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M A N 's

Great Duty:

O R, A

DISCOURSE

O F

The Care every Man should
take, to make sure the Salvation
of his own Soul.

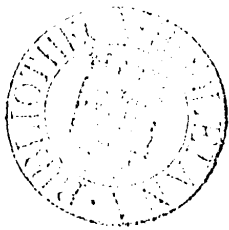
By *Samuel Bold*, Rector of *Styple* in
Dorsetshire.

Matt. XVI. xxvi.

*What shall a Man give in Exchange for
his Soul?*

L O N D O N.

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be Sold by *R. Baldwin*, near the
Oxford-Arms in *Warwick-Lane*.
1693.



T H E
Epistle Dedicatory.

T O

*Mrs. Mary Cooke, Widow of that very
Learned and Pious Man Mr. William
Cooke, sometime since Minister of
the Gospel in the City of Chester,
and to the rest of the Author's Friends
in that City.*

I Present this Discourse to you, as a
publick Testimony that I am not
unmindful how much I am oblig-
ed to you all, for your great Love
and Respects to me, from my Infancy
to this time: And in an especial man-
ner to you Mrs. Cooke, for the Mo-
therly Affection, Care and Tender-
ness you have constantly Manifested
towards me, through my Childhood
and Youth, and are pleased still to
continue. I forbear reckoning up par-

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particular Obligations, because too numerous for so slow a Pen. I know you delight more in shewing Kindness and doing Good, than others would in having the World told that they do so. The Subject treated of in this little Book, I am sure is very grateful to you all, and I am confident you will not be offended with my Discourse, because so familiar. It is a very sad and afflicting Reflection to a serious Christian, that there are such multitudes who plainly appear to take no tolerable care of their own Souls, tho they profess the best Religion, and are furnished with eminent Advantages: For, *The Earth which is so Watered, and beareth Thorns and Briars, is Rejected, and is nigh unto Cursing, whose end is to be Burned. But Beloved, I am persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation, Heb. 6. 8, 9.* It very much concerns you all to take care I be not mistaken in you, and to use your utmost Diligence to bring forth Fruit in some proportion to the Labour

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Labour and Pains which have been bestowed on you. You have enjoyed the Labours of that eminently holy Person and faithful Minister, Mr. Cooke, whose love to, and care of Souls, and zeal for their Salvation was such, I am not acquainted with any words that are significative enough to express them. And therefore if you do not much exceed others in Divine Love, and all the Fruits of Righteousness and Holiness, you do not fully answer the Means with which you have been favoured. I am willing to remember you of your *Old Pastor*, that you may thereby be induced to reflect upon your selves, and be quickned to give such diligence to make your *Salvation sure*, as he was always pressing you unto. Were the excellent Treatises he left behind him, Published, they would contribute much to keep those things always in your Remembrance, which he mainly insisted on whilst he was Living, and to establish you in the Truths and Duties you know and have

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have been practising. He was the greatest instance of an indefatigable faithful Minister, and practical Believer, I was ever acquainted with. He was diligent and industrious, even to a Prodigy. His Humility and Modesty did exceedingly veil his intellectual Merits. Few could comprehend the time he spent and the pains he took in his Study, much less the proficiency he made there. He had strong Natural Parts, a great Memory, a quick Apprehension, was very Thoughtful, and dived very far into whatsoever he applied his Mind unto. He was the most void of all kind of Affectation (so far as my Knowledge doth extend) of any meer Man. His Learning, Ministerial Labours and exemplary Piety, were such, could the World be furnish'd with an exact faithful Account of his Life, I am perswaded it would yield as grateful and pleasing Entertainment to the learned part of the World, and be as profitable to all People, who have a serious sense of true Piety,

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Piety, as any thing that can be Published. But I doubt those who knew him best, Died before him; and as for those who were acquainted with him and do Survive, I suspect some were not observant enough, and others did not know him long enough to understand very many of the most material Passages which would be necessary for such a Composure. Indeed he did so conceal himself, I very much question whether any Man was ever in a capacity to do him Right. Yet, a full Collection of the many great things his Friends remember, and which he could not hinder People from observing, would be of extraordinary use unto the Publick: Tho the whole Relation thereof would not comprehend the half of what he deserved should be said, to perpetuate his Memory, and encourage a laudable Imitation. If this hint may prompt those who knew him, to recollect themselves, and jointly apply themselves to such a Work; I shall have this Satisfaction,

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faction, that I have been instrumental to put them on Acts of Friendship and true Piety, and have contributed a little to oblige the Publick. You are commanded not to be Slothful, *but followers of them who through Faith and Patience, are Inheritors of the Promises*, Heb. 6. 12. And I propound unto you Mr. Cooke, as a great Pattern you should imitate in variety of Instances, which are within your reach, and pertain to the Stations you are in, as well as in the whole general tenor of his Conversation. I shall therefore pass over in Silence many very considerable things I know concerning him, which must not by any means be omitted, by one who would attempt to write his Life. I must not therefore insist on his Learning: And indeed he who would do him Justice as to that, must be furnished with a much greater measure of it, than I can hope to attain unto. Yet, let me take liberty to mention one thing, *viz.* That his skill in the Oriental Languages was such, it procured

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red him a respect above many Persons of great worth, from the *Famous Bishop Walton*, whose eminent Talent lay in that sort of Study. A very worthy Author (whom I am obliged to Love and Honour greatly for his substantial solid Learning, but especially on the account of his exemplary Piety, and more than common Zeal for the good of Souls) hath told the World, *That Bishop Walton would speak Civilly to Mr. Cooke, tho he told him unless he would Conform, he could not help him.* I have particular reason to say, that when he spake those words, he did it with intimations of great Regret; and that amongst other reasons of his Respect to Mr. Cooke, common to others for whom that Great Man had a Kindness, notwithstanding they had different Sentiments from him, about some Matters, it was Mr. Cooke's great knowledge in these Languages, which did peculiarly commend him to that

A. 2. Bishop.

*Conformists 4th.
Plea for Nonconformists. p. 109.*

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Bishop. Here I am to take notice, that Mr. Cooke was a *Nonconformist*, and so had different Sentiments about some inferior, and less substantial, rather meerly accidental Matters (about which all deserving and good Men have not the same Apprehensions) from what I have, and many more have, whom I greatly Reverence. His differing Judgment about these Matters, served him for his own Conduct. But he manag'd his Dissent from Conformists, with that Candor and Christian Temper, he highly deserved Love and Respect from all Conformists who were endowed with true Piety, or indeed had any share of common Ingenuity. He did not abuse his Dissent to Uncharitableness and Censure; nay, he could not endure to hear a deserving Conformist Reflected on. I remember once, a Person of no small Abilities, and Mr. Cooke's particular Friend, happen'd accidentally to reflect on a Conformist, on the account of his being a Conformist,

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mist, Mr. Cooke immediately reproved him with some keenness; the other Person replying, *I believe what I said, is true*: Mr. Cooke presently Silenc'd him, desiring him the with some earnestness of Speech to observe the Apostle's Rule, *Hast thou Faith? Have it to thy self*, Rom. 14. 22. I must also pass over in Silence, Mr. Cook's unwearied and indefatigable Labours in the work of the Ministry, in Praying, Preaching, Expounding the Holy Scriptures, Catechising, and Personal Converse from House to House; tho in these things he very well deserves to be imitated by all Clergymen of what sort soever. An exact Relation of Mr. Cooke's Loyalty would make a Volume, and represent him so considerable on that account, I do not question, but most would be apt to suspect the possibility of finding a compleat Parallel in the Records of Human History. His Loyalty was not like that so much talked and boasted of some Years ago, an empty Name, used to cover——. His Loyalty was truly

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truly Christian. He knew how to suffer with Patience and Meekness, and with a temper of Soul very agreeable to that of the Holy Jesus, whose Ambassador he was, and whose Example he followed. And he did actually suffer in that manner, both *for* and *under* the *same Government*. True Loyalty is a necessary property of a good Christian and faithful Subject. And I know not any one who hath lived within your Memory, who so well deserved your imitation in this excellent Qualification, as your ancient Pastor. This is indeed a Topick which deserves to be enlarg'd on, because the thing has been so horribly Counterfeited, and the *Name* so shamefully, yea, more than villainously Abused. But I forbear, because should I expatiate, I may find my self obliged to drop some Expressions which would prove uneasie to certain Persons, who have happened to bring themselves under such Circumstances, they perceive it possible for Men of haughty Spirits, who have ridicul'd the plea of Conscience, who have been very daring, contemptuous and truculent in their Behaviour and Carriage, to have some *tender Places*. And I am not willing to exasperate any Man, if I may avoid it, with Innocency. He Governed his Family with great Prudence, and with much

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much Strictness. I think no Man ever attended more diligently to the interest of Religion in a Private Family, than he did. Every Morning and Evening after he had with his Family briefly implored the Divine assistance in Prayer and Praise, and a Blessing with that part of the Holy Scriptures which was then to be read, a Psalm, or part of one was Sung, then a Chapter (in the Old Testament in the Morning, and in the New Testament in the Evening) was read, which he Expounded, reporting the principal parts of which it did consist; then he gave an account of the substance of it, in as few words as the matter and parts of it would permit, afterwards explained the greatest Difficulties which did occur; and in the last place shewed, what useful Instructions were especially to be taken notice of. And then he spent at last a quarter of an Hour in Prayer and Praise, usually improving much of the Chapter that was read, into matter for the one or the other. He was an extraordinary Person for all the parts of Prayer, tho' commonly he did very much abound in confusion of Sin, in admiring the Divine Excellencies, and in praising of God for his Benefits of all sorts. On all occasions he was very importunate for the Church of God, and that the

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the Kingdom of Christ might be Enlarged. He had no Child of his own, but did freely take into his Family three or four Children, for whom at his own Charge, he provided Food, Lodging and Raiment, and whom he instructed in Religion and Human Learning, in order to their attaining to serve their Generation according to the will of God. These and the Servants he Catechised twice every Week, explaining every thing with a peculiar easiness, for the helping them to understand every particular. When he could not any longer attend on his publick Ministry, he did not grow Idle, but performed most parts of it in his own Family, with the same care and diligence he was accustomed to use in Publick, tho there were not one Person more, than those of whom his Family did constantly consist. He was a very strict Consciencious observer of the Lord's Day. His Family was constantly to have their Worldly Business dispatched by four or five of the Clock in the Afternoon of Saturday. Then he bestowed an Hour and an half or more with his Family, in explaining and applying one or more Verses of some Chapter in the Bible, (going over the Chapter, and usually the Book in order) and in Prayer. After that, every one in the Family was

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was to go to his own Apartment for some time, either to learn the Catechism, or for private Reading and Devotion. About Eight of the Clock they Supped, and after that, he dismissed his Family, according to his every days Custom. He was always up early on the Lord's Day. Every one read a Chapter in the Morning; he then spent at least an Hour and an half in expounding one or more Verses of a Chapter, and in Prayer. Then he and his whole Family went to Church, (I speak now of the time after his publick Ministry ceased.) About a quarter of an Hour after they were returned home, he Prayed with his Family, repeated the Sermon they had heard in Publick, and Preached and Prayed as he was wont to do in Publick before he was Silenced. A little time being allowed for Dinner, he and his Family went again to Church, and allowing after their return home, more time for every one in Retirement, he performed the same Religious Exercises he had performed betwixt coming from Church in the Forenoon, and going thither in the Afternoon. Every one in the Family having after Supper given an account of what they remembered, he concluded the day always with singing a Psalm, and with solemn enlarged Praise

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Praise and Thanksgiving. He went through all this Labour and Work with unaccountable vigor, cheerfulness, and fervour of Spirit. The Visits he made were usually very short, and most of the time was spent in pious Discourse, or Prayer. He would be exceedingly uneasie if he heard any Person spoken of Reproachfully. He would not by any Means permit any of his Friends and Acquaintance to use any harsh words concerning any Person who had unexcusably injured him. If he heard of their doing so, he would be sure to reprove them sharply. He was very free in reproofing his Friends and Relations, and all those with whom he was Acquainted, as occasion required, and in cautioning them against the appearances of Evil. His Humility was almost Astonishing; and he fortified himself to a strange degree against every thing he could suspect might so much as have a tendency to tempt him to have even a moderate Conceit of himself. I wrote to him once and used the word *Reverend* to him; he sent me by the next Post a very Pious Letter, wherein he gave me a Repri- mand for that word, and desired me if I thought fit, to use that word to others, yet not to use it any more to him. He was wont to be mightily concerned when ever he

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he heard of the outward Prosperity of his Friends, that they might be provided against, and secured from the temptations which attended such a Condition. And when ever he heard of their Adversity, or being any way Afflicted, how earnest were his Prayers that their Afflictions might be Sanctified to them! His Abstinence, Mortification, Self-denial, and the strict Watch he kept over himself, together with the heedful regard he had to Divine Providence in all Instances, would appear truly wonderful, could I give a full Relation of them. He did every Week set apart one whole day for private Fasting and Humiliation. He kept a constant Diary for his own private use, which he wrote in Latin, but in such a Character, I am perswaded no Man beside himself, could read an intire Passage. His Charity (considering what he had to live on, and what has been already said of it by the Bye) was as stupendious as any thing else. He would strain to the utmost to relieve the Indigent. What multitudes of Catechisins, &c. did he Buy to give to the Poor! And how much Mony he bestowed on poor Families, which he frequently Visited, that he might Instruct, Counsel, Exhort, and Comfort them, none can tell. For he distributed his Charity with

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with all the Secrecy he could devise. Great numbers of poor People were continually relieved at his Door. I believe no Man was ever more forward than he, to contribute to the utmost of his Ability to promote any Charitable design. I never heard that any seemingly poor Person ever met him, and ask'd an Alms of him, who went away from him without good Advice, and a larger testimony of his being affected with his appearing Poverty, than could reasonably be expected from him. But often did he enquire after, and seek out Objects and Opportunities for doing good in this kind. His regard to Righteousness and Justice, was so exact and tender, peradventure the like hath scarce been heard of. I could name a Gentlewoman of good Quality in *Chester*, who offered Mr. *Cooke* some Monies, at a time when his Circumstances were indeed very mean, but he refused to accept of it, which occasioned her to urge him more earnestly to accept of it, as a testimony of her Respect to him; but he would not be prevailed with to receive it; telling her at last, that he understood her Husband had some Creditors when he Died, and that they were not all as yet fully satisfied, and he could not in Conscience receive Money from her for his own use,

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use, whatever his Straits might be, as long as he knew her Husband's Debts were unpaid. He was a great follower of Peace. He was extraordinary plain in his Habit, and void of every thing that could look like Flattery; but truly Civil, Courteous and Obliging, tho a perfect stranger to that Ceremoniousness, which it may be the want of his habitual Honesty and Integrity, hath brought so far into Fashion, as even to be esteemed an Accomplishment. He was a great Enemy to the Poms and Vanities of this evil World, and perhaps the exactest observer of the Baptifmal Vow, that any (at least) of these latter Ages of the World have produced. Thus far have I spoken from my own Knowledge of that excellent Person, and do but put you in remembrance of what you more fully know. That Mr. *Cooke* continued this course of Life, these Religious Exercises, and his Weekly Fast, to the very Week in which he Died, I have been certified by one of you, a little after his Decease. And that he was very patient and submissive under his last Visitation, being never heard to utter one complaint; that he spent the remainder of his strength and time in Pious Discourse on certain portions of Holy Scripture, and in pithy fervent Prayers, till he actually resign'd

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sign'd up his Spirit into the hands of his beloved Jesus; which was about two or three of the Clock in the Morning of the Third of July, 1684. and 73^d. year of his Age.

The more you resemble that holy Man in all those Instances which pertain to your selves, and wherein he was a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, the more successfully will you work out your own Salvation. You will be disposed to yield up your Souls to God in due time, in such a calm and comfortable manner, he resigned up his Soul. You will be prepared to enter into that Rest and Joy, you have such abundant cause to conclude he entred into the possession of almost Nine Years ago. *Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in him, (agreeable to the Gospel of Christ) do, and the God of Peace shall be with you.* This comprehends the best Advice I can give you, and the substance of the sincerest Prayer tendred unto God on your behalfs,

By your Obliged Faithful

Styple, June
8th. 1693.

Friend and Servant,

Sam. Bold.

The Preface to the

READER.

Reader,

WE of this Land have been of late entertained with a constant Series of Providences, little less than Miraculous. But our Murmuring untractable Temper, our unreformed disobedient Lives, our aversion to, and our stiff, vehement, and unreasonable Opposition against every thing which hath a tendency to promote the interest of Peace, Concord and Holiness, do not portend any Good. The Ferment seems daily to grow higher and higher, and who can tell what tremendous Eruptions may follow? As long as our Wickednesses are multiplied, our Dangers do most certainly encrease, appear we ever so Careless and Indifferent. What astonishing Calamities and Confusions

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fusions are at hand, I cannot undertake to Relate, I dare scarce adventure to Suspect. But if God do whet his glittering Sword, and his Hand take hold of Judgment, he will undoubtedly render Vengeance to his Enemies, he will reward them that hate him, Deut. 32. 41. I may with good assurance affirm, that the best Service we can every one do for our selves, is to make sure the Salvation of our own Souls. Our doing this, will not in the least incommode the Publick; it may advantage and benefit it greatly. If we do thus, we shall be prepared for whatso ever it will please our God in his infinite Wisdom to permit. If we shall not be able to entertain the most frightful Occurrences, with less discomposure than others, we shall most assuredly lose less by them than they, because our best and chiefest Interests will be safe. For no sooner will a period be put to our present Pilgrimage and Warfare, but an abundant Entrance will be Ministred to us into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour
Jesus

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Jesus Christ. If some of these Sheets had not been Printed before I knew they were in the Press, this Discourse might have come forth in another form, and a little better Polished. But if it shall please God to make it (as it is) serviceable to quicken any of you to, or assist you in a just concern for your own Salvation, my design is answered, whose desire and Prayer to God for you all is, that you may be Saved.

S. B.

MAN'S

MAN'S

Great Duty :

O R,

Every Man should be principally Concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul.

Pſalm XXXV. v. 3. Part Laſt.

Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.

IT is very evident by this Pſalm, that *David* (when he Compos'd it) was in very great Danger, in a very afflicted and diſtreſſed Eſtate, by reaſon of the exceſſive Power, inexorable Rage, and implacable Malice of his Enemies. Being in this condition, he did not depend on any outward Succours, nor would he betake himſelf to any unlawful Arts, but applied
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himſelf

himself to God, committing himself to his Conduct, Care and Protection, earnestly importuning him to undertake for him, plead his Cause, maintain his Right, defeat his Adversaries, and to defend, help and deliver him.

Which was undoubtedly the wisest course he could take, considering the circumstances with which he was at that time clothed: For tho the best People, those for whom God hath a singular respect, may be under such oppression and persecution, their case may to outward appearance seem altogether Remediless, yet their God can soon alter the Scene, effectually rescue and command Deliverance for them.

These words, *Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation*, may be considered either,

First, As an affectionate and earnest desire, that God would inwardly assure him, that he would effectually Save and Deliver him from those external difficulties and dangers with which he was surrounded, and by reason of which his case appeared quite Desperate. He was very well satisfied, God could make his Enemies examples of his Vengeance, in proportion to the Malice and Wickedness they had discovered in their unjust Persecuting of him, how numerous,

powerful

powerful and crafty, soever they were. But this was not enough to quiet and pacify his Mind, and to dispel those fears and suspicions which did frequently disorder him, and make those Burthens others did lay upon him, much more weighty and insupportable than otherwise they would have been. His Spirit would be in a fluctuating and unsettled Frame, till God would assure him he would undertake his Defence, and cause him to see a happy period put to that ungrateful and disingenuous, that rude, yea, barbarous Treatment and Persecution, with which he had been Exercised a long time, which had now almost tired him, and was ready to overwhelm and sink him.

Or, Secondly, As noting his diverting from what he had just before been so intent upon, and vehemently concerned about, and improving his present Troubles and Calamities, and his fervent Supplications for help against, and deliverance from them and their Authors, to excite and quicken him to a more affectionate and ardent Praying, that whatever his portion might be in this World, yet God would be pleased to certify him, that his Soul should be Saved. Which is certainly one of the best uses we can make of bodily and outward Afflictions.

We may perceive the Psalmist putting a sudden stop to that mighty Current of Desire, as express'd in the former part of this Verse, and the other two which come before it, and turning that Stream into another Channel, speaking to this effect. Lord! tho I am very sensible of the distressed Estate I am now in, and therefore have been so importunate with thee, to *plead my Cause, and stand up for my Help*, yet the deliverance I have been begging being but a Temporal Mercy, I dare not be peremptory, or ask it absolutely at thy Hands; nor indeed would such a Deliverance fully satisfy me; I therefore entirely refer that to thy infinite Wisdom: But yet there is one thing I cannot, I will not be denied; one thing I desire above all other, and if thou wilt grant me that, I shall have as much as I can wish; it will fully satisfy me. The thing I thus importunately beg, is, that thou wilt assure me, *My Soul shall be Saved.*

How well would it become us? How much would it be to our advantage to improve outward Calamities; to make us eminently concerned for the welfare and happiness of our Souls? To make us more ardent in our Prayers, and vigorous in our Endeavours to obtain a good assurance, that God will certainly conduct us into that blessed

blessed Estate he hath prepared for them; He doth set apart for himself?

But if there were no room for this last Interpretation, and we were certain the words did only relate to the Psalmists deliverance out of that calamitous Condition, in which he was at that time; yet we have ground enough from his being so earnest in Prayer for such a Deliverance, to mind our selves in what manner we ought to concern our selves, that we may secure the Eternal Happiness and Salvation of our Souls. Sure we may, we ought to use these words, *Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation*, according to the most Spiritual importance they will admit.

And thus the Words might prompt us to make some Enquiry. *First*, Concerning the Salvation of the Soul. *Secondly*, Of what consequence it is for a Person to have a solid assurance that he shall be Saved. *Thirdly*, From whom and how such satisfaction may be obtained.

But I will confine my Discourse at this time to this one Point, *viz.*

That every Person should be very much concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul. We should all of us be principally busied to secure the Salvation of our own Souls, tho that is the thing which of all other,

is generally most neglected. People ordinarily find a great many matters to employ themselves about, which are of little moment in themselves, and will turn them to small, or no account at last. They are so taken up in providing for their Bodies, indulging their Appetites, pleasing and gratifying their Senses, and managing their earthly temporary Affairs; they think very seldom and very little of the eternal safety and welfare of their Souls. How prone are we to suffer almost any thing to divert and take us off from minding the Salvation of our Souls, with any tolerable degree of Attention and Seriousness; not to say with such care and solicitude as the importance and weightiness thereof doth call for and deserve? Other things are more thought of and minded than this; and the means we think proper to obtain them, are more diligently and delightfully used than those God hath directed us to, to make the Salvation of our Souls sure. But tho we provide our selves other work, this remains our Duty; our heedlessness and omission is not to be Justified; cannot discharge us from our Obligation; For, *What as a Man professed if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?* Matt. 16.

In

In discoursing of this Doctrine, I will observe this plain and easie Method. *First*, I will explain the words in which it is Propounded. *Secondly*, Mind you of some Reasons why every Man should be so concerned for the Salvation of his Soul. *Thirdly*, Take notice of some Inferences, which the Point will evidently afford, and which may and ought to be improved by us to our great Advantage.

First, I am to explain the terms of the Proposition, which may be done by answering these two Questions. *First*, What are we to understand by the Salvation of the Soul? *Secondly*, What is meant by a Person's being very much concerned for it?

First, What are we to understand by the Salvation of the Soul?

The Soul is the most excellent part of Man; that part on which the Image of God was at first principally Stamp'd and Imprinted, which doth distinguish him from, and dignifie him above all the lower parts of the Creation, and which renders him capable of Knowing, Loving, Serving and Enjoying God, the Sovereign God. It is an immaterial, spiritual Substance, which is not like the Body, lyable to Corruption and Death, but when separated from it, doth enter into a State either of such Happiness

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pineness and Pleasure we cannot at present form an adequate Idea of, or of Misery and Torment, altogether unconceivable. In which Estate it must continue unalterably to all Eternity.

The Salvation of the Soul then, is its exemption and Freedom, as from all the Sins Temptations and Evils, unto which Man is obnoxious in this Life, so from all the Miseries, Curses and Plagues Sin doth expose and make Man lyable to in the next World, and its fruition of God and Christ, and all that Glory and Blessedness in Heaven, God hath prepared for, and promised thorough Christ to them, who faithfully accept of, and comply with the terms he hath propounded in his Word, *Rom. 6. 22, 23. Rom. 21. 6, 7, &c. Matt. 25. 34.*

If any one should now enquire why the Salvation of the Soul is so much insisted on, when it is most true in it self, and certain unto Christians, that the Body as well as the Soul, will in the next World be in a State of Happiness, or Misery for ever? Or why People should not rather be minded, that it behoves them to take care to provide for the Salvation of their whole Man, than thus to be put in mind of, and excited to concern themselves for the Salvation of one part of themselves.

It

It may be pertinently enough replied, That the Soul being the noblest part, is ordinarily put for the whole Man. So that for a Person to mind the Salvation of his Soul, is the same thing with his minding the Salvation of himself. Our blessed Saviour speaking of this same matter, the Evangelist *St. Matthew*, relates his discourse in these words, *For what is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give, in Exchange for his Soul?* *Matt. 16. 26.* *St. Luke* delivers it thus, *For what is a Man advantaged, if he gain the whole World, and lose himself, or be cast away,* *Luke 9. 25.*

Besides, the Body, when the Soul is departed from it, doth not presently pass unto a State of Torment, or Joy, but is laid in the Grave, where it remains without any sense of either, till the Resurrection, whence it must be raised up, and fitted for, and united to its own Soul, to share with in that State to which it was assigned immediately after it was separated from the Body. The Soul after its departure from the Body, appears before God, and is sentenced to a State either of Horror and Torment, or of Satisfaction, Joy, and Pleasure, *Luke 16. 22, 23. Luke 23. 43.* So that the Salvation of the Soul, doth note a freedom from Sin, Misery, and Torment

Torment, and enjoying a State of eminent Delight and Happiness, immediately upon its departure out of this World. When the Body shall be again united to the Soul, it must partake of the same Happiness with the Soul. The Salvation of the Soul implies and comprehends in it the Salvation of the whole Man. The happiness or misery of the Body at the Resurrection, depends on the happy or wretched Estate the Soul was consigned to at its departure from the Body.

All that are in the Graves shall hear his Voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation, Joh. 5. 28, 29. Dan. 12. 2.

Secondly, What is it for a Person to be very much concerned for the Salvation of his Soul?

Ans. To be firmly perswaded, that it is of extraordinary importance to him, to have his Salvation well secured; to desire ardently that it may be so, and to apply his utmost endeavours to make it sure, by a due, and regular use of those Means God hath appointed for this purpose. He hath a sound knowledge of what the Salvation of his Soul doth mean. He often thinks with himself of what consequence and moment it is to him, that he should be Saved. He fre-

frequently considers in what State his Soul is, and what he may reasonably conclude would become of it, if it were presently to be called away from its earthly Tabernacle. He seriously considers what course he ought to take, that his Soul may assuredly be saved at last. Such kind of thoughts do often occur to him, and he is careful to entertain them, and prosecute them with seriousness, till they produce some good effect. What can we think of those who obstinately neglect to meditate on their future State, and refuse to consider what a plain and certain tendency the sins and wickednesses in which they allow and indulge themselves, have, to make them eternally Miserable? Who are so very regardless, they leave their Souls to all adventures? Never seriously thinking of, reasoning, and expostulating with themselves about these matters? I say, what can we think of them, but that they are dangerously besotted by *Satan* and their Lusts, if not dreadfully forsaken and given over of God in just Judgment, to go on Inconsiderately to the Vengeance of the Great Day? We must at least conclude they are not much concerned for the salvation of their Souls. We should certainly without any difficulty, make such a determination in another Case so circum-

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stanced. *He feedeth on Ashes, a deceived Heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his Soul, nor say, is there not a Lye in my right Hand?* But if we are really perswaded that it is not a matter of indifferency, whether our Souls be saved or not, and that there cannot be any thing of such extraordinary consequence and moment to us, as having our Salvation secured, our thoughts will be very much employed about it: And these will excite and stir up affections in some proportion to the sense we have of its worth, and how much our interest is wrapped up therein. So that we shall not be satisfied with any thing, so long as we perceive this is in hazard. We shall pant and breath after this, as what is indispensably necessary to our being Happy; That in which our whole welfare consists, and without which all other things are insipid, are as nothing, yea burthensom, and vexatious. *I have longed for thy Salvation O Lord, and thy Law is my delight,* Psal. 119.

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And he who is thus affected towards the salvation of his Soul, will diligently observe the directions God hath given, and use the means he hath appointed, in order to a Person's making his Salvation sure. He will be careful to take God's way to secure his Salvation.

vation, for he knows none but God can save his Soul, and that God will not save him but in his own way. He penitently, and with great humility and reverence, betakes himself to Christ; faithfully depends on him, and with much fidelity follows his Counsel, being sensible that *no Man cometh to the Father, but by him,* Joh. 14. 6. And that there is not any Name given under Heaven but his, whereby we must be Saved. *Neither is there salvation in any other,* Acts 4. 12. With how much greater fervour doth he pray for this, than for all other things? *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks; so panteth my Soul after thee O God; my Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God,* Psal. 42. 1, 2. *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land where no water is. Thy loving kindness is better than Life,* Psal. 63. 1. And he makes great Conscience of keeping God's Commandments. *Lord, I have hoped for thy Salvation, and done thy Commandments,* Psal. 119. 166.

The Salvation of his Soul hath a more settled prevailing constant power over him, than all other things have. He gives this the preference above all, and brings all other things to a subordination to it. This hath

hath such a fixed prevailing influence on him through the whole course of his Life, that all other things are measured, esteemed, judged of, approved, or disapproved, according to the relation and tendency they have to further or obstruct this. He that is very much and duly concerned for the salvation of his Soul, is ordinarily thus affected, thus disposed, thus resolved.

He will not deliberately give way to, or adventure on any thing, he is sensible will endanger, obstruct, or hinder the Salvation of his Soul, tho he hath never so many inducements to it, on other accounts; he dares not adventure his Soul for the pleasures of Sin, the profits of the World, the applause, approbation, esteem and favour of Men. Shall I pay so dear for these fading, perishing airy things at present, as to occasion my sad and mournful repenting of my purchase and bargain to all Eternity? God forbid I should ever be so infamously Sottish, so execrably Wicked, to pawn my Soul, and stake my Salvation at such a disingenuous, impious and unworthy rate; to offer such indignity and contempt to the precious Blood of the Covenant, as to sell it at such a common and unhallowed Price.

Yea, he will apply himself with vigor to any thing he understands from the word
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of God; will promote and further his Salvation, tho he perceives he shall certainly encounter very formidable discouragements; he will pass quietly through reproaches, patiently sustain Losses, and cheerfully endure Tribulation, and inhuman Barbarities, rather than omit, or neglect any thing which pertains to, and must accompany, and will help forward his Salvation. Tho Bonds and Afflictions abide with me, and wait for me every where, yet none of these things ought to move me. Lord, let me never count my Life dear to my self, so that I may but finish my Course with Joy.

When I say that every Person ought to be very much concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul; you are not to understand this as if I did exclude our being obliged to concern our selves for other Peoples Salvation: Those who are unconcerned for their own Salvation, will not be heartily concerned for the Salvation of other Peoples Souls. They may do several things (being induced thereunto by some mean and selfish considerations) by which others may be much advantaged and assisted in working out their own Salvation. But they who are altogether regardless of their own Souls, will be every jot as little concerned for others. But he who is truly sensible of
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the great worth of a Soul, and the weightiness of Salvation, and therefore is heartily concerned that his own Soul may be saved, will in his measure and proportion be concerned that others may be saved too.

Having said thus much in order to a direct explaining of the Doctrin, I am in the next place,

Secondly, To propound some Reasons, why we should every one be very much concerned for the Salvation of our own Souls? And they are these,

First, God hath by his plain and express Command, made it our Duty. We cannot but acknowledge, both, that God hath an unquestionable right to appoint us our Work; and that he best understands what it is we ought to make our principal Business. So that if he hath enjoined us to be more concerned for our Salvation than any thing else; we are obliged unto it by all the respect we owe unto him, and that deference which is due from us, to his Authority. We cannot be regardless of Salvation, but we must be justly reputed guilty of offering the most horrid and unexcusable Contempt to the Divine Majesty; of renouncing his Authority, and refusing to obey him in an Instance wherein his Grace

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and Love, his regard to, and tenderness for our chiefest good, are eminently manifested. God's Command should sway with us in any case, more than any thing else, but especially in a case of this nature, where we have so evident a Demonstration, that the Command it self chiefly respects our highest Advantage. How can a refusal to comply with and obey such a Command, escape being Interpreted, to proceed from a spitefulness against God, and an unaccountable hatred and malice to our own Souls? And can any thing be enjoined in plainer terms, in more express words, than our Lord hath used in commanding us, to concern our selves very much, and to use our utmost care and best diligence, to provide for, and make sure of Salvation, and eternal Felicity in the next World? Could any thing be spoken with greater Emphasis, or represented with more Earnestness, and better testifie the utmost force and strength of Affection, than what you read, *Deut. 30. 19, 20. I call Heaven and Earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing: Therefore chuse Life, that both thou and thy Seed may Live; that thou may'st love the Lord thy God, and that thou may'st obey his voice, and that thou may'st cleave unto him; for he is thy*

thy Life and the strength of thy days. Are you not in express terms commanded, *To work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling?* Phil. 2. 12. *And to give diligence to make your calling and election sure, that an entrance may be ministred to you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ,* 2 Pet. 1. 10, 11. *And to seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness,* Matt. 6. 33. *And to strive to enter in at the strait Gate,* Luke 13. 24.

Now, can any thing be so execrable, as to choose to destroy and make your selves eternally Miserable, rather than practically own God's Authority, and obey him in that, wherein he hath given the fullest discovery of his having a singular regard to your greatest and unconceivable Happiness? The Command of God should sway and prevail with us to apply our selves to any thing tho ever so difficult, tho we were perfectly ignorant of the Reason, why he doth enjoin and make it our Duty. But how much more then should his Command influence us, when we evidently perceive the reason of his Command is most expressive of his Love, and doth apparently carry with it a wonderful force drawn from Principles so deeply rooted in our Natures, as are our own Preservation and Happiness? His interest-

interesting his Authority thus in this matter, should not only prompt us to take notice of the tender regard he hath to our perfect Felicity, but also how prone we are to be careless of, and neglect it, and with what heedfulness, care and diligence it behoves us to attend to and follow it, lest we should fail and miscarry in so important a Business.

Secondly, It is a business of such weight and consequence, that it is to render us capable of attending to it, and to assist and quicken us to carry it on with Success; that we are endowed with those faculties which are peculiar to us, as we are rational Creatures; and that we are entrusted with Life and Time, after that we arrive to years of Discretion; and that those advantages are afforded us which are singularly adapted to further us in it. All these are Talents committed to our trust; and those who will acknowledge them to be such, must needs own, they ought to be employed to the ends for which they are especially designed. Now, seeing they are peculiarly fitted both in their own Nature, and by divine Appointment, to promote our Salvation, it must greatly concern us to use them for that purpose, for which they were intended. As the Members and parts of
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our Bodies are naturally fitted and particularly designed for the preservation, nourishment, and perfection of our outward State, so our rational Powers and Faculties are directly and immediately prepared and appointed to be used to secure and advance the good and welfare of our Souls. Our Understandings, Wills, and Affections, are never employed so pertinently, as when they are duly exercised about those matters, which will contribute most effectually to our Salvation. This is the noblest and most excellent use we can make of them. And if they could not be improved to this purpose, it would not be a valuable advantage to be endowed with them. This is also the great business for which God doth allot us time in this World. We have indeed other things to employ our selves about, whilst we are here in the Body, but all other Businesses are subordinate, should be subservient to this. For this is the *one thing necessary*. Life and Time are not allotted us, merely to Eat and Drink and take our Pleasure and Pass-time here; or merely to drudge and toil for the necessities or varieties of a temporary State, but chiefly to provide for a future and eternal Happiness, by such ways as God hath prescribed. For what is to be done by us in order to our Salvation,

Salvation, must be done whilst we have our abode in this World. It will be too late to think of busying our selves for our Salvation, when we are removed hence. *The night cometh, (saith our Saviour) when no Man can work, Joh. 9. 4. Whatsoever therefore thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the Grave, whether thou goest, Eccle. 9. 10. So teach us (O Lord) to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto Wisdom, Psal. 90. 12.*

Can we imagin it is for any thing else, but to oblige us to, and assist us in the minding of our Salvation, and to excite and quicken us to a great, regular, and due concernment for it, that God doth afford us his Word, Ordinances, and the means of Grace? Are they not all evidently designed, to mind us that this is that for which we should be most concerned, and to direct, help, and lead us in the true, infallible, and most suitable way unto Salvation? *Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13.* And is it not certain, that our neglecting to improve Gospel advantages to this purpose, will exceedingly encrease our Danger, and render our State hereafter, more than ordinarily Dolorous, and Dreadful? *Woe unto thee Corazin: Woe unto thee Bethsaida, &c. Matt. 11. 20, &c. How shall we escape*

escape, if we neglect so great Salvation? Heb. 2. 3. Lay, aside the consideration of the Salvation of the Soul, and People may attend to, and follow all their other Businesses and Affairs every jot as well, without the Gospel; as with it.

Thirdly, The salvation of a Man's Soul, is a matter of the greatest consequence he can possibly concern himself about. It is agreeable to the dictates of Reason, and the Maxims of Prudence, that we should be most concerned for that which doth most concern us. And doubtless, that which is of the greatest worth and excellency in it self, in which all our Interests are wrapt up; and without which, there is no possibility of our being safe and happy, is of the greatest Moment imaginable to us; and is that which it behoves and concerns us to use our utmost care about; and such is the Salvation of our Souls.

For if our Souls be safe and happy, it is not possible we should be Miserable. If we are really in the way to Salvation, and have an Interest in God through Christ, so that his power becomes engaged, to keep us safely unto Salvation, let what will happen unto us here, it cannot make us unhappy. It will not be long before we shall be perfectly out of the reach of every thing that
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can be called *Evil*: And a well grounded hope of Salvation will make any thing Portable which can befall us in this World. And as soon as we have pass'd through this Wilderness, and are got from amongst the Briers and Thorns which grow here below, we shall inherit a Pleasure, a Joy, a Portion; in comparison with which, all that this World can afford, is in every respect less, and more inconsiderable than the emptiest Dream, or most fleeting Shadow we can think of. Why then should we be afraid of any thing that cannot hinder us from being for ever Blessed? We should not be afraid of any thing but Sin, 'tis that alone which is displeasing to God; that alone which exposes to eternal Misery: 'Tis only that which can hinder our attaining to the Salvation of our Souls, *Matt.* 10. 28.

But if our Souls Miscarry, all other things cannot make us amends. There is no remedy for a lost Soul. We may be disappointed to a notable degree in our worldly Designs, and Affairs, and Interests, and not be *Undone*. But if the Soul be Damned, there is no reversing that Sentence. If the Soul perish and be sent to Hell, it cannot be redeemed thence. All the Pleasures, Riches Honors, Bravery, Applause

Applause, &c. in the World, tho enjoyed without any Interruption, the whole space of a Man's abode on Earth, will not avail, or profit, help, or comfort him one jot, will not abate or qualifie his Sorrow and Torment one Moment, when his Soul doth sink under the weight of its own Guilt, and God's just Indignation, into unquenchable Flames. Former enjoyments are past, and ended, what was left behind, will not purchase one Minutes Ease: And the remembrance of antiquated Delights and Pleasures, will but encrease and make present Tortures more wracking and vexatious; heighten and increase those Torments and Horrors, which do every Minute unconceivably over-weigh all the Jollities of an ill-spent Vitious Life. What can you conceive more terrifying than to hear it said, *Remember thou in thy Lifetime receivest thy Good Things*, Luke 16.

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Besides a due concernedness for the Salvation of our Souls, is the surest course we can take, to be provided with what is most convenient for us, till we arrive at the end of our Faith and Hope, *the Salvation of our Souls*. We have reason enough to be well satisfied, if we have Journey-provision, where we are Strangers and Pilgrims, if as soon as ever our Journey is over, we shall enter

enter into the Heavenly Canaan, and be *for ever with the Lord*. And if we be duly concerned for our Salvation, we have as good assurance as can be desired, to be supplied with what infinite Wisdom shall judge most fit and convenient for us, during our Travel. Our allowance of outward things shall be more, or less, according as our Heavenly Father shall see most for our good. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*, Matt. 6. 33. *The Lord God is a Sun and Shield; The Lord will give Grace and Glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly*, Psal. 84. 11.

Fourthly, A great concernedness for the Salvation of the Soul, is the only way to secure it. Negligence, Sloth and Heedlessness, are not look'd on as the way to great, honourable and comfortable Fruitions, in this World; why then should they be thought consistent with a rational expectation of the glorious things which are reserved in Heaven? If you are sensible of the worth of your Souls, and do desire they may be Saved, you must needs own you ought to be much concerned for their Salvation; or you must renounce and depart from the common Rules of Reason, and from those Principles by which all Mankind

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do govern themselves, in seeking after what is of great value in it self, or what they do magnifie by their own Phancies and Imaginations, unless you do know some other way, by which their Salvation may be made sure. Now, the Salvation of the Soul depending wholly on the free Grace and good Pleasure of God, there cannot be any way to secure it, but what God hath been pleased to fix upon and appoint. Can you therefore produce a proof that God hath revealed, and declared, that it is his purpose to save any one who is of years of Discretion, whether he do or do not concern himself in good earnest for his Salvation? If you cannot produce a Revelation that is very plain and expresse to this effect, you run the greatest risk imaginable, and act with the greatest inconsistency that can be, with the Principles of Reason and Prudence: If you be not mightily concerned for your Salvation, How unavoidably will all the methods you use, with respect to other Matters, upbraid, reproach, and condemn your inadvertency, and regardlessness as to this, which is of infinitely greater consideration an importance to you than all other things can be? Moreover, you may remember it hath been proved to you by expresse Scripture, that God hath appointed this as the course you must take, if you will make your Salvation sure. Indeed,

Indeed our concernedness for the Salvation of our Souls, be it ever so great, does not, nor cannot procure their Salvation, by virtue of its own intrinsick worth and excellency. We cannot be our own Saviours. We are wholly beholding to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to free Grace for salvation. But we must in obedience to God, acquit our selves strenuously for our Salvation, in using those means, and following those directions he hath appointed and assigned for this purpose, depending upon him to Sanctifie and make this obediential compliance with his blessed Will Effectual, for the preparing us for, and bringing us unto that Salvation, whereunto he hath appointed the same. Our coming to Christ when we are truly sensible of our Wants and Misery hath no intrinsick Vertue and Excellency of its own, to purchase and procure us Acceptance with him, yet it is the necessary and only successful way, a convinced, sensible, humbled Sinner can take to obtain acceptance with him. This being what he Commands, and that to which he hath annexed his compassionate and merciful Promise, *Joh. 6. 37. Matt. 11. 28.* The necessity there is of our taking the course I have been discoursing of, doth principally arise from God's appointment: The successful-

ness of it, ariseth wholly from the vouchsafements of Divine Grace.

Fifthly, Every Person's concernedness is necessary to the Salvation of his own Soul. I speak to Persons who are of years of Discretion; and my Discourse is about the Salvation of those who are Adult. Other People may and ought to be concerned for your Salvation, in their way, to the utmost of their Power, according to the Capacities thy have, and the Offices they are in, and the Relations they bear to you. But what others can do, will not profit unto Salvation, if you are altogether unconcerned about it your selves. Most of your Worldly Businessses, may be done for you by others. Other People may Build your Houses, make your Cloaths, till your Grounds, feed your Cattle, gather in your Harvests, &c. But other People, (excluding your particular personal concerning your selves for your Salvation) cannot do all that is necessary to be done, in order to your being Saved. Those who have ever so many at work for them, must (notwithstanding that) Eat and Drink for themselves, or else they will soon be Famished and Die. Other Peoples Eating and Drinking will not sustain you in Life; their wearing of Cloaths, will not preserve you

you from Cold, or warm and heat you; their Sleeping will not refresh Nature in you. These are things all People must do for themselves; and we are all sensible enough of the same. O that we were every one as fully convinc'd that it is every jot as necessary, for every particular Person to be very much concerned for his own Salvation. Other Peoples Knowledge, Faith, Holiness, &c. will not save our Souls. Every one that will be Saved, must Repent of his own Sins, must himself believe in Christ, and be made Holy, and must Personally observe and keep God's Commandments.

Sixthly, The Enemies of our Souls do concern themselves very much to hinder our Salvation. Every Man hath variety of Enemies, who in their several ways do busie themselves to hinder the Salvation of his Soul, and to make his Damnation sure. Does it not therefore behove him to do what he can, that his endeavours to frustrate and defeat their Projects and Designs, may be equal to theirs? *Be sober, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil as a roaring Lyon, walketh about seeking whom he may Devour, whom resist stedfast in the Faith.* 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Why should the Devil hate your Souls more than you love them? should not you be as much concerned for their

their Salvation, as he is for their Damnation? Are not you more interested in your own Souls, than he is? Doth it not more concern you what will become of your Souls, than it doth him? The Damnation of your Souls, will be no real advantage to him, notwithstanding he seeks and labours for it so industriously; but how unconceivable will your Benefit be, if they be Saved? We have Enemies in the World, and Corruption within us, unweariedly labouring to obstruct our Salvation. And seeing we have so many and such industrious and indefatigable Enemies, waiting to do us a Mischief, even the greatest Mischief imaginable; to hinder our Salvation, to destroy and ruin our Souls for ever; in what manner will it become us to acquit our selves? How concerned should we be for the Salvation of our Souls, which are thus beset?

If we have any regard to the Authority of Almighty God, or think our selves obliged to employ the best Talents and Advantages which are committed to our trust, to the ends for which they naturally serve, and to which they are particularly Ordained; if we believe everlasting Salvation is of any great moment to our selves, and that it is not the effect of Chance, but will be regularly dispensed; if we are satisfied that

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we cannot be saved by Proxy, and that it doth behove us to improve the diligence and industry of our worst Enemies, to our own greatest Advantage; what hath been discoursed, may in some measure serve to beget, or awaken in us a perswasion, that we ought to be very much concerned for the Salvation of our own Souls. And therefore I will now proceed,

Thirdly, To take notice of some Inferences which this Doctrin doth evidently afford, and even prompt us to take into our consideration, and of which we may make a profitable Use and Improvement.

First, The Soul of Man is exceeding precious; 'Tis this on which we should set the greatest value, and of which we should take the greatest care. It is of the greatest worth in it self, and may be improved to our unexpressible advantage. But if it be finally slighted and neglected, the damage which will follow, will be altogether irreparable. Man consists of two Parts, a Body, and a Soul; The former is of a frail and corruptible Nature, of very little Excellency, and of no use at all when the Soul is separated from it. As long as the Soul continues in it, it is sensible of Pleasure, or Pain, according as things are proportioned, or disproportioned to its Organs, Appetites, Frame

or State, but no sooner doth the Soul part from it, but it becomes perfectly stupid and senseless, and presently molds into Dust. Foolish miserable Wretches that we are! How unexcusable are we, in being so immoderately solicitous about our fading Earthly Part and its little diminutive Interests, to the extraordinary prejudice and hazard of our Souls, which are Immortal, and evidently our best and noblest Part! When the Body returns to the Dust, the Soul doth not cease to be, but then becomes more sprightly and active, more apprehensive of what is Pleasing, or Dolorous, than it was before.

We do all put a difference betwixt things, esteeming some more Precious than others, and accordingly we proportion our love to, and care of, and concernment for them. But our great fault is this, we are hasty and inconsiderate, we are rash and precipitate; we ordinarily judge amiss, and value things above their worth; setting a mighty Price upon those things which have no intrinsic Excellency, but are intirely beholding to our own Fancies, or vulgar Opinion, for all their reputed worth, and slighting and making no account of that, which is so transcendently Excellent; we cannot possibly advance our esteem for it, to those

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degrees it deserves. Lord! How shall we duly deplore and bewail our selves, upbraid and reproach our Folly! seeing we have so long extravagantly admired and inordinately doated on empty Impertinencies, whilst our Souls, which are of unconceivably greater worth than all the World, have been left unregarded and unminded by us! What vile and ungrateful Wretches are we, thus to dishonour our selves, and disparage and prostitute the Souls God hath entrusted us with! How loathsome may we justly appear in the sight of God, and of all his Creatures? 'Tis owing to our Souls, that we are capable of setting a value upon any thing; and having Souls committed to our trust, could we behave our selves more unworthily, than to cast off all care of them, and degrade them to the sordidest Drudgery we could devise? All Worldly and Earthly Enjoyments and Objects, will be as nothing to us; the pleasure and delight we took in them, will be gone, and tho the things themselves may stay behind, we cannot make any more use of them, when once our Souls have taken their flight into the other and unseen World. And what can we expect will be their lot and portion, who have taken no better care of their precious Souls, have so neglected and abused them here?

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Did we rightly understand, and were we duly affected with the worth and preciousness of our Souls, we could not make so light of them as we do. We should then certainly concern our selves much to secure their Salvation. Do I believe my Soul came immediately from God, and that it is of a Divine Extraction; and that the greatest Excellency of my Body, consists in its being fitted for the use and service of my Soul, during its abode in it? And can I by any means be reconciled to cast off all concern for it, and to make such a Heaven-born Offspring, a Slave to my drossy and earthly Part? Does not all corporal Beauty and Lustre, presently disappear and vanish, after the Soul is separated from it? How great a Value should we set upon our Souls, were we seriously and strongly perswaded, that as soon as they leave our Bodies, they *must return to God, who gave them*, Eccles. 12, 7.

It is true, we cannot at present distinctly and fully understand what the Soul is; but we easily perceive we have such a noble and sublime Part, by those Actions which are peculiar to it: It Thinks, it Understands, it Wills and Chuses; it Loves, it Reflects upon it Self and all its Actings; it converses with Objects, which are not Objects

jects of Sense; it compares sensible Objects one with another, and raiseth notions from them: And we are sure the Body can do none of these things, when the Soul is gone from it. And tho it is naturally void now of its Primitive Holiness and Purity, yet it still retains some Marks and Characters of the Divine Image upon it, and it is still capable of having its first Excellency and Beauty Repaired, Restored, Improved. Oh! how large and vast are its Capacities? What work can it do! What Exercises may it perform: What Objects can it converse with! What great and glorious things may it be employed about! And what blessed Privileges may it be advanced unto! It is capable of having the Divine Image again Imprinted on it, with a Lustre and Glory far exceeding the utmost our most extended thoughts can possibly comprehend, or reach unto. It is capable of Divine Illumination, and effectual Sanctification of a partial, but blessed and joyful Communion with God at present, and a perfect Fruition of him hereafter.

God forbid, that I should any longer prostitute, neglect, or make little account of that part of my self, which is so Spiritual in its Nature, which the Great, Holy, and Munificent God hath endued with such Powers, and already advanc'd to such Dignity.

nity! which may be improved, and ascend in this World to such Honour and Eminency, and is capable of inheriting such Glorious and incomprehensible Recompences in the next World! If I be regardless of such a Soul, and yet vehemently pursue, and inordinately prize a few empty Trifles, some lying Vanities, what shall I alledge to excuse my self? Must I not be Self-condemned? Will not all the Ranks and Orders of Beings Condemn me? With what Confusion must my Face be covered? May not the whole System of Nature Tremble, be Ashamed, and Blush at such a Prospect, to have a view of a Rational Creature, one that hath so capacious a Soul, and yet more stupid and blockish than its most sullen and dreggy Part? Lord, let not such Shame be my Portion! Let me never fall into, nor sink under such Guilt! What! shall I be voluntarily cruel to, shall I hate and so dishonour the noblest part of my Self? Shall I willfully cast away my Soul, which if I take a due care of, will in a little time mount above the Stars, and be settled in a State incomprehensibly Joyous, and full of Glory? No, I will now awake and rouse up all my Powers and Strength, and tho I cannot exactly understand the worth of my Soul, no more than I can what it.

it is; yet I will endeavour to be as just to it as possibly I can; I will prefer it above all the Objects of Sense, above every thing that Time diminishes! above every thing that hath either Vexation, or Vanity inscribed upon it! And I will do all I can in a firm dependance on Divine Grace, that this Soul of mine may assuredly arrive at the full Fruition of all those great and blessed things which are laid up in store for truly pious and devout, vertuous and upright, sanctified and religious Souls.

What raised thoughts should I have of a Soul, that is not liable to the Shocks and Violences to which my Body is every Hour subject! A Soul that cannot be at all impaired by any of those rude Assaults, which may Surprize, and which may unexpectedly and irresistibly hurry my Earthly part to Dust! Our Souls will endure for ever, let all Created Powers do what they can against them. They do not yield, they are not subject to the Alterations which are incident to what is Mortal. They are Immortal, they cannot Die, but when their *Houses of Clay* are Dissolved, they pass and enter into a State more suitable to their Spiritual Nature. They will retain their Beings, Powers and Properties, after that the Worms have glutted themselves with our

our Flesh and Humors, after that our Bodies have past through all the Changes, to which such Matter is liable.

If I believe my Soul is Immortal, what a value must I set upon it? We prize any thing of worth much the more, if it will be of long continuance. How should I then esteem a Soul, which will abide for ever! What Reasons can I produce for my having been so intent upon the acquiring, and so industrious and unwearied to obtain things which cannot Satisfie, which may soon Fade, and which must certainly Perish? Misguided, foolish and infatuated Wretch! O how do I now bewail my Folly and my Wickedness! who have so vainly, yea, so impiously abus'd my self, misemployed my Strength, and squandred away my precious time! Away, you gilded, false, you mask'd disguis'd Temptations! Be gone, you empty lying treacherous Pleasures of Sense! You have already cheated and deceived me too long! You have robb'd, abus'd and wrong'd me hitherto! You can never repair the damage you have done me! I now with all Solemnity renounce and cast you off! I am resolv'd through Grace to despise, contemn and vilifie you all, I can, and to have no more to do with you whilst I Live! What relation can you pretend to a Soul, which will

will continue, live and act, through all the long and undeterminable duration of Eternity! I will not any more allow you the Service of a Thought! I loath and detest you! I earnestly desire and pray, that as long as I am on Earth, my Heart may be fill'd with an insuperable Indignation against you all, and against every thing that cannot be improved to the benefit and advantage of my Immortal Soul! Should I be careless of my Soul any longer, now that *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Gospel*, which Gospel I am favoured with for the guiding and directing of my Heart and Life, I should not only be altogether inexcusable, but the very Heathens will rise up in Judgment against me, to my greater and more terrible Condemnation! 'Tis said of *Pythagoras*, that when he heard of the Immortality of the Soul, He presently gave off that diligent attendance to his Body, to which he had addicted himself, and made it his business to improve in Knowledge and Vertue. How much more should I value and endeavour by all means to improve my Soul, who behold and discern this Truth in a much clearer Light, than he could? How do I Blush! and with what Grief and Revenge is my Heart rent, because of the folly and vanity, the wickedness

edness of the past part of my Life; because of my unthankfulness for the Gospel; and carelessness of my Soul, to this time, when I read what a *Mahometan* King is reported to have caused to be writ on the Gates of his Pleasure-House, *viz. This World will not continue long; its Pride and Lustre will soon be gone. Remember Brother, and apply thy Heart to Him, who only intended this World for our Inn. Let not thy Life be united to this Bitter Sweet, for it hath Cheated many; first Feste'd with them, and afterwards Slaughtered them. If thy Soul can but come away from her Prison Pure and Undeiled, and reach the Mark, it's no great matter whether thou Diest on a Throne, or on a Dung-hill.* O how Sottish have I been in setting the Riches, Pleasures, Honors and Accommodations of this present World, at so high a Rate, preferring them before my Precious Soul! And shall I still continue to do so? Let so tremendous Folly, such desperate Madnes, be far from me: My own experience doth now convince me, that the more I have admired, the more I have toiled for these things, the emptier I am; the more I am disappointed, the further I am from being satisfied! I am sure these things are vain, yea, and vexatious too! They will fade and Perish, and are at best, but of a short duration! What are these, and such brittle decaying, short-liv'd Enjoyments, to

a Soul, which will abide and Live for ever! Were it not for the levity and sickliness of my mind, what thousands of considerations would croud in, to convince and certifie me, that it is my Soul, which of all other things, is of greatest Worth? And can there be a more prodigious Folly, a grosser contradiction, than for a Man to believe, his Soul is Immortal, and of greater value, than his Imagination can extend unto, and yet be regardless of it!

As to other things which are of value, but which we do not exactly understand, we usually them esteem according as they are better skill'd in them, than we are. Will any discreet and prudent Person throw away a Medal, a Jewel, or Precious-stone, or part with it for a Counter, a piece of Lead, or any such thing, because he doth not know its just worth? Or will he not rather enquire of some one who understands such things, and then esteem and prize it, at the rate he assures him it is really worth? Now we have no reason at all to question, but God who Created our Souls, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who Redeemed and Purchased them, do very well understand their worth. And by whose determination should we govern our selves in this Affair, but by theirs whose Judgment is most assuredly

redly Infallible? And if we will acquiesce in their Judgment in the Case, we must certainly esteem our Souls exceeding precious. For if our Souls were not exceeding precious, the Eternal Father would not have given his Son to purchase them; nor would the only Begotten of the Father have laid down his Life for their Ransom. Had they judged our Souls such frivolous worthless things, as we generally appear to esteem them, they would not have been redeemed at all; or if they must have been Purchased, it would have been with a Price of infinitely less Value, than the Blood of him who was the Son of God. The most that could have been demanded for them, would have been but a very moderate sum of that, with which we buy the necessaries for our Temporal Life. For what poor and trifling things in this World, do People ordinarily pawn and venture their Souls? But God and Christ, had other thoughts of our Souls than we have. Tho we expose our Souls for nought, yet if any one Man could purchase the whole World, with the loss of his Soul, he would be no Gainer, yea, his loss would be Irreparable. *What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Matt. 16. 26. O! the inestimable price that was paid for these Souls, which we do so neglect, slight, and disregard!

disregard! *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as Silver and Gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot,* 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. When my thoughts concerning Reasonable Souls, have mounted as high as ever they can, and when my esteem of them has followed my Thoughts as close as possible, how far am I from comprehending, and being thoroughly affected with their full worth? Alas! what are my most elevated apprehensions to the incomprehensible excellency and merit of that Blood with which they were bought? Wo is me! who have too long neglected and been careless of my unaccountably precious Soul, as if it had been the only frivolous, useless thing in the whole World! If I do any longer make but little account of this Soul of mine, I shall be unavoidably chargeable with an affected undervaluing what is in it self of unconceivable worth, and trampling under foot most ungratefully the precious Blood of the everlasting Covenant, and offering the most insufferable contumely to the Lord of Glory, who gave himself a Ransom for my Soul! Can I sustain so great a load? Dare I willfully cast away my Soul, to give the greatest demonstration of Ingratitude, and of fallen Contempt unto Almighty God? Shall I

I be so peevish, so malicious, so revengeful, as to destroy my Soul, and sink my self under the most horrid Guilt, because my Saviour's Love was so stupendous and amazing! Wretch that I am! in that I have till now been so unmindful of my Soul, which cost my *Jesus* so dear! My dearest *Jesus*, thy Love doth now constrain me! Methinks I hear thy Sobs, thy Groans, the Prayers and Supplications, which thou didst offer with strong Crying and Tears! Thy earnest Expostulation on the Cross, when Dying, to Redeem this Soul! My Heart is pierced now! I must! I Grieve! I Mourn! My Indignation now is kindled! I despise! I hate! I loath whatever would defraud thee of thy Purchase! The Beauty, Grandeur, Pomp and Glory of this World, is now as nothing unto me! I neither love, nor prize, nor value any thing but my Soul, and as it's ransomed by thy Blood! O! what shall I do, that I may attain to prize my Soul as it deserves! This, this Soul which cost the Son of God so dear! May I be duly affected with the Travail of my Saviour's Soul, and with the horrors of his Agonies and Death! Let me ever with becoming Adoration, meditate on, rightly understand, and constantly retain a lively, affectionate, powerful, constraining sense on my Heart and Spirit

Spirit, of Christ's profoundest Condescension and superlative Grace and Kindness! Would Christ dwell in my Heart by Faith, and might I be enabled to comprehend with all Saints, the breadth and length, and depth and height of his Love, how should I abound in Admiring, Praising, Glorifying, and giving Thanks unto him! and to what a height would this sort of exercise raise my estimation of my Soul, towards which, this great, this glorious, this beneficent and most gracious Saviour, hath manifested a Love, which passeth Knowledge.

As the best and greatest Friend to Mankind hath in so stupendous a manner, Testified his love to, and thereby the real and extraordinary worth of Souls, so the most envious inveterate and malicious Enemy to Human Race, hath mightily fortified this Truth, That the Soul of Man is exceeding precious, by his indefatigable and unwearied attempts, to destroy our Souls, both in the ways of Subtily, and Violence. We commonly acknowledge and boldly affirm, the Devil is our great Adversary, and then we must likewise allow and grant, that he designs to do us the greatest Mischief; and what can that be, but to prejudice and ruine that part of us which is undoubtedly of greatest value? And can any thing be more apparent

apparent and manifest, than that all his methods and assaults are levelled against our Souls? What a Monster shall I appear, if I make little or no account of this Soul, for the ransoming of which, the eternal Son of God laid down his most precious Life! And for the ruining of which, the Devil doth not spare any either of his Craft and Artifice, or of his Strength and Industry? Would the Prince of the Powers of the Air, so sedulously contrive and plot, be so very observant, and constant upon his Watch, make such diligent Search after, and take so much pains as he doth to destroy our Souls, if they were such inconsiderable worthless Trifles, as we seem to reckon them?

We are careful of, and do look accurately after those things we really prize, and of which we make a very great account. And were we truly sensible of, and duly affected with the worth, the excellency, the preciousness of our own Souls, O! with what seriousness should we busie our selves to secure their Salvation?

Secondly, Salvation is an inestimable Mercy and Privilege. Salvation! What a sweet delicious good word is this? Take all the Letters in the World, and join them together how you please, you cannot frame a word,

word, that makes so comfortable and charming a Sound as this does! Of all the expressions that can be named, this is the most proper, and the best accommodated to our State and Circumstances, to our Case and Necessities! We are in Misery, our wants and dangers are greater than our Lips can utter! Who so wretched and forlorn as Sinners and guilty Persons? None certainly excepting them whose Condemnation is already Seal'd and ratified! May such as we be Saved? is it possible for us to obtain Salvation? May our aggravated Transgressions, the horrible Rebellion we have so long and so obstinately persisted in against the Holy God, be Pardoned! May we yet escape the terrible wrath that is coming apace upon the Wicked and Disobedient! Is the door of Mercy still open? May we yet be received into favour! Most joyful tidings! most comfortable and ravishing News! Bless 'be my Rock, Exalted be the God of my 'Salvation! Praise the Lord, O my Soul! 'and let all that is within me, magnifie his 'Holy Name! Thy loving kindness is better than Life! O Lord! I will praise thee 'as long as I Live! Let all the Angels of 'God, which excel in strength, bless him! 'Yea, let all his works in all Places of his 'Dominion, bless him! Bless the Lord, O 'my

' my Soul ! Oh that Men would praise the
 ' Lord for his Goodness and for his wonder-
 ' ful Works to the Children of Men ! Blessed
 ' be the Lord God of *Israel*, from Everla-
 ' sting, to Everlasting, and let all the Peo-
 ' ple say, *Amen*. Praise ye the Lord ! This
 ' is a faithful saying, and worthy of all ac-
 ' ceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the
 ' World to save Sinners, of whom we may
 ' justly repute our selves the greatest ! Let
 that Message brought from Heaven by an
 Angel, (A Message every way worthy of
 such a Messenger) be the chief subject of
 my Meditations ! And Oh that I might
 never think of it, but with a Heart rightly
 affected towards it ! powerfully influenced
 by it, and mightily enlarged in thankful-
 ness and praise for it ! *Fear not, for behold,*
I bring you good Tydings of great Joy, which
shall be to all People ; for unto you is Born this
day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is
Christ the Lord, Luke 2. 10, 11.

This Salvation, is indeed a great and blef-
 sed word, but how little do we know of that
 which it imports ? No created Being can
 comprehend, and fully understand the Mer-
 cy, Good, and Privilege it signifies. A
 Blessing is the less by its being such, that
 any finite Being can reach and know its full
 Dimensions. This is a Mercy and Benefit,
 which

which deserves our loudest Praises, our most
 solemn Acknowledgments, and our silent
 Admiration. We cannot possibly raise our
 estimation to its real Value : It is so great,
 the loftiest Expressions fall infinitely short
 of conveying to our Minds an adequate
 and exact conception of it. *How shall we*
then escape, if we neglect so great Salvation ?
 Heb. 2. 3. Our deliverances are incomplete
 whilst we are on Earth ; we are encom-
 passed and surrounded here, with such va-
 riety of dangers, calamities and troubles,
 we are no sooner rescued out of one, but
 we feel our selves Arrested by another Dis-
 aster, and are in all respects as uneasy and
 dissatisfied till freed from this, as we were
 when mourning under the former. Yea,
 many times our very Deliverance proves
 but a step to a Relapse, which sinks us
 deeper into the very same kind of Trouble
 and Disquietment we thought we had esca-
 ped. We are *Born to Trouble, as the Sparks*
fly upward. When one afflicting occur-
 rence having gorg'd it self, as we conceive,
 leaves us, we presently become a Booty to
 another, or else the former returns with
 greater eagerness, and preys on us with
 more insatiable greediness and violence.
 No sooner have we one Deliverance, but
 we find we do as much need another. We
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are not sure but whole Troops of Sorrows will seize on us, and these so thick and close one after another, they will not afford us one pleasant Interval. Our Lives are at best chequered; and our Deliverances in this World, yield not a satisfaction of any long continuance. But blessed be God, the Lord Jesus *being made perfect, is become the Author of eternal Salvation, unto all them that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. O! the blessedness of them who partake of this Salvation! who are perfectly freed from every thing that can offend and molest! from the worst of Evils, Sin, and the next Temptations to it, and from all the Sufferings, Pains, Diseases, Doubts and Fears, which here extort our Tears, Complaints, and Moans! God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain, for the former things are passed away, Rev. 21. 4. How happy are they who are safe from, and out of the reach of all those Torment, and Curses, to which Sin doth expose People, and under which others must eternally roar! who, whilst others fry in unquenchable Flames, and must be always tost on the Waves and Surges of the ever burning Lake, endure none of their Anguish, but are filled with a Joy which no Tongue can relate!

relate! O the Honor to which they are advanced! the Glory with which they are Crowned! the Treasures they enjoy! the Kingdoms they have received, the Delights with which they are, and will be everlastingly entertained! Our Understandings and Minds are not capacious and wide enough to comprehend, or conceive the great and excellent things that are conferred on them! *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 Joh. 3. 2. In thy presence is fulness of Joy, at thy right Hand are Pleasures for ever more, Psal. 16. 11. As for me, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy Likeness, Psal. 17. 15. Because thy loving Kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise thee. Thus will I praise thee while I Live; I will lift up my Hands in thy Name. My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips, Psal. 63. 3, 4, 5.

Can any thing be so desirable to me, as when I die, to have my precious Soul

guarded and conveyed by holy and blessed Angels, through the airy Regions unto Abraham's Bosom, into the kindest Embraces of the holy amiable, and loving Jesus! And at the general Resurrection, to have my Body raised Incorruptible and Glorious, and every way disposed for, and united to its happy Soul, that they may be joint and eternal sharers in all those blessed Fruitions infinite Grace and Love will vouchsafe! How happy shall I be if through Grace I arrive to be for ever with Christ! What a glorious Change will then be wrought on me! How wonderfully will all the Powers and Faculties of my Soul, be advanced, improved, and enlarged! How much more beautiful and capacious will they be made than now they are? O the alteration that shall be made on me, to my unconceivable Advantage! when I shall shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, as the Stars for Ever and Ever, Dan. 12. 3. Yea, as the Sun in the Kingdom of my Father, Mat. 13. 43. When this vile Body shall be Changed, and fashioned like unto the Glorious Body of My Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the working, whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself, Phil. 3. 21. What account should I make of such a Privilege, Honor and Felicity! How should I prepare, wait and

and long for this Great, Holy, and Glorious Change!

The word of that God, who is faithful and true, and cannot Lie, affords us evident and full assurance, that such a glorious and everlastingly happy State is prepared, and may be obtained, and it likewise certifies what manner of People they must be who shall be admitted to it. The Lord Jesus the supream Judge of, and great King over all, will at the last Day, say unto them on his right Hand, *Come ye blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World, Matt. 25. 34. He will render to every Man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in Well-doing, seek for Glory and Honor, and Immortality, Eternal Life, Rom. 2. 6, 7. Henceforth (saith St. Paul) there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing, 2 Tim. 4. 8. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance Incorruptible and Undeiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through Faith unto*
D 3 *Salvation,*

Salvation, ready to be Revealed in the last Time, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, 5.

This Salvation comprehends all that is Great, all that is Honorable, all that is truly Delighting, Good and Desirable. O that we may all duly strive, labour, desire and long to be prepared for, and brought to the actual possession of it! What should we wish for on our own behalves, if we have any love for our selves, but that God himself, the only satisfying good, would be our Portion! That we may have free, Intimate, full and everlasting Communion in the highest Heavens, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with glorious Angels and all the Saints above! That we may come to the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Assembly and Church of the first Born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the Blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. 12. 22, &c. Can we desire and pant after any thing comparable to our beholding our Saviour's Glory, and being for ever with him in his Kingdom, where he Reigns in Glory?

Were,

Were we thoroughly perswaded of, and did we in any measure esteem this Salvation as we ought, (for indeed we cannot prize it as it deserves) what an happy Change should we presently perceive in our selves! What a mighty power and efficacy should we feel it have on our Souls! What a sweet and constraining influence should we find it shed abroad in our Hearts and Lives! How strangely would it abate and take off our love and affection to this World! Its Poms! its Pleasures! its Vanities! How much would it raise us above the Flatteries which have hitherto Deluded us! How would it make us despise and contemn the painted Glories, and empty Enjoyments, which we have so unweariedly pursued, and so passionately courted! How indifferent should we be to Earthly things, and how little impression would any Worldly Allurements make on us, if we did steadily look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, 2 Cor. 4. 18. And did we affectionately consider, that the things which are seen are Temporal, but the things which are not seen, are Eternal! How would this engage us to, animate us in, and with what success and vigor would it carry us through all our Duties! Would not our Conversation be in Heaven, did we

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seriously look for our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ from thence, to call and take us along with him thither! *I press toward the Mark for the Price of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus, if by any means I might attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead.* What support would this yield us? With what patience would this possess our Souls? Yea, with what joy would this fill us in the greatest Tribulations, Distresses and Persecutions, we can possibly have occasion to encounter in our passage toward it? *We glory in the Tribulations also,* Rom. 5. 3. *For which cause we faint not; but tho our outward Man perish, the inward Man is renewed day by day; for our light affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory,* 2 Cor. 4. 16, 17. *I reckon that the Sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us,* Rom. 8. 18. We read of those (Heb. 10. 24.) who took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing in themselves, that they had in Heaven a better, and an enduring Substance. Yea, how would this reconcile us to leave the World quite! make us earnestly desire to Die, and that the time may hasten apace, when we may actually give up the Ghost, and resign up our Spirits to Christ! *Having a desire to de-*

part,

part, and to be with Christ, which is far better, Phil. 1. 23.

Who can conceive the thousandth, yea, the least part of the Happiness of the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect! With what knowledge, admiration and love, shall we be filled, when we are settled *yonder*, in those bright and shining *Thrones*! when we are joined to the *Heavenly Choir*, and bear our part in the *eternal Hallelujahs*! and shall be ascribing Honor, Glory and Praise to him that sitteth on Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever! With what raptures of Love, Praise and Joy, shall we be everlastingly entertained, when we become Denizens of that glorious City, of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb is the Temple! where we shall see his Face, and have his Name in our Fore-heads! where there shall be no Night! where we shall need no Candle, neither light of the Sun, for the Lord God will give us Light, and we shall reign for ever and ever.

How incomprehensibly great and good are the things which God hath in store for them who heartily love and sincerely serve him! seeing God will be pleased to admit such frail imperfect Mortals as we are, to the full fruition of himself and his Christ; surely there is nothing can deserve to be

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esteemed

esteemed and called Blessedness, but only this. How can I prize and value, how can I affect, strive and long for any thing but this Salvation alone! How am I transported with admiration and wonder! yet these do fail me! they flag, they cannot mount high enough by thousands of Degrees! Salvation is so transcendent! O let my Love increase, grow ripe, ascend still higher and higher! How would the Damned value this Salvation, might they have but the least hopes of ever being admitted to it? What esteem have the Saints above for it? Yea, how do sincere Believers here prize it, especially when they have a lively vigorous sense of it? St. Paul was positive, that to Die would be his Gain, *Phil. 1. 21. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection, Heb. 11. 35.*

O my stupid senseless Soul! what ails thee, that thou still liest grovelling here! that thy motion is so slow! O! for the strongest and most seraphick flights of Love! for the Extasies of Passion now! What, art thou bereaved of all thy Powers! Hast thou lost thy Nature? Art thou Metamorphos'd and chang'd into a lifeless lump of Matter? Rouze and awake! exert and put forth all thy Strength! Tho hitherto thou hast been deceived by Objects much too little and

unsatis-

unsatisfying, here's that which calls for all thy Love, thy Zeal, thy Life! Here is Salvation, which much exceeds thy most extended thoughts, and reach! Here's that which none could ever esteem according to the fulness of its worth; the most glittering splendid, worldly Triumphs, are at best but poor, deceitful, treacherous and insipid Vanities! all the Grandeur, Pomp and Glories here, do soon decay and wither; do quickly dwindle into nothing! but this Salvation is truly great and Glorious; it is substantial, durable and satisfying.

Most holy, true and blessed Jesus! thou hast expressly told us, that in thy Father's House there are many Mansions; *Job. 14. 2. 3.* That thou art gone to prepare a place for thy faithful People! And that thou wilt come again and receive them unto thy Self! that where thou art, there they may be also! Thou Prayedst for them with most tender and earnest Affection, when thou wast here! And it is thy will and pleasure, that thy Saints and Servants, those whom the Father hath given thee, shall be with thee, where thou art, that they may behold thy Glory, *Matt. 17. 24.* Thou dost not enjoin them any thing in order to their being Saved, but what thou wilt enable them by thy Spirit to perform! Nor any thing but

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what thou can'st make pleasing and delightful to them, by the abundance of thy Grace! O Lord, I here absolutely resign my self to be guided by thy Counsel; afterwards receive me to Glory! Whom have I in Heaven but thee? There is none upon Earth I can desire besides thee! Be thou the strength and the joy of my Heart, and my portion for ever! There is not any thing comparable to thy Salvation! Lord, take from me what thou wilt! make me Poor and needy! let me be Scorned and Despised! let my Body be Sick, and every part and Joynt of it, Sore and in Pain! let me be afflicted and Persecuted! yea, do with me what thou wilt, so that thou wilt grant that Grace and Peace may be multiplied to me at present, through the knowledge of thy self; so that thou wilt be pleased, that I may at last obtain the end of my Faith and Hope, the Salvation of my Soul!

Thirdly, No Person can with reason expect, or hope his Soul shall be Saved, who is not resolutely diligent in that course God hath ordained and prescribed him for this purpose. That customary, slight, and formal course, with which too many content themselves, will not suffice to secure their Salvation. The best have too much reason to complain of themselves, because they are

are so supine, remiss and careless, about a business of so great importance in it self, and unto which, the Holy and most Righteous God requires all should give a diligent Attendance. This is the *one Thing necessary*, which must be minded with the greatest seriousness, whatever is Neglected. All other Affairs and Businesses, must give place to this, if at any time they happen to interfere with it. A few accidental thoughts of, some flitting unconstant desires after Salvation; a customary observation of some of the outward parts of Devotion; an over-vehement heat for particular Modes of Worship, speculative Opinions, and doubtful Practices, will not avail any Man unto Salvation, but will render his Case much more dangerous, if the main bent of his Heart and Affections, is after his Covetousness, his worldly and fleshly Lusts, if his Life is blemished and polluted with practices diametrically opposite to the power, essence and design of all true Religion.

If we will secure the Salvation of our Souls, we must have, and cherish a composedness, and seriousness of Spirit, in some measure suitable to the Nature, Excellency, and Weightiness of that we propound to our selves. We must attend to, and industriously prosecute that course of Life and Practice,

Practice, which hath some affinity with, and bears some proportion to what we aim at. We must be resolutely diligent in the use of those Means God hath instituted for the furthering of us in it. And if we refuse to walk in his way, and follow the method he hath directed us to, our Hope will certainly fail us, and we shall be utterly without Excuse.

Salvation is not to be attained so easily as multitudes dream it is, and as too many are enclined to flatter People it is. All would be Saved, and the greatest part would fain be saved in a way very little inconvenient, and contradictory to their sensual Lusts and Interests, and then do too readily persuade themselves they may be Saved in such a way as is agreeable enough to their own extravagant Humours; in such a way as they would like best, and would pitch upon, if they were to appoint the way themselves. It is a great unhappiness, that the Christian World hath been so long troubled with a sort of Persons, who pretending they have a right to instruct others in the way to Heaven and Salvation, have contributed very much both by their Discourses and Practices, to reconcile the profession of Christianity to Men's Ungodly Lusts, rather than to reconcile them they have pretended to take

take care of, unto the truth and practice of that Religion they professed, whose way to Salvation seems every jot as broad as that our Blessed Saviour cautioned People against, assuring them, it would lead unto Destruction: Such Persons may justly be reputed *Factors* for the *Prince of Darkness*, rather than *Ambassadors* and *Ministers* of that Sacred and Divine Person, who came to *destroy the works of the Devil*, and to save his People from their Sins. Great Resolution and vigorous constant Diligence must be used by us, in order to Salvation, let Flattering Soul-destroyers say what they please to the contrary.

If we will be Saved and enter into Life, we must keep God's Commandments; we must mortify our Lusts, be crucified to the World, and have the World crucified to us; we must deny our selves, and walk in a way contrary to those of this World, who do lye in Wickedness, and are governed by that Spirit, which ruleth in the Children of Disobedience. We must expect to meet with Difficulties and Oppositions, and must resolutely through Divine assistance, encounter and vanquish them all. We must have Grace, and act it strenuously and with great seriousness and constancy, use appointed Means for the strengthening, encreasing and confirming of our Graces; and

and perseveringly strive to improve and grow more and more in Knowledge, Faith, Hope, Love, and in all the parts of a truly Godly and Religious Life.

He who is the Author of eternal Salvation, the only Saviour of Sinners, did not acquaint them he loved most, with any other way to Salvation, but Repenting thoroughly of Sin, believing in Him, obeying his Laws, and following his Example. He did not give any Indulgence to Peoples Lusts, nor did he countenance their Sloth. He peremptorily required them to *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*, Luke, 13. 24. He is positive, that *except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God*, Matt. 5. 20. He saith, *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by force*, Matt. 11. 12. Yea, he warns us against cheating our selves with false and groundless easy hopes; and assures us with great earnestness and much solemnity, that we will find our selves mistaken and deceived, if we think to insist upon any specious pretences at the last day, and will therefore content our selves with what falls short of doing the Will of his Father which is in Heaven. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall I enter in-*
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to the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name have cast out Devils? And in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work Iniquity, Matt. 7. 21, 22, 23. His Apostles afterwards certified the People, they must give diligence, to make their Calling and Election sure, if they would be sure not to miscarry and fail, 2 Pet. 1. 10. And that he is the Author of eternal Salvation, only unto those who do obey him, Heb. 5. 9. With what shadow of Reason can you pretend to hope for Salvation, if you will not credit him and his Apostles, but continue regardless of what they have so vehemently affirmed indispensibly necessary to your being made meet to be partakers of the Inheritances of the Saints in Light? Is it not most evident and plain, that the precious Promises pertain only unto them who approve themselves resolutely diligent in eschewing what is Evil, and in perfecting of Holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Is not this undoubtedly the great purport, the main design, and the principal business of the whole Gospel, viz. To instruct, direct, oblige and assist us to deny all Ungodliness
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and worldly Lusts, and to live Godly, Righteously, and Soberly in this present World, that we may be disposed for everlasting Salvation in the next World, *Tit. 2. 11, 12.* Was not this the course the Saints of Old took to make their Salvation sure? Was it not from their having conscientiously followed this Method, that they fetched their Evidences, to prove they had a right to hope and look for Salvation? Was it not from this that they derived Comfort in their greatest Distresses, and looked with satisfaction and joy to hereafter, beyond time and days? *This is our rejoicing, the Testimony of our Consciences, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, we have had our Conversation in the World, &c. 2 Cor. 1. 12. I have fought, (said St. Paul) a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge will give unto me at that day, &c. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.* Ought we not now to be followers of them, who through Faith and Patience, are Inheritors of the faithful Promises? Can any Man now pretend with any shew of Reason, to expect Salvation, so long as he continues Vicious and Immoral, Supercilious and Careless, Negligent and Slothful? Do you quit your selves like good Christians, whilst you pre-

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sume on Salvation, in a way which is not consistent with God's Commands? Whilst you depend on what the Lord Jesus hath assured you, will certainly fail you: Whilst you have not one promise in all your Bible to countenance and support your Hope: Whilst the whole Doctrin of Salvation, the entire Gospel of Christ is against you: Whilst you keep and continue in a way directly contrary to that, in which all those did walk who are already got to Heaven?

Fourthly, How justly may they be Expostulated with, and what keen Reproof do they deserve who have been all their time regardless of the Salvation of their Souls? Indeed we are all faulty; we have been very defective and wanting; we have not done what we might, to further and make our own Salvation sure. What reason have we all to be deeply Humbled, to smite upon our Breasts, and cry out against our selves? Ah! miserable and ill-deserving Wretches! we are horribly guilty! God be Merciful unto us, who have been so careless of our own Salvation! How have we cumbered our selves, been careful and troubled about many needless and unprofitable Matters, and left the *one thing necessary* unheeded? How thoughtful and solicitous have we been

been about our Food and Apparel! What we should Eat and Drink, and wherewith we should be Cloathed! With what eager, vehement desires and affections have we pursued the little Interests of this present World? With what unwearied pains have we laboured for very Vanities! And how have we all this while shamefully forgotten the holy God! slighted the most compassionate and loving Jesus! not looked after, nor sought for the Kingdom of Heaven, and that Righteousness which prepares for, and leads us to it, with any tolerable Diligence and Concernedness! How have we neglected our eternal Salvation! We have not had a due regard to the safety and welfare of our precious and Immortal Souls! the duties of Piety and offices of Religion, have either been wholly omitted by us, or else we have performed them in a very superficial, cold and heartless manner! Who amongst us all can vindicate and clear himself from this Charge, before that God who observes all our ways, knows our Hearts and tries our Reins? Or, what can we alledge and plead in our own Excuse, if we have been by our own Confession thus Guilty? Is it not highly reasonable, and very fit we should all strive to acquire a true sense of our own Guilt, and

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accuse and condemn our selves? Cry importunately for Pardon and Mercy, immediately resolve, and in a dependance on Divine assistance, presently set upon a faithful and most vigorous Amendment? Sure it will become us to apply our selves speedily, *To work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, and to give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure.*

And if those who have made the greatest proficiency in Religion, have so much occasion to upbraid themselves, and to acknowledge that they deserve to have their Faces covered with Shame and Confusion; If such be scarcely saved, then what may be said of others? Where shall the Wicked and Ungodly, the openly Vicious and Profane, the Unrighteous and Unmerciful, the Luxurious and the Covetous, the Formalist and the Hypocrite appear?

All People are busie and much concerned for something or other. We are concerned much for our Bodies, for our Temporal Life, Health, and Happiness, for our Ease, our Pleasure, our Profits; for our Houses, Lands, Cattle, Wares, Merchandize, &c. But how few are concerned half so much for their Souls and their Salvation, as they are for those momentary, transient, and uncertain things? Yet

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every Man ought to be more concerned for the Salvation of his Soul, than for all other things. Sirs, reflect upon your selves, and with good deliberation consider your State, and in what manner you have hitherto behaved your selves, and what is your Disposition and Carriage? Do you not indulge your selves in your Lusts and vicious Courses, tho you have been often admonished and warned, and advised to the contrary? Are you not industrious and diligent in providing for, and fulfilling the Lusts of the Flesh? Do you not conform your selves to the sinful fashions and customs of this evil World? Do you not live and persist in those practices you are convinced in your Consciences, are disallowed and condemned by him who will be your Judge, and which you have at least pretended solemnly to Renounce? Are you not Enemies in your minds to the power of Godliness? Do you not make it appear by your practices, that you are not willing to be reconciled to a serious, gracious and heavenly course of Life? How can you pretend you are concerned for your Salvation, whilst you obstinately refuse to walk in the only Way which leads unto it? Do you not make light of Christ? Are you not contentedly ignorant of the great Truths relating to his

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Person, his Natures and his Offices, or at least of the practical Improvement you should make of them? Do you not sturdily reject his gracious Invitations, contemn his Authority, and refuse to follow his Example? Does not the World and your Pleasures carry away your Affections and Hearts from him? Do you not undervalue the Ordinances instituted in the Gospel, and make little or no account of the means of Grace? Are you not altogether Heartless and Formal in, and careless in being made better by the use of them? Do you not ordinarily allow any thing to excuse you from attending on God in them, tho God hath writ to you the great things of his Law, *Hof. 8. 12.* Do you not account them as a strange thing? Are you not altogether unconcerned for the due and serious performance of the private duties of Religion? Do you not pass over Days and Weeks, without examining your Hearts, and enquiring into your Practices and the State and condition of your Souls, without reading the word of God, so as to inform your selves thereby in his Mind, and quicken you to your Duties, without praying with such a composedness of Spirit and affectionateness of Soul, as the nature of that Duty and your own Cases call for? Do you

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at all delight in serious religious spiritual Discourse? Or, do you make any enquiries for your sound Instruction and safe guidance in the way to Blessedness, and for your assistance towards Salvation? May you not easily convince your selves from these and the like Instances that you do not heartily concern your selves for, but are indeed regardless of the Salvation of your Souls? And, will you obstinately continue so?

O! how extreamly dangerous is your Estate! How justly are you to be reproved, seeing you have pass'd over so much of your time in a neglect of that which should have been most deeply Imprinted on your Hearts, and should have had the most powerful influence on your whole Practice! Your guilt is exceeding great, and you are absolutely without Excuse. You act against all the principles of Reason, and dictates of common Prudence. You run counter to your own Profession. You tear in pieces your most solemn and sacred Vows. You cast contempt upon God himself, and affront, scorn, and testify your spitefulness against the very Commiseration and Love, the Bowels and Blood of his only Begotten Son. Instead of reaping advantage from the Death of Christ, you do your utmost

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to Crucifie him afresh. You do what you are able to put him to open Shame. You manifestly judge and declare your selves unworthy of Eternal Life. You destroy your own Hopes, and render the Patience and Mercy of God (other Peoples principal Support and Comfort on all occasions) unconceivably Terrible and Frightful to your selves. You forfeit what you pursue, and you turn your present Possessions, into real Curses: And when you Perish everlastingly, you will have and inherit your own Choice. You must expect your Condemnation will be much more aggravated than other Peoples. How little a while can you enjoy the Riches, Pleasures and Vanities, you prefer above your Souls, and their Salvation? And whether do you think you can fly for help and comfort, when God and Christ shall abandon you to the insuperable lashes and accusations of your own guilty Consciences? And to the never fading, but incomprehensible Torments of a Damned State.

You profess you believe there is such a blessed and glorious Estate to be obtained, as that is which the word of God doth give an account of: But you do not heartily believe what you would have the World believe you do. For were you really and

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fully perswaded of the truth, certainty and excellency of what God hath promised to the Faithful and Obedient, you would concern your selves in good earnest, to get an interest in, and right unto the same. If you had a strong and firm perswasion of those things you would be thoroughly perswaded, that the way God hath prescribed, is not only suitable, but absolutely necessary. You would be reconciled to follow that course of Life, he hath ordained for them to walk in, who shall inherit them. People do constantly act according to the predominancy of their Perswasion and Belief. Lord! What Multitudes who profess the Christian Faith, are ruined by a secret, but predominant Unbelief! It is an evil Heart of Unbelief, that makes to depart from the living God, *Heb. 3. 12.*

You behave your selves in this Matter as if you were quite void of Reason. You are thoughtful enough in all other cases, pretend to be prudent, will think and consider, ponder and project how to manage your little Half-penny Affairs to your utmost Advantage, and would not by any means give People occasion to suspect you inconsiderate and weak, silly and indiscreet in ordering your Worldly Business. But as to what concerns your Souls and Eternity; you

you live at random, as if these things were of no moment to you. Whereas, if you did but deliberately weigh your Actions *in the Ballance of the Sanctuary*, consider what you have done, and what you are about to do, and whether your Practices are consistent with, or have any relation to Salvation, it would be next to impossible that you should continue so unmindful of, and persist in a course of Practice so plainly contradictory and fatal to your highest Interests. Did you seriously consider on your ways, you would soon perceive invincible Reasons why you should presently alter your course, and betake your selves to a faithful and diligent observing of the Divine Testimonies, *Psal. 119. 59.* An irreparable miscarriage, admits of no Excuse; yea, is horribly aggravated, when it appears to be the pure effect of voluntary Inconsideration. How exceedingly will it encrease and heighten the torments of Damnation, when a Man shall be necessitated to accuse himself, that he never considered what he did, nor would not think what he was to do, that he might be Saved?

What a groundless Confidence and desperate Presumption do you please your selves with, if you provide your selves other claims to Salvation, than God will approve

of? How come you to have reason to think you have enough to plead for your admission into the Kingdom of God, because you enjoy outward Privileges, and partake of Gospel Ordinances, whilst you cast off all care, that these may have their proper effects on your Hearts and Lives, seeing our Saviour, Lord and Judge hath expressly said, *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name have 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. 7. 22, 23. Can a grosser Dotage be imagined, than for People to live presumptuously in evil Courses, and yet buoy up themselves with confident hopes of making amends for their transgressing of God's Laws, and of providing themselves a safe passage to Heaven, when they can tarry no longer upon Earth, by ways of their own, or other Peoples devising? This was an Imposture which prevailed amongst the Pharisees of Old; it does obtain amongst the Superstitious in these days; it is the principal Fancy, which supports the rude, immoderate and unreasonable Heat, People manifest for those matters, of which we read not one Syllable in any of the Divine Oracles.

Oracles. O! the senseless delusions with which Multitudes willingly suffer themselves to be cheated! and this in a Business of the greatest Consequence imaginable! With what ease and readiness do men of ill Lives reconcile themselves to confident hopes of Salvation, persuading themselves, that by a few new-devised ways of Corporal Mortifications, and empty Abstinencies, some ritual Observances, or at most a pecuniary Indulgence, they shall make a very good Comutation for all their Immoralities, and purchase an easie Passport unto Glory?

Sirs! What reason can you alledge for your entertaining and hardning yourselves in your vicious Courses with Diabolical suggestions? Why do you suffer your selves to be so tamely imposed on, by your grand Adversary the Devil? He does all he can to lead his Captives on smoothly, and without any suspicion, to that remediless Perdition, where he designs they should be everlastingly Lodged. When you please yourselves that such seriousness of Spirit, such holiness of Life, such circumspect Walking as the faithful Ministers of the Gospel insist on, and commend to People, is not necessary to your being Saved: Is it not the Devil who doth furnish you with these Insinuations? When you plead the Goodness and

Mercy of God in express contradiction to the whole tenor of his Word. Whence doth this illusion arise but from your Minds being darkened with the Vapours and Steams which ascend from the Bottomless Pit? Why will you so affront God, and abuse his most Divine Excellencies, to disguise the infernal Treachery of the Father of Lies, and great destroyer of Souls? Who but your most mischievous Enemy can prompt you thus to pervert the Declarations of God's Goodness, to defeat the main intentment of the riches of his Grace? Can you exercise your Reason, can you Meditate and think in any degree, and yet believe you shall be able to vindicate your tenacious adhering to a Notion which Cancels all the Authority of God's Commands, dejects him of his Truth and Faithfulness, and transforms his whole Revelation into a plain piece of Falshood and Imposture?

How wretchedly does Satan infatuate and besool you, when he perswades you to put off your concerning your selves for the Salvation of your Souls, to *a more convenient Season*? And prevails with you to stifle, efface and vanquish your present Convictions, by pretending you may do it with *a better Grace* hereafter; and that a riper and more mature Age, will be much more proper

per for, and agreeable to so Austere and Grave a Business? Whom do you gratifie in neglecting to mind your Salvation, but your worst and most mischievous Enemy? And will you humor him, when you cannot do it any other way, than by running the most Dismal Risk, and rendring your Salvation at least next to Impossible? Can any time be so convenient for this Work, as the present, seeing the present is the only Season you can call your own? Seeing you are not sure of more time to mind it in? Seeing the present Season is the only time, wherein you can truly hope to attend it with good Success? Are you so destitute of Reason and good Sense, as not to perceive that if you allow Satan to have such an ascendent over you, as to wheedle you at this rate, he will drill you on so long, you will have no time at last to concern your selves for the Salvation of your Souls, to any purpose?

Sirs, what do you mean? What is your Purpose? What are you resolved on? Sure you will not say, you fully determin to destroy those precious Souls you are entrusted with, and make an Experiment, how much your abusing Divine Patience, contemning infinite Mercy, and despising the Riches of God's Grace, will add to the

Horror and Anguish of the Damned. Oh! that you would seriously consider of Matters, and *shew your selves Men*, yea, shew your selves what according to your Profession you should be, *Christians*, before the door of Hope be quite shut; whilst there remains a possibility of escaping that Vengeance, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries! Do you think you are able to contend with the Almighty? Are you equal Matches for that God, who is a Consuming Fire? Can you with calm and serene Minds, dwell with Everlasting Burnings? Alas! how soon may God begin to write against you Bitter things? How soon can he throw your Consciences into Convulsions, and wound your Souls, by causing the Invenomed Darts of his Fury to stick fast in them? In what a case will you be, *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking vengeance on them who know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the power of his Glory,* 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9, What will you do, when the Great and terrible day of the Lord shall come? Whether will you then fly? How will you then be able to appear before, and look your incensed Judge

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in the Face? What will you then plead for your selves? Where do you think to hide your selves? Rocks and Mountains cannot then conceal you! What can screen you from irresistible Power? How do you think you shall escape the effects of Impartial Justice? *Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver,* Psal. 50. 22.

But alas! how difficultly are such People brought to consider the things which belong to their Peace? What multitudes are there every where who have so habituated themselves to neglect their Salvation, and to those courses which have the plainest tendency to ruin their Souls Everlastingly; they have hardned themselves against all Reproof; whose Consciences are so canteriz'd, or seared, they can hear the most dreadful threatnings Recorded in the Word of God, and their Hearts not be moved or affected at all with them? yea, in express defiance of those Menaces, can Bless themselves in their Iniquities. What so strange and so amazing! as that People should be in so forlorn a State, and yet will not be prevailed with by any means to take notice of it! They are sensible of Hunger, Cold, Sicknes, any Corporal wants and pains, of troublesome Times, worldly Losses, un-

reasonable Weather, &c. But have no sense of their spiritual Wants, and the great danger their Souls are in. Tho they are under the wrath of God, stand on the very brink of Hell, and are not certain of being one Hour out of unquenchable Flames, yet they are altogether unconcerned, can Eat and Drink and Sleep, and follow their Sports, and worldly Business with Eagerness, as if they were in no danger, nor had any reason at all to be afraid. *There is a way that seemeth right unto a Man, but the end thereof are the ways of Death*, Prov. 14. 12. O that the carnally secure and presumptuous would ponder, believe, and faithfully apply this Scripture to themselves! I do not only pity multitudes of ignorant poor People, who mind nothing but a present Livelyhood, but a great many who live in pomp, have huge worldly Possessions, do fair Deliciously every day, bestow the most of their thoughts, and the greatest portions of their time, and their Wealth, upon their Bodies, which must in a little time be laid in the Grave, and at last, (unless they come to be of another Mind, and to alter their course in due time before they Die) together with their miserable, guilty, neglected Souls, be Tormented in Hell Fire for ever.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, It is very fit and meet, that every one should make a serious, strict and impartial Enquiry into himself, whether he has been duly concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul, or have hitherto been regardless of, and neglected this most necessary and important Business? Let us speedily set apart some portion of our time for this Work, and employ our calmest and most penetrating Thoughts in searching out the State and Condition of our Souls. In considering what we have been doing? Whether we are going? What will become of us, if we should presently be Summoned to appear before God's Tribunal? Whither we must be Sentenced to that unquenchable Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels, or to dwell with Christ in Glory? Whether we shall see the Face of God with Comfort and Joy, or have our Souls filled with Astonishment and Confusion? Whether we shall hear those joyful Words, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant*, or that terrible Thunder, *Depart thou Cursed, I know thee not thou wicked doer*? It doth behove us to enquire seriously, and to get speedily a sound knowledge of the Estate of our Souls, lest Death and Hell should surprize us; Death and Judgment are hastning a pace, and it will be too late

to think of amending what is amiss, and flying from Wrath, if we leave this World in an unreconciled Estate. Yet you have time and means, and encouragements and helps to discover the Truth of your Condition; yet you may prevent your eternal Misery, if you have been unconcerned for your Souls; yet you may escape the Punishments you have deserved, if you be truly sensible of your Sin, Guilt and danger, do humbly betake you unto Christ, reform your Lives, close with the offers of Mercy, and lay hold of the Grace which is tendered.

You will say (it may be) you hope well, and you trust that all will end well. But I pray you, what ground have you for that Hope and Trust? Groundless Hope will not Save you. Such Hope is but Presumption, it hath ruin'd Thousands and Millions. Examine yourselves therefore impartially, search out what your Estate is, bring this matter to a full determinate Issue. Awake careless drowsie Soul! please not thyself with foolish Dreams any longer! Lord of all Grace and Might! pour down thy gracious Influences! awake our drowsie, sleepy, senseless Consciences, make us to attend to, and obey the word of Exhortation!

Hearken

Hearken every one, listen to Advice, and improve the present Opportunity: Know that you are called on, exhorted and warned, and if you continue finally sturdy and disobedient, you will be without Excuse. If you Perish, your Blood will be required at your own Hands. Your Damnation will lye wholly upon your selves. Consider therefore,

1. If you have been unconcerned all your time for your Souls and their Salvation, and are under the power of Sin and your Lusts, and in an unreconciled Estate, you are in a very evil and dangerous Estate. You have been pulling down insupportable loads of Wrath upon your selves. If you persist and die in this Estate, it will be impossible for any thing to interpose and screen you from the terrible strokes of divine Vengeance, or to support and bear you up, under that mighty weight of Horror and Torment you have been hailing upon your Selves. What trembling of Heart, failing of Eyes, and sorrow of Soul will then seize on you? Is this an estate to be desired? Is this an Estate to sleep and slumber and repose your selves quietly in?

2. This was your Estate once. We are all naturally concluded under Sin and Guilt. *Children of Wrath, dead in Trespasses and Sins;* without

without Holiness, unconcerned for our Souls, Enemies to God, and obnoxious unto his Displeasure. And every Man continues in this evil Estate, till he is effectually Regenerated, and doth heartily entertain the *word of Reconciliation*, by and through Jesus Christ. Till a real, spiritual, gracious Change is wrought in him, he is an Enemy to God, is actually provoking of God, and treasuring up Wrath for himself against that Great Day, when the Disobedient and Unbelieving, and those who are unconcerned for their precious Souls, must be Destroyed, with an utter and an everlasting Destruction. Those who are now in the holiest and happiest Estate, were once in this Guilty and wretched Estate. *Such were some of you, &c. 1 Cor. 6. 11. We our selves were sometime foolish disobedient, serving divers Lusts, &c. Tit. 3. 3.*

3. You have too just ground to suspect and fear you are in this dreadful Estate, till you make a faithful enquiry into your Estate. You cannot ordinarily have a sound knowledge, that your Souls are in a good condition, without reflecting upon your selves, and descending to a strict and faithful Examination. If you entertain an opinion that all is well and safe, as to your Souls, you have no occasion to take any comfort

comfort in that Opinion, because you have no ground or reason for it, which you know of. It may be meer *Diabolical Delusion* for any thing you know to the contrary, having never duly enquired into the Matter. Yea,

4. The more secure and confident you are, having never made a thorough enquiry into the State of your Souls, the more sad and dangerous your Estate is. For this argues you have sinned your selves out of a sense of all your spiritual and eternal Concernments; and that you have so entirely committed your selves to Satan's Conduct, as to rely on his Word for your Safety and Happiness. 'Tis his Interest to do what he can to support and heighten your Presumption, and to prevent your being prevailed with to search seriously into your Estate. He would deceive but few, did he not flatter them with hopes of Heaven at last. Could you see from one end and side of Hell, to the other, what a dreadful Spectacle would you behold? And amongst those enumerable multitudes of Damned Wretches which have gone thither in every Age of the World; how few would you see in comparison of those who were secure, confident, self-deluding Sinners when they were on Earth? Who went thither Blindfold,

Blindfold, refusing to search into their Estate, and consider whether they were going? Who were resolved to Believe well, and Hope well, (as they phras'd it) of themselves, without ever examining their Spiritual Estate, in defiance of all Warnings and Exhortations that could be administered unto them? What a deplorable thing is it, to consider how People do at Satan's instigation, harden themselves against Fear, and all Consideration, so that they will not suspect they may be in the way to Hell, till they do irrecoverably drop into it? And,

5. In what a fearful Estate wilt thou be, who obstinately refusest to consider what thy condition really is, if at last thou be found an unreconciled Sinner, utterly unconcerned for the Salvation of thy Soul? If this be thy case when Death hath seized thee, thou must presently sink into unquenchable Flames. And then what a miserable helpless Wretch wilt thou be for ever? What a dreadful thing will it be to be scared and rasted out of thy Spiritual Slumber and Sleep, by the actual Pains and Agonies of Damnation? Should a Man Sleeping at his own home, be a little moved with the cry of *Fire, Fire!* but without enquiring whether his Dwelling-place were

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in Danger, should compose himself again for Sleep, and not awake, till rasted out of his Sleep by the scorching heat and vehement noise of the Fire burning down his own House, and should he as soon as his Eyes are open, behold his Bed and all his Room in Flames, how gastly would he look, being thus affrighted out of his Sleep, and seeing no way to escape those devouring Flames, which have seized on every part of his Room? What loud Outcries, and dreadful Schrieks would he utter? How deplorable should we conceive his condition, should we see his gastly Looks, and hear his Roarings, and his mournful Groans, whilst Burning and Roasting in the Flames of his own House, not able to fly from that scorching Fire, nor any able to come near to help him, because compassed in by those furious and merciless Flames? If this would be so full of Terror to that miserable unfortunate dying Person, and would fill the Beholders with most affectionate Trouble and Grief, what must the Dread and Horror of that Sinner be, who sleeping securely in his Sins, will take no warning, but at last is rasted out of his Sleep by the Flames of Hell, and finds himself as soon as ever he awakes, in unquenchable Burnings, and his Estate becomes one dreadful Schriek, continued

nued (if I may so phrase it) to the utmost length of Eternity ?

6. Remember, we must every one be concerned for our own Salvation, and we must every one try our selves, and examin our own Estate ; for none can do these things effectually for us without our concurrence, and we must every one answer before God for our selves, and be Saved or Damned in our own Persons. Others may advise and counsel us, give rules and directions to assist us in the Work, but they cannot peremptorily determin the Case, for our Hearts may be false and rotten, and corrupt, prophane, hypocritical and proud, when we are performing the outward parts of Duties ; yea, when we perform them to the great liking and admiration of others. If it appear at last that we have been unconcerned for our Souls, and died impenitently in our Sins, who shall answer for us ? Will any one take off the blame from us ? Alas ! we must answer for our selves, and bear our own Sins. Witnesses and Accusers there will be enough against us, but not one Advocate. Not one of all those Multitudes who follow some wicked Mens CorpSES to the Grave, either can or dares go along with the Soul to God's Tribunal, to plead for and answer God on its behalf.

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If thou art wicked and unconcerned for thy own Salvation, and diest Impenitent, no other Person will go to Hell in thy stead, but thou must bear thy own guilt, perish, and be Damned and Tormented everlastingly in thy own Person. Search therefore speedily into your Estate, and leave not Matters of such weight, to all Adventures, and at Uncertainties. Let us be prevailed with to set about this work in all sincerity, and without delay, that we may every one be acquainted with our own Estate, and learn how we are to manage and behave our selves for the future, and what course we are to apply our selves unto further, in order to our everlasting Wellfare,

Some of you have past over a great many Years, and have no reason to expect that you should live many more. Now, if you have been regardless of your Souls, and have hitherto neglected to examin your Estate, how ought you to be troubled for so great faults ? What Sins might you have avoided ? What Good might you have done ? What Comfort might you have treasur'd up for your selves, had you begun and faithfully gone through this Enquiry some Years ago ? Take heed of continuing your Neglect ; refuse not to comply with this present Entreaty, lest God should give you over in Judgment,

Judgment, and you should be hardened and sealed to a most just and dreadful Condemnation. Why will you refuse and sin against your own Mercies? Why will you bring your own *Gray Hairs to the Grave with Sorrow*? Why will you pierce your own Hearts thorough with Sorrow? Why will you ruin and destroy your own selves? Is it not yet high time for you to know and understand what you have been doing? Whom you have been serving? And what is like to become of you for ever?

And you who are not so much stricken in years, even the youngest of you, who are come to years of Discretion, it behoves you to be very inquisitive about the State of your Souls. What Consternation and Amazement will seize you, if you should be cut off in the midst of your Years, and then eternally upbraid your selves with having spent the best of your Years, and the choicest of your Strength, yea, your whole time in a way of Hostility and War against God? You have no more assurance of time than the oldest Man has; and if you die in the flower of your Age, in an un-reconciled Estate, wholly unconcerned for the salvation of your Souls, you must as infallibly be Sentenced unto Hell, as the oldest and most overgrown Sinner in the World.

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The infernal Flames will prey as violently on you who are thrown into them in your greener Age, as they will on those who are cast into them in their decayed and withered Age. A strong Fire burns the greenest Log, as well as the driest, tho the green may make a little more noise for a while. Whatever your outward State and Circumstances may be in this World, be you Rich or Poor, High or Low, Learned or Unlearned, Master or Servant, you are equally concerned in this Business. He that lives and dies in an un-regenerate Estate, wholly regardless of, and unconcerned for his Salvation, will lose his Soul, his whole self, and what hath any Man More? Or, if he have, What is all the World to one who is Damned, and in Eternal Torments?

Good Lord, open the Hearts of Sinners now, that they may entertain Advice! And so improve what hath been said, that it may produce some good Effect! Let not every one continue in a groundless Soul-destroying Presumption! Let not Satan triumph, that he carries all away headlong and unconcernedly unto Hell, in defiance of all perswasion to Consideration and Enquiry! Lord, let not the Exhortation be wholly lost! but cause some one Self-deluding

ding Wretch to be awakened, and brought to a right Mind!

Friend! what dost thou intend to do? Wilt thou stubbornly shut thy Eyes and slumber, till Vengeance doth actually seize on thee? Till infinite Wrath come upon thee and surround thee, so that there shall be no escaping? Canst thou be contented to be reproached by multitudes of forlorn undone Souls, that thou art the *Monster* that would'st not hearken and consider, but would'st voluntarily Damn thy Self, in opposition to all Perswasion? Search and try thy self now at last, and take heed lest there be in thee a Root that beareth Gall and Wormwood, and do not whilst thou hearest these words, *Bless thy self in thy Heart, saying, I shall have Peace, tho I walk in the I-magination of my Heart, to add Drunkenness to Thirst*, Deut. 29. 18, &c. Know thou who ever thou art, the Lord will not spare thee, but the Anger of the Lord and his Jealousie shall smoke against thee, and all the Curses that are written in his Book, shall lye upon thee; the Lord shall separate thee unto Evil, according to all the Curses of the Covenant, that are written in his Book.

Sirs, have some pity upon your selves! What hurt have your precious Souls ever done you, that you should thus neglect and

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cast them out of your thoughts, that you should revenge your selves on them in this manner? How can you think to escape, if you still neglect this Enquiry? What will you say for your selves at the Great Day of the Lord? Sure you will not pretend you were never warned, or perswaded. And would not those Powers and Faculties you employ in examining other matters, serve you to much better purpose on this account? And hath not God given you a Rule, and set you down Marks and Characters, by comparing your selves with which, you may acquire a distinct and true knowledge of your Estate? Do not your Bibles tell you very plainly, what sorts of People will be shut out of the Kingdom? And how should you know, whether you be or be not of those numbers, if you refuse to examine and make a true judgment of your selves? Presume what you please of your selves, God cannot be deceived, nor will he be mocked. Death and Judgment will in due time fully discover the truth of your State, both to your selves, and to all the World. Can you imagin that this Enquiry should do you any prejudice? If you have been, and are duly concerned for your Salvation, nothing can fill you with a greater and such rational Joy and Comfort, than to perceive

perceive this attested upon a just Search, by the word of God; and that an eternal and glorious Inheritance is made sure to you, by the promise of that God who cannot lye. Whereas a neglect of this Enquiry must needs deprive you of the best and greatest comfort of your Lives. If you have been and still are unconcerned for your Salvation, nothing can more mischievously hinder your recovery out of that dangerous Estate you are in, than your refusing to try and examin your selves. Make no delay therefore, but presently betake your selves to what you are perswaded unto. O! that you would be so kind to me, to grant me this one request! I beg it of you for your own Sakes! I have no Interest to serve by it but your own, that you may presently escape out of the snares of the Devil, and be safe from eternal Agonies, that you may not walk any longer in the Broad Road, which ends in Hell, and irreparable Destruction, but may live in Peace and Comfort here, and Reign with Christ in Glory for ever.

Reason then and argue with your selves about this Matter. Cannot you discourse thus with your selves? How terrible and dreadful a thing will it be, to be found at last a neglecter of Salvation, one who hath been

been all his Life unconcerned for his Soul! To have God and Christ Enemies, when I must appear before their Tribunal! He that commanded me into Being and Life, can with a word speak me into Eternal Misery! The Holy God, I must needs acknowledge, loves Holiness, and cannot but hate Iniquity. He will in his Righteous Judgment, infallibly make a difference betwixt People. He will assuredly separate the Holy from the Vile. *Then shall the Righteous be discerned from the Wicked, and he that serveth God, from him that serveth him not,* Mal. 3. 17, 18. I am at present undoubtedly of one of these Ranks. And doth it not much concern me to understand what my Estate is? Careless negligent Wretch! in omitting an enquiry of such Importance so long! The time past shall suffice, to have lived in so supine and unthoughtful a manner! My Eyes shall not Sleep, nor will I give slumber to my Eye-lids, till I have made a diligent Enquiry, and do know what the Word of the Lord doth say of, and to me! I dare not lye down to Sleep, till I have examined my Estate! till, if it appear I have been unconcerned hitherto for my Soul and its Salvation; I have sued heartily for Pardon and Peace through the Blood

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of Christ! lest I should sleep the Sleep of Death! lest Destruction should surprize me! And I should awake in those Flames which will never be quenched! Be gone all Excuses, for I have no Business so necessary to be attended to, as this! I am not at leisure to follow any Sports, or to mind Wealth, or Honors, yea, or the Necessaries of this present Life, whilst I am Ignorant of the State of my Soul, and know not whether I have been duly concerned, that my Salvation may be made sure! I will not any longer venture Eternity upon Uncertainties! Now I have been called on, and exhorted to apply my self to this Examination! Should I refuse to comply, God may justly suffer me to be hardened in my Sins. I may never have the like opportunity again! Tho I should find I have hitherto been unconcerned for the happiness of my Soul, yet eternal Misery may be prevented! There yet remains place for Repentance! and some ground to hope that I may find favour with the Lord! Therefore I am resolved, nothing shall divert me from going through with this Work. Lord! powerfully fix my Resolution! Keep my Mind and Heart intent on this Business, and give me the gracious assistance of thy holy

holy and powerful Spirit, to guide and carry me with success thorough it!

Sixthly, You who have been careless of your Souls, and their Salvation, till this time, should now be prevailed with to concern your selves with all seriousness and earnestness, that they may be secured. Could I set forth a miserable Estate before you, in the most doleful Strains, and with the fullest account of aggravating Circumstances imaginable, I should not declare the thousandth part of your Wretchedness. The Groans and Sobs of the Damned, manifest they cannot speak what they feel; their Shrieks and Clamours are but broken Relations of the Horrors and Pains they sink under. And you are obnoxious to all that Wrath which doth so terrifie and overwhelm them. If you still continue secure, and cannot bemoan your selves, nor cry heartily for Pity and Mercy, your Danger encreases. Did you understand what you are doing, what Vengeance you are treasuring up for your selves; whom you are Offending; what Souls you are Murthering; what a glorious, holy, powerful, just God you are Provoking, what a Change would soon appear in you? You would look upon all your Enjoyments as nothing

worth; you would look upon the Pleasures, Riches and Honors of this World, as insipid useless things. The whole World would be no more to you than a Prison, or Dungeon, in which you are reserved till the Sentence of Wrath is to be Executed on you. *The wicked is reserved to the day of Destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of Wrath, Job 21. 30.* Were you sensible what Love you despise; what Salvation you neglect; what Mercy you trample under your Feet; what Grace you reject; what Patience and Goodness you abuse, and what great things you might lay hold on, what Inheritances you might obtain, what Glory you may be assured of, if you would but consider things aright, and approve your selves truly Wise; what an alteration would soon appear in your Carriage and Conduct? You will in a little time be convinced fully of the truth of all this. When Death hath executed its Commission against you, and your Souls are dragg'd into another World, continue Infidels if you can. When you have drank a few draughts more, spent a little time more in your Sports and Games, slept a few Nights, drudg'd and toil'd a few days more, you will see and know, and be convinced of these things in another manner.

ner. Then you will have no need of such Ministers to tell you of them, whose warnings you can now slight, whose Exhortations and Counsel you can now reject with Scorn and Contempt. For then you will hear the Sentence of Condemnation from One, the Glory of whose appearing, you will not be able to endure, whose Presence will grieve and terrifie you.

But your case is not yet quite Desperate. If you will now concern your selves heartily for your Souls, and apply yourselves in good earnest, to make their Salvation sure, there is some ground for Hope, Mercy may yet be had. The Scepter of Grace is still held forth. Your endless Misery may yet be prevented. You may yet be made Holy and Gracious, behold God's reconciled Face, and inherit incomprehensible Glory and Blessedness. Nothing will hinder but your wilfulness, your resolved continuing unconcerned for these things. What Mercy is it that God will yet be favourable, notwithstanding thou hast at this time been unconcerned and stubborn in thy Enmity? Will yet, if thou turn sincerely, pardon and blot out all is past? Will receive and honor, love and eternally glorifie thee? Who would not seek reconciliation.

ation with all his might, with such a gracious condescending, patient and merciful God? Who would go on to provoke such a God, and Damn himself in opposition to such Love, and Grace, and Mercy! What acceptance wouldst thou find with God? What good wouldst thou do thy self? What Happiness wouldst thou treasure up for thy self to all future Generations? What Joy wouldst thou occasion in Heaven, wouldst thou now be prevailed with to come out of thy miserable sinful State, and to concern thy self as thou oughtest for thy Soul, and its endless wellfare? Peruse carefully these following Scriptures, *Luke 15. 7. and 10, and 20, &c. Isa. 55. 7. 2 Cor. 6. 2.*

Take heed you do not prevent all this to encourage your selves to continue in your unconcernedness for your Salvation. For if instead of complying with Calls and Entreaties to accept of, and close with the offers of Mercy God is pleased to make you, you stubbornly refuse to hearken, to yea, abuse them, to harden and embolden your selves in your Sins, your condition will become exceeding Dreadful, yea, quite hopeless, according to that account the holy Scriptures give of People under such Circumstances; as you may evidently see, if

if you please to turn to, and read the following places in your Bibles, *Prov. 1. 24. &c. Prov. 29. 1. Heb. 12. 17. Luke 19. 42.* Yea, remember this will render your State in Hell terrible and tormenting to the highest degree. In what boisterous Waves of inflamed Wrath shall those Persons be roll'd and tost, who affectedly persist in their Enmity against God, and contempt of the riches of his Grace! Why should you be curious to secure to your selves the utmost efforts of Divine Displeasure? How sad must your estate be if after you have enjoyed the Gospel, and been earnestly persuaded to concern your selves in good earnest for your Salvation, you should perish and reap no advantage from all that Christ hath done, suffered and purchased for repenting, reforming Sinners? What a terrible day will the day of Christ's appearing be to you, if after all your coming to Church, hearing Prayers and Sermons, and partaking of Sacraments, you remain stubborn and untractable, sensual and worldly in your Minds, loose, carnal and vicious in your Lives?

Be entreated, dearly Beloved, to lay these seriously to Heart, and forthwith to make a good improvement of them. Please not

your selves with purposes of taking them into consideration hereafter, lest Satan prove too subtle for you, and carry you away securely to his own Appartments, full fraught with seemingly pious resolves. What multitudes have cried out for Mercy, when it hath been too late! *Mat 25. 11. 12.*

If you are now willing to do what it behoves you to do, that you may secure the Salvation of your Souls, observe and follow these few Directions.

First, Set your selves to a serious thorough consideration of your present Estate. Weigh and insist on this till you are fully convinced, your present State is such, you cannot with any safety continue in it; and do firmly resolve to alter your Course; press your danger and guilt upon your selves, till your Souls and Consciences are mightily affected with your present Circumstances, and you become in some measure sensible how much more desirable their Condition is than yours, who have heartily concerned themselves to secure the Salvation of their Souls. In other cases, we think it a mighty blemish, to give occasion for others to repute us inconsiderate and rash. And sure nothing better deserves our best, our most mature and vivid thoughts than this Matter,

ter, because it doth so nearly concern us. Can we expect prudently to avoid our Danger, and amend our Mistakes, whilst either ignorant of, or unaffected with them? Serious consideration is a proper, if not the only preparatory expedient to bring us to a right Mind, to furnish us with a just Notion and becoming Sense of those things, which are of eminent Importance, and to dispose us to rectifie past Errors and Defaults. When the Prodigal came to himself, and considered the evil and dangerous case he was in, and how much better the very Servants in his Fathers Family were provided for than he was, he presently resolves to go thither, *Luke 15. 17, 18. Psal. 119. 59, 60.* Set thy self as in God's Presence, call thy self to account, and revive the remembrance of thy past Carriages. Call to mind how God hath expressly declared such or such Affections of Soul, Specche Actions, to be detestable abominable Sins, and hath declared from Heaven his Wrath against them, in such or such places of his holy Word. And then apply the same particularly and with all vehemency of affection and faithfulness to thy self, till thou feelest the power and efficacy of them in thy own Spirit and Conscience. Is this my Estate?

Doth the word of God speak nothing but Terror and Indignation against me, whilst I continue in this condition? Is the infinitely, holy, powerful just God my Enemy? O wretched Creature that I am! What shall I do! Is this an Estate to be rested in! What is all the World, and all it can afford to me, if God should pour forth the Vials of his Anger upon me! If I must pass from the applause and favour of Men, from Houses, Lands and Friends, to dwell with everlasting Burnings! and be a Companion with Devils for ever! O how happy are they who have been wise for their Souls! who can look with comfort into the Holy Scriptures! and read over all those Passages with Satisfaction, which Terrifie me, and are as so many Arrows sticking fast in my Soul! What a Fool have I been all my time! What Mercy and rich Grace must be discovered, if ever I escape Damnation! I cannot escape it, if I continue in this Estate! A great Change must be wrought in me. I must be made a new Creature, I must lead a new Life! And by God's Grace so I will! Blessed be the Lord, that he hath given me any sight of my Danger! That he hath brought me to consider, before my condition is absolutely past remedy!

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O what Trouble and Sorrow, have I been heaping on my self! How bitter and gnawing now are all the things I count pleasant! How vile and contemptible are all the things for which I ventured my precious Soul! There is nothing now can relieve and do me good, nothing I can account precious, but an Interest in Jesus Christ, and pardoning Love through him! O the Confusion I am in! But I wish not that it were with me as in times past! That my vain Presumption, stupidity and insensibleness might again return! No, but O that I had sooner seen my Danger! and sooner began my Retreat! Here I lye on the very brink of Hell! Had I made one step further, I might have been among the Damned! and yet I scarce know which way to turn! O the proficiency others have made in the way to Heaven, who had no more time, nor outward Calls and Means than I had! O the peace and comfort they have! the Sweets with which their Souls are feasted! O that I might love the Lord Christ in sincerity! have an interest in his Merits! a right to his precious Promises! and that I may dutifully acknowledge his Authority! walk in his Laws! and know by experience what joy is to be found in Believing!

Believing! Well, by Divine Assistance, I will up and be doing! I will not loyter any longer! I now cast away with abhorrence, and lay aside every weight, and the Sin that hath so easily beset me! Lord, do thou enlarge my Heart, and I will run the way of thy Commandments! May I ever have my eye fixed on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of a Believer's Faith! To thee holy Jesus I flee for Refuge! Help me to lay hold on the Hope thou hast set before me!

Secondly, Humble your selves deeply before the Lord, and offer unto him fervent earnest Supplications and Prayers, to commiserate and deliver you. No help can come but from Heaven, and it must be fetched thence by hearty affectionate Cries and Entreaties. Lay your selves therefore low before the Lord; acknowledge your Sins with Godly Sorrow and Grief: Repent before him your sad Estate; the aggravating Circumstances of your Guilt, your Fears, your Guilt, the dreadful Curses which hang over you; how sensible you are of his Displeasure against Sin, that you are not able to bear his Wrath, and that nothing but Free-Grace can save and preserve you. Justifie God in all his Laws, and in all his Threats, and in his executing of them. Confess heartily thou art a Monument

Monument of his Patience. Break forth into affectionate Admirations, that he hath born with thee so long, whereas, he might have caused his Vengeance to have overtaken thee long ago. And then with strong Cries, and Tears too, if thou canst beseech him for his Mercy sake, his name sake, the Son of his love sake, to pity, Pardon, help and sanctifie thee. Consider what encouragement thou hast from these and the like Scriptures, *Psal.* 145. 18, 19. *Psal.* 32. 5, 6. *Psal.* 50. 15. *Matt.* 7. 7, &c.

Lord, thou art Great, Holy, Just and Powerful, none can set himself against thee and Prosper! Thy purity and holiness is such, thou canst not behold the least Iniquity with Approbation! Thou hast declared thy Wrath against every Sin! And in particular hast revealed thy Indignation against this, and that, and the other Wickedness; and that thou wilt terribly avenge thy self of such Adversaries as live impenitently in them! Lord, I am the vile Wretch who have been guilty of these Transgressions! I have lived a great while in them, and have often repeated these acts of Hostility against thee! O my Misery, my Guilt, my Wretchedness! Whither shall I go? What shall I do? I cannot flee from thy

thy Presence! Where ever I am, thy Arm can reach me! I cannot bear thy Frowns! thy Terrors make me afraid! Damnation and Hell are the least I have deserved! O the Light, the Love, the Means I have sinned against! I have nothing to say for my self! who shall plead for me! Methinks I am now sinking! Hell appears ready to swallow me up! Just and Righteous art thou O God! No punishments are too great for so wicked, so ungrateful, so vile and obstinate a Wretch as I am! In the very midst of my Fears and Anguish, I cannot but wonder that the Sentence of Condemnation is not already pronounced against, and executed on me! O what long-suffering goodness hast thou manifested towards me, the worst and greatest of Sinners! Blessed be thy Name for thy Long-suffering Patience towards me! Whither shall I now turn! Will the holy God have Mercy on such a desperate Sinner! To whom shall I go in these Straits! Creatures cannot help me! My Lusts and Sins have brought all this Misery upon me! All will fail me, unless the Lord will be pleased to look down in Mercy upon me! And it is, the Lord I have offended! How shall I go to a provoked God! Yet all my hope must be

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from him! To the Lord I will go, I will lie at his Feet! I will throw my self wholly upon his Mercy! Lord, I have heard that thou art Gracious, Long-suffering, slow to Wrath, and of great Goodness. Thou hast said so of thy self. Thou hast the words of eternal Life. There is Forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. Thou hast contrived a way for the glorifying of thy Mercy, in saving the greatest Sinners who truly repent, and turn from the evil of their doings unto thee, with all their Hearts. Lord, here behold a miserable mourning Sinner, than whom none ever stood more in need of Mercy! Extend thy wonderful Grace to me! I come to thee in thy Son's Name, I depend intirely on his Merits; I plead with thee the only gracious Promises! Sustain now a sinking Soul! I loath and abhor my self! O let thy Bowels ern over me! Tho I stand on the brink of Hell, let thy Grace prevent my falling into that Bottomless-Pit! Say unto this Soul, *Live!* May I, who deserve to houl for ever under the dreadful testimonies of thy Displeasure, be effectually delivered from Sin, Guilt and Condemnation! May I be Pardoned, made Holy, and sing forth the Praises of thy rich and abounding Grace to all Eternity! Consider

Isa. 63. 15, 16.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, If you take pains with your selves, and faithfully perform what you have been advised to already, you will easily perceive what is further necessary to be done by you, to make secure the Salvation of your Souls; and you will be disposed to urge upon your selves, and improve such Counsel as shall be offered you, and is manifestly pertinent to this purpose. I will therefore propound the other Directions you are to observe altogether, and only give you brief hints for your future Conduct, leaving you to imprint them on your own Hearts, by meditating on, and expostulating with your selves about them, till you feel they have their proper and due influence on your Souls and Lives. You must then endeavour to acquire a sound knowledge of the gracious method God hath been pleased to pitch on, for the bringing of Sinners into a State of Reconciliation and Peace with himself. You must heartily entertain the great Truths he hath revealed concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. Those which concern his Person, his Natures, and the Commission the Father hath given him. And you must sincerely close with Christ in all his Offices, depending wholly on his Merits, Intercession

cession, and Influences; submitting to his Authority, diligently following his Example, and faithfully keeping his Laws, *For there is not Salvation in any other*, Acts 4. 12. You must labour to understand distinctly the Baptismal Vow, with Understanding and Judgment, solemnly devote, consign and dedicate your selves to God, through Christ, and daily addict your selves to the conscientious performing of that Vow, as long as you Live. Therefore you must diligently read and study the Holy Scriptures, and make them the sole Rule of your Faith, your Worship, your moral Conduct, or Practice; *for they are able to make you wise unto Salvation through Faith which is in Christ Jesus*, 2 Tim. 3. 15. Read the word of God daily with a fixed Attention, and holy fervent Desires, that you may find it powerful to subdue Corruption, and bring you to a saving Acquaintance with Christ, and to nourish your Souls in all *Godliness of Living*. Attend diligently on the Ministry of the Word, and wait conscientiously on God in those Ordinances he hath instituted for the Conversion and Edification of Souls. Take heed of Customariness and Formality in these. Use them as means God hath

hath appointed for higher Ends, and be not satisfied till you really perceive they are Sanctified to you, and have such an effect on you that you do thereby grow in Knowledge, Grace, and practical Holiness. You must renounce the Society of loose and vicious People, and shun the company of those who deride and mock at Religion and Holiness, appearing in their Truth and Power, *Prov. 13. 20.* And wonderful Advantage will accrue to you, if you do ordinarily accustom your selves to cross the design of Temptations, and make an Advantage of them, to put you with greater seriousness and fervency on acting those Graces, and performing those Duties which are most opposite and contrary to the Sins, the Enemies of your Souls would draw you unto.

You who have been and are in good earnest concerned for the Salvation of your Souls, must diligently attend to what doth peculiarly belong to you, considering the State you are in. Give God the glory of that Grace he hath vouchsafed you. You were Ignorant, Blind, Foolish and Disobedient formerly, as well as others. Praise and Magnifie God with all your might, that he hath made you know and follow *after the things which belong to your Peace.* How should you bless the Lord who hath made

made you the Triumph of your Saviour's Love, whereas you might have been Monuments of his Anger? Pity, Pray for, advise do what you can to convince, awaken, and recover them, who appear altogether careless of, and unconcerned for their Salvation. Hold fast what you have received, proceed forward in the work you have begun. *Grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Watch over, and assist one another all you are able. *Heb. 3. 12, 13.* So run that ye may obtain. Persevere to the end, and let none take away your Crown, *Rev. 3. 11.*

In a word, every Man should be very much concerned for the Salvation of his own Soul. Then let us all forthwith shake off Sloth, remembering we are hastning apace towards Eternity. *Do the wicked do evil with both hands earnestly, Mic. 7. 3.* And shall we fold our Arms, and refuse to take a little pains for the obtaining of that Inheritance, which is reserved in the Heavens? We have done too much already to prejudice our Souls; now let us use all possible care and industry to recover and save them.

Sirs, I beseech you in the Bowels of Christ, and by all that should be dear and valuable

valuable to you, to concern your selves so for your Salvation, as in a little time you will certainly wish you had. What a change will Death quickly make in every one of you? O lose not Heaven and eternal Glory, for Shadows! Lose not your Souls for Trifles! Quit you now like Men. Be watchful, serious and diligent. Gird up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end. My Brethren, dearly beloved and longed for; my Joy and Crown, so stand fast in the Lord. Finally Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good Report; if there be any Vertue, if there be any Praise, think on and practice these things with all your might and affection, and with all perseverance. Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know, that your Labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

F I N I S.