happiness; and for this many of them are angry with us and incensed against us. They may forgive us this wrong, I can assure them we intend them no Evil, but all the Good we do or can desire to our own Souls; and whatsoever the Success be, it is still our Duty to call upon them, to advise them of their Duty, and if possible reclaim them from their Sins, and if they be angry with us for that, as many are, they cannot wonder at our Saviour's saying, that many are called, but few chosen.

6. THE last reason which our Saviour gives in this Parable, why many are called, but few chosen, is because of those who are called, and come too at their Call, many come not aright, which he signifies by the Man that came without his Wedding garment, ver. 11, 12, 13. where although he mentions but one Man, yet under that one is comprehended all of the same kind, even all such Persons as have the Gospel preached to them, and so are called and Invited to all the Graces and Privileges proposed in it, all such as profess to believe in Christ, and to expect Happiness and Salvation from him, yet will not come up to the Terms which he propounds in his Gospel to them, even to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, Eph. iv. 1. And indeed this is the great reason of all why of so many which are called there are so few chosen, because there are so few which do all things which the Gospel requires of them. Many like Herod will do many things, Marc. vi. 20. and are almost persuaded to be Christians, as Agrippa was, Act. xxvi.

28. How zealous are some for, how violent are others against, the little Ceremonies and Circumstances of Religion, and in the mean while neglect and let slip the Power and Substance of it? How demure are some in their Carriage towards Men, but irreverent and slovenly in the Worship of Almighty God? How devout would others seem towards God, but are still careless and negligent of their Duty towards Men? Some are all for the Duties of the first Table without the second, others for the second without the first. Some are altogether for Obedience and good Works, without Faith in Christ; others are as much for Faith in Christ without Obedience and good Works. Some would do all themselves, as if Christ had done nothing for them; others fancy that Christ hath so done all things for them, that there is nothing left for themselves to do: And so betwixt both their sorts of People, which are the far greater part of those who are called, either the Merits or else the Laws of Christ are slighted and contemned. But is this the way to be saved? No, surely: If I know any thing of the Gospel, it requires both Repentance and Faith in Christ, that we perform sincere Obedience to all his Laws, and yet trust in him, and him done, for Pardon, Acceptance, and Salvation. And whosoever comes short of this, though he be called, we may be sure he is not chosen; though he come to the Marriage Feast with those that are invited, yet wanting his Wedding Garment, he will be cast out again with Shame and Confusion of Face. So that it is not our doing some, or many, or most of the things which the Gospel requires, that will do our Business, unless we do all to the utmost of our Skill and Power. But where shall we find the Man that doth so? What ground have we to acknowledge that our Saviour had but too much cause to say, Many are called, but few chosen; which I fear is but too true, not only of others, but our selves too.

I say not this to discourage any one: No, it is my hearty Desire and

Prayer to the eternal God, that every Soul of us might be chosen and saved. But my great Fear is, that many think it so easy a matter to go to Heaven, that if they do but say their Prayers, and hear Sermons now and then, they cannot miss of it, and therefore need not trouble themselves any farther about it. But they must give me leave to tell them, that this will not serve their turn; if it would, most of those which are called would be chosen too. Whereas our Saviour himself tells us, in plain terms, the contrary. And yet this should be so far from discouraging of us, that it should rather excite us to greater Diligence about it than heretofore we may have used, as our Saviour himself intimates in his Answer to this Question, Luc. xiii. 23, 24. And verily, what greater Encouragement can we have than to consider, that though there be but few chosen, yet there are some? For why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others? Are not we all called to Christ? Are not we all invited, yea commanded to believe in his Name, and obey his Gospel, that so we may partake of everlasting Glory? Let us then all set upon that Work in good earnest which we are called to. Let us but fear God, and keep his Commandments, and believe in his Son for his Acceptance of us, and then we need not fear but though of the many others which are called there are but few chosen, yet we few who are all called shall be all chosen; chosen to live with God himself, and Jesus Christ, and to sing forth his Praises for evermore.

Thoughts upon the Appearance of Christ the Sun of Righteousness, or the

Beatifick Vision.

SO long as we are in the Body, we are apt to be governed wholly by its senses, seldom or never minding any thing but what comes to us through one or other of them. Though we are all able to abstract our Thoughts when we please from matter, and fix them upon things that are purely spiritual; there are but few that ever do it. But few, even among those also that have such things revealed to them by God himself, and so have infinitely more and firmer ground to believe them, than any one, or all their senses put together can afford. Such are the great Truths of the Gospel, for which we have the infallible Word and Testimony of the supreme Truth; yet seeing they are not the Objects of sense, but only of our Faith, though we profess to believe them, yet we take but little notice of them, and are usually no more affected with them, than as if there were no such things in being. Hence it hath pleased God, in great Compassion to our Infirmary, not only to reveal and make known such spiritual things to us, in plain and easy terms, but likewise to bring them as near as possible to our senses, by representing them to us under the Names and Characters of such sensible Objects as bear the greatest Resemblance to them; that we who are led so much by our senses, may by them also be directed how to apprehend those spiritual Objects which he hath told us of, on purpose that we may believe them upon his word.

THUS he often useth the words, Hand, Eye, and the like, to signify his own divine Perfections to us. And thus it was that our Saviour preached the Gospel to the People, by Parables, and Similitudes of things

commonly seen and done among themselves. The Prophets also frequently took the same course, as might be shewn by many Instances; but one of the most remarkable is that in Mat. iv. 2. where the Prophet in the Name of God speaking of Christ's coining into the World, expreseth it by the rising of the Sun, saying, To you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.

FOR that Jesus Christ is that Sun of Righteousness here spoken of, is so plain from the Context, and whole Design of the Prophet, that I need not insist upon the proving it; but shall only observe, that this being the last of all the Prophets in the Old Testament, he shuts up his own, and all the other Prophecies, with a clear Prediction of Christ, and his Fore-runner John the Baptist, whom he calls Elijah or Elias, and concludes his Prophecy with these words concerning him, Behold I will send you Elijah the Prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the Earth (or rather the Land) with a Curse, Mal. iv. 5, 6. For that by Elijah is here meant John the Baptist, we are assured by Christ himself, Matth. xi. 14. And it is very observable, that as this Prophet ends the old Testament with a Prediction of Elias, so St. Luke begins the New with a relation how John the Baptist was born, and so came into the World a little before Christ, as the Morning Star that appeared before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

BUT of the Day which shall come at the rising of that glorious Sun, the Prophet saith, that it shall burn as an Oven, and all the proud, yea and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch, ver. 1. It will be a terrible Day to those that shall obstinately refuse to walk in the light of it; they shall be

all consumed, as we read the unbelieving Jews were at the Destruction of Hierusalem, that happened soon after that Sun was up. But then turning himself, as it were, to his own People, Almighty God here by his Prophet cheers and comforts them, saying to them, But unto you that fear my Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, &c. He shall arise to all, but to the other with such a scorching Heat as shall burn them up, to these with healing in his Wings, or Rays, so as not to hurt but heal them of all their Maladies. NOW that which I chiefly design by God's Assistance, to shew from these words, is, what Thoughts they suggest to us concerning our blessed Saviour, by calling him the Sun of Righteousness. But to make the way as plain as I can, we must first consider, to whom he is here said to arise with healing in his wings, even to those that fear the Name of God; i.e. to those who firmly believing in God, and being fully persuaded of his infinite Power, Justice and Mercy, and also of the Truth of all his Threats and Promises, stand continually in awe of him; not daring to do any thing willingly that may offend him, nor leave any thing undone that he would have them do. Such, and such only, can be truly said to fear God. And therefore the Fear of God in the Scriptures, especially of the Old Testament, is all along put for the whole Duty of Man. There being no Duty that a Man owes, either to God or his Neighbour, but if he really fears God, he will endeavour all he can to do it. But this necessarily supposeth his Belief in God, and his holy Word, or rather proceeds originally from it. For he that cometh unto God, so as to fear and obey him, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them who diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 6. So that as no Man can believe in God, but he must needs fear him; so no Man can fear God, unless he first believes in him. From whence it necessarily follows, that by those who are here said to fear the Name of God, we

can understand no other but only such as are possessed with a firm Belief in him, and with a full Persuasion of the Truth and Certainty of those divine Revelations that he hath made of himself, and of his Will to Mankind, and therefore live accordingly.

OF these, and these only, it is here said, that to them shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings. Not to any other; no other being able to see his light, nor capable of those healing Influences that proceed from him. For though he be a Sun, he is not not such a Sun as we see with our bodily Eyes in the Firmament, but the Sun of Righteousness, shining in the highest Heavens, beyond the reach of our senses, visible only to the Eye of the Faith, the Evidence of things not seen. Insomuch that although he be risen, and darts down his Beams to this lower World continually, yet they who have not Faith, can neither see him, nor enjoy any more Benefit by him than as if he was not risen, or did not shine at all. As if a Man be born stark blind, though the Sun shines never so clear about him, he sees no more than he did before, but lives in the dark at Noonday as much as at Midnight, neither can ye ever make him understand what Light or Colours are; for having not that sense, by which alone such things can be perceived, he can never understand what you mean by such things, so as to form any true Notion of them in his mind. So it is in our present Case; though the Sun of Righteousness be risen, and shines most gloriously in the World; yet being the Object only of our Faith, without that a Man can discern nothing of him. He may perhaps talk of him as a blind Man may talk of Light, but all the while he knows not what he means by the Words which he useth about him. For he useth them only as Words in course, taken up from those he talks with, without having any Effect or Operation at all upon his mind; whereas they who really believe God's Word, and what is there revealed concerning the Sun of Righteousness;

they see his Light, they feel his Heat, they experience the Power and Efficacy of his Influences; and therefore, although they who have not Faith (as few have) can be no way profited by what they shall hear or read of him, yet they who have, and act it upon what they hear or read out of God's holy Word concerning him, they will find their Thoughts or Apprehensions of him cleared up, and their Affections enflamed to him; so as to love and honour him for the future, as the Fountain of all that spiritual Life and Light, and Joy they have. For to them he will arise with healing in his wings.

HE did not only arise once, but he continually ariseth to those who believe in God, and fear him. For thus saith the Lord, to you that fear my Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings. It is true, he speaks more especially of his Incarnation, or visible Appearance in the World, but by this manner of speaking; he intimates withal that this Sun of Righteousness is always shining upon his faithful People, more or less, in all Ages from the beginning to the end of the World. For in that it is said he shall arise, it is plainly supposed that he was the Sun of Righteousness before, and gave Light unto the World, though not so clearly as when he was actually risen. As we see and enjoy the light of the Sun, long before he riseth, from the first dawning of the Day, though it grows clearer and clearer, all along as he comes nearer and nearer to his rising; so the Sun of Righteousness began to enlighten the World as soon as it was darkened by Sin; the Day then began to break, and it grew lighter and lighter in every Age. Adam himself saw something of this Light, Abraham more; Abraham rejoiced to see my Day, saith this glorious Sun, he saw it, and was glad, Joh. viii. 56: David and the Prophets after him saw it most clearly; especially this, the last of the Prophets: He saw this Sun in a manner rising, so that he could tell the People that it would

suddenly get above their Horizon, The Lord whom ye seek, saith he, shall suddenly come to his Temple, Mal. iii. 1. and acquaints them also with the happy Influences it would have upon them, saying, in the Name of God, Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

The Sun of Righteousness; that is, as I observed before, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is often foretold and spoke of under the name and notion of the Sun or Star that giveth light unto the World. There shall come a star out of Jacob, said Balaam, Num. xxiv. 17. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, saith David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. And the Prophet Isaiah speaking of his coming, saith, The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined; Isa. ix. 2. For that this was spoken of Christ, we have the authority of the Evangelist, Mat. iv. 16. To the same purpose is that of the same Prophet, Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee, Isa. lx. 1, 2. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee. But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, v. 19, 20. To which we may add the many places where Christ is called tsmch which we translate the Branch. As, I will bring forth my servant the Branch, Zech. iii. 8. Behold the man, whose name is the Branch, c. vi. 8. I will raise up to David, a righteous Branch, Jer. xxiii. 5. And a Branch of righteousness, c. xxxiii. 15. In all which places the original word signifies also the rising of the Sun, and is accordingly rendred by the LXX, Anatole, Oriens, not that part of Heaven where the Sun riseth, but

the Sun it self as rising there. And so it is translated also both in the Syriack and Arabick Versions. And where it is said, In that day shall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful, Isa. iv. 2. In the LXX it is epilampsei ho Theos, God shall shine forth. In the Syriack [image of syriack script] The rising of the Lord shall be for glory. In Arabick, [image of arabick script] The Lord shall rise as the sun. And that this is the true sense of the word in all these places, appears from the Prophecy of Zacharias the Father of John the Baptist; for speaking of Christ's coming, he expresseth it according to our Translation, by saying, The day spring from on high hath visited us, Luk. i. 78. But in the original it is the same word that the LXX use in all the aforefaid places, Anatole, Oriens, the rising Sun. And it is much to be observed, that all the said places of the Prophets, are interpreted of the Messiah or Christ; by the Targem or Chaldee Paraphrase, made by the ancient Jews themselves; for tsmch the rising Sun, is there translated mpsych' the Christ, as if it was only another name for Messiah, the Saviour of the World. From all which it appears, that when the Prophet here calls our Saviour Christ the sun of righteousness, he speaks according to the common sense and practice of the Church at that time. AND verily he may well be called the Sun, both in respect of what he is in himself, and in respect of what he is to us. As there is but one Sun in the Firmament, it is the chief of all Creatures that we see in the World. There is nothing upon Earth, but what is vastly inferior, the very Stars of Heaven seem no way comparable to it; it is the top, the head, the glory of all visible Objects: In like manner, as there is but one Saviour in the World, he is exalted far above all things in it, not only above the Sun it self, but above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not only in this World, but also in that which is to come. All things are put under his

feet, and he is given to be head over all things to the Church, Eph. i. 21, 22. The very Angels, Authorities and Powers of Heaven, \are all made subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22. And that is the reason that he is said to be at the right hand of God, because he is preferred before, and set over the whole Creation, next to the Almighty Creator himself, where he now reigns, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth in Heaven and Earth.

AND as the Sun is in itself also the most glorious, as well as the most excellent Creature we see, of such transcendent Beauty, Splendor and Glory, that we cannot look stedfastly upon it, but our eyes are presently dazled, so is Christ; the Sun of righteousness, When he was transfigured, his face did shine as the sun, Mat. xvii. 2. When St. John had a glimpse of him, he saw his countenance as the sun that shineth in his strength, Rev. i. 16. When he appeared to St. Paul going to Damascus at mid day, there was a light above the brightness of the sun shining round about him, and them that journied with him, Acts xxvi. 13. And it is no wonder, For he is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. And therefore must needs shine more gloriously than it is possible for any mere Creature to do; his very Body, by reason of its Union to the divine Person, is a glorious body. Phil. iii. 21. The most glorious doubtless of all the Bodies in the World, as far exceeding the Sun, as that doth a clod of Earth; insomuch, that could we look upon our Lord as he now shines forth in all his Glory in the highest Heavens, how would our eyes be dazled? Our whole Souls amazed and confounded at his excellent Glory? The Sun would appear to us no otherwise than as the Moon and Stars do, when the Sun is up. And he that so far excels the Sun in that very property, wherein the Sun excels all other things, may well be called the Sun: The Sun by way of præeminence, the most glorious Sun in

the World, in comparison whereof nothing else deserves to be called by that Name. Neither may our blessed Saviour be justly called by this glorious Name, only from what he is in himself, but likewise for what He doth for us, as may be easily demonstrated from all the benefits that we receive from the Sun, I shall instance in some of the most plain and obvious.

FIRST therefore, the Sun we know is the Fountain of all the Light that we have upon Earth, without which we could see nothing, not so much as the way that is before us, but should be always groping and stumbling in the dark, whereas by it we can discern every thing that is about us, or at any distance from us, as far as our sight can reach. In which respect our blessed Lord is the Sun indeed; The light of the world, Joh. viii. 12. The true light; that lighteneth every one that cometh into the world, c. i. 9. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel, Luk. ii. 32. A marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Whereby we can see things that are not visible to the eye, as plainly as we do those that are. For this day spring from on high, this Sun of Righteousness hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace, Luc. i. 78, 79. To shew us the invisible things of God, and direct us to all things belonging to our everlasting Peace and Happiness. He hath made them all clear and manifest to us in his Gospel. But whatsoever maketh manifest is light, Eph. v. 13. Wherefore he is said to have brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. Because he hath there so clearly revealed them to us, that by the light of his holy Gospel we may see all things necessary to be known, believed, or done, in order to eternal Life, as plainly as we can see the most visible Objects at Noon day.

BY this Light we can see as much of the Glory of God himself, as our

mortal Nature can bear. For No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, Joh. i. 18. Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Mat. xi. 27. So that no Man ever had or can have any right knowledge of the true God, but only by his Son our Saviour Christ. But by his means, they that lived before might see him as by twilight, we who live after this Sun is risen, may see him by the clearest Light that can be given of him, for he hath fully revealed and declared him to us in the Gospel.

BY this glorious Light we can see into the Mystery of the eternal Trinity in Unity, so as to believe that God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one, one Jehovah, one God. That God the Father made all things at the first by his Word, and still upholds and orders all things according to his Will. That God the Son was made flesh, became Man, and as such died upon the Cross, and so offered up himself as a Sacrifice for the sins of the whole World; that he rose again, went up to Heaven, and is now there at the right hand of God; that upon our Repentance and Faith in him our sins are all pardoned, and he that made us is reconciled to us by the Merits of his said Death; that by the Power of his Intercession which he now makes in Heaven for us, we are justified or accounted righteous in him, before his, and in him our Almighty Father; that God the Holy Ghost abide continually with his Church, moving upon, actuating and influencing the means of Grace that are there administered; that he sanctifies all that believe in Christ, leads them into all Truth, comforts them in all their Troubles, and of assists them in doing whatsoever is required of them. These and many such great and necessary Truths as lay in a great measure hid before, are now by the Light of the Sun of Righteousness shining in his Gospel, made so plain and evident, that all may see them, except they

wilfully shut their Eyes, or turn their Backs upon then.

AND though the Sun in the Firmament enlightens only the Air, to make it a fit medium through which to see; this glorious Light that comes from the Sun of Righteousness, enlightens Mens Minds too, and opens their Eyes, to behold the wondrous things that are revealed in the law of God, Psal. cxix. 18. And that too so effectually in some, that they likewise are able to enlighten others, to open their Eyes, and turn them from Darkness to Light, Acts xxvi. 18. Insomuch that they also are the Light of the World, Mat. v. 14. not originally in themselves, but by communication from him, as the Moon is first enlightened by the Sun, and then reflects its light to the Earth.

MOREOVER, the Sun is the first Cause under God, not only of Light, but also of all the Life that is in any Creature upon Earth, without which nothing could live, no, not so much as a Vegetable, much less an Animal Life; for that which we call Life, wherewith such Creatures as have Organs fitted for it, are actuated and quickned, so as to be said properly to live, at all depends upon the heat and influences of the Sun; should the Sun once cease to be, or to influence the World, all living Creatures would immediately expire and die. So is Christ the Sun of Righteousness, the Fountain of all spiritual Life. In thee, saith David, is the fountain of life, in thy light we shall see light, Psal. xxxvi. 9. Where we see that Light, and Life in this sense also go together; they both proceed from the same Fountain, the Sun of righteousness, who therefore saith, I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life, Joh. viii. 12. that Light which hath Life always proceeding from it, and accompanying it; so that he is both Light and Life it self.. I am, saith he, the way, the truth, and the life, Joh. xiv. 6. And our Life, as the Apostle calls him, Col. iii. 4. even the life of

all that believe in him. The life that I now live in the flesh, saith the same Apostle, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Gal. ii. 20.

And therefore he who believeth, and so hath the son, he hath life, and he that hath not the son, hath not life, 1 Joh. v. 12.

FROM all which it appears, that All men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1. But when any arise from the dead by faith, it is Christ that gives them life, c. v. 14. Who came into the world on purpose that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, Joh. x. 10. more abundantly, that is, in the highest and most excellent manner that it is possible for Men to live. For this Life which the Sun of Righteousness raiseth Believers to, is the Life of Righteousness, an holy, an heavenly, a spiritual, divine Life; it is the Life of Faith, whereby they live to other purposes, and in a quite different manner from other Men; they live to God, and not unto the World, they live in a constant dependence upon him, and submission to him, they live with a firm belief of his Word, and sincere obedience to his Laws; they live altogether in his Service, so that whether they eat, or drink, or whatsoever they do, they still do it to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. In short, they strive all they can to do the Will of God upon Earth, as the holy Angels do it in Heaven, and so have their Conversation there, where their Saviour and their Treasure is.

BUT this Life is infused into them, only by the Rays of the Sun of Righteousness, by that Holy Spirit which proceedeth from Christ, whereby they being born again, and made the Children of Light, thus walk in newness of Life; and so it is nourished also, preserved and strengthened only by him, who therefore calls himself the bread of life, Joh. vi. 35, 48. And the Bread of God, which cometh from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, v. 33, the living bread, of which if any man eat, he shall live for ever, v. 51. And this Bread which he gives

is his flesh, which he gave for the life of the world, *ibid.* For his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; so that whoso eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood hath eternal Life, and he will raise him up at the last day, that he may live for ever. v. 54, 55, 58.

For Christ is the resurrection and the life, whosoever believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die, c. xi. 25, 26. Though his Body may die, yet not his Soul. And his Body also at the last Day shall be raised again to Life, by the power of this glorious Son. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

SEEING therefore that Jesus Christ is the Fountain of the Life of Righteousness, the Author of that spiritual and eternal Life which the righteous live; as the Sun is of our natural, he also may most properly be called the Sun, and the Sun of Righteousness, as he is in the words before us. And so he may be likewise from his chearing and refreshing our Spirits in the inward Man, as the Sun doth in the outward. The light of the eyes, saith the Wise Man, rejoiceth the heart, Prov. xv. 30. And truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eye to behold the sun, Eccles. xi. 7. This we all find by daily experience, and so we do too, that the light and heat of the Sun agitate or move our animal Spirits in so benign and delicate a manner, that we are always more chearful and pleasant when the Sun shines clearly, than we are in a dark Night or cloudy Day. But in this the Sun of Righteousness infinitely exceeds the other, for he is the Fountain not only of some, but of all the true Joy and Comfort that his faithful People have or ever can have in the World. It all proceeds from him, whom having not seen they love, in whom, though now they see him not, yet believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. For upon their believing in him, as having been delivered

for their Offences, and raised again for their Justification, he manifesteth himself, and his special love and favour to them, in the pardon of their Sins, and their Reconciliation to Almighty God, whereby their Souls are filled, not only with unspeakable, but glorious Joy, of the same nature with that which the glorified Saints in Heaven are continually transported with. This is that which is called the lifting up the light of God's countenance, and his causing his Face to shine upon them, Psal. iv. 6. Psal. lxxvii. 1. Psal. lxxx. 3. Num. vi. 25.

When the Sun of Righteousness thus shineth upon them, refreshing and comforting their hearts, by the sweet influences of that Holy Spirit that proceedeth from him.

BUT the Sun doth not only refresh the Earth, but makes it fruitful; it is by his means under God, that Plants grow and bring forth Fruit, and that Animals do the respective Works which God hath set them. So is Christ the Cause or Author of all the good and righteous Works that are done in the World; he himself saith, without me ye can do nothing, Joh. xv. 5. And his Apostle could say upon his own experience, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me, Phil. iv. 13. And that the Fruits, all the Fruits of Righteousness, and by Jesus Christ, or come from him, Chap. i. 11. who therefore in this respect also may well be termed the Sun of Righteousness.

TO which we may likewise add, that as the Works which God hath made upon Earth by his Power, although they have no light in themselves whereby they can be seen, yet they appear in all their Beauty and Colours by the Sun reflecting his light upon them; so the Works which his Servants do, by his Assistance and Grace, although they have no real worth, nor are exactly righteous in themselves, yet by the Sun of Righteousness reflecting his Righteousness upon them, they seem or are accounted righteous in the sight of God, or as St. Peter speaks, they

are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. without whom therefore there could be no such thing as Righteousness seen upon Earth, no more than there could be Colours without light. But as by one man's disobedience many were made Sinners, so by the Obedience of one many are made righteous, Rom. v. 19. both sincerely righteous in themselves, and accepted of as righteous before God, by his Righteousness imputed to them. So that all Righteousness, both as it is performed by Men, and as it is approved of by God, comes only from Jesus Christ. And this seems to be the great reason wherefore he is here called in a peculiar manner the Sun of Righteousness, and promised to arise to his faithful People with healing in his wings, that they may grow up as Calves in the stalls; to shew that it is by him only that they are healed of their Infirmities, and restored to a sound mind, so as to grow in Grace, and bring forth the Fruits of Righteousness, such Righteousness as by him is acceptable to God, from whom they shall therefore at the last Day receive the Crown of Righteousness, that Crown which this Sun of Righteousness hath procured for them.

UPON these, among many other accounts, Jesus Christ the Saviour of Mankind may truly be called the Sun of Righteousness, as he is here by the Spirit of Truth itself, for our Admonition and Comfort. For hereby we are put in mind how to think of our blessed Saviour, and to exercise our Faith in him, so as to love and honour him with all our Hearts, and to put our whole Trust and Confidence in him for all things necessary to our eternal Salvation. Forasmuch as we are by this means given to understand, that what the Sun is to this lower World, the same is Christ to his Church. But the Sun, as we have heard, is the most excellent, and most glorious thing that we see in the World. It is the next Cause, under God, of all the Light that is in the Air, and of all

the Life that any Creatures live upon the Earth. It is that which refresheth the Earth, and makes it fruitful. It is that also which gives a lustre to all things that are about us, so as to make them pleasing and delightful to the Eye.

AND accordingly, whensoever I think of my blessed Saviour, the Sun of Righteousness I apprehend, or rather by the Eye of Faith I behold him in the highest Heavens, there shining in Glory and Splendor infinitely greater than any mortal Eye can bear, invested with supreme Majesty, Honour and Authority over the whole Creation. I behold him there surrounded with an innumerable Company of holy Angels, as so many fixed Stars, and of glorified Saints as Planets enlightened by him; all his Satellites or Servants waiting upon him; ready upon all occasions to reflect and convey his benign Influences or Favours to his People upon Earth. I see him yonder, by his own Light; I behold him displaying his bright Beams, and diffusing his Light round about, over his whole Church, both that which is triumphant in Heaven, and that which is militant here on Earth, that all the Members of it may see all things belonging to their Peace. I behold him continually sending down his quickening Spirit upon those who are baptized into, and believe in his holy Name, to regenerate them, to be a standing Principle of a new and divine Life in them. I behold him there manifesting himself, and causing his Face to shine upon those who look up to him, so as to refresh and cheer their Spirits, to make them brisk and lively, and able to run with Patience the race that is set before them. I behold him there continually issuing forth his Holy Spirit, to actuate and influence the Administration of his Word and Sacraments; that all who duly receive them may thereby grow in Grace, and be fruitful in every good Word and Work. I behold this Sun of Righteousness shining with so much Power and Efficacy upon his Church, that all the good Works which

are done in it, though imperfect in themselves, do notwithstanding appear through him as good and righteous in the sight of God himself, and are accordingly rewarded by him. In short, as the Sun was made to rule and govern the Day, so I behold this Sun of Righteousness as governing his Church, and ordering all things both within it and without it, so as to make them work together for the good of those who love God, till he hath brought them all to himself, to live with him in the highest Heavens, where they also shall by his means, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever, Mat. xiii. 43.

COULD we keep these and such like thoughts of our blessed Saviour always fresh in our Minds, could we be always thus looking upon him, as the Sun of Righteousness shining continually upon us and his whole Church, what holy, what heavenly, what comfortable Lives should we then lead? We should then despise the Poms and Vanities of this wicked World, as nothing, as less than nothing in comparison of this most glorious Sun and his Righteousness. We should then with St. Paul, count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, and should count them but dung that we may win Christ, and be found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9. We should then leave gazing upon the trifles of this lower World, and should be always looking up to this Sun of Righteousness, so as to be enlightened by him, Psal. xxxiv. 5. with such a Light as will discover to us the Glories of the other World, together with the way that leads to it.

WE should then abhor and detest the works of Darkness, and walk as the Children of Light, and accordingly shine as Lights in the World. And then we should have the Light of God's Countenance shining continually upon us, enlightening, enlivening, and refreshing our whole Souls, and

pacifying both our Hearts and Lives so, as to make us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light; in that everlasting Light which comes from the Sun of Righteousness, who liveth and reigneth, and shineth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever.

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