

A Practical EXPOSITION ON THE CXXXth. Psalm.

WHEREIN

The Nature of the Forgiveneſs of Sin is declared, the Truth and Reality of it aſſerted;

AND

The Caſe of a Soul diſtreſſed with the Guilt of Sin, and relieved by a diſcovery of Forgiveneſs with God, is at large diſcourſed.

By *John Owen*, D. D.

John 5. 39. *Search the Scriptures.*

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Stanhope, Grenville, fine portrait by R. W[HITE], Psalm CXXX, fine portrait by R. W[HITE], 4to, original calf, rebacked, 1680 4s

To the READER.

Chriſtian Reader,

THe enſuing Expoſition and Diſcourſes are intended for the benefit of thoſe, whoſe ſpiritual ſtate and condition is repreſented in the *Pſalm* here explained. That theſe are not a few, that they are many; yea, that to ſome part or parts of it, they are all who believe, both the Scriptures and their own Experience will bear Teſtimony. Some of them it may be will inquire into, and after their own concernments as they are here declared. To be ſerviceable to their Faith, Peace, and ſpiritual conſolation, hath been the whole of my deſign. If they meet with any diſcovery of Truth, any due application of it to their conſciences, any declaration of the ſenſe and mind of the Holy Ghoſt in the Scriptures ſuitable unto their condition, and uſefull to their edification, much of my end and purpoſe is obtained. *I* know ſome there are that diſlike all diſcourſes of this nature, and look upon them with contempt and ſcorn. But why they ſhould ſo do, *I* know not, unleſs the Goſpel it ſelf, and all the myſteries of it be folly unto them. *Sin*

and *Grace* in their original cauſes, various reſpects, conſequents, and ends, are the principal ſubjects of the whole Scripture, of the whole Revelation of the Will of God to Mankind. *In* theſe do our preſent and eternal concernments lie, and from and by them hath God deſigned the great and everlaſting exaltation of his own Glory. Upon theſe do turn all the tranſactions that are between God and the ſouls of men. That it ſhould be an endeavour needleſs, or ſuperfluous, to inquire into the Will of God *about*, and our own intereſt in theſe things, who can imagine? Two ways there are whereby this may be done. Firſt, Speculatively, by a due inveſtigation of the nature of theſe things, according as their Doctrine is declared in the Scripture. An endeavour according to the mind of God herein, is juſt and commendable, and comprehenſive of moſt of the chief heads of Divinity. But this is not to be engaged in for its own ſake. The knowledg of God and ſpiritual things have this proportion unto practical Sciences, that the end of all its notions and Doctrines conſiſts in practice. Wherefore, Secondly, theſe things are to be conſidered practically, that is, as the ſouls and conſciences of men are actually concerned in them, and converſant about them. How men contract the guilt of ſin, what ſenſe they

they have, and ought to have thereof, what danger they are liable unto thereon, what perplexities and diſtreſſes their ſouls and conſciences are reduced to thereby, what courſes they fix upon for their relief, as alſo what is that Grace of God whereby alone they may be delivered, wherein it conſiſts, how it was prepared, how purchaſed, how it is propoſed, and how it may be attained; what effects and conſequents a participation of it doth produce, how in theſe things Faith and obedience unto God, dependance on him, ſubmiſſion to him, waiting for him, are to be exerciſed, is the principal work that thoſe who are called unto the diſpenſation of the Goſpel ought to enquire into themſelves, and to acquaint others withall. In the right and due management of theſe things, whether by writing, or oral inſtruction, with prudence, diligence, and zeal, doth conſiſt their principal uſefulneſs in reference unto the Glory of God, and the everlaſting welfare of the ſouls of men: And they are under a great miſtake, who ſuppoſe it an eaſie and a common matter to treat of theſe practical things uſefully, to the edification of them that do believe. Becauſe both the nature of the things themſelves, with the concerns of the ſouls and conſciences of all ſorts of Perſons in them, require that they be handled plainly; and

and without those intermixtures of secular Learning, and additions of ornaments of speech, which discourses of other natures may, or ought to be composed and set off withall; some judging by meer outward appearances, especially if they be of them from whom the true nature of the things themselves treated of are hid, are ready to despise and scorn the plain management of them, as that which hath nothing of wisdom or learning accompanying of it, no effects of any commendable ability of mind for which it should be esteemed. But it is not expressible how great a mistake such persons through their own darkness and ignorance do labour under. In a right spiritual understanding, in a due perception and comprehension of these things, the things of the sins of Men and Grace of God, consists the greatest part of that wisdom, of that soundness of mind, of that knowledge rightly so called, which the Gospel commands, exhibits, and puts a valuation upon. To reveal and declare them unto others in words of Truth and Soberness, fit and meet to express them unto the understandings of men opened and enlightned by the same spirit, by whom the things themselves are originally revealed, to derive such sacred spiritual Truths from the Word, and by a due preparation to communicate and apply them to the Souls

Souls and Consciences of men, contains a principal part of that Ministerial skill and ability which are required in the dispensers of the Gospel; and wherein a severe exercise of sound learning, judgment and care necessary to be found, and may be fully expressed. Into this Treasurie towards the Service of the House of God, it is, that I have cast my Mite in the ensuing exposition and discourses on the 130. *Psalm*. The design of the Holy Ghost was therein to express and represent in the Person and Condition of the *Psalmist* the case of a soul intangled, and ready to be overwhelmed with the guilt of sin, relieved by a discovery of Grace and Forgiveness in God, with its deportment upon a participation of that relief. After the Exposition of the words of the Text, my design and endeavour hath been only to enlarge the Pourtraicture here given us in the Psalm, of a Believing Soul in and under the condition mentioned; to render the lines of it more visible, and to make the Character given in its description more legible; and withall to give unto others in the like condition with the Psalmist, a light to understand and discern themselves in that Image and Representation, which is here made of them in the Person of another. To this end have I been forced to enlarge on the two great Heads of *Sin* and *Grace*; especially

the latter here called the *forgiveneſs that is with God*. An intereſt herein, a participation hereof being our principal concernment in this World, and the ſole foundation of all our expectations of a bleſſed portion in that which is to come, it certainly requires the beſt and utmoſt of our endeavours, as to look into the nature, cauſes, and effects of it, ſo eſpecially into the ways and means whereby we may be made partakers of it; and how that participation may be ſecured unto us unto our peace and conſolation; as alſo into that Love, that Holineſs, that obedience, that fruitfulneſs in good works, which on the account of this Grace God expecteth from us, and requireth at our hands. An Explication of theſe things is that which *I* have deſigned to enſue and follow after in theſe diſcourſes, and that with a conſtant eye, as on the one hand to the ſole rule and Standard of Truth, the Sacred Scriptures, eſpecially that part of it which is under peculiar conſideration; ſo on the other to the Experience and Service unto the edification of them that do believe, whoſe ſpiritual benefit and advantage without any other conſideration in the World, is aimed at in the publiſhing of them.

AN

AN EXPOSITION UPON PSALM CXXX.

Pſalm 130.

1. *OUt of the depths have I cryed unto thee, O Lord.*
2. *Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my ſupplications.*
3. *If thou, Lord, ſhouldſt mark iniquities, O Lord, who ſhall ſtand?*
4. *But there is forgiveneſs with thee: that thou maiſt be feared.*
5. *I wait for the Lord, my Soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.*
6. *My Soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they, that watch for the morning, I ſay, more than they that watch for the morning.*
7. *Let* Iſrael *hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption.*
8. *And he ſhall redeem* Iſrael *from all his Iniquities.*

A

PARAPHRASE.

Verse 1, 2.

1 Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee, O Lord.
2. Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications

O Lord, through my manifold sins and provocations I have brought my self into great distresses. Mine Iniquities are always before me, and I am ready to be overwhelmed with them, as with a flood of waters, for they have brought me into depths, wherein I am ready to be swallowed up. But yet although my distress be great and perplexing, I do not, I dare not utterly despond and cast away all hopes of relief or recovery. Nor do I seek unto any other remedy, way or means of relief, but I apply my self to thee Jehovah, *to thee alone. And in this my Application unto thee, the greatness and urgency of my troubles makes my Soul urgent, earnest, and pressing in my supplications. Whilst I have no rest, I can give thee no rest; Oh therefore attend and hearken unto the voice of my crying and supplications.*

Ver. 3.

3. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

IT is true O Lord, thou God great and terrible, that if thou shouldst deal with me in this Condition, with any man living, with the best of thy Saints, according to the strict and exact tenor of the Law, which first represents it self to my guilty Conscience, and troubled Soul; If thou shouldst take notice of, observe, and keep in Remembrance, mine, or their, or the Iniquity of any one, to the end that thou mightst deal with them, and recompence unto them according to the sentence thereof; there would be neither for me, nor them, any the least expectation of deliverance; all flesh must

must fail before thee, and the spirits which thou hast made, and that to Eternity; for who could stand before thee, when thou shouldst so execute thy displeasure.

Ver. 4.

4. But there is forgiveness with thee: that thou maist be feared.

BUt O Lord, this is not absolutely and universally the state of things between thy Majesty and poor sinners; Thou art in thy Nature infinitely Good and Gracious, ready and free in the purposes of thy will to receive them. And there is such a blessed way made for the exercise of the holy inclinations and purposes of thy heart towards them, in the mediation and blood of thy dear Son, That they have assured foundations of concluding and believing, that there is pardon and forgiveness with thee for them; and which in the way of thine appointments they may be partakers of. This way therefore will I, with all that fear thee persist in: I will not give over, leave thee, or turn from thee, through my fears, discouragements, and despondencies; but will abide constantly in the observation of the worship which thou hast prescribed; and the performance of the Obedience which thou dost require; having great encouragements so to do.

Ver. 5.

5. I wait for the Lord, my Soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

AND herein, upon the account of the forgiveness that is with thee, O Lord, do I wait with all patience, quietness and perseverance. In this work is my whole Soul engaged; even in an earnest expectation of thy approach unto me, in a way of grace and mercy. And for my encouragement therein, hast thou given out unto me a blessed word of Grace, a faithful word of promise, wherein my hope is fixed.

Ver. 6.

6. My Soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they, that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

YEa, in the performance, and discharge of this duty, my Soul is intent upon thee. and in its whole frame turned towards thee, and that with such diligence and watchfulness in looking out after every way, and means of thy appearance, of thy manifestation of thy self, and coming unto me, that I excell therein those who with longing desire, heedfulness, and earnest expectation, do wait and watch for the appearance of the morning; and that either that they may rest from their night watches, or have light for the duties of thy Worship in the Temple, which they are most delighted in.

Ver. 7, 8.

7. Let *Israel* hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption. 8. And he shall redeem *Israel* from all his Iniquities.

HErein have I found that rest, peace, and satisfaction unto my own Soul, that I cannot but invite and encourage others, in the like Condition to take the same course with me. Let then all the Israel *of God, all that fear him, learn this of me, and from my experience. Be not hasty in your distresses; despond not, despair not, turn not aside unto other remedies; but hope in the Lord; for I can now in an especial manner, give testimony unto this, that there is mercy with him suited unto your relief. Yea, whatever your distress be, the Redemption that is with him, is so bounteous, plenteous and unsearchable, that the undoubted issue of your performance of this duty will be; that you shall be delivered from the guilt of all your sins; and the perplexities of all your troubles.*

General

General Scope of the whole Psalm.

THE design of the Holy Ghost in this *Psalm* is to express in the *Experience* of the *Psalmist*, and the working of his faith, the state and condition of a Soul greatly in it *self* perplexed, relieved on the account of *Grace*, and *acting* it self towards *God* and his *Saints*, suitably to the *discovery* of that Grace unto him. A great design, and full of great Instruction. General scope of the whole *Psalm*.

And this general Prospect gives us the *parts*, and scope of the whole Psalm: for (1.) We have the *state and condition of the Soul* therein represented, with his *deportment* in and under that state and condition, in *ver.* 1, 2.

Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee O Lord, Lord, hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

(2.) *His enquiry after relief*; and therein are two things that present themselves unto him; the *one* whereof, which *first* offers the consideration of its self to him in his distress, he *deprecates*, *ver.* 3.

If thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord who shall stand?

The other he *closeth withal*, and finds relief in it, and support-ment by it, *ver.* 5.

But there is forgiveness with thee that thou maist be feared.

Upon this his *discovery* and fixing on relief, there is the *acting of his Faith*, and the deportment of his whole person;

1. *Towards God*, *ver.* 5, 6.

I wait for the Lord, my Soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.

My Soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, I say more than they that watch for the morning.

2. *Towards the Saints*, *ver.* 7, 8.

Let Israel *hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption.*

And

And he shall redeem Israel *from all his Iniquities.*

All which parts, and the various concernments of them, must be opened severally.

And this also gives an account of what is my *design* from, and upon the words of this *Psalm*; namely, to declare the *perplexed intanglements which may befall a gracious Soul*, such a one as this *Psalmist* was; with the nature and *proper workings of Faith* in such a condition: Principally aiming at *what* it is, that gives a Soul *relief and supportment in*, and afterward deliverance *from*, such a perplexed estate.

The Lord in Mercy, dispose of these Meditations in such a way and manner, as that both he that writes, and they that read, may be made partakers of the benefit, relief, and consolation, intended for his Saints in this Psalm by the Holy Ghost.

The two first Verses opened.

The State and Condition of the Soul represented in the Psalm. The two first Verses opened.

The State and Condition of the Soul here represented, as the *Basis* on which the process of the *Psalm* is built; with its deportment, or the general acting of its Faith in that state, is expressed in the two first Verses.

Out of the depths have I cryed unto thee, O Lord.

Lord hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

1. The *present state of the Soul* under consideration is included in that expression, *out of the Depths.*

Some of the Ancients, as *Chrysostom*, suppose this *expression* to relate unto the *depths of the heart* of the *Psalmist*; τί ἐστιν ἐκ βαθέων; *not from the mouth or tongue only*, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ καρδίας βαθυτάτης; *but from the depth and bottom of the heart*; ἐξ αὐτῶν τ῀ διανοίας τ῀ βαθέων, *from the deepest recesses of the mind.*

And indeed the word is used to express the *depths of the hearts of Men*, but utterly in another sense; Psal. 64. 6. *The heart is deep.*

But the obvious *sense* of the place, and the constant *use* of the word will not admit of this Interpretation: *e Profundis*, from עמק *profundus fuit*, is בעמקים in the *plural number*, *Profunditates*, or *Depths.* It is commonly used for *Valleys*, or any *deep*

deep places whatever, but especially of *Waters*. *Valleys* and *deep Places*, because of their *Darkness* and *Solitariness*, are accounted places of horrour, helplesness and trouble, Psal. 23. 4. *When I walk in the Valley of the shadow of Death*, that is, in the *extremity* of danger and trouble.

The *Moral* use of the word, as expressing the state and condition of the Souls of men, is *metaphorical.* These *Depths* then are difficulties, or pressures, attended with fear, horrour, danger, and trouble.

And they are of two sorts.

1. *Providential*; in respect of *outward Distresses*, Calamities, and Afflictions, Psal. 69. 1. *Save me O God, for the waters are come in unto my Soul*; *I stick in the mire of the deep, and there is no standing, I am come,* במעמקי־מים *into the depths of waters, and the flood overflows me.* It is trouble and the extremity of it, that the *Psalmist* complains of, and which he thus expresseth. He was brought by it into a condition like unto a man *ready to be drowned*; being cast into the bottom of *deep* and miry waters; where he had no *firm foundation* to stand upon, nor ability to come out: as he farther explains himself, *ver.* 15.

2. There are *internal Depths.* Depths of *Conscience* upon the account of sin, Psal. 88. 6. *Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps.* What he intends by this expression, the *Psalmist* declares in the next words, v. 7. *Thy wrath lyeth hard upon me. Sense of Gods wrath* upon his Conscience upon the account of sin, was the *deep* he was cast into. So *v.* 15. speaking of the same matter; saith he, *I suffer thy terrours*, and *v.* 16. Thy *fierce wrath goeth over me.* Which he calls water, waves, and *deeps*; according to the *Metaphor* before opened.

And these are the *deeps* that are here principally intended, *Clamat sub molibus & fluctibus iniquitatum suarum*, says *Austin* on the place. He *cryes out under the weight and waves of his sins.*

This the ensuing *Psalm* makes evident. Desiring to be delivered from these *depths* out of which he cried; he deals with God wholly about mercy and *forgiveness*; and it is sin alone, from which *forgiveness* is a Deliverance. The *Doctrine* also that he *preacheth* upon his Delivery, is that of *Mercy*, *Grace*, and *Redemption*, as is manifest from the close of the *Psalm.* And what we have deliverance by, is most upon our hearts when we are delivered.

It

It is true indeed, that theſe *deeps* do oftentimes concur: as *David* ſpeaks, *Deep calleth upon deep, Pſal.* 42 7. The deeps of *Affliction*, awaken the *Conſcience* to a deep ſenſe of ſin. But ſin is the *Diſeaſe*; Affliction only a *Symptome* of it; and in attending a Cure, the *diſeaſe* it ſelf is principally to be heeded, the *ſymptome* will follow, or depart of it ſelf.

Many *Interpreters* think that this was now *Davids* condition; by great *trouble* and diſtreſs, he was greatly minded of *ſin*; and we muſt not therefore wholly paſs over that intendment of the word, though we are *chiefly* to reſpect that, which he himſelf in this addreſs unto God, did principally regard.

This in general is the *ſtate and condition* of the Soul managed in this Pſalm; and is as the *key* to the enſuing diſcourſe, or the hinge on which it turns. As to my intendment from the Pſalm: That which ariſeth from hence, may be comprized in theſe two Propoſitions:

1. *Gracious Souls, after much Communion with God, may be brought into inextricable depths and intanglements on the account of ſin.* For *ſuch* the *Pſalmiſt* here expreſſeth his own condition to have been; and *ſuch* he was.

2. *The inward root of outward diſtreſſes, is principally to be attended in all preſſing trials; ſin, in Afflictions.*

Depths of trouble on the account of Sin.

Gracious Souls may be brought into depths on the account of ſin.
What thoſe depths are.

Before I proceed at all in the farther opening of the words; they having all of them reſpect unto the *Propoſition* firſt laid down, I ſhall explain and confirm the truth obtained in it; that ſo it may be underſtood, *what we ſay, and whereof we do affirm* in the whole proceſs of our diſcourſe.

It is a *ſad Truth* that we have propoſed unto conſideration: He that hears it ought to *tremble* in himſelf, that he may reſt in the day of trouble; It ſpeaks out the Apoſtles advice, *Rom.* 11. 20. *Be not high minded, but fear:* and that alſo, 1 Cor. 10. 12. *Let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.* When *Peter* had learned this truth by woful experience, after all his *boldneſs* and frowardneſs, he gives this Councel to all Saints: *that they would paſs the time of their ſojourning here in fear*, 1 Pet. 1. 14. Knowing how

how near in our greateſt peace and ſerenity, evil and danger may lye at the door.

Some few *inſtances* of the many that are left on record, wherein this Truth is *exemplified*, may be mentioned, Gen. 6, 9. *Noah was a juſt man, perfect in his Generation, and* Noah *walked with God.* He did ſo a long ſeaſon, and that in an evil time, amidſt all ſorts of Temptations, *When all fleſh had corrupted its way upon earth*, ver. 12. This put an eminency upon his obedience; and doubtleſs rendred the Communion which he had with God in *walking before him*, moſt ſweet and precious to him. He was a *gracious ſoul* upon the redoubled Teſtimony of God himſelf. But we know what befell this *holy Perſon*. He that ſhall read the ſtory that is recorded of him, *Gen.* 9. 21. will eaſily grant, that he was brought into *inextricable diſtreſs* on the account of ſin. His own *drunkenneſs, ver.* 21. with the conſequent of it, gives ſcandal unto, and provokes the *unnatural luſt* of his Son, *v.* 22. and this leads him to the *devoting of that Son*, and his Poſterity, unto Deſtruction, *ver.* 24. 25. all which, joyned with the ſenſe of Gods *juſt indignation*, from whom he had newly received that tremendouſly miraculous deliverance; muſt needs *overwhelm him* with ſorrow and anxiety of Spirit.

The matter is more clear in *David*. Under the Old Teſtament none *loved God* more than he, none was *loved of God* more than he. The Paths of *Faith and Love* wherein he walked, are unto the moſt of us, like the way of an Eagle in the Air, too high and hard for us. Yet to this very day, do the *cryes* of *this Man after Gods own heart*, found in our Ears. Sometimes he complains of *broken bones*, ſometimes of *drowning depths*,, ſometimes of *waves* and *water-ſpouts*, ſometimes of *wounds* and *diſeaſes*, ſometimes of *Wrath*, and the *ſorrows of Hell*, every where of his *ſins*, the burden and trouble of them. Some of the occaſions of his *Depths*, Darkneſs, Intanglements and Diſtreſſes, we all know. As no man had *more Grace* than he, ſo none is a greater inſtance of the *power of ſin*, and the effects of its guilt upon the conſcience than he. But inſtances of this kind are obvious, and occur to the thoughts of all, ſo that they need not be repeated. I ſhall then ſhew,

Depths of sin, wherein they consist.

First, What in particular *is intended by the depths and intanglements, on the account of sin, whereinto gracious souls after much Communion with God, may be cast.*

Secondly, *Whence it comes to pass, that so they may be, and that oftentimes so they are.*

First, For the *First*, some or all of these things following do concur to the *Depths* complained of.

First, *Loss of the wonted sense of the Love of God which the soul did formerly enjoy.* There is a twofold *sense of the Love of God*, whereof Believers in this world may be made partakers. There is the *transient acting of the heart* by the Holy Ghost, with ravishing *unspeakable joyes*, in apprehension of Gods Love, and our Relation unto him in Christ. *This*, or the immediate effect of it, *is called, joy unspeakible and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. The Holy Ghost shining into the heart, with a *clear evidence* of the souls interest in all Gospel Mercies, causeth it to leap for joy, to exult, and triumph in the Lord; as being for a season carried above all sense and thought of sin, self, temptation, or trouble. But as God gives the *bread* of his *House* unto all his *Children*, so these dainties, and high *Cordials*, he reserveth only for the *seasons*, and *Persons*, wherein, and to whom he knows them to be needful, and useful. Believers may be without *this sense of Love*, and yet be in no *depths*. A man may be strong and healthy, who hath wholsom food, though he never drink *Spirits* and Cordials.

Again, There is *an abiding, dwelling sense of Gods Love* upon the hearts of those of whom we speak, who have had long communion with God, consisting in a *prevailing Gospel perswasion*, denoting both the *opposition* that is made unto it, by Satan and unbelief, and its *efficacy* in the conquest thereof. This is the root from whence all that *peace*, and *ordinary consolation* which Believers in this world are made partakers of, do spring and grow. This is that which quickens and enlivens them unto Duty, *Psal.* 116, 12, 13. and is the *salt* that renders their *Sacrifices* and *Performances savoury* to God, and refreshing to themselves. This supports them under their tryals, gives them peace, hope and comfort in Life and Death, Psal. 23 4. *Though I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.* A sense of Gods presence in Love, is sufficient to rebuke all anxiety and fears, in the worst and most dreadful condition. And not

not only so, but to give in the midst of them, *solid Consolation* and Joy. So the *Prophet* expresseth it, Hab. 3. 17, 18. *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vines, the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.* And this is that *sense of Love*, which the choicest Believers may lose on the account of sin. This is *one step* into their *depths*. They shall not retain any such *Gospel apprehension* of it, as that it should give them rest, peace, or consolation; that it should influence their souls with delight in Duty, or supportment in trial; And the Nature hereof will be afterwards more fully explained.

Secondly, *Perplexed thoughtfulness about their great and wretched unkindness towards God*, are another part of the *depths* of *sin-intangled* souls. So *David* complains, *Psal.* 77. 3. *I remembred God*, saith he, *and was troubled.* How comes the *Remembrance of God* to be unto him a matter of *trouble?* in other places he professeth, that it was all his relief and supportment. How comes it to be an occasion of his *trouble?* All had not been well between God and him; and whereas formerly in his *Remembrance* of God, his thoughts were chiefly exercised about his *Love* and *Kindness*, now they were wholly possest with his *own sin* and *unkindness*. This causeth his *trouble*. Herein lyes a share of the *intanglements* occasioned by sin. Saith such a soul in its self; *fooliſh Creature*, hast thou thus requited the Lord? Is this the *return* that thou hast made unto him for all his love, his kindness, his consolations, mercies? Is this thy kindness for him, thy love to him? Is this thy kindness to *thy Friend?* Is this thy *boasting* of him, that thou hadst found so much Goodness and Excellency in him and his Love, that though all men *should forsake him*, thou never wouldst do so? Are all thy *Promises*, all thy *Engagements* which thou madest unto God, in times of distress, upon prevailing obligations, and mighty impressions of his Good Spirit upon thy soul, now come to this, that thou shouldst so foolishly forget, neglect, despise, cast him off? Well! now *he is gone*; he is withdrawn from thee, and what wilt thou do? Art thou not even *ashamed* to desire him to return? They were thoughts of this nature, that *cut* Peter *to the heart* upon his *fall*. The soul finds them *cruel as Death*, and *strong as the Grave*. It is bound in the *chains of them*,

and cannot be comforted, *Psalm* 38. 3, 4, 5, 6. And herein consists a great part of the *depths* enquired after. For this consideration excites, and puts an edge upon all grieving, straightning, perplexing *Affections*, which are the only means whereby the soul of a man may be inwardly *troubled*, or *trouble* it self; such are *sorrow* and *shame*, with that *self-displicency* and *revenge*, wherewith they are attended. And as their *Reason* and *Object* in this case do transcend all other occasions of them, so on no other account do they cause such severe and perplexing reflections on the soul as on this.

Thirdly, *A revived sense of justly deserved wrath*, belongs also to these *depths*. This is as the opening of *old wounds*. When men have passed through a *sense of wrath*, and have obtained deliverance and rest through the blood of Christ, to come to their *old thoughts* again, to be trading afresh with *Hell*, *Curse*, *Law*, and *Wrath*, it is a *depth* indeed. And this often befalls *gracious souls* on the account of sin, Psalm 88. 7. *Thy wrath lyeth hard upon me*, saith *Heman*. It pressed and crushed him sorely. There is a *self-judging* as to the *desert* of wrath, which is consistent with a comforting perswasion of an Interest in Christ. This the soul finds *sweetness* in, as it lyes in a *subservience* to the exaltation of Grace. But in this case, the soul is *left under it* without that relief. It plungeth it self into the *Curse of the Law*, and flames of Hell, without any cheering supportment from the blood of Christ. This is walking in *the valley of the shadow of death*. The *soul converseth with death*, and what seems to lye in a tendency thereunto. The Lord also to increase his perplexities, puts *new life* and spirit into the *Law*; gives it a fresh *Commission* as it were, to *take such a one into its Custody*; and the *Law* will never in this world be wanting unto its Duty.

Fourthly, *Oppressing Apprehensions of temporal Judgements*, concur herein also; for God will *Judge his People*. And Judgement often *begins at the House of God*. Though God, *saith such a one*, should not cast me off for ever, though he should *pardon my iniquities*, yet he may so take *vengeance of my inventions*, as to make me feed on *gall and wormwood* all my days, Psalm 119. 120. saith *David*, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgements*. He knows not what the *great God* may bring upon him; and being full of *a sense of the guilt of sin*, which is the bottom

bottom of this whole condition, every *Judgement* of God is *full of terror* unto him. Sometimes he thinks, God may *lay open the filth of his heart*, and make him a scandal and a reproach in the world; *Psalm* 39. 8. *Oh*, saith he, *make me not a reproach to the foolish*. Sometimes he trembles lest God should *strike him suddenly* with some *signal Judgement*, and take him out of the world, in darkness and sorrow; so saith *David*, *take me not away in thy wrath*. Sometimes he *fears* lest he shall be like *Jonah*, and raise a storm in his *Family*, in the *Church* whereof he is a member, or in the whole Nation. *Let them not be ashamed for my sake*. These things make his *heart soft*, as *Job* speaks, and to melt within him. When any *Affliction* or *publick Judgement* of God, is fastned to a quick living sense of sin in the Conscience, it overwhelms the soul; whether it be only *justly feared*, or be actually inflicted, as was the case of *Joseph's* Brethren in *Egypt*. The soul is then *rolled* from one *deep* to another. *Sense of sin*, casts it on the consideration of its *Affliction*; and *Affliction* turns it back on a *sense of sin*. So *deep* calleth unto *deep*, and all *Gods billows go over the soul*. And they do each of them make the soul *tender*, and sharpen its sense unto the other. Affliction *softens* the soul; so that the *sense of sin* cuts the *deeper*, and makes the larger wounds; and the *sense of sin weakens* the soul, and makes *Affliction* sit the heavier, and so increaseth its burden. In this case, that *Affliction* which a man in his usual state of spiritual peace, could have embraced as a sweet *pledge of Love*, is as *goads and thorns* in his side, depriving him of all rest and quietness; God makes it, as *thorns and briars* wherewith he will *teach* stubborn souls their duty, as *Gideon* did the Man of *Succoth*.

Fifthly, There may be added hereunto, *prevailing fears for a season, of being utterly rejected by God, of being found a Reprobate at the last day*. *Jonah* seems to conclude so, Chap. 3. 4. *Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight*. I am lost for ever, God will own me no more. And *Heman*, Psalm 88. 4, 5. *I am counted with them that go down into the pit: Free among the dead, like the slain that lye in the grave, whom thou remembrest no more, and they are cut off from thy hand*. This may reach the soul, until the *sorrows of Hell* encompass it, and lay hold upon it; until it be deprived of comfort, peace, rest, until it be a *terror* to its self, and be ready to *choose strangling* rather than life. This may befall a *gra-*

cious

cious soul on the account of sin. But yet because this fights directly against the *Life of Faith*, God doth not, unless it be in extraordinary cases, suffer any of his to *lye long in this horrible pit, where there is no water*, no refreshment. But this *often* falls out, that even the Saints themselves are left for a season to a *fearful expectation of Judgement, and fiery indignation*, as to the prevailing apprehension of their minds. And,

Sixthly, *God secretly sends his Arrows into the soul, that wound and gall it, adding pain, trouble, and disquietness to its disconsolation*, Psalm 38. 2. *Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.* Ever and anon in his walking, God *shot a sharp piercing arrow*, fixing it on his soul that galled, wounded, and perplexed him, filling him with pain and grievous vexation. These *arrows* are Gods *rebukes*, Psalm 39. 11. *When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity.* God speaks in his Word, and by his Spirit in the *Conscience*, things sharp and bitter to the soul, fastning them so as it cannot shake them out. These *Job* so mournfully complains of, *Chap.* 6. 4. The Lord speaks words with that efficacy, that they *pierce the heart* quite through; and what the issue then is, *David* declares, Psalm 38. 3. *There is no soundness*, saith he, *in my flesh, because of thine anger, nor is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.* The whole person is brought under the power of them, and all *health* and rest is taken away; and

Seventhly, *Unspiritedness and disability unto Duty, in doing or suffering*, attend such a condition, *Psal.* 40. 12. *Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up.* His *spiritual* strength was worn away by sin, so that he was not able to *address himself* unto any communion with God. The soul now cannot *pray* with life and power; cannot *hear* with joy and profit; cannot *do good* and communicate with cheerfulness and freedom; cannot *meditate* with delight and heavenly mindedness; cannot *act for God* with zeal and liberty; cannot think of *suffering* with boldness and resolution; but is sick, weak, feeble, and bowed down.

Now, I say, a *gracious soul after much communion with God*, may on the account of sin, by a sense of the guilt of it, be brought into a state and condition, wherein *some, more*, or *all of these*, with other the like *perplexities*, may be its portion. And these make up the *Depths* whereof the *Psalmist* here complains.

What

What are the sins, or of *what sorts*, that ordinarily cast the souls of Believers into these depths, shall be afterwards declared. I shall now shew both *whence* it is, that Believers *may* fall into such a condition; as also whence it is that oftentimes, they *actually do so.*

Whence it is that Believers may be brought into depths on account of sin. Nature of the supplies of Grace given in the Covenant. How far they extend. Principles of the power of sin.

The Nature and Extent of supplies of Grace, according to the Covenant.

First, The *Nature of the Covenant* wherein all Believers now walk with God, and wherein all their *whole provision for obedience* is enwrapped, leaves it *possible* for them to fall into these *depths* that have been mentioned. Under the *first Covenant* there was no *mercy* or *forgiveness* provided for any sin. It was necessary then that it should exhibit a *sufficiency of Grace* to preserve them from *every sin*, or it could have been of no use at all. This the Righteousness of God required, and so it was. To have made a *Covenant* wherein there was no provision at all of *pardon*, and not a *sufficiency of Grace* to keep the *Covenanters* from *need of pardon*, was not answerable to the Goodness and Righteousness of God. But he made *man upright* who of his own accord *sought out many inventions.*

It is not so in the *Covenant of Grace*; There is in it *pardon* provided in the blood of Christ; It is not therefore of *indispensible necessity* that there should be administred in it, Grace *effectually preserving from every sin:* Yet it is on all accounts to be preferred before the other. For besides the relief *by pardon* which the other *knew nothing* of, there is in it also much *provision* against sin, which was not in the other.

First, There is *provision made in it, against all and every sin that would disannul the Covenant*, and make a final separation between God and a soul that hath been once taken into the bond thereof. This provision is *absolute*; God hath taken upon himself the making of this *good*, and the establishing this *Law* of the Covenant, that it shall not by any sin disannulled, Jer. 32. 40. *I will* (saith God) *make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their hearts,*

hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me. The ſecurity hereof depends not *on any thing* in our ſelves. All that is in us is to be uſed as a *means* of the accompliſhment of this Promiſe; but the *event* or iſſue depends abſolutely on the faithfulneſs of God. And the whole certainty and ſtability of the Covenant depends on the *efficacy of the Grace* adminiſtred in it, to preſerve men from all ſuch ſins as would diſannul it.

Secondly, There is in this Covenant *proviſion made for conſtant peace and conſolation, notwithſtanding, and againſt the guilt of ſuch ſins, as through their infirmities and temptations believers are daily expoſed unto.* Though they fall into *ſins* every day, yet they do not *fall into depths* every day. In the tenour of this Covenant, there is a conſiſtency between a *ſenſe* of ſin unto *humiliation and peace*, with ſtrong conſolation. After the Apoſtle had deſcribed the whole *conflict* that Believers have with *ſin*, and the *frequent wounds* which they receive thereby, which makes them cry out for deliverance, *Rom.* 7. 24. He yet concludes, *Chap.* 8. 1. that there *is no condemnation unto them*, which is a ſufficient and ſtable foundation of Peace. So 1 Joh. 2. 1. *Theſe things have I written unto you, that you ſin not; and if any man ſin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous.* Our great buſineſs and care ought to be, that *we ſin not*; but yet when we have done our utmoſt, *if we ſay we have no ſin, we deceive our ſelves*, Chap. 1. 8. What then ſhall *poor, ſinful, guilty creatures* do? why let them go to the *Father*, by their *Advocate*, and they ſhall not fail of *pardon* and peace. And ſaith *Paul*, Heb. 6. 17, 18. *God is abundantly willing that we might have ſtrong conſolation, who fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us.* What was his condition who *fled* of old to the City of refuge for ſafety, from whence this expreſſion is taken? He was *guilty of blood*, though ſhed at unawares; and ſo, as that he was to *dye* for it, if he eſcaped not to the *City of Refuge.* Though we may have the *guilt of ſins* upon us, that the Law pronounceth *death* unto, yet *flying to Chriſt for refuge*, God hath provided not only ſafety, but *ſtrong conſolation* for us alſo. Forgiveneſs in the blood of Chriſt, doth not only take *guilt* from the ſoul, but *trouble* alſo from the conſcience. And in this reſpect doth the Apoſtle at large ſet forth the Excellency of his *Sacrifice*, Heb. 10. The Sacrifices of the Old Law, he tells us, could not make *perfect the worſhippers*, v. 1. which he proves, *v.* 2. becauſe they

they did never take away, throughly and really, *Conſcience of ſin*, that is, *depths or diſtreſſes of conſcience* about ſin. But now, ſaith he, Jeſus Chriſt in the Covenant of Grace hath for *ever perfected them that were ſanctified*, v. 14. providing for them ſuch ſtable peace and conſolation, as that they ſhall not need the *renewing of Sacrifices* every day, *v.* 18. This is the great *myſtery* of the Goſpel in the blood of Chriſt; that thoſe who ſin *every day*, ſhould have peace with God *all their days.* Provided their *ſins* fall within the compaſs of thoſe *infirmities*, againſt which this conſolation is provided.

Thirdly, There is *proviſion made of grace, to prevent and preſerve the ſoul from great and enormous ſins*, ſuch as in their own nature are apt to wound conſcience, and caſt the perſon into ſuch *depths* and intanglements as wherein he ſhall have neither reſt nor peace. Of what *ſort theſe ſins* are, ſhall be afterwards declared. There is in this Covenant *Grace for Grace*, Joh. 1. 16. and abundance of Grace, adminiſtred from the *All-fulneſs* of Chriſt Grace *reigneth* in it, *Rom.* 6. 6. deſtroying and *crucifying* the body of ſin.

But this Proviſion in the Covenant *of Grace* againſt *peace ruining, ſoul-perplexing* ſins, is not as to the adminiſtration of it, *abſolute.* There are *Covenant Commands* and Exhortations, on the attendance whereunto, the *adminiſtration* of much *Covenant-Grace* doth depend. To watch, pray, improve faith, to ſtand on our guard continually, to mortifie ſin, to fight againſt temptations, with ſtedfaſtneſs, diligence, conſtancy, are every where preſcribed unto us; and that in order unto the *inſurance* of the Grace mentioned. Theſe things are on our part, the *condition of the Adminiſtration* of that *abundant* Grace, which is to preſerve us from *ſoul-entangling* ſins. So *Peter* informs us, 2 Ep. 1. v. 3. *The divine power of God hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godlineſs.* We have from it an *habitual furniſhment* and proviſion for obedience at all times. Alſo ſaith he, v. 4. *He hath given unto us great and pretious promiſes, that by them we might be partakers of the Divine Nature*; What then is in this bleſſed eſtate and condition *required of us*, that we may make a due improvement of the *proviſion* made for us, and enjoy the comforting influence of thoſe Promiſes? that he preſcribes unto us, v. 5, 6, 7. *Giving all diligence, add to your faith vertue, and to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience goodlineſs, and*

to godlineſs brotherly kindneſs, and to brotherly kindneſs charity; That is carefuly and diligently attend to the exercise of all the Graces of the Spirit, and unto a converſation in all things becoming the Goſpel. What then ſhall be the iſſue, if theſe things are attended unto? v. 8 *If theſe things be in you, and abound, yeſhall be neither barren nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* It is not enough that theſe things be *in you*? that you have the *ſeed* and *root* of them from and by the Holy Ghoſt; but you are to take care that they flouriſh and *abound*; without which, though the *root of the matter may be in you*, and ſo you be not wholly devoid of ſpiritual life, yet you will be poor, barren, ſapleſs, withering creatures, all your days. But now ſuppoſe that theſe things *do abound*, and we be made fruitful thereby, Why then ſaith he, v. 10. *If you do theſe things ye ſhall never fall.* What never *fall into ſin?* Nay, that is not in the Promiſe; and he that ſayes, when he hath done all, *that he hath no ſin*, he is a Lyar. Or it is never *fall totally from God?* No, the preſervation of the *Elect*, of whom he ſpeaks, from *total Apoſtaſie*, is not ſuſpended on ſuch conditions, eſpecially not on any *degree* of them, ſuch as their *abounding* imports. But it is that they *ſhall not fall* into *their own ſins from which they were purged*, v. 9. Such Conſcience-waſting, and defiling ſins, as they lived in, in the time and ſtate of their Unregeneracy. Thus though there be in the Covenant of Grace through *Jeſus Chriſt*, Proviſion made of abundant ſupplies for the ſouls preſervation from entangling ſins; yet their *Adminiſtration* hath reſpect unto our *diligent attendance* unto the means of receiving them appointed for us to walk in.

And here lyes the *latitude* of the New Covenant; here lyes the exercise of renewed *Free-will*. This is the field of free voluntary obedience under the Adminiſtration of Goſpel Grace. There are *extreams* which in reſpect of the *event* it is not concerned in. To be *wholly perfect*, to be free from every ſin, all failings, all infirmities, that is not provided for, not promiſed in this Covenant. It is a Covenant of *mercy and pardon* which ſuppoſeth a continuance of ſin. To fall utterly and *finally* from God, that is *abſolutely* provided againſt. Between theſe two extreams of *abſolute perfection*, and *totall Apoſtaſie*, lies the large Field of Believers obedience and walking with God. Many a ſweet

ſweet heavenly paſſage there is, and many a dangerous *depth* in this *field*. Some walk near to the one ſide, ſome to the other? yea, the ſame perſon may ſometimes preſs hard after *Perfection*, ſometimes be caſt to the very *border* of deſtruction. Now between theſe two, lye many a *ſoul-plunging ſin*, againſt which no abſolute proviſion is made, and which for want of giving *all diligence* to put the means of preſervation in practice, Believers are oftentimes overtaken withal.

Fourthly, There is not in the Covenant of Grace, Proviſion made of *ordinary and abiding conſolation*, for any under the guilt of great *ſins*, or ſins greatly aggravated, which they fall into by a neglect of uſing and abiding in the forementioned conditions of *abounding actual Grace*. Sins there are, which either becauſe in their own *nature* they wound and waſte conſcience, or in their *effects* break forth into ſcandal, cauſing the name of God and the Goſpel to be evil ſpoken of, or in ſome of their *circumſtances*, are full of unkindneſs againſt God, do deprive the ſoul of its wonted conſolation. How, by what means, on what account ſuch ſins come to *terrifie conſcience*, to break the bones, to darken the ſoul, and to caſt it into *inextricable depths*, notwithſtanding the relief that is provided of pardon in the blood of Chriſt, I ſhall not now declare; that they will do ſo, and that *Conſolation* is not of equal extent with *ſafety*, we know. Hence God aſſumes it to himſelf as an act of meer *Soveraign Grace*, to *ſpeak peace* and refreſhment unto the ſouls of his Saints in their depths of ſin-entanglements, *Iſa.* 57. 18, 19. And indeed if the Lord had not thus provided, that *great provocation*, ſhould ſtand in need of *ſpeciall reliefs*, it might juſtly be feared, that the negligence of Believers, might poſſibly bring much bitter fruit.

Only this muſt be obſerved by the way, that what is ſpoken relates to the *ſenſe of ſinners* in their own ſouls, and not to the nature of the thing it ſelf. There is in the Goſpel, *conſolation* provided againſt the *greateſt*, as well as the *leaſt* ſins. The difference ariſeth from Gods Soveraign communication of it, according to their tenor of the Covenants Adminiſtration, which we have laid down. Hence becauſe under *Moſes*'s Law there was an exception made of ſome ſins, for which there was no *Sacrifice* appointed, ſo that thoſe who were guilty of

them could no way be *justified* from them, that is *carnally* as to their interest in the *Judaical* Church and *Polity*; *Paul* tells the *Jews*, Acts 13. 38, 39. *That through Jesus Christ was preached unto them the forgiveness of sins, and that by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses.* There is now no exception of *any particular sins*, as to pardon, and Peace; but what we have spoken relates unto the manner and way, wherein God is pleased to administer consolation to the souls of sinning Believers.

And this is the Evidence which I shall offer to prove, that *the souls of Believers, after much Gracious Communion with God, may yet fall into inextricable depths on the account of sin*, whence it is, that *actually* they oftentimes do so, shall be farther declared.

The *Principles* of this Assertion, are known, I shall therefore only touch upon them.

The Power of Indwelling Sin.

First, The *nature of In-dwelling-sin*, as it remains in the best of the Saints in this life, being a little considered, will evidence unto us, from whence it is, that they are sometimes surprized, and plunged into the *depths* mentioned. For,

First, Though the *strength of every sin* be weakned by Grace, yet the *root of no sin*, is in this life wholly taken away. Lust is like the stubborn *Canaanites*, who after the general conquest of the Land, *would dwell in it the* still, *Judg.* 17. 12. Indeed when *Israel grew strong* they brought them under *tribute*, but they could not utterly expell them. The *Kingdom* and Rule belongs to Grace; and when it grows strong it brings sin much under; but it will not wholly be driven out. The *Body of Death* is not utterly to be done away, but in and by the *Death of the Body*. In the *flesh of the best Saints there dwelleth no good thing*, *Rom.* 7. 8. but the contrary is there; that is the root of all evil. The *flesh lusteth against the Spirit*, as the *Spirit* lusteth against the *flesh*. *Gal.* 5. 17. As then there is an *Universality* in the actings of the *Spirit* in its opposing all evil, so also there is an *Universality* in the Actings of the *flesh* for the furtherance of it.

Secondly, Some *Lusts* or branches of original corruption, do obtain in some person such advantages, either from Nature, Custom, Employment, Societyor, the like *Circumstances*, that

that they become like the *Canaanites that had iron Chariots*; it is a very difficult thing to subdue them. Well it is, if War be maintained constantly against them, for they will almost alwayes be in actual Rebellion.

Thirdly, *In-dwelling-Sin* though weakned, retaineth all its *properties*; the properties of a thing follow its nature. Where the *nature* of any thing is, there are all its *natural properties*. What are these properties of *In-dwelling Sin*, I should here declare, but that I have handled the whole *power and efficacy*, the *nature and properties* of it, in a Treatise to that only purpose. In brief they are such, as it is no wonder, that *some Believers* are by them cast into *depths*; but it is indeed, that any do escape them. But thereof the Reader may see at large my Discourse on this particular subject.

Secondly, Add hereunto, the *power and prevalency of temptation*; which because also, I have already in a *special Discourse* to that purpose insisted on, I shall not here farther lay open.

Thirdly, The *Soveraign pleasure of God* in dealing with *sinning Saints* must also be considered. Divine Love and Wisdom work not towards all in the same manner. God is pleased to continue Peace unto some with a *non-abstante*, for great provocations. *Love* shall humble them, and rebukes of kindness shall recover them from their wanderings. Others he is pleased to bring into the *depths* we have been speaking of. But yet I may say generally, signal provocations meet with one of these two events from God.

Gods Soveraignty in dealing with Believers in their sins.

First, Those in whom they are, are left into some *signal barrenness*, and fruitlesness in their Generations; they shall wither, grow barren, worldly, sapless, and be much cast out of the hearts of the people of God. Or Secondly, They shall be exercised in these *depths*, from whence their way of deliverence is laid down in this *Psalm*. Thus I say, God deals with his Saints in great variety: Some shall have *all their bones broken*, when others shall have only the gentle strokes of the rod. We are in the *hand of Mercy*, and he may deal with us as seems good unto him; but for our parts, *great sins*, ought to be attended with expectations of *great depths* and perplexities.

And this is the state of the soul *proposed in this Psalm*, and by us, unto consideration. These are the *depths* wherein it is entangled;

tangled; these are the wayes and means whereby it is brought into these depths. Its deportment in, and under this state and condition, lyes next in our way. But before I proceed thereunto, I shall annex some few things, unto what hath been delivered, tending to the farther opening of the *whole Case* before us. And they are (1.) What are, or of *what sort* those sins are which usually cast the souls of Believers into these depths; and then (2.) Insist on some *Aggravations* of them.

What sins usually bring Believers into great spiritual distresses. Aggravations of these sins.

First, Sins in their own nature *wasting Conscience* are of this sort. Sins that rise in opposition unto *all of God* that is in us; that is the light of *Grace* and *Nature* also. Such are the sins that cast *David* into his *depths*. Such are the sins enumerated 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10 *Be not deceived*, saith the Apostle, *neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with Mankind. Nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Certain it is, that Believers may fall into *some of the sins* here mentioned. Some *have done so*, as is left on record; The Apostle says not, these who *have commited any of these sins*, but *such sinners* shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, that is, who live in these, or any of these sins, or any like unto them. There is no provision of mercy made for *such sinners*. These and the like are sins which in their *own nature*, without the consideration of *aggravating circumstances*, (which yet indeed really, in *Believers* they can never be without) are able to plunge a soul into *depths*. These sins *eat the locks* of men spiritual strength; and it is in vain for them to say, we will go, and do as at others times. Bones are not broken without pain; nor *great sins* brought on the *Conscience* without trouble. But I need not insist on these. *Some* say that they deprive even true Believers of all their interest in the Love of God, but unduly; all grant that they bereave them of all *comforting evidence*, and well grounded *Assurance* of it. So they did *David* and *Peter*, and herein lyes no small part of the *depths* we are searching into.

Secondly,

Secondly, There are sins which though they do not rise up in the conscience with such a *bloody guilt*, as those mentioned, yet by reason of some *circumstances* and *aggravations*, God takes them so *unkindly*, as to make them a rope of disquietness and trouble to the soul all its dayes. He sayes of some sins of ungodly men, as *I live this iniquity shall not be purged from you until ye dye?* If you are come to this *height*, you shall not escape, I will not spare you. And there are Provocations in his own People, which may be so *circumstantiated*, as that he will not let them pass, before he have cast them into *depths*, and made them cry out for deliverance. Let us consider some of them.

First, *Miscarriages under signal Enjoyments of love and kindness from God*, are of this sort. When God hath given unto any one *expressive manifestations* of his Love, convinced him of it, made him say in the inmost parts of his heart, *this is undeserved love and kindness*, then for him to be *negligent in his walking* with God, it carrieth an *unkindness* with it, that shall not be forgotten. It is a remark upon the miscarriages of *Solomon*, that he fell into them after *God had appeared unto him twice*. And all sins under, or after *especial mercies*, will meet at one time or other *especial rebukes*. Nothing doth more distress the conscience of a sinner, then the remembrance in *darkness* of abused light; in *distortions* of neglected love. This God will make them sensible of. *Though I have redeemed them*, saith God, *yet they have spoken lyes against me*, Hos. 7. 15. So *Chap.* 13. 4, 5, 6, 7. When God hath in his Providence dealt graciously with a Person, it may be delivered him from *straights and troubles*, set him in a large place, prevented him with many fruits and effects of his goodness, blessed him in his *Person*, Relations, and Employments, dealt well with his soul, in giving him a gracious sense of his love in Christ; for such a one to fall under *sinful miscarriages*, it goes to the heart of God, and shall not be passed over. *Undervaluations of Love, are great provocations.* Hath *Nabal* thus requited my kindness saith *David?* I cannot bear it. And the clearer the *convictions* of any in this kind were, the more severe will their *reflections* be upon themselves

Secondly, *Sins under, or after great Afflictions, are of this importance also.* God doth not afflict *willingly*, or chasten us meerly

meerly for his pleaſure. He doth it to make us *partakers of his Holineſs.* To take ſo little notice of his hand herein, as under it, or after it, not to watch againſt the workings and ſurprizals of ſin, it hath unkindneſs in it; *I ſmote him*, ſaith God, *and he went on forwardly in the wayes of his own heart.* Theſe provocations of his *Sons and Daughters*, he cannot bear with. Hath God brought thee into the *Furnace*, ſo that thou haſt *melted* under his hand, and in pity and compaſſion hath given thee enlargement; if thou haſt *ſoon forgotten* his dealings with thee, is it any wonder, if he mind thee again, by troubles in thy ſoul?

Thirdly, *Breaking off from under ſtrong convictions, and dawnings of Love before Converſion*, are oftentimes remembred upon the conſcience afterwards. When the Lord by his Spirit ſhall mightily *convince the heart of ſin*, and make withal ſome diſcoveries of his Love, and the Excellencies of Chriſt unto it, ſo that it begins to *yield*, and be overpowered being *almoſt perſwaded to be a Chriſtian*; if then through the ſtrength of *luſt*, or unbellef, it goes back to the *world*, or *ſelf righteouſneſs*; its folly hath *unkindneſs* with it, that ſometimes ſhall not be paſſed by. God can, and often doth put forth the *greatneſs of his power*, for the recovery of ſuch a ſoul; but yet he will deal with him, about this contempt of his Love, and the Excellency of his Son, in the dawnings of them revealed unto him.

Fourthly, *Snddain forgetfulneſs of indearing manifeſtations of ſpecial Love.* This God cautions his people againſt, as knowing their proneneſs thereunto. Pſal. 85. 8. *God the Lord will ſpeak peace to his People and his Saints; but let them not turn again to folly.* Let them take heed of their aptneſs to *forget indearing manifeſtations of ſpecial Love.* When God at any time draws nigh to a ſoul by his Spirit, in his Word, with gracious words of peace and love, giving a ſenſe of his kindneſs upon the heart by the Holy Ghoſt, ſo that it is filled with *joy unſpeakable and glorious* thereon; for this ſoul, upon a temptation, a diverſion, or by meer careleſneſs and neglect, which oftentimes falls out, to ſuffer *this ſenſe of Love* to be as it were obliterated, and ſo to loſe that influencing efficacy unto obedience which it is accompanied withal, this alſo is full of *unkindneſs.* An account hereof we

we have, *Cant.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. In the firſt Verſe the *Lord Jeſus* draws nigh with full proviſion of Goſpel Mercies for his *Beloved*; *I am come unto thee*, ſaith he, *O my Siſter*; I have brought *Myrrh* and *Spice*, *Honey* and *Wine* with me: Whatever is ſpiritually ſweet and delightful; Mercy, Grace, Peace, Conſolation, Joy, Aſſurance, they are all here in a readineſs for thee, *v.* 2. The *Spouſe* in her *drowſie indiſpoſition* takes little notice of this gracious viſit; ſhe is diverted by other matters, and knows not how to attend fully and wholly to the bleſſed *Communion* offered unto her; but excuſeth her ſelf as otherwiſe engaged. But what is the iſſue? Chriſt withdraws, leaves her in the dark, in the midſt of many *diſconſolations*, and long it is before ſhe obtain any recovery.

Fifthly, *Great opportunities for ſervice neglected, and great gifts not improved*, are oftentimes the occaſion of plunging the Soul into great depths. Gifts are given to *trade* withall for God. Opportunities are the *market-days* for that trade. To napkin up the *one*, and to let ſlip the *other*, will end in trouble and diſconſolation. Diſquietments and perplexities of heart, are *worms* that will certainly breed in the *ruſt* of unexerciſed Gifts. God loſeth a revenue of glory and honour by ſuch ſlothful Souls; and he will make them ſenſible of it. I know ſome at this day, whom *omiſſions of opportunities* for ſervice, are ready to *ſink* into the Grave.

Sixthly, *Sins after eſpecial warnings*, are uſually thus iſſued. In all that variety of *ſpecial warnings* which God is pleaſed to uſe towards *ſinning Saints*, I ſhall ſingle out one only. When a Soul is wraſtling with ſome *Luſt* or *Temptation*, God by his Providence cauſeth ſome *ſpecial word*, in the Preaching of the Goſpel, or the Adminiſtration of ſome *Ordinance* thereof, peculiarly ſuited to the ſtate and condition of the Soul, by the ways of *rebuke* or *perſwaſion*, to come nigh and enter the inmoſt parts of the heart. The Soul cannot but take notice that God is *nigh* to him, that he is dealing with him; and calling on him to look to him for aſſiſtance. And he ſeldom gives ſuch warnings to his Saints, but that he is *nigh them* in an eminent manner to give them relief and help, if in anſwer unto his call, they apply themſelves unto him; but if his care and kindneſs herein be neglected, his following *reproofs* are uſually more ſevere.

Seventhly, *Sins that bring ſcandal*, ſeldom ſuffer the Soul to

escape *depths*. Even in *great sins*, God in chastening takes more notice oft-times of the *scandal*, then the *sin*: as 2 *Sam.* 12. 14. Many professors take little notice of their worldlines, their pride, their passion, their lavish tongues; but the *world doth*, and the *Gospel* is disadvantaged by it; and no wonder if themselves find from the hand of the Lord, the bitter fruits of them in the issue.

And many other such *Aggravations* of sins there are, which heighten provocations in their own nature, not of so dreadful an aspect as some others, into a guilt plunging a Soul into *depths*. Those which have been named, may suffice in the way of instance; which is all that we have aimed at, and therefore forbear enlargements on the several heads of them.

Aggravations of sins causing Distresses.

The consideration of some *Aggravations* of the guilt of these sins, which bring the Soul usually into the condition before laid down, shall close this discourse.

First, The Soul is *furnished with a Principle of Grace, which is continually operative and working for its preservation from such sins*. The *new Creature* is living and active for its own growth, increase and security, according to the tenour of the Covenant of Grace, Gal. 5. 17. *it lusteth against the flesh*. It is naturally *active* for its own preservation and increase; as *new born Children* have a natural inclination to the *food* that will keep them alive, and cause them to grow, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. The Soul then cannot fall into these entangling sins, but it must be with an *high neglect* of that very Principle which is bestowed upon it for quite contrary ends and purposes. The labourings, lustings, desires, crying of it, are neglected. Now it is from God, and of God, and is the *Renovation of his Image* in us; that which God owneth and careth for; the wounding of its vitals, the stifling its operations, the neglect of its endeavours for the Souls preservation, do always attend sins of the importance spoken unto.

Secondly, Whereas this *new Creature*, this principle of Life and Obedience is not able of it self to preserve the Soul from such sins as will bring it into *depths*; *there is full provision for continual supplies made for it, and all its wants in Jesus Christ*. There are treasures of relief in Christ, whereunto the Soul may at any time repair and find *succour* against the incursions of sin. He says to the Soul, as *David* unto *Abiathar*; when he fled from *Doeg*:

Doeg: Abide with me, fear not; he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life, but with me thou shalt be in safety. Sin is my Enemy no less then thine; it seeketh the life of thy Soul, and it seeketh my life; abide with me, for with me thou shalt be in safety. This the Apostle exhorts us unto, Heb. 4. 16. *Let us come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need.* If ever it be a time of need with a Soul, it is so when it is under the *assaults* of provoking sins. At such a time there is suitable and *seasonable help* in Christ for succour and relief. The new Creature beggs with sighs and groans, that the Soul would apply it self unto him. To *neglect him* with all his Provision of Grace, whilst he stands calling unto us, *open unto me, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*, to despise the *sighing* of the poor Prisoner, the *new Creature*, by sin appointed to dye, cannot but be an high provocation. May not God complain and say; see these poor creatures; they were once intrusted with a *stock of Grace* in themselves; this they cast away, and themselves into the utmost misery thereby. That they might not utterly perish a second time, their *portion* and stock is now laid up in another; a safe Treasurer; in him are their lives and comforts secured. But see their *wretched negligence*; they venture all, rather then they will attend to him for succour. And what think we is the heart of Christ, when he sees his *Children* giving way to conscience-wasting sins, without that *application* unto him, which the life and peace of their own Souls calls upon them for. These are not sins of daily infirmity, which cannot be avoided; but their guilt is always attended with a *neglect* more or less, of the relief provided in Christ against them. The *means* of preservation from them is blessed, ready, nigh at hand: the *concernment* of Christ in our preservation great, of our Souls unspeakable; to neglect and despise means, Christ, souls, peace and life, must needs render guilt very guilty.

Thirdly, Much to the same purpose may be spoken about that *signal provision that is made against such sins as these in the Covenant of Grace*, as hath been already declared. But I shall not farther carry on this discourse.

And this may suffice, as to the state and condition of the Soul in this *Psalm* represented. We have seen what the *depths* are wherein it is intangled, and by what ways and means any one

may come to be cast into them. The next thing that offers it self unto our consideration, is the *deportment* of a gracious Soul in that state and condition; or what course it steers towards a delivery.

The Duty and Actings of a Believer under Distresses from a sense of sin. His Application unto God. To God alone. Earnestness and intention of mind therein.

The second Verse opened.

The words of these two first Verses declare also the deportment of the Soul in the condition that we have described; that is, what it doth, and what course it steers for relief. *I have cryed unto thee O Lord, Lord hear my voice, let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.*

There is in the words a *General Application* made in a tendency unto relief; wherein is first to be considered, to whom the Application is made; and that is JEHOVAH. I have cryed unto thee *Jehovah*. God gave out that Name to his people to confirm their Faith in the stability of his Promises, *Exod.* 3. He who is *BEING* himself, will assuredly give *being* and subsistance to his promises. Being to deal with God about the *promises* of *Grace*, he makes his Application to him under this name, I call upon thee *Jehovah*.

In the Application it self may be observed,

First, The *Anthropopathy* of the Expression, He prays that God would cause his *Ears to be attentive:* after the manner of men who seriously *attend* to what is spoken to them, when they turn aside from that which they regard not.

Secondly, The *Earnestness* of the Soul in the work it hath in hand. which is evident both from the *Reduplication* of his request, *Lord hear my voice, let thine Ears be attentive to my voice*, and the *Emphaticalness* of the words he maketh use of. Let thine ears, saith he, be קשבות *Diligently Attentive*. The word signifies the most diligent heedfulness and close attention; let thine ears be *very attentive*; and unto what; לקדל תחנוני *to the voice of my supplication: deprecationum mearum* generally say *Interpreters*; of my *Deprecations*; or earnest prayers for the averting of evil, or punishment. But the word is from חנן *Gratiosus fuit*; to be *gracious* or *merciful*; so that it signifies properly *supplication for grace.*

grace. Be attentive, saith he, *O Lord, unto my supplications for grace and mercy*, which according to my extream necessity, I now address my self to make unto thee. And in these words doth the *Psalmist* set forth in general the *frame* and working of a gracious Soul, being cast into *depths* and darkness by sin.

The foundation of what I shall farther thence pursue, lyes in these two Propositions.

First, *The only attempt of a sinful entangled Soul for relief, lyes in an application to God alone. To thee* Jehovah *have I cryed, Lord hear.*

Secondly *Depths of sin-intanglements, will put a gracious Soul on intense and earnest applications unto God; Lord hear, Lord attend.* Dying men do not use to cry out slothfully for relief.

What may be thought necessary in general for the direction of Soul in the state and condition described, shall briefly be spoken unto from these two Propositions.

Actings of a Believer under distresses from sin.

First, *Trouble*, danger, disquietment, arguing not only things evil, but a *sense* in the mind and Soul of them, will of themselves put those in whom they are upon *seeking relief.* Every thing would naturally be at rest: A *drowning man* needs no *Exhortation* to endeavour his own deliverance and safety. And spiritual troubles will in like manner put men on attempts for relief. To seek for no remedy, is to be senslesly *obdurate*, or wretched *desperate*, as *Cain* and *Judas*. We may suppose then that the principal business of every Soul in *depths*, is to endeavour deliverance. They cannot *rest* in that condition wherein they have *no rest*. In this endeavour what course a gracious Soul steers, is laid down in the first Proposition, *negatively and positively*. He applies himself *not* to any thing *but God*, he applies himself *unto God*. An eminent instance we have of it in both parts; or both to the one side and the other, Hos. 14. 3. *Asshur*, says those poor distressed returning sinners, *shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our Gods, for in thee the Fatherless findeth mercy.* Their application unto God, is attended with a renunciation of every other way of relief.

Several

False ways of relieving Souls in distress.

Several things there are that *sinners* are apt to apply themselves unto for relief in their perplexities, which prove unto them as *waters* that fail. How many things have the *Romanists* invented to deceive Souls withall? *Saints* and *Angels*, the *Blessed Virgin*, *the Wood of the Cross*, *Confessions*, *Pennances*, *Masses*, *Pilgrimages*, *Dirges*, *Purgatories*, *Papal Pardons*, *Works of Compensation*, and the like, are made entrances for innumerable Souls into Everlasting ruine. Did they know the terrour of the Lord, the nature of Sin, and of the *mediation* of Christ, they would be ashamed and confounded in themselves for these abominations, they would not say unto these their *Idols*, *ye are our Gods*, come and save us. How short do all their contrivances come of his, that would faln be offering Rivers of Oil, *yea*, *the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul*, *his first born for his transgression*, Mich. 6. 7. Who yet gains nothing, but an Aggravation of his sin and misery thereby: Yea, the Heathens went beyond them in devotion and expence. It is no new enquiry what course *sin perplexed Souls* should take for relief. From the foundation of the world, the minds of far the greatest part of mankind, have been exercised in it: As was their light or darkness, such was the course they took; Among those who were ignorant of God, this Enquiry brought forth all that *Diabolical Superstition* which spread it self over the face of the whole world. *Gentilism* being destroyed by the power and efficacy of the Gospel, the same enquiry working in the minds of darkned men in conjunction with other lusts, brought forth the *Papacy*. When Men had lost a spiritual acquaintance with the Covenant of Grace, and Mystery of the Gospel, the design of eternal love, and efficacy of the blood of Christ, they betook themselves in part, or in whole for relief under their entanglements, unto the *broken Cisterns* mentioned. They are of two sorts: *Self*, and *other things*. For those *other things* which belong unto their *false Worship*, being abominated by all the Saints of God: I shall not need to make any farther mention of them. That which relates unto *self*, is not confined unto *Popery*, but confines it self to the limits of Humane Nature, and is predominate over all that are under the Law; that is, to seek for relief in *sin-distresses* by self-endeavours, self-righteousness. Hence many poor Souls in straights apply *themselves* to *themselves*. They expect

pect their *cure* from the same hand that wounded them. This was the life of *Judaism*, as the Apostle informs us, *Rom.* 10. 3. And all men under the Law, are still animated by the same principle. *They return, but not unto the Lord.* Finding themselves *in depths*, in distresses about sin, what course do they take? This they will do, that they will do no more; this shall be their *ordinary* course, and that they will do in an *extraordinary* manner; as they have *offended*, whence their trouble ariseth, so they will *amend*, and look that their peace should spring from thence, as if God and they stood on equal terms. In this way some spend all their days; *sinning* and *amending*, amending and sinning, without once coming to repentance and peace. This the Souls of Believers watch against. They look on themselves as *Fatherless*, in thee the *Fatherless findeth mercy*; that is, *helpless*; without the least ground of hopes in themselves, or expectation from themselves. They know their repentance, their amendment, their supplications, their humiliations, their fastings, their mortifications; will not relieve them. *Repent* they will, and amend they will, and pray, and fast, and humble their Souls, for they know these things to be their duty; but they know that their *goodness extends not to him* with whom they have to do, nor is he profited by their righteousness. They will be in the *performance* of all duties, but they expect not *deliverance* by any duty. It is God, say they, with whom we have to do: our business is to hearken what he will say unto us.

There are also other ways whereby *sinful Souls* destroy themselves by *false reliefs*. *Diversions* from their perplexing thoughtfulness pleaseth them. They will fix on something or other that cannot *cure* their *Disease*, but shall only make them *forget* that they are *sick*. As *Cain* under the terrour of his guilt, departed from the presence of the Lord, and sought inward rest in outward labour and employment; he *went and built a City*, Gen. 4. 6. Such courses *Saul* fixed on; first *Musick*, then a *Witch*. Nothing more ordinary then for men thus to deal with their convictions. They *see their sickness*, *feel their wound*, *and go to the Assyrian*, Hos. 5. 13. And this insensibly leads men into *Atheism*. Frequent Applications of *Creature diversions* unto convictions of sin, are a notable means of bringing on final impenitency. Some *Drunkards* had it may be never been so, had they not been first *convinced* of other sins.

ſins. They ſtrive to ſtifle the guilt of *one* ſin, with *another*. They fly from themſelves, unto themſelves, from their *conſciences* unto their *luſts*; and ſeek for relief *from ſin* by *ſinning*. This is ſo far from Believers, that they will not allow *lawfull things* to be a diverſion of their diſtreſs. *Uſe* lawful things they may and will, but not to *divert* their thoughts from their diſtreſſes. Theſe they know muſt be iſſued *between God and them*. *Wear* off they will not, but muſt be taken away. Theſe *rocks*, and the like whereof they are innumerable, I ſay, a gracious ſoul takes care to avoid. He knows it is *God alone* who is the Lord of his *Conſcience*, where his depths lye; *God alone* againſt whom he hath ſinned; *God alone* who can pardon his ſin. From dealing with him he will be neither enticed, nor *diverted*. *To thee O Lord*, ſaith he, *do I come*; thy *word* concerning me muſt ſtand; upon thee will I wait; if thou haſt no delight in me I muſt periſh. Other remedies I know are vain. I intend not to ſpend my ſtrength for that which is not bread. *Unto thee do I cry*. Here a ſin-intangled ſoul is to fix its ſelf. Trouble excites it to look for relief. Many things *without it* preſent themſelves as a diverſion; many things *within it*, offer themſelves for a remedy. *Forget* thy ſorrow ſay the former; *eaſe* thy ſelf of it by us, ſay the latter; the ſoul refuſeth both; as *Phyſitians* of no value, and to God alone, makes its Application. He hath *wounded*, and he alone can *heal*. And untill any one that is ſenſible of the guilt of ſin, will come off from all *reſerves* to deal immediately with God, it is in vain for him to expect relief.

Earneſtneſs of a diſtreſſed ſoul in its Applications unto God.

Secondly, Herein it is *intenſe*, *earneſt and urgent*, which was the ſecond thing obſerved. It is no time now to be ſloathful. The ſouls, *All*, its greateſt concernments are at the ſtake. Dull, cold, *formal*, cuſtomary Applications to God will not ſerve the turn. *Ordinary* actings of faith, love, fervency, *uſual* ſeaſons, opportunities, duties, anſwer not this condition. To do no more than *ordinary* now, is to do nothing at all. He that put forth no more ſtrength and activity for his deliverence when he *is in depths*, ready to periſh, than he doth, or hath need to do, when he is at liberty in plain and ſmooth paths, is ſcarcely like to eſcape. Some (in ſuch conditions) are *careleſs* and negligent; they think in ordinary courſe, to wear off their diſtempers; and that although

although at preſent they are ſenſible of their danger, they ſhall yet have peace at laſt; in which frame there is much contempt of God. Some *deſpond* and languiſh away under their preſſures. *Spiritual ſloth* influenceth both theſe ſorts of perſons. Let us ſee the *frame* under conſideration exemplified in another. We have an inſtance in the *Spouſe*, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2, 3. She had loſt the *preſence of Chriſt*; and ſo was in the very ſtate and condition before deſcribed, *v.* 1. It was *night* with her, a time of darkneſs and diſconſolation; and ſhe ſeeks for her Beloved: *By night on my bed I ſought him whom my ſoul loveth*. Chriſt was abſent from her, and ſhe was left unto *depths* and *darkneſs* upon that account. Wherefore ſhe *ſeeks* for him; but as the moſt are apt to do in the like ſtate and condition. She mends not her pace, goes not out of, or beyond her courſe of *ordinary duties*; nor the frame ſhe was uſually in at other times. But what is the iſſue? ſaith ſhe, *I found him not*. This is not a way to recover a ſenſe of loſt Love; nor to get out of her entanglements. And this puts her on another courſe; ſhe begins to think that if things continue in this eſtate, ſhe ſhall be undone; I go on indeed with the performance of duties ſtill, but I have not the *preſence of my Beloved*; I meet not with Chriſt in them. My darkneſs and trouble abides ſtill, if I take not ſome other courſe, I ſhall be loſt. Well ſaith ſhe, *I will riſe now*, *v.* 2. I will ſhake off all that *eaſe* and *ſloth*, and *cuſtomarineſs*, that cleave to me. Some more *lively*, vigorous courſe muſt be fixed on. Reſolutions for new, extraordinary, vigorous, conſtant *Applications unto God*, are the firſt general ſtep and degree, of a ſin-intangled ſoul acting towards a recovery, *I will riſe now*. And what doth ſhe do when ſhe is thus reſolved? *I will*, ſaith ſhe, *go about the ſtreets, and in the broad ways, and ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth*. I will leave no ways or means unattempted, whereby I may poſſibly come to a freſh enjoyment of him. If a man ſeek for a Friend, he can look for him only in the *ſtreets* and in the *broad ways*; that is either in *Towns*, or in the *Fields*. So will I do ſaith the *Spouſe*; in what Way, Ordinance, or Inſtitution ſoever, in or by what duty ſoever, publick or private, of communion with others, or ſolitary retiredneſs, Chriſt ever was, or may be found, or peace obtained, *I will ſeek him*, and not give over until I come to an injoyment of him. And this frame, this Reſoſution, a ſoul in

depths muſt come unto, if ever it expect deliverance. For the moſt part, *mens wounds ſtink, and are corrupt becauſe of their fooliſhneſs.* As the *Pſalmiſt* complains, *Pſal.* 38. 5. They are wounded by ſin; and through *ſpiritual ſloth* they neglect their cure; this weakens them, and diſquiets them day by day; yet they endure all, rather then they will come out of their carnal eaſe to deal effectually with God in an extraordinary manner. It was otherwiſe with *David*, Pſal. 22. 1. 2. *Why*, ſaith he, *art thou ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring! O my God, I cry in the day time, and in the night ſeaſon, and am not ſilent.* What ails the Man? Can he not be quiet *night* nor *day*? never *ſilent*, never hold his peace? And if he be ſomwhat diſquieted, can he not contain himſelf, but that he muſt *roar*, and cry out? Yea muſt he *roar* thus *all the day long*, as he ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 32. 3. and *groan* all *the night*, as *Pſal.* 6. 6. What is the matter with all this *roaring*, *ſighing*, *tears*, roaring all the day, all night long? Ah let him alone, *his ſoul is bitter in him*; he is fallen into *depths*; the Lord is withdrawn from him, trouble is hard at hand, yea, he is full of anxiety on the account of ſin; there is no quietneſs and *ſoundneſs* in him; and he muſt thus earneſtly and reſtleſly apply himſelf for relief. Alas, what ſtrangers for the moſt part are men *now-adays* to this frame? How little of the workings of this Spirit is found amongſt us? And is not the reaſon of it, that we value the World more, and Heaven and heavenly things leſs then he did? that we can live at a better rate without a ſenſe of the love of God in Chriſt, then he could do? and is't not hence that we every day ſee ſo many *withering Profeſſors*, that have in a manner loſt all Communion with God, beyond a little lip-labour, or talking; the *filthy ſavour* of whoſe wounds are offenſive to all but themſelves; and ſo will they go on ready to die and periſh, rather then with this holy man thus ſtir up themſelves to meet the Lord. *Heman* was alſo like unto him, *Pſal.* 88 11, 12. What ſenſe he had of his depths, he declares, v. 3. *My ſoul*, ſaith he, *is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.* And what courſe doth he ſteer in this heavy, ſorrowful, and diſconſolate condition? Why ſaith he, *O Lord God of my ſalvation, I have cryed day and night unto thee, let my prayer come before thee, incline thine ear unto my cry*, v. 1, 2. Day and night he cries to the God of his ſalvation, and that with

with *earneſtneſs* and importunity. This was his buſineſs, thus was he exerciſed about all his days.

This is that which is aimed at; if a *gracious ſoul* be brought into the *depths* before-mentioned, and deſcribed by reaſon of ſin, when the Lord is pleaſed to lead him forth towards a recovery, he cauſeth him to be *vigorous*, and *reſtleſs* in all the duties whereby he may make Application to him for deliverance. Now wherein this *intenſineſs* and earneſtneſs of the ſoul in its Applications unto God, doth principally conſiſt, I ſhall briefly declare, when I have touched a little upon ſome conſiderations and grounds that ſtir it up thereunto.

Grounds of earneſtneſs in Applications unto God.

First, The *greateſt of mens concernments* may well put them on this *earneſtneſs*. Men do not uſe to deal with dull and *ſlothful Spirits* about their greateſt concerns. *David* tells us, that he was more concerned *in the light* of *Gods countenance*, then the men of the world could be in their *Corn and Wine*, Pſal. 4. 6, 7. Suppoſe a *man of the World*, ſhould have his houſe, wherein all his ſtock and riches are laid up, ſet on fire, and ſo the whole be in danger under his eye to be conſumed; would he be calm and quiet in the conſideration of it? Would he not beſtir himſelf with all his might, and call in all the help he could obtain? and that becauſe his *portion*, his *all*, his great concernment lies at ſtake. And ſhall the ſoul be ſlothful, careleſs, dull, ſecure, when *fire* is put to its eternal concernments? when the *light of Gods countenance*, which is of more eſteem unto him, then the greateſt *increaſe of Corn and Wine*, can be to the men of the world, is removed from him? It was an argument of prodigious ſecurity in *Jonah*, that he was faſt aſleep when the *Ship* wherein he was, was ready to be caſt away for his ſake. And will it be thought leſs in any ſoul, who being in a ſtorm of wrath and diſpleaſure from God, ſent out into the *deep* after him, ſhall neglect it, and ſleep, as *Solomon* ſays, on the *top of a Maſt in the midſt of the Sea*? How did that poor creature whoſe heart was mad on his *Idols*, *Judg.* 18. 24. cry out, when he was deprived of them? *You have taken away my Gods*, ſaith he, *and what have I more*? And ſhall a gracious ſoul *loſe his God*, through his own folly, the ſenſe of his love, the conſolation of his preſence, and not with all his might follow hard after him? Peace with God, joy in believing, ſuch

ſouls have formerly obtained; Can they live without them now, in their ordinary walking? can they chooſe but cry out with *Job*, *O that it were with us, as in former days, when the candle of the Lord was upon our Tabernacle*, Chap. 29. 2, 3 4 and with *David*, O Lord, *reſtore unto me the joy of ſalvation*, pſal. 51. 12. for *Oh my God, I remember former injoyments, and my ſoul is caſt down within me.* Pſal. 42. 6. They cannot live without it. But ſuppoſe, they might make a *ſorry ſhift* to paſs on in their Pilgrimage, whilſt all is ſmooth about them; what will they do in the time of outward tryals and diſtreſſes? When *deep calleth unto deep*, and one trouble excites and ſharpens another: Nothing then will ſupport them, they know, but that which is wanting to them; as *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Pſal.* 23. 4. So that the greatneſs of their concernment, provokes them to the earneſtneſs mentioned.

Secondly, They have *a deep ſenſe* of theſe their *great concernments*. All men are *equally concerned* in the Love of God, and pardon of ſin. Every one hath a *ſoul* of the ſame immortal conſtitution, equally capable of Bliſs and Wo. But yet we ſee moſt men are ſo *ſtupidly ſottiſh*, that they take little notice of theſe things. Neither the *guilt* of ſin, nor the *wrath* of God, nor *death*, nor *Hell*, are thought on, or eſteemed by them; they are their *concernments*, but they are not *ſenſible* of them. But *gracious ſouls*, have a *quick* living *ſenſe* of ſpiritual things. For

Firſt, They have a *ſaving ſpiritual light*, whereby they are able to *diſcern* the true nature of ſin, and the terror of the Lord. For though they are now ſuppoſed to have loſt the *comforting light* of the Spirit; yet they never looſe the *ſanctifying light* of the Spirit, the light whereby they are enabled to diſcern ſpiritual things in a ſpiritual manner, this never utterly departs from them. By this they ſee ſin *to be exceeding ſinful*, Rom. 7. 13. By this they *know the terror of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 15. 11. And that it is *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. 10. 13. By *this* they diſcover the excellency of the love of God in Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, the preſent ſenſe whereof they have loſt. By *this* they are enabled to look within the vail, and to take a view of the bleſſed conſolations which the *Saints* injoy, whoſe communion with God was never interrupted. *This* repreſents to them all the ſweetneſs, pleaſure, *Joy*, *Peace*, which in former days

days they had whilſt God was preſent with them in Love: By *this*, are they taught to value all the fruits of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, of the injoyment of many, whereof they are at preſent cut ſhort and deprived. All which, with other things of the like nature and importance make them very ſenſible of their concernments.

Secondly, They remember what it *coſt them* formerly to deal with God about ſin; and hence they know it is no *ordinary matter* they have in hand. They muſt again to their old work; take the old cup into their hands again. A recovery from *depths* is as a *new converſion*.

Oft-times in it, the *whole work*, as to the ſouls apprehenſion, is gone over afreſh. This the ſoul knows to have been a work of dread, terrour and trouble, and trembles in it ſelf, at its new tryals. And,

Thirdly, The Holy Ghoſt gives unto poor ſouls, a *freſh ſenſe* of their *deep concernments*, on purpoſe that it may be a means to ſtir them up unto theſe earneſt Applications unto God. The whole work is his, and he carries it on, by means ſuited to the compaſſing of the end he aimeth at. And by theſe means is a gracious ſoul brought into the frame mentioned. Now there are ſundry things that concur in and unto this frame.

Earneſtneſs & wherein it conſiſteth.

Firſt, There is a *continual thoughtfulneſs* about the ſad condition wherein the ſoul is in its *depths*. Being deeply affected with their condition, they are continually ruminating upon it, and pondering it in their minds. So *David* declares the caſe to have been with him, Pſal. 38. 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 7, 8. *Thine arrows ſtick faſt in me, and thy hands preſſeth me ſore; there is no ſoundneſs in my fleſh, becauſe of thine anger, neither is there any reſt in my bones becauſe of my ſins; for mine iniquities are gone over mine head, as an heavy burthen they are too heavy for me, my wounds ſtink, and are corrupt, becauſe of my foliſhneſs; I am troubled, I am bowed down, I go mourning all the day long; I am feeble and ſore broken, I have roared for the diſquietneſs of my heart.* Reſtleſneſs, deep-thoughtfulneſs, diſquietneſs of heart, continual heavineſs of ſoul, ſorrow and anxiety of mind, lye at the bottom of the *Applications*, we ſpeak of. From theſe Principles their Prayers flow out; as *David* adds, v. 9. *Lord, all my deſire is before thee, and*

and my groaning is not hid from thee. This way all his trouble wrought. He *prayed* out of the abundance of his meditation and grief. Thoughts of their ſtate and condition lye down with ſuch Perſons, and riſe with them; and accompany them all the day long. As *Reuben* cryed, *The child is not, and I, whither ſhall I go?* So doth ſuch a ſoul; the Love of God is not, Chriſt is not, and I, whither ſhall I cauſe my ſorrow to go? God is provoked, death is nigh at hand, relief is far away, darkneſs is about me; I have loſt my peace, my joy, my Song in the night; what do I think of duties? Can two *walk together unleſs they be agreed?* Can I walk with God in them, whilſt I have thus made him mine enemy? What do I think of Ordinances? Will it do me any good to be at *Jeruſalem*, and not ſee the face of the King? to live under Ordinances, and not to meet in them with the *King of Saints*? May I not juſtly fear, that the Lord will take his *Holy Spirit from me*, until I be left without remedy? With ſuch thoughts as theſe are *ſin-entangled ſouls* exerciſed, and they lye rolling in their minds, in all their applications unto God.

Secondly, We ſee the Application it ſelf conſiſts in, and is made by the *Prayer of Faith*; or crying unto God; now this is done with *intenſeneſs* of mind; which hath a two-fold fruit or propriety, (1.) *Importunity*, and (2.) *Conſtancy*.

It is ſaid of our bleſſed Saviour, that when he was in *his depths*, about *our* ſins, that he offered up *prayers and ſupplications with ſtrong cries and tears*, Heb. 5. 7. Strong cries and tears expreſs the *utmoſt intenſion* of Spirit. And *David* expreſſeth it by *roaring*, as we have ſeen before; as alſo by *ſighing*, *groaning* and panting. A ſoul in ſuch a condition lies down before the Lord, with ſighs, groans, mourning, cries, tears and *roaring*, according to the various working of his heart, and its being affected with the things that it hath to do; and this produceth.

Firſt, *Importunity*. The power of the *importunity* of Faith our Saviour hath marvellouſly ſet out, *Luke* 11. 8, 9, 10. as alſo, *Chap.* 18. 1. *Importunate prayer* is certainly prevailing. And importunity is as it were made up of theſe two things: *frequency* of interpoſition, and *variety* of arguings. You ſhall have a man that is importunate come unto you, *ſeven times a day* about the ſame buſineſs; and after all, if any new thought come into his mind,

mind, though he had reſolved to the contrary, he will come again. And there is nothing that can be imagined to relate unto the buſineſs he hath in hand, but he will make uſe of it, and turn it to the furtherance of his Plea. So is it in this caſe. Men will uſe both *frequency* of interpoſition, and *variety* of arguings, Pſal. 86. 1. *I cry unto thee daily*, or rather, all the day. He had but that *one buſineſs*, and he attended it to the purpoſe. By this means we *give God no reſt*, *Iſa.* 62. 7, which is the *very character* of importunity. Such ſouls *go to God*; and they are not ſatisfied with what they have done; and they *go again*; and ſomewhat abideth ſtill with them, and they *go to him again*; and the heart is not yet emptied, *they'l go again* to him; that he may have no reſt. What variety of arguments are pleaded with God in this caſe, I could manifeſt in the ſame *David*. But it is known to all; there is not any thing almoſt that he makes not a *plea* of, the *Faithfulneſs*, *Righteouſneſs*, Name, Mercy, Goodneſs, and Kindneſs of God in Jeſus Chriſt; the *concernment* of others in him, both the friends and foes of God; his own *weakneſs* and helpleſneſs, yea, the *greateſt of ſin* it ſelf: *Be merciful to my ſin*, ſaith he, *for it is great*. Sometimes he begins with ſome Arguments of this kind; and then being a little diverted by other conſiderations, ſome new *plea* is ſuggeſted unto him by the Spirit, and he returns immediatly to his firſt imployment and deſign, all arguing great intenſion of mind and ſpirit.

Secondly *Conſtancy* alſo flows from intenſeneſs. Such a ſoul will not give over, untill it obtain what it aims at, and looks for: as we ſhall ſee in our proceſs in opening this Pſalm.

And this is in general the *deportment* of a *gracious ſoul* in the condition here repreſented unto us. As poor creatures love their peace, as they love their ſouls, as they tender the glory of God, they are not to be wanting in this duty. What is the reaſon that *controverſies* hang ſo long between God and your ſouls, that it may be you ſcarce ſee a good day all your lives? Is it not for the moſt part from your ſloth and deſpondency of ſpirit? you will not gird up the loyns of your minds, in dealing with God, to put them to a ſpeedy iſſue in the blood of Chriſt. You go on and off, begin and ceaſe, try and give over; and for the moſt part, though your caſe be *extraordinary*, content yourſelves with *ordinary* and cuſtomary Applications unto God. This makes

makes you *wither*, become uſeleſs, and pine away in and under your perplexities. *David* did not ſo; but after many and many a breach made by ſin, yet through quick, vigorous, reſtleſs actings of Faith, all was repaired, ſo that he lived peaceably, and dyed triumphantly. Up then and be doing; let not your *wounds corrupt becauſe of your folly*; make through-work of that which lies before you; be it long, or difficult, it is all one, it muſt be done, and is attended with ſafety; What you are like to meet withal in the firſt place ſhall nextly be declared.

Verſe 3.

The words of the Verſe explained; and their meaning opened.

Verſe 3. opened.

THE *general frame* of a gracious ſoul in its perplexities about ſin, hath been declared. Its *particular actings*, what it doth, what it meets withall, are nextly repreſented unto us.

Firſt, Then in particular, it cries out, *If thou Lord ſhouldſt mark iniquities, O Lord who ſhall ſtand?*

There is in the words a *Suppoſition*; and an *Inference* on that Suppoſition. In the *Suppoſition*; there is, firſt, the *Name* of *God* that is fixed on, as ſuited unto it. And Secondly, The *thing it ſelf* ſuppoſed. In the *Inference*, there is expreſſed the matter of it, *to ſtand*; and the manner of its *propoſal*, Wherein two things occur, (1.) That it is expreſſed by way of *Interrogation*. (2.) The *Indefiniteneſs* of that *Interrogation*; *Who ſhall ſtand?*

If thou *Lord*; He here fixes on another name of God; which is *Jah*. A name though from the ſame *root* with the former, yet ſeldom uſed, but to intimate and expreſs the *terrible Majeſty of God*. *He rideth on the Heavens, and is extolled by his name Jah.* Pſal. 68. 4. He is to deal now with God about the guilt of ſin; and God is repreſented to the ſoul as *great and terrible*; that he may know what to expect and look for, if the matter muſt be tryed out according to the demerit of ſin.

What then ſaith he to *Jah*? אם עונות תשמור *If thou ſhouldſt mark iniquities.* שמר is to *obſerve* and *keep* as in ſafe cuſtody. To *keep*, *preſerve* and watch diligently. So to remark and obſerve, as to *retain* that which is obſerved, to ponder it, and lay it up in the heart, Gen. 37. 11, *Jacob obſerved Joſephs* dream: that is,

is, he *retained* the memory of it, and pondered it in his heart.

The *marking of iniquities* then here intended, is Gods ſo far conſidering and obſerving of them, as to *reſerve them for puniſhment* and vengeance. In oppoſition unto this *marking*, he is ſaid not to *ſee ſin*, to *overlook* it, to *cover* it, to *forget* it, or remember it no more; that is, to *forgive* it, as the next Verſe declares.

I need not ſhew that God ſo far *marks all* ſins in all perſons, as to *ſee them*, *know* them, diſallow them, and to be *diſpleaſed* with them. This cannot be denyed without taking away of all grounds of fear and Worſhip. To deny it, is all one as to deny the very *Being* of God; deny his Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and you deny his Exiſtance. But there is a day appointed, wherein all the men of the world ſhall know, that *God knew* and took notice of all and every one of their moſt ſecret ſins. There is then a *double marking* of ſin in God, neither of which can be denyed in reference unto any ſins, in any perſons. The firſt is *Phyſical*, conſiſting in his *omniſcience*, whereunto all things are open and naked. Thus no ſin is hid from him; the ſecreteſt are before the light of his countenance. All are marked by him. Secondly, *Moral*; in a *diſpliceney* with, or diſpleaſure againſt every ſin, which is inſeperable from the nature of God, upon the account of his *Holineſs*. And this is declared in the ſentence of the *Law*, and that equally to all men in the World. But the *marking* here intended, is that which is in a tendency to Animadverſion and *puniſhment* according to the tenor of the Law. Not only the ſentence of the Law, but a *Will of puniſhing* according to it, is included in it. If ſaith the Plaſmiſt, *thou the great and dreadful God, who art extolled by the glorious name* Jah, *ſhouldſt take notice of iniquities, ſo as to recompence ſinners that come unto thee according to the ſeverity and exigence of thy holy Law*. What then? It is anſwered by the *matter* of the *Propoſal*, *who can ſtand?* That is, none can ſo do; τίς ἐστὶν οὗτος ὃν δεῖ ἔχειν ſayes *Chryſoſtom*; This WHO, is NONE. *No man*; not one in the world. מי יעמד *quis ſtabit*, or *conſiſtet*; who can ſtand, or abide and endure the tryal? Every one on this ſuppoſition muſt periſh, and that eternally. This the *deſert* of ſin, and the Curſe of the Law, which is the Rule of this *marking of their iniquity*, doth require. And there is a notable *emphaſis* in the *interragation*, which contains the *manner* of the Inference. *Who can ſtand?* is more than if he had ſaid, none can abide the tryal, and eſcape without

 ever-

everlasting ruine. For the Interrogation is *indefinite*; not *how can I? but, who can stand?* When the Holy Ghost would set out the certainty, and dreadfulness of the perishing of ungodly men, he doth it by such a kind of expression, wherein there is a deeper sense *intimated* into the minds of men, that any words can well cloath or declare. 1 Pet. 4. 17. *What shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel?* and v. 18. *Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* So here. *Who can stand?* there is a deep insinuation of a *dreadful ruine*, as unto all, with whom God shall so deal, as to *mark their iniquities*. See *Psal.* 1. 5.

The *Psalmist* then addressing himself to deal with God about sin, layes down in the first place in the general how things must go, not with *himself only*, but with *all the World*, upon the supposition he had fixed. This is not *my case only*; but it is so with *all mankind*, every one who is partaker of flesh and blood; whether their guilt answer that, which I am oppressed withal or no; all is one; *guilty* they are all, and all must perish: How much more must that needs be *my condition*, who have contracted so great a guilt as I have done. Here then he layes a great Argument against himself, on the *supposition* before laid down. If none, the *Holiest*, the humblest, the most believing soul, can *abide the tryal, can endure*; how much less can I, who am the *chiefest of sinners*, the least of Saints, who *come* unspeakably *behind them* in holiness, and have equally *gone beyond* them in sin?

This is the sense ad importance of the words; Let us now consider how they are expressive of the *actings* of the *soul* whose state and condition is here represented unto us, and what *directions* they will afford unto us, to give unto them who are fallen into the same state.

What first presents it self to a soul in distress on the account of sin, This opened in four Propositions. Thoughts of Gods making sin according to the tenor of the Law full of dread and terror.

Propositions from Verse 3.

What *depths* the *Psalmist* was in, hath been declared; in them, what Resolution he takes upon himself to *seek God alone* for relief and recovery, hath been also shewed; and what *earnestness* in general he useth therein; Addressing himself unto God *in that frame*, with that *purpose* and resolution, the first thing he fixeth on in particular

particular is the *greatness of his sin*, and guilt, according to the tenor of the Law. It appears then, that,

First, *In a sin perplexed souls addresses unto God, the first thing that presents it self unto him, is Gods marking sin according to the tenor of the Law.* The case is the same in this matter with *all sorts* of sinners; whether before *conversion*, or in *relapses* and entanglements after *conversion*. There is a proportion between *Conversion* and Recoveries. They are both wrought by the same *means* and wayes; and have both the same *effects* upon the souls of sinners, although in sundry things they differ, not now to be spoken unto. What then is spoken on this head, may be applyed unto both sorts; to them that are yet *unconverted*, and to them who are really delivered from their state and condition, but especially unto those who *know not whether state they belong unto*, that is, to all guilty souls. The Law will put in its claim to all. It will condemn the *sin*, and try what it can do against the *sinner*. There is no shaking of it off; it must be fairly answered, or it will prevail. The Law issues out an *arrest* for the debt; and it is no purpose to bid the *Serjeant* be gone, or to entreat him to spare. If *payment* be not procured, and an acquaintance produced, the soul must to prison. I am going unto God saith the soul. He is great and terrible, a *marker* of sin, and what shall I say unto him? This makes him tremble, and cry out, O Lord *who shall stand?* so that it appears hence, that,

Secondly, *Serious thoughts of Gods marking sin according to the tenor of the Law, is a thing full of dread and terror to the soul of a sinner.* But this is not all; he is not swallowed up in this amazement, *crying out only who can stand?* there is included in the words, a through sincere *Acknowledgement* of his own sin, and the guilt thereof. Mentioning the desert of sin, in his *own case*, he acknowledgeth *his own*. So that,

Thirdly, *Sincere sense and acknowledgement for sin, with self condemnation in the Justification of God, is the first peculiar especial working of a gracious soul rising out of its entanglements.* All this is included in these words. He acknowledgeth both his own *guilt*, and the Righteousness of God, if he should deal with him according to the demerit of sin.

And these things lay in the words absolutely considered; But the *state of the soul* here represented, carries us on farther. He rests

not here, as we shall see in the opening of the next Verse, the chief thing aimed at in the whole. And as a *transition* from the one to the other, that we may still carry on the *general design* at the entrance laid down; we must take along with us this farther observation.

Fourthly, *Though self-condemnation be an eminent preparation for the discovery of forgiveness in God, yet a poor distressed soul is not to rest in it, nor to rest upon it, but to pass on to the embracing of forgiveness it self.*

There is yet a general proposition lying in the words, that we may make use of in our passage; and it is this, *Gods marking of iniquities, and mans salvation are everlastingly inconsistent.* I mean his marking them in the *persons of sinners*, for the ends before mentioned.

Of some of these I shall farther treat, according as the handling of them conduceth to the purpose in hand.

That which I shall begin withal, is that which was first laid down about the effects of *serious thoughts* concerning Gods *marking sin* according to the tenor of the Law; which as I said, is the *first thing* that presents it self unto a sin-entangled soul in its addresses unto God.

But this shall not pass alone. I shall draw the *two* first Observations into *one*, and make use of the *first* only in the confirmation of the other; which will express the sense of the words absolutely considered. The *third* and *fourth* will lead us on in the progress of the soul, towards the relief sought after, and proposed. That therefore which is to be first insisted on, comes up to this *Proposition.*

In a sin perplexed souls addresses unto God, the first thing that presents it self unto him, is, Gods marking of sin according to the Tenor of the Law, which of it self is apt to fill the soul with dread and terror.

I shall first somewhat speak unto it in *This*; as considering in its self, and then enquire into the *concernment* of the soul in it, *whose condition* is here described.

Terror arising from a sense of the guilt of sin.

The Lord speaks of some, who when they *hear the word of the curse, yet bless themselves, and say they shall have peace, Deut.* 29. 19. Let men preach, and say what they will of the terror of the Lord, they

they will despise it; which God threatens with *utter extermination:* And he notes it again, as an amazing wickedness, and the height of obduratenes, *Jer* 36. 24. Generally it is with sinners, as it was with *Gaal* the Son of *Ebed, Judg.* 9. when he was fortifying of *Sichem* against *Abimelech*; *Zebul* tells him that *Abimelech* will come and destroy him. Let him come saith *Gaal*, I shall deal well enough with him, let him bring forth his Army, I fear him not; but upon the very first appearance of *Abimelech's* Army, he trembleth for fear, *v.* 36. Tell obdurate sinners of the *wrath of God*, and that he will come to plead his cause against them; for the most part they take no notice of what you say; nor have any serious thoughts about it; but go on as if they were resolved they should deal well enough with him. Notwithstanding all their stoutness, a day is coming wherein *fearfulness* shall surprise them, and make them cry out, *who amongst us shall dwell with devouring fire, who amongst us shall inhabit with everlasting burnings?* Yea, if the Lord be pleased in this life in an especial manner to draw nigh to any of them, they quickly see, that their *hearts cannot endure, nor can their hands be strong*, Ezek 22. 14. Their hands hang down, and their stout hearts tremble like an aspen leaf.

He who *first sinned*, and had first occasion to have *serious thoughts about Gods marking of sin*, gives us a notable instance of what we have affirmed. And the first in every kind, is the *measure* of all that follows in the same *kind. Gen.* 3. 8. *He heard the voice of God:* so he had done *before* without the least trouble or consternation of Spirit; He was made for communion with God; and that he might *hear his voice* was part of his blessedness. But now saith he, *I heard thy voice and was afraid, and hid my self.* He knew that God was coming in the *inquest of sin*, and he was not able to bear the thoughts of meeting him; could he have gone into the *bowels* of the earth from whence he was taken, and have been there hid from God, he would not have failed to have attempted it. Things are now altered with him; in that God whom he loved before, as a *good, holy, powerful*, Righteous Creator, Preserver, Benefactor and Rewarder, he saw nothing now, but wrath, indignation, vengeance and terror. This makes him tremble out those dreadful words, *I heard thy voice, and was afraid and hid my self.*

The *giving of the Law* afterwards, evinces what effects the con-

consideration of Gods proceeding with *sinners*, according to the tenor of it, must needs produce, Exod. 20. 18, 19. *All the people saw the thundrings and the lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet, and the Mountain smoaking*; as the Apostle also describes it, *Heb.* 12. 18. In this manner came forth from the Lord that *fiery Law*, *Deut.* 33. 2. So that all who are concerned in it, did exceedingly *quake and tremble*. And yet all this respects but the severity of the Law in *general*, without the application of it unto any soul in particular. There is a solemnity, that carrieth an *awe* with it, in the preparation of an *Assize* to be kept and held by poor worms like our selves; but the dread of it, is peculiar to the *Malefactors*, for whose tryal and execution all this preparation is made. When a soul comes to think, that all this *dreadful preparation*, this appearance of terrible *Majesty*, these streams of the firy Law are all pointed towards him, it will make him cry out, *Lord who can stand?* And this Law is still in *force* towards sinners, even as it was on the day wherein it was given on Mount *Sinai*. Though *Moses* grew *old*, yet his *strength* never failed. Nor hath his Law; the Law given by him, lost any thing of its *strength*, power, or *Authority* towards *sinners*. It is still accompanied with *thundrings* and *lightnings* as of old. And it will not fail to represent the *terror of the Lord* to a guilty soul.

Among the Saints themselves I could produce instances to manifest that they have found it to be thus. The cases of *Job*, *David*, *Heman* are known. I shall only consider it in *Christ* himself. From himself he had no occasion of any *discouraging* thought; being *holy*, *harmless*, *undefiled*. He fulfilled all Righteousness, did his Fathers will in all things, and abode in his Love. This must needs be attended with the *highest peace*, and most blessed Joy. In the very entrance of his tryals, he had a *full perswasion* of a comfortable issue and success; as we may see, *Isa.* 50. 7, 8. But yet when his soul was exercised with thoughts of Gods *marking our iniquities* upon him, it was *sorrowful unto the death*. He was *amazed and very heavy*, Mark 14. 33. His *Agony*, his blood sweat, his strong cryes and supplications, his reiterated prayers, *if it be possible let this cup pass from me*, his last and dreadful cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*, all manifest what apprehensions he had, of what it was for *God to mark iniquities*. Well may poor sinners cry out, *Lord who shall stand?* when the Son of God himself, so trembled under the weight of it. In

In serious thoughts of *Gods marking sin*, he is represented unto the soul under all those glorious terrible *Attributes and Excellencies* which are apt to beget a dread and terror in the hearts of sinners, when they have no relief from any Covenant engagements in Christ. The soul looks upon him as the great *Law-giver*, *James* 4. 12. able to revenge the breach of it, by destroying *body and soul in Hell fire*, as one terrible in holiness, of *purer eyes than to behold iniquity*; So also in Greatness and in power; the *Living God*, into whose *hands it is a fearful thing to fall*; as attended with vendictive Justice, saying *Vengeance is mine, and I will recompence*, Heb. 10. 30. Now for a soul to consider God, cloathed with all these dreadful and terrible Excellencies, coming to deal with sinners according to the tenor of his *fiery* Law, it cannot but make him *cry* out with *Moses*, *I exceedingly quake and tremble*.

These things work on their minds the *conclusion* mentioned before, is asserted in these words; namely, that *Gods marking of sin according to the tenor of the Law, and mans salvation, are utterly inconsistent*; a conclusion, that must needs shake a soul, when pressed under a sense of its own guilt.

When a Person who is really guilty, and knows himself to be guilty, is brought unto his *tryal*, he hath but these *four grounds* of hope that his *safety* and his *tryal* may be consistent. He may think that either (1.) The *Judge* will not be able to find out, or *discover* his crimes; or (2.) That some one will powerfully *intercede* for him with the Judge: or (3.) That the *Rule of the Law* is not so strict as to take notice of his miscarriages; or (4.) That the *penalty* of it, is not so *severe* but that there may be a way of escape. Cut him short of his expectations from some, one, or all of these, and all his hopes must of necessity perish. And how is it in this case? Gods marking sin, and mans salvation inconsistent.

First, Of the *Judge* we have spoken somewhat already. The present enquiry is, whether any thing may be *hid from him* or no; and so a door of escape be opened to a sinner. The Apostle tels us, *that all things are open and naked unto him*, Heb. 4. 12. and the Psalmist, that there *is not a thought in our hearts, nor a word in our tongue, but he understandeth it afar off, and knoweth it altogether*, Psal. 139. 2, 4. What the sinner knows of himself, that may *cause him to fear*, that God knows. And what he knows not of himself,

himself, that *deserves his fear*, that God knows also; *he is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*, 1 John. 3 20. When God shall not only set in order before the sinner, the *secret sins*, which he retains some remembrance of; but also brings to mind and represents unto him, that world of filth and folly, which either he never took any real *notice* of, or hath utterly *forgotten*, it will trouble him, yea confound him.

Secondly, But may not this Judge be *intreated* to pass by what he knows, and to deal favourably with the sinner? May not *an Intercessor* be obtained to plead in the behalf of the guilty soul? *Eli* determines this matter, 1 Sam. 2. 25 *If one man sin against another, the Judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?* There is not, saith *Job* between us מוכיח one that might *argue* the case, in pleading for me, and so make up the matter, *laying his hand upon us both*, Job. 9. 33. We now consider a sinner purely under the Administration of the Law; which knows nothing of a *Mediator*. In that case who shall take upon him to intercede for the sinner? Besides, that *all creatures* in Heaven and Earth are engaged in the quarrel of God against sinners; and besides the greatness and terror of his *Majesty*, that will certainly deter all or any of them from undertaking any such work; what is the request that in this case must be put up unto God? Is it not that he would cease to be *Holy*, leave off from being *Righteous*, relinquish his Throne, deny himself, and his Soveraignty, that a *Rebell*, a Traytor, his cursed enemy may live and escape his Justice: Is this request reasonable? Is he fit to *intercede* for sinners that make it? Would he not by so doing prove himself to be the *greatest* of them? The sinner cannot then expect any door of escape to be opened unto him? All the *world* is against him; and the case must be tryed out nakedly between God and him: but,

Thirdly, It may be the *Rule of the Law* whereby the sinner is to be tryed, is not so *strict*, but that in the case of *such sins* as he is guilty of, it may admit of a favourable *Interpretation*; or that the *good* that he hath done, may be laid in the ballance against his *Evil*, and so some relief be obtained that way. But the matter is quite otherwise, There is no *good Action* of a sinner, though it were perfectly good, that can lye in the *ballance* with, or compensate the *evil* of the least sin committed. For all good is due on another account,

account, though no guilt were incurred. And the payment of money that a man *owes*, that he hath borrowed, makes no satisfaction for what he hath *stole*; no more will our duties compensate for our sins. Nor is there any *good* Action of a sinner, but it hath *evil* and guilt enough attending it, to render it self unacceptable, so that men may well cease from thoughts of their *supererrogation*. Besides where there is any *one sin*, if all the good in the world might be supposed to be in the same person, yet in the indispensible order of our dependance on God, nothing of that *good* could come into consideration, until the *guilt of that sin* were answered for unto the utmost. Now the penalty of every sin, being the *eternal ruine* of the sinner, all his *supposed good* can stand him in little stead. And for the Law it self, it is an issue of the Holiness, Righteousness, and Wisdom of God; so that there is not any evil, so great or small, but is forbidden in it, and condemned by it. Hereupon *David* so states this whole matter, Psal. 143. 2. *Enter not into Judgement with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* That is, if things are to be tryed out and determined by the *Law*, no sinner can obtain acquitment; as *Paul* declares the sense of that place to be, *Rom.* 3. 20. *Gal.* 2. 16. but yet,

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Though what hath been spoken, may be of *general use* unto sinners of all sorts, whether called home to God, or yet strangers to him; yet I shall not insist upon any *general improvement* of it, because it is intended only for one special end or purpose. That which is aimed at, is to shew what are the *first thoughts* that arise in the heart of a poor intangled soul, when first he begins to endeavour a *recovery* in a returnal unto God. The Law immediately puts in its *claim* unto him, and against him.

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God is repreſented unto him, as *angry*, diſpleaſed, provoked; and his *terror* more or leſs beſets him round about. This fills him with *fear*, *ſhame*, and *confuſion* of face; ſo that he knows not what to do. Theſe troubles are greater or leſſer, according as God ſeeth it *beſt* for the poor creatures *preſent humiliation*, and *future* ſafety. What then doth the ſinner? What are his thoughts hereupon? doth he think to *fly from God*, and to give over all endeavours of recovery? Doth he ſay this God is an *holy and terrible God, I cannot ſerve him*, it is to no purpoſe for me to look for any thing but fury and deſtruction from him? and therefore I had as good give over, as preſiſt in my deſign of drawing nigh to him? It cannot be denyed but that in this caſe, *thoughts of this nature* will be ſuggeſted by unbelief: and that ſometimes great perplexities ariſe to the ſoul by them. But this is not the iſſue and final product of this exerciſe of the ſoul; it produceth another effect; it calls for that which is the *firſt particular working* of a gracious ſoul ariſing out of its ſin intanglements. This is, as was declared; *a ſincere ſenſe of ſin, and acknowledgment of it, with ſelf-condemnation in the juſtification of God*: This is the *firſt thing* that a ſoul endeavouring a *recovery* from its *depths* is brought and wrought unto. His general reſolution to make ſeriours and through work, with what he hath in hand, was before unfolded. That which in the next place we are directed unto in theſe words, as the *Reflection* on its ſelf, upon the conſideration of Gods *making iniquity*, now mentioned. This is Faiths *great* and proper *uſe of the Law*; The nature whereof ſhall be farther opened in the next *diſcourſe*.

The firſt particular actings of a ſoul towards a recovery out of the depths of ſin. Senſe of ſin, wherein it conſiſts. How it is wrought. Acknowledgment of ſin; its nature and properties. Self-condemnation.

The ſouls actings towards a Recovery.

What is the *frame of the ſoul in general*, that is excited by grace, and reſolves in the ſtrength thereof to attempt a *recovery out of the depths of ſin-entanglements*, hath been declared. We have alſo ſhewed what *entertainments*, in general ſuch a ſoul had need to expect; yea, *ordinarily* ſhall be ſure to meet withall. It may be he goes forth at firſt like *Sampſon* with his *locks* cut, and thinks he will do as at other times; but he quickly finds, his *peace* loſt, his *wounds* painful, his *Conſcience* reſtleſs, God diſpleaſed, and his whole condition, as the utmoſt of his *own Apprehenſion*, hazardous. This fills him with the thoughts expreſſed in this *third Verſe*, and fixes the concluſion in his mind, diſcourſed of before. He finds now that he hath the Law afreſh to deal withall. Thence ariſeth that ſenſe and acknowledgement of ſin, that *ſelf-condemnation*, in the Juſtification of God, whereof we now ſpeak. He grows not *ſullen*, ſtubborn, diſpleaſed, or for the extenuation of his ſin and guilt; he quarrelleth not with, he repineth not againſt the Holineſs, Severity and Righteouſneſs of the Law of God; but reflects wholly on himſelf, his own unworthineſs, guilt and deſert; and in a ſenſe of them lyes down at the foot of God, in expectation of his word and ſentence.

Senſe of ſin, wherein it conſiſts.

Three things in this condition we aſcribe unto ſuch a Soul. First, *A ſincere ſenſe of ſin*. There is a *twofold ſenſe of ſin*. The one is general and *notional*; whereby a man knows *what ſin is*, that himſelf is a ſinner; that he is guilty of this or that, theſe or thoſe ſins; only his *heart* is not effected proportionably to that diſcovery and knowledge which he hath of theſe things. The other is *active* and *efficacious*. The ſoul being acquainted with the *nature of ſin*, with its *own guilt* in reference unto ſin in general, as alſo to this or that ſin, is *univerſally* influenced by that apprehenſion unto ſuitable Affections and Operations.

Of both theſe we have an inſtance in the ſame perſon. *David* before *Nathans* coming to him, had the *former*, afterwards he had the *latter* alſo. It cannot be imagined but that before the coming of the *Prophet*, he had a *general knowledge* and ſenſe not only abſolutely of the *nature of ſin*; but alſo, that *himſelf was a ſinner*, and guilty of thoſe very ſins which afterwards he was reproved for. To think otherwiſe, is to ſuppoſe, not only that he was *un-ſainted*, but *un-manned* alſo, and turned into a Beaſt. But yet this wrought not in him any *one Affection* ſuitable to his condition. And the like may be ſaid of moſt ſinners in the world. But now when *Nathan* comes to him, and gives him the latter *efficacious ſenſe* whereof we ſpeak, we know what effects it did produce.

It is the *latter* only that is under consideration; and that also is twofold: (1.) *Legal* or *Antecedaneous* unto conversion; (2) *Evangelical*, and previous to the *recovery from depths*, whereof we treat. How these two differ, and how they may be discerned one from the other, being both of them in their kind sincere, is not my business to declare.

Nature and Causes of Gospel convictions of sin.

Now this *last*, which we assign as the *first duty*, work, or acting of a returning soul, *is a deep and practical apprehension wrought in the mind and heart of a believing sinner by the Holy Ghost, of sin and its evils, in reference unto the Law, and Love of God, the Cross, and blood of Christ, the Communion and Consolation of the Spirit, and all the fruits of Love, Mercy, or Grace, that it hath been made partakers of, or on Gospel-ground hoped for.*

First, The *principal efficient cause* of it is the *Holy Ghost*. He it is who *convinceth of sin*, John 16. 8. He works indeed by *means*. He wrought it in *David* by the Ministry of *Nathan*, and he wrought it in *Peter*, by the look of Christ. But his work it is. No man can work it upon his own soul. It will not spring out of mens rational considerations. Though men may exercise their *thoughts* about such things, as one would think were enough to break the heart of stones, yet if the Holy Ghost put not forth a *peculiar efficacy* of his own, this sence of sin will not be wrought or produced. As the waters at the Pool of *Bethesda* were not *troubled*, but when an Angel descended and moved them, no more will the Heart for sin, without a saving *elapse* of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, It is a *deep Apprehension of sin*, and the evils of it. Slight transient thoughts about them, amount not to the *sense* of which we speak. *My sorrow*, saith *David*, *is continually before me*. Psal. 38. 17. It pressed him alwayes and greatly. Hence he compares this *sense of sin* wrought by the Holy Ghost, to *arrows that stick in the flesh*, v. 2: They pain sorely and are always perplexing. Sin in this *sense* of it, layes hold on the soul, so that the sinner cannot *look up*, Psal. 40. 12. And it abides with him, making *his sore run in the night without ceasing*, Psal. 77. 2. and depriveth the soul of rest, *my soul* saith he *refused to be comforted*. This Apprehension of sin, lyes down, and rises with him in whom it is. *Transient thoughts* attended with infrequent

frequent sights and ejaculations, little become a returning soul. And.

Thirdly, It is *Practical*. It is not seated only in the *speculative* part of the mind, hovering in general notions; but it *dwells* in the *Practical understanding*, which effectually influenceth the Will and Affections. Such an Apprehension as from which *sorrow and humiliation* are inseparable. The acts of the *practical understanding*, do so necessarily produce, together with them suitable acts of the Will and affections, that some have concluded that those are indeed proper acts of the *Will*, which are usually ascribed to the *Understanding*. It is *so in the mind*, as that the whole soul is cast into the mould and likeness of it, humiliation, sorrow, self-abhorrency, do live and dye with it.

Fourthly, It hath in the *first place*, respect unto the *Law* of God. There can be no due consideration of sin, wherein the Law hath not its place. The *Law* calls for the sinner, and he willingly gives up his sin to be judged by it. There he sees it to be *exceeding sinful*, Rom. 7. 17. Though a Believer be *less under the power of the Law* than others, yet he knows more of the *Authority* and nature of it than others. He sees more of its *spirituality* and holiness. And the more a man sees of the *excellency of the Law*, the more he sees of the *vileness of sin*. This is done by a soul in its first endeavour of a *recovery* from the entanglements of sin. He labours throughly to *know his disease*, that he may be cured. It will do him no good, he knows, to be ignorant of his distemper, or his danger. He knows that if his wounds be not searched to the bottom, they will *stink, and be corrupt*. To the Law then he brings himself and his sin. By that, he sees the *vileness* of the one, and the *danger* of the other. Most men lye still in their depths, because they would willingly escape the *first step* of their rising. From the *bottom* of their misery, they would fain at once be at the *top* of their felicity. The soul managed in this work by the Holy Ghost doth not so. He *converseth* with the Law; brings his sin unto it; and fully hears the sentence of it. When the *sin* is throughly condemned, then he farther takes care of the *sinner*. As ever you desire to come to rest, avoid not this entrance of your passion unto it. Weigh it well, and attend unto what the *Law* speaks of your sin, and its desert, or you will never make a due application to God for *forgiveness*. As ever you would

would have your *Souls, justified* by Grace, take care to have *your sins judged by the Law.*

Secondly, There is a respect in it to the *Love* of God. And this *breaks the hearts* of the poor returning sinner. Sorrow from the *Law, shuts* it self up in the soul, and strangleth it. Sorrow from the thoughts of the *Love* of God opens it, and causeth it to flow forth. Thoughts of sinning against the *Love of God*, managed by the Holy Ghost; what shall I say? their effects in the heart are not to be expressed. This made *Ezra* cry out, *O my God I blush, and am ashamed to lift up my face to thee*, Chap. 9. 6. and v. 10. *What shall we say after this?* After what? why all the fruits of love and kindness they had been made partakers of. Thoughts of *love* and *sin* laid together, make the soul *blush, mourn*, be ashamed and confounded in its self. So *Ezek.* 36. 31. *Then shall you remember your own evil wayes, and your doings that were not good*; When shall they do so; when thoughts and apprehensions of *love* shall be brought home to them; and saith he, then *shall you loath your selves in your own sight.* The soul now calls to mind, what *Love*, what kindness, what mercy, what grace, what patience hath been exercised towards it, and wherof it hath been made partaker. The thoughts of all these now come in upon him as streams of water. Such Mercy, such Communion, such Priviledges, such hopes of Glory; such tastes of Heaven, such Peace, such Consolation, such Joy, such Communications of the Spirit, all to a poor, wretched, cursed, lost, forlorn sinner; and all this despised, neglected, the God of them all provoked, forsaken. Ah, saith the soul, *Whither shall I cause my sorrow to go?* This fills him with shame and confusion of face; makes him mourn in secret, and sign to the breaking of the loyns; and then,

Thirdly, The *blood and Cross of Christ* is also brought to remembrance by the Holy Ghost. Ah, saith the soul, have I thus requited the wonderful astonishing *Love of my Redeemer*? Is this the return, the requital, I have made unto him? Are not Heaven and Earth *astonished* at the *despising* of that Love, at which they are *astonished*? This brake *Peters* heart upon the *look* of Christ. Such words as these from Christ, will in this condition, sound in the ears of the soul. *Did I love thee, and leave my glory to become a scorn and reproach for thy sake? Did*

I not think my life, and all that was dear unto me too good for thee, to save thee from the wrath to come? Have I been a Wildernes unto thee, or a land of darkness? What could I have done more for thee; when I had nothing left but my life, blood and soul, they went all for thee that thou mightest live by my death, be washed in my blood, and be saved through my souls being made an offering for thee? And hast thou thus requited my love? to prefer a lust before me, or by meer sloth and folley to be turned away from me; go unkind and unthankful soul, and see if thou canst find another Redeemer: This overwhelms the soul, and even drowns it in tears and sorrow. And then the bitterness also of the sufferings of Christ, are brought to mind. *They look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*, Zech. 12. 10. They remember his gall and wormwood; his cry and tears; his agony and sweat, his desertion and anguish; his blood and death; the sharpness of the Sword that was in his soul, and the bitterness of the Cup that was put into his hand. Such a soul now looks on Christ, *bleeding, dying, wrestling* with wrath and curse for him, and seeth his sin in the streams of blood that issued from his side. And all this increaseth that sense of sin whereof we speak. Also,

Fourthly, It relates to the *communion and consolations* of the Holy Ghost, with all the priviledges, and fruits of Love we are by him made partakers of. The *Spirit* is given to Believers upon the promise of Christ to *dwell in them.* He takes up their hearts to be his *dwelling place*; to what ends and purposes? that he may *purifie and sanctifie them*, make them holy, and *dedicate* them to God; to furnish them with Grace and gifts, to interest them in priviledges; to guide, lead, direct, comfort them; to seal them unto the day of Redemption. Now this Spirit is *grieved by sin*, Ephes. 4. 30. and his *dwelling place defiled thereby*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. and 3. 17. Thoughts hereof greatly sharpen the spiritual sense of sin in a recovering soul. He considers, what Light, what Love, what Joy, what Consolation, what Priviledges it hath by him been made partaker of; what motions, warnings, workings to keep it from sin, it hath found from him; and sayes within it self; *What have I done, whom have I grieved, whom have I provoked; what if the Lord should now for my folly and ingratitude utterly take his holy Spirit from me? What if I should have so grieved him, that he will dwell in me no more,*

delight

delight in me no more? What dismal darkness and disconsolation; yea, what utter ruine should I be left unto? However, what shame and confusion of face belongs to me for my wretched disingennity, and ingratitude towards him?

This is the *first thing* that appears in the returning souls actings and frames; a *sincere sence of sin* on the account mentioned, wrought in it by the Holy Ghost. And this a soul in the depths described, must come unto, if ever it expects or look for deliverance, and a recovery. Let not such persons expect to have a *renewed* sence of mercy, without a *revived* sense of sin.

Acknowledgment of sin, the true nature of it.

Secondly, From hence proceedeth an *ingenious*, free, gracious *Acknowledgment of sin*. Men may have a *sense of sin*, and yet suffer it to lye burning as a fire shut up in their bones, to their continual disquietment, and not be able to come off unto a *free soul-opening* acknowledgment. Yea, *confession* may be made in general, and mention therein of that *very sin* wherewith the soul is most intangled, and yet the soul comes short of a due performance of this Duty. Consider how the case stood with *David*, Psal. 32. 3. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* How could *David keep silence*, and yet roar all the day long? What is that silence which is consistent with *roaring*? It is a meer negation of that duty, which is expressed, *v.* 5 that is intended. *I acknowledge my sins unto thee, and mine iniquities I have not hid.* It was not a *silence* of submission and waiting on God that he intends. That would not have produced a wasting of his spiritual strength, as he complains this silence did; *My bones waxed old*; nor yet was it a *sullen, stubborn* and contumacious frame that was upon him; but he notes, saith *Calvin*, (and he sayes well,) *affectum qui medius est inter tolerantiam & contumaciam, vitio & virtuti affinis*; *An affection between patience and stubbornes bordering on the one and other.* That is, he had a deep sense of sin; this disquieted and perplexed him all the day long; which he calls his *roaring*; It *weakned* and *wearied* him, making his *bones wax old*, or his strength decay; yet was he not able to bring his heart to that *ingenious* gracious *acknowledgment*, which like the launcing of a festered wound, would have given at least some *ease* to his soul. *Gods children* are oft-times in this matter like *ours*. Thought they

they are convinced of a fault, and are really troubled at it, yet they will hardly acknowledge it. So do they. They will go up and down, sigh and mourn, *roar all the day long*; but an evil and untoward frame of spirit under the power of unbelief and fear, keeps them from this duty.

Now that this *acknowledgement* may be acceptable unto God; it is required, First, that it be *free*, then that it be *full*.

First, It must be *free* and *spiritually* ingenious. *Cain, Pharaoh, Ahab, Judas*, came all to an *acknowledgement* of sin; but it was whether they would or no. It was pressed out of them; it did not flow from them. The *confession* of a person under the convincing terrors of the Law, or dread of eminent Judgements, is like that of Malefactors on the rack; who speak out that, for which themselves and friends must dye. What they say, though it be the truth, is a fruit of force and torture, not of any ingenuity of mind. So is it with meerly convinced persons. They come not to the *acknowledgement* of sin with any more freedom. And the Reason is because all sin hath *shame*; and for men to be *free unto shame*, is naturally impossible, shame being natures *shrinking from its self*, and the posture it would appear in. But now the *returning soul*, hath never more freedom, liberty and *aptitude* of spirit, than when he is in the *acknowledgement* of those things whereof he is most *ashamed*. And this is no small evidence that it proceeds from that spirit which is attended with that liberty, for where *the Spirit of God is, there is liberty*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. When *David* was delivered from his *silence*, he expresseth this frame in the performance of this Duty, Psal. 32. 5. *I acknowledged my sin, and mine iniquities I have not hid; I said I will confess my transgression.* His mouth is now open, and his heart inlarged. And he multiplies one expression upon another, to manifest his enlargement. So doth a soul rising out of its depths, in this beginning of this *address* unto God. Having the *sense of sin*, before described wrought in him by the Holy Ghost, his heart is made free and inlarged unto an *ingenious acknowledgement* of his sin before the Lord. Herein he pours out his soul unto God; and hath not more *freedom* in any thing than in dealing about that, whereof he is most *ashamed*.

Secondly, *Full* also it must be. *Reserves* ruine confession. If the soul have any secret thought of *rolling a sweet morsel under*

its tongue, of a *bow* in the house of *Rimmon*, it is like *part of the price kept back*, which makes the whole robbery, instead of an *offering*. If there be remaining a *bitter root* of favouring any one lust or sin, of any *occasion* of, or *temptation* unto sin, let a man be as open, free and earnest as can be imagined in the acknowledgement of all other sins and evils, the *whole duty* is rendered abominable. Some persons when they are brought into depths and anguish about any sin, and are thereon forced to the acknowledgement of it, at the same time they are little concerned, with their other follies and iniquities, that it may be, are no less provoking unto God, than that is from whence their present trouble doth arise. Let not, as *James* speaks in another case, *such a man think, that he shall receive any thing from God.* It must be *full* and comprehensive, as well as free and ingenious.

And of such *importance* is the right performance of this duty, that the *promise of pardon* is oft-times peculiarly annexed unto it, as that which certainly carries along with it, the other duties which make up a full returnal unto God, *Prov.* 28. 13. 1 *John* 1. 9. and that place in *Job* is remarkable, Chap. 33. 27, 28. *He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.* He shall not only be made partaker of *pardon*, but of *consolation* also, and joy in the light of Gods countenance.

Self-condemnation, where in it consists.

Thirdly, There yet remains, *self-condemnation with the justification of God*, which lyes expressly in the word of the *Verse* under consideration, and hereof are two parts.

First, *Self-abhorrency* or dislike. The soul is now *wholy displeased* with it self, and reflects upon it self with all affections of regret and trouble. So the Apostles declare it to have been with the *Corinthians* when their *godly sorrow* was working in them 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. among other things, it wrought in them *indignation and revenge*; or a reflection on themselves with all manner of dislike and abhorrency. In the winding up of the Controversie between God and *Job*, this is the point he rests in. As he had come in general to a *free, full*, ingenious acknowledgement of sin, *Chap.* 40. 4, 5. So in particular he gives up his whole

whole contest, in this *abhorrency of himself*, Chap. 42. 6 *I abhor my self and repent in dust and ashes.* What a vile wretched creature have I been, saith the soul; I blush and am ashamed to think of my folly, baseness and ingratitude, is it possible that I should deal thus with the Lord? I abhorr, I loath my self, I would fain be a way from my self, I am so vile and loathsome; and filthy [illegible] of God, Angels and Men; and

Second [illegible] is *self-judging* in it also. This the Apostle invi[illegible] *selves, that we be not judged.* Chap. 11 31. *If we would judge [illegible] should not be judged.* This is a person pronouncing sentence against himself according to the tenor of the Law. The [illegible] not only its *sin*, but it *self* also to the Law. It passeth [illegible] as to *merit* and desert under the stroke and severity of it. Hence ariseth a full justification of God, in what sentences soever he shall be *pleased* to pronounce in the case before him. And these *three things* which we have passed through, compose the *frame* and first actings of a gracious soul, rising from its *depths*. They are all of them *signally* expressed in that place where we have a signal recovery exemplified, *Hos.* 14. 1,2,3,4. And this makes way for the *exaltation of grace*, the great thing in all this dispensation aimed at by God. *Ephes.* 1. 6. That which he is now doing, is to bring the soul to *glory in him*, 1 Cor. 1. 31. which is all the return he hath from his large and infinitely bountiful expences of Grace and Mercy. Now nothing can render Grace *conspicious* and glorious, until the soul come to this frame. Grace will not seem *high*, until the soul be laid very *low*. And this also suits or prepares the soul for the *receiving of mercy*, in a sense of pardon, the great thing aimed at on the part of the sinner. And it prepares it for *every duty* that is incumbent on him in that condition wherein he is. This brings the soul to *waiting* with deligence and patience. If things presently answer not our expectation, we are ready to think, we have done what we can; if it will be no better we must bear it as we are able; which frame God abhors. The soul in this frame is contented to wait the pleasure of God, as we shall see in the close of the Psalm? Oh said such an one; *if ever I obtain* a sense of Love, if *ever I enjoy* one smile of his countenance more, it is of unspeakable Grace. Let him take his own time, his own season; it is good for me quietly

ly to wait, and to hope for his salvation. And it puts the soul on prayer; yea a soul alwayes in this frame, *prayes alwayes* And there is nothing more evident, than that want of a through engagement into the performance of these duties, is the great cause why so few come *clear off from their entanglement* all their dayes Men heal their wounds slightly; and therefore after a new painful *festring*, they are brought into the same condition of restlesness and trouble, which they were in before.

Grounds of miscarriages when persons are convinced of sin and humbled. Resting in that state. Resting on it.

Miscarriages in persons convinced of sin.

The soul is not to be *left* in the state before described. There is other work for it to apply it self unto, if it intend to come unto *Rest* and peace. It hath obtained an eminent advantage for the *discovery of Forgivenes*. But to *rest in that state* wherein it is, or to *rest upon it*, will not bring it into its harbour. Three things we discovered before in the souls first serious address unto God for deliverance; *sense of sin, acknowledgement of it*, and *self-condemnation*. *Two evils* there are which attend men oftentimes, when they are brought into that state. Some *rest in it*, and press no farther; some *rest upon it*, and suppose that it is all which is required of them: The *Psalmist* avoids both these, and notwithstanding all his *pressures* reacheth out towards *forgivenes*, as we shall see in the next verse. I shall briefly unfold these *two evils*, and shew the necessity of their avoidance,

First, *By resting or staying in it*, I mean the souls desponding through discouraging thoughts that deliverance is not to obtained. Being made deeply sensible of sin, it is so overwhelmed with thoughts of its own vileness and unworthiness, as to sink under the burden; Such a soul is *afflicted and tosse with tempests and not comforted*, Isa. 54. 11. untill it is quite weary. As a Ship in a storm at Sea; when all means of contrivance are gone, men give up themselves to be driven and tossed by the Winds and Seas at their pleasure. This brought *Israel* to that state wherein he cryed out, *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement is passed over from my God*, Isa. 40 27. and *Zion*; *The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*, Chap. 49.

49. 14: The soul begins *secretly* to think there is no hope; God regardeth it not; it shall one day perish, relief is far away, and trouble nigh at hand. These thoughts do so oppress them, that though they *forsake not God utterly* to their destruction, yet they draw not nigh unto him *effectually* to their consolation

This is the *first evil* that the soul in this condition is enabled to avoid, We know how God rebukes it in *Sion*. Sion *said the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*, *Isaiah* 49 14. But how *foolish* is *Sion*, how froward, how unbelieving in this matter; what ground hath she for such sinful despondencies, such discouraging conclusions? *Can a woman*, saith the Lord, *forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb, yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee*. The like reproof he gives to *Jacob* upon the like complaint, *Chap.* 40. 28. 29. 30. There is nothing that is more provoking to the Lord, nor more disadvantagious unto the soul, than such sinful despondency. For,

First, It insensibly *weakens* the soul, and disenables it, both for *present* duties, and *future* endeavours. Hence, *some* poor creatures mourn, and even pine away in this condition, never getting one step beyond a perplexing sense of sin all their days. *Some* have dwelt so long upon it, and have so intangled themselves with a *multitude of perplexed thoughts*, that at length their natural faculties have been weakned, and rendred utterly useless; so that they have lost both sense of sin and every thing else. Against some, Satan hath taken advantage to cast in so many *intangling objections* into their minds, that their whole time hath be taken up in proposing doubts and objections against themselves: with these they have gone up and down, to one and another, and being never able to come unto *a consistency* in their own thoughts, they have spent all their dayes in a fruitless, sapless, withering comfortless condition. *Some* with whom things come to a better issue, are yet for a season brought to that *discomposure of Spirit*, or are so filled with their own apprehensions, that when the things which are most proper to their condition are spoken to them, they take *no impression* in the least upon them. Thus the soul is weakned by dwelling too long on these considerations; until some cry with

with those in Ezek. 33. 10. *Our sins are upon us, we pine away in them, and how should we then live?*

Secondly, *This frame*, if it abides, by its self, will insensibly give countenance unto *hard thoughts of God*, and so to repining, and weariness in waiting on him. At first the soul neither apprehends nor fears any such issue. It supposeth that it shall condemn and abhorr it self, and justifie God, and that for ever. But when relief comes not in, this resolution begins to weaken. Secret thoughts arise in the heart, that God is *austere*, inexorable, and not to be dealt withall. This sometimes casts forth such *complaints*, as will bring the soul unto *new complaints*, before it comes to have an issue of its tryals. *Here*, in humiliation antecedaneous to conversion, many a convinced person perisheth. They cannot *wait Gods season*, and perish under their impatience. And what the Saints of God themselves have been *overtaken* withal in their depths and tryals, we have many examples and instances. *Delight* and Expectations are the grounds of our abiding with God. Both these are weakned by a conquering prevailing sense of sin, without some relief from the *discovery of forgiveness*, though at a distance. And therefore *our perplexed soul* stayes not here, but presseth on towards that discovery.

Secondly, There is a *resting on this frame*, that is noxious and hurtful also. Some finding this *sense of sin*, with those other things that attend it wrought in them, in some measure, begin to think that now all is well, this is all that is of them required. They will endeavour to make a *life*, form such arguments of *comfort*, as they can take from their *trouble*. They think this a *ground of peace*, that they have *not place*. Here some take up *before conversion*, and it proves their ruine. Because they are convinced of sin, and troubled about it, and burdened with it, they think it shall be well with them: But were not *Cain*, *Esau*, *Saul*, *Ahab*, *Judas*, convinced of sin, and burdened with it; Did this profit them? Did it intrest them in the promises? Did not the wrath of God overtake them notwithstanding? So is it with many daily, they think their *Conviction* is *conversion*; and that their *sins are pardoned*, because *they have been troubled*.

This then is that which we reject, which the soul in this condition doth carefully avoid; so to satisfie it self with its *humiliation*, as to make that a ground of *supportment* and consolation, being thereby kept off from exercising Faith for *Forgiveness*, For this is,

First, A fruit of *self-righteousness*. For a soul to place the spring of its peace or comfort in any thing of its own, is to fall short of Christ, and to take up in *self*. We must not only be *justified*, but *glory* in him also, *Isa.* 45. 25. Men may make use of the *evidence* of their garces; but only as *medium* to a farther end; not as the *rest* of the soul in the least. And this deprives mens very *humiliations* of all *Gospel humility*. True humility consists more in *believing*, than in being sensible of sin. That's the souls great *self-emptying* and abasing; this may consist with an obstinate resolution to *scramble* for something upon the account of self endeavours.

Secondly, Though, *Evangelical sense of sin*, be a Grace, yet it is not the *uniting Grace*, it is not that which *intrests* us in Christ, not that which peculiary, and in its own nature *exalts* him There is in this sense of sin, that which is *natural*, and that which is *spiritual*; or the matter of it, and its spirituality. The former consists in *sorrow*, *trouble*, self-abasement, dejection and anxeity of mind, with the like passions. Of these I may say as the Apostle of Afflictions, they are not *joyous* but *grievous*. They are such as are accompanied with the aversation of the object which they are conversant about. In their own nature they are no more but the soul's *retreat* into its self, with an abhorrency of the objects of its sorrow and grief. When these Affections *are spiritualized*, the nature is not changed. The soul in and by them, acts according to their nature; and doth by them as such, but *retreat into its self* with a diffidence of that they are exercised about. To take up here then, must needs be to sit down short of Christ; whether it be for life, or consolation.

Let there be no mistake. There can be no *Evangelical sense* of sin, and *humiliation*, where there is not Union with Christ, *Zech.* 12 10. Only in its self, and in its own nature it is not availing. Now Christ is the only *rest of our souls*: in any thing, for any end or purpose, to take up short of him, is to lose it. It is not enough that we be *prisoners of hope*, but we must *turn to our strong hold*, Zech. 9 12. not enough that we are *weary and*

and laden, but we *must come to Him*, Matth. 11. 27, 28. It will not suffice that we are weak, and know we are weak, but we must take *hold on the strength of God*, Isa. 27. 4, 5.

Thirdly, Indeed pressing after forgiveness, is the very life and power of *Evangelical* Illumination. How shall a man know that his humiliation is *Evangelical*, that his sorrow is according to God? Is it enough that he may be resolved, that he doth not in it, as Cain, say, his *sins were greater then he could bear*, and so departed from the presence of God? nor as *Judas* did, throw down the silver, and hanged himself; nor as *Felix* did, tremble at the word, and then return to his lusts, nor as the *Jews* did, like *Prophet, pine away under his iniquities*, because of vexation of heart; nor doth he divert his thoughts to other things, thereby to relieve his soul in his trouble; nor fix upon a *Righteousness of his own*; nor *slothfully* lye down under his perplexity; but in the midst of it, he plyes himself to God in Christ for *pardon* and mercy. And it is the souls Application unto God for *forgiveness*, and not its sense of sin, that gives unto God the glory of His Grace.

Thus far then have we accompained the soul *in its depths*; it is now looking out for *forgiveness*; which what it is, and how we come to have an interest in it, the principal matter in this discourse intended, is nextly to be considered.

Verse 4.

The Words explained, and the design or scope of the Psalmist in them discovered.

The fourth Verse opened.

THe state and condition of the *soul* making *Application* unto God in this *Psalm* is recounted, *v.* 1. It was in the *depths*; not only *Providential depths* of Trouble, Affliction, and perplexities thereon; but also *depths of conscience*, distress on the account of sin, as in the opening of those words have been declared.

The *Application* of this soul unto God, with *restless fervency* and earnestness, in that state and condition; its consideration in the first place of the *Law* and the severity of Gods Justice in a

a procedure thereon; with the inevitable *ruine of all sinners*, if God insist on that way of dealing with them, have also been opened and manifested from the foregoing *Verses*.

Being in this estate, *perplexed* in its self, *lost* in and under the consideration of Gods *marking iniquity according to the tenor of the Law*; that which it fixes on, from whence any relief, stay or supportment might be expected in such a condition, is laid down in this *Verse*.

Verse 4.

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou maist be feared.

I shall first *open* the words as to their *signification* and importance; then shew the *design* of the *Psalmist* in them, with reference to the soul whose condition is here represented; and lastly propose the *general Truths* contained in them, wherein all our concernments do lye.

There is *forgiveness*, ἱλασμὸς say the *LXX.* and *Hierom* accordingly *Propitiatio*; *propitiation*: which is somewhat more than *venia* or *pardon*, as by some it is rendred.

הסליחה *condonatio ipsa*; *forgiveness its self*. It is from סלח to *spare*, to *pardon*, to *forgive*, to be *propitious*: and is opposed to חסל, a word composed of the same letters varied (which is common in that Language) signifying to *cut off*, and *destroy*.

Now it is constantly applyed unto *Sin*, and expresseth every thing that concurrs to its *pardon*, or *forgiveness*. As,

First, It expresseth the *Mind* or *Will* of *pardoning*, or Gods gracious *readiness* to forgive, Psal. 86. 5. *Thou Lord art good* וסלח and *ready to forgive*; χρηστὸς καὶ ἐπιεικὴς; *benign and meek*; or *sparing*, *propitious*. Of a gracious merciful heart and nature. So *Nehem.* 9. 17. Thou art O God סליחות *propitiationum*, of *propitiations* or pardons; or as we have rendered it, *ready to forgive*; a God of *forgivenesses*; or all plenty of them is in thy gracious heart, *Isa.* 55. 8. So that thou art alwayes ready to make out *pardons* to sinners. The word is used again *Dan.* 9. 9. to the same purpose.

Secondly, It regards the *act of pardoning*; or *actual forgiveness* it self, Psal. 103. 3. המחל *who forgiveth* all thine iniqui-

ties; actually discharged thee of them: which place the Apostle respecting renders the word by χαρισάμενος, Col. 3. 13. *Having freely forgiven you* (for so much the word imports) *all your trespasses.*

And this is the *word* that God useth in the *Covenant*, in that great Promise of Grace and Pardon, *Jer.* 31. 34.

It is *warrantable* for us, yea *necessary* to take the *word* in the utmost extent of its signification and use. It is a word of *favour*, and requires an interpretation tending towards the enlargement of it. We see it may be rendred ἱλασμὸς or *propitiation*; χάρις or *Grace*; and *venia* or *pardon*; and may denote these three things.

First, The *gracious*, tender, merciful *Heart* and Will of God; who is the *God of pardons* and forgiveness; or one ready to forgive, to give out mercy, to *add to pardon.*

Secondly, A respect unto *Jesus Christ*, the only ἱλασμὸς, or *propitiation* for sin, as he is expressly called, *Rom.* 3. 25. 1 *John* 2. 2. And this is that which interposeth between the gracious *heart* of God, and the actual *pardon* of sinners: *All forgiveness is founded on propitiation.*

Thirdly, It denotes *condonation* or *actual forgiveness* it self, as we are made partakers of it; comprizing it both *actively*, as it is an Act of Grace in God, and *passively* as terminated in our souls, with the deliverance that attends it. In this sense as it looks *downwards*, and in its *effects* respects us, it is of meer *Grace*; as it looks *upwards* to its *causes* and respects the Lord Christ, it is from *propitiation* or attonement. And this is that *pardon* which is administred in the Covenant of Grace.

Now as to the *place* which these *words* enjoy in this *Psalm*, and their Relation to the *state* and condition of the soul here mentioned, this seems to be their importance.

O Lord, although this must be granted, that if thou shouldst mark iniquities according to the tenor of the Law, every man living must perish, and that for ever; yet there is hope for my soul; that even I who am in the depths of sin-entanglements, may find acceptance with thee; for whilst I am putting my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; I find that there is an Attonement, a propitiation made for sin, on the account whereof thou sayest thou hast found a Ransome, and wilt not deal with them that come un-

to thee according to the severity and exigence of thy Justice; but art gracious, loving, tender, ready to forgive and pardon, and dost so accordingly; THERE IS FORGIVENESSE WITH THEE.

The following words, *therefore thou shalt be feared, or that thou mayst be feared*, though in the *Original* free from all Ambiguity, yet are so signally varyed by *Interpreters*, that it may not be amiss to take notice of it in our passage.

The *Targum* hath it, *that thou mayst be seen.* This answers not the *word*, but it doth the *sense* of the place well enough. God in his displeasure is said to *hide himself*, or his face, Isaiah 8. 17. The *Lord hideth his face from the house of Jacob.* By *forgiveness* we obtain again the *light* of his countenance. This dispels the darkness, and clouds that are about him; and gives us a comfortable prospect of his face and favour. *There is forgiveness with him that he may be seen.* Besides, there is but *one letter* different in the *Original* words; and that which is usually changed for the other.

The *LXX.* render them, ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματός σου; *for thy names sake*; or thy *own sake*, that is, freely, without any respect unto any thing in us. This also would admit of a fair and *sound construction*, but that there is more than ordinary evidence of the places being corrupted. For the *Vulgar Latin*, which as to the *Psalms* was *translated* out of the *LXX.* renders these words, *propter legem tuam; for thy Laws sake*; which makes it evident, that that *Translator* reads the words ἕνεκα τοῦ νόμου σου, and not ὀνόματος, as now we read. Now though this hath in its self, no proper sence (for *forgiveness* is not bestowed for the *Laws sake*) yet it discovers the original of the whole mistake. תורה The *Law*, differs but in one letter from תורא *that thou mayst be feared*; by a mistake whereof this ἕνεκα τοῦ νόμου, *for thy Laws sake*, crept into the Text. Nor doth this any thing countenance the corrupt figment of the novelty of the *Hebrew Vowels and Accents*; as though this difference might arise from the *LXX.* using a *copy* that had none, that is before their invention, which might occasion mistakes and differences; for this difference is in a *Letter* as well as the *Vowel*; and therefore there can be no colour for this conceit, unless we say also, that they had *Copies* of old with other *Consonants* than those we now enjoy. *Bellarmine* in his *Exposition*

of this place, endeavours to give countenance unto the reading of the *Vulgar Latin*; *for thy Laws sake*; affirming that by the *Law* here, not the *Law of our Obedience*, is intended; but the *Law or Order* of Gods dealing with us; that is his *Mercy* and *Faithfulness*; which is a meer *new Invention* to countenance an old error, which any *tolerable ingenuity* would have confessed, rather than have justified by so sorry a pretence. For neither is that *expression*, or that *word*, ever used in the sence here by him *faigned*, nor can it have any such signification.

Hierom renders these words, *ut sis terribilis*, that thou maist be *dreadful or terrible*, doubtless not according to the intendment of the place. It is for the *relieving* of the soul, and not for the increasing of its *dread* and terror, that this observation is made; *there is forgiveness with thee.*

But the words are *clear*, and their sense is *obvious*; למען תורא *therefore thou shalt be feared*, or *that thou maist be feared.*

By the *Fear of the Lord*, in the Old Testament, the whole *Worship* of God, *moral* and *instituted*, all the Obedience which we owe unto him, both for matter and manner, is intended. Whatever we are to perform unto God, being to be carried on and performed with Reverence and *godly fear*, by a *Metonymy* of the *Adjunct*, that name is given to the whole. *That thou mayst be feared*, then, is that thou maist be *served*, *worshipped*; that I who am ready to faint and give over on the account of sin, may yet be *encouraged* unto, and yet continue in that *Obedience* which thou requirest at my hands; And this appears to be the sence of the whole Verse; as influenced by, and from those foregoing.

Although O Lord, no man can approach unto thee, stand before thee, or walk with thee, if thou shouldst mark their sins and follies according to the tenor of the Law, nor could they serve so great and holy a God as thou art; yet because I know from thy Revelation of it, that there is also with thee on the account of Jesus Christ the propitiation, pardon and forgiveness; I am encouraged to continue with thee, waiting for thee, worshipping of thee, when without this discovery, I should rather chuse to have Rocks and Mountains fall upon me, to hide me from thy presence.

But

But there is forgiveness with thee, and therefore thou shalt be feared.

The words being thus opened, we may take a full view in them of the state and condition of the soul *expressed* in this Psalm; and that answering the experiences of all who have had any thing to do with God, in and about the Depths and Entanglements of sin.

Having in, and from his great *depths*, *v.* 1. addressed himself with *fervent* redoubled *cryes*, yea, *outcryes*, to God and to him *alone* for relief, *v.* 1, 2, having also acknowledged his *iniquities*, and considered them according to the *tenor of the Law*, *v.* 3. he confesseth himself to be *lost* and undone for ever on that account, *v.* 3. But he *abides* not in the state of *self-condemnation* and dejection of soul; He sayes not there is no hope, *God is a jealous God*, an holy God, I cannot serve him; his Law is a fiery Law, which I cannot stand before, so that I had as good give over, sit down and perish, as contend any longer! no, but searching by faith into the *discovery* that God makes of himself in Christ through the Covenant of Grace, he finds a stable foundation of encouragement, to continue *waiting* on him, with expectation of *mercy* and *pardon.*

Propositions or Observations from the former Exposition of the words. The first proposed to confirmation. No encouragement for any sinner to approach unto God, without a discovery of forgiveness.

From the *words* unfolded, as they lye in their *contexture*, in the *Psalm*, the ensuing Propositions do arise. Doctrinal Observations from *V.* 4.

1. *Faiths discovery of forgiveness in God, though it have no present sense of its own peculiar interest therein, is the great supportment of a sin-perplexed soul.*

2. *Gospel-Forgiveness, whose discovery is the sole supportment of sin-distressed souls, relates to the gracious heart, or good will of the Father, the God of forgiveness, the propitiation that is made by the blood of the Son, and free condonation or pardon according to the tenor of the Covenant of Grace.*

3. *Faiths*

3. *Faiths discovery of Forgiveness in God, is the sole bottom of adherence to him, in acceptable Worship and reverential obedience.*

The *first* of these, is that whose confirmation and improvement I principally aim at; and the *other* only so far as they have coincidence therewith, or may be used in a subserviency to the illustration or demonstration thereof.

In the handling then of this truth, that it may be of the more advantage unto them whose good is sought, and intended in the proposal and management of it, I shall steer this course, and shew,

1. *That there is not the least encouragement to the soul of a sinner to deal with God without this discovery.*

2. *That this discovery of forgiveness in God is a matter great, holy and mysterious; and which very few on Gospel abiding grounds, do attain unto.*

3. *That yet this is a great, sacred and certain Truth,* as from the manifold Evidences of it, may be made to appear.

4. *That this is a stable supportment unto a sin-distressed soul,* shall be manifested; and the whole applyed, according to the several concernments of those who shall consider it.

No approaching unto God, without a discovery of forgiveness,

First, *There is not the least encouragement for the soul of a sinner, to entertain any thoughts of approaching unto God without this discovery.* All the rest of the world, is covered with a *deluge* of wrath. This is the only *Ark* whereunto the soul may repair and find rest. All without it, is darkness, curse and terror.

We have an instance and example of it, beyond all exception in *Adam.* When he knew himself to be a *sinner,* and it was impossible for him, as we shall shew afterwards, to make a *discovery* of any such thing as *forgiveness* with God, he laid aside all thoughts of treating with him; the best of his foolish contrivance was for an escape; Gen. 3. 10. *I heard thy voyce* (saith he to God) *in the Garden, and was AFRAID, because I was naked; and I HID my self.* Nothing but *thou shalt die the death,* sounded in his ears. In the *morning* of that day, he was made by the hand of God: a few hours before, he had converse and communion with him, with boldness and peace; why then doth nothing now but FEAR, Flying and HIDING possess

possess him? *Adam had sinned,* the *Promise* was not yet given, no Revelation made of *forgiveness in God,* and what other course, than that vain and foolish one, to fix upon, he knew not. No more can any of his *Posterity* without this Revelation. What else any of them hath fixed on in this case, hath been no less *foolish* than his hiding; and in most, more *pernicious.* When *Cain* had received his sentence from God, it is said he went out מלפני יהוה *from the presence or face of the Lord,* Gen. 4. 16. From his *providential presence* he could never subduct himself: So the *Psalmist* informs us at large, *Psal.* 139. 7,8,9. The very *Heathen* knew by the light of nature, that guilt could never drive men out of the reach of God.

Quo fugis Encelade, quascunq; acceſſeris oras
Sub Jove ſemper eris.

They knew that *Dien* (the vengeance of God) would not spare sinners; nor could be avoided, *Acts* 28. 4. From Gods *Gracious Presence,* which he never enjoyed, he could not depart. It was then his *Presence* as to his *Worship*; and all outward acts of Communion that he forsook, and departed from. He had no discovery by faith, of *forgiveness,* and therefore resolved to have no more to do with God, nor those who cleaved to him; for it respects his *course,* and not any one *particular* action.

This also is stated, Isa. 33. 14. *The sinners in* Sion *are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the Hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* The persons spoken of are *sinners,* great *sinners* and Hypocrites; conviction of sin, and the desert of it was fallen upon them; a light to discern *forgiveness* they had not; they apprehend God as *devouring fire* and *everlasting burnings only*; One that would not spare, but assuredly inflict punishment according to the desert of sin; and thence is their *conclusion* couched in their *Interrogation,* that there can be no *entercourse of peace* between him and them; there is no abiding, no enduring of his presence. And what condition this consideration brings the souls of sinners unto, when conviction grows strong, upon them the Holy Ghost declares, Mich. 6. 6, 7. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord; and bow my self before the high God?*

God? ſhall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with Calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſand of Rivers of Oyl? ſhall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul? Senſe of ſin preſſeth, forgiveneſs is not diſcovered, (like the *Philiſtins* on *Saul*, *Samuel* not coming to his direction) and how doth the poor creature perplex it ſelf in vain, to find out a way of dealing with God? will a ſedulous and diligent obſervation of his own *Ordinances* and Inſtitutions relieve me; *Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings and Calves of a year old?* Alas thou art a *ſinner*, and theſe *Sacrifices* cannot make thee perfect, or acquit thee, *Heb.* 10. 1. Shall I do more than ever he required of any of the Sons of men? *O that I had thouſands of Rams, and ten thouſands of Rivers of Oyl to offer to him?* Alas, if thou hadſt all the *Bulls* and *Goats* in the world, it is not poſſible that their bloud ſhould take away ſins, *v.* 4. But I have heard of them who have ſnatched their own *Children* from their Mothers breaſts, and caſt them into the *fire*, until they were conſumed, ſo to pacifie their conſciences in expiating the guilt of their iniquities; ſhall I take this courſe? will it relieve me? I am ready to part with my *firſt-born* into the fire, ſo I may have deliverance from my *Tranſgreſſions*. Alas this never came into the heart of God to approve, or accept of. And as it was *then*, whilſt that *kind of worſhip* was in force, ſo is it ſtill as to *any duties*, really to be performed, or *imaginarily*. Where there is no diſcovery of *forgiveneſs*; they will yield the ſoul no relief, no ſupportment; God is not to be treated upon ſuch terms.

Greatneſs and rareneſs of the Diſcovery of Forgiveneſs in God. Reaſons of it. Teſtimonies of Conſcience, and Law againſt it, &c.

Forgiveneſs a great Myſterie.

Secondly, *This diſcovery of Forgiveneſs in God is great, holy and Myſterious, and which very few on Goſpel-grounds do attain unto.* All men indeed *ſay* there is; moſt men are perſwaded that they *think* ſo. Only men in great and deſperate extremities, like *Cain*, or *Spira*, ſeem to call it into queſtion. But their thoughts are empty, groundleſs, yea, for the moſt part wicked, and

and *Atheiſtical*. *Elihu* tells us, that to declare this aright to a ſinful ſoul, it is the work of a *Meſſenger, an Interpreter, one among a thouſand*, Job 33. 23. that is indeed, of Chriſt himſelf. The common thoughts of men about this thing are ſlight and fooliſh; and may be reſolved into thoſe mentioned by the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 50. 21. They think that *God is altogether ſuch a one as themſelves*. That indeed he takes little or no care about theſe things, but paſſeth them over as ſlightly as they do themſelves; That, notwihſtanding all their pretences, the moſt of men never had indeed, any real diſcovery of *forgiveneſs*, ſhall be afterwards undeniably evinced; and I ſhall ſpeedily ſhew the difference that is between their *vain credulity*, and a gracious, Goſpel diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God. For it muſt be obſerved, that by this *Diſcovery*, I intend, both the *Revelation* of it made by God, and our underſtanding, and Reception of that *Revelation* to our own advantage, as ſhall be ſhewed immediately.

Now the grounds of the difficulty intimated, conſiſt *partly* in the *hindrances*, that lie in the way of this diſcovery; and *partly* in the *nature* of the thing it ſelf, that is diſcovered; of both which I ſhall briefly treat.

But here before I proceed, ſomewhat muſt be premiſed to ſhew what it is, that I particularly intend by a *diſcovery of forgiveneſs*. It may then be conſidered two ways; Firſt, For a *doctrinal, objective* diſcovery of it in its *truth*; 2. An *experimental ſubjective* diſcovery of it in its *power*. In the firſt ſenſe, *forgiveneſs in God*, hath been *diſcovered* ever ſince the giving out of the *firſt Promiſe*: God *revealed* it in a *word of promiſe*, or it could never have been known, as ſhall be afterwards declared. In this ſenſe after many leſſer degrees and advancements of the *light* of it, it was fully and gloriouſly brought forth by the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* in his own perſon; and is now revealed, and preached in the Goſpel, and by *them* to whom the *Word of Reconciliation* is committed. And to declare this is the principal work of the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel. Herein ly thoſe *unſearchable Treaſures and Riches* of Chriſt, which the *Apoſtle* eſteemed as his chiefeſt Honour and Priviledg that he was intruſted with the declaration and diſpenſation of, *Eph.* 3. 8, 9. I know by many it is *deſpiſed*, by many *traduced*, whoſe Ignorance and Blindneſs

is to be lamented. But the day is coming which will *manifest every mans work* of what sort it is. In the latter sense how it is made by *faith* in the soul, shall in its proper place be further opened and made known. Here many men mistake, and deceive themselves. Because it is so in the *Book*, they think it is so in *them* also. Because they have been *taught* it, they think they *believe* it. But it is not so; They have not *heard this voyce of God at any time, nor seen his shape*; it hath not been revealed unto them in its *power*? to have this done is a great work: For,

Testimony of a natural conscience against the forgiveness of sin.

First, *The constant voice of Conscience lyes against it. Conscience* (if not feared) inexorably condemneth, and pronounceth Wrath and Anger upon the soul that hath the least guilt cleaving to it. Now it hath this advantage, it lyeth *close* to the soul, and by importunity, and *loud speaking* it will be heard in what it hath to say. It will make the whole soul *attend*, or it will speak like thunder. And its constant voyce is, that *where there is guilt there must be judgement*, Rom 2. 14, 15. *Conscience* naturally knows nothing of *forgiveness*. Yea it is against its very trust, work, and office, to hear any thing of it. If a man of courage and honesty be intrusted to keep a *Garrison* against an Enemy, let one come and tell him, that there is *peace* made between those whom he serves, and their Enemies, so that he may leave his Guard, and set open the Gates, and cease his watchfulness; how *wary* will he be, lest under this pretence he be betrayed? No saith he, I will keep my *hold*, until I have express order from my *Superiours*. *Conscience* is entrusted with the power of God in the soul of a sinner, with command to keep all in subjection with reference unto the *Judgement* to come; it will not betray its trust in believing every *report of peace*. No! but this it sayes, and it speaks in the name of God; *Guilt and punishment are inseparable twins, if the sonl sin, God will judge*. What tell you me of *forgiveness*, I know what my commission is; and that I will abide by; you shall not bring in a *Superior* Commander, a cross Principle into my trust; for if this be so, it seems I must let go my Throne; another *Lord* must come in; not knowing as yet how this whole business is compounded in the blood of Christ. Now

Now whom should a man believe if not his *own Conscience*, which as it will not flatter him, so it intends not to affright him, but to speak the truth as the matter requireth. *Conscience* hath two works in reference unto sin; one to condemn the *Acts* of sin, another to judge the *Person* of the sinner; both with reference to the *Judgement* of God. When *forgiveness* comes, it would sever and part these employments, and take *one* of them out of the hand of conscience. It would divide the spoil with this strong one. It shall condemn the *fact*, or every sin; but it shall no more condemn the *sinner*, the Person of the sinner; that shall be freed from its sentence. Here *Conscience* labours with all its might to keep its whole dominion; and to keep out the power of *forgiveness*, from being enthroned in the soul. It will allow men to *talk* of *forgiveness*, to *hear* it preached, though they abuse it every day; but to receive it in its *power*, that stands up in direct opposition to its dominion; in the *Kingdom*, saith *Conscience*, I will be greater than thou; and in *many*, in the *most*, it keeps its possession, and will not be deposed.

Nor indeed is it an easie work *so* to deal with it. The Apostle tells us, that all the *sacrifices of the Law* could not do it, *Heb.* 10. 2. they could not bring a man into that estate, wherein he should *have no more conscience of sin*; that is, *Conscience* condemning the *person*; for conscience in a sense of sin, and condemnation of it, is never to be taken away. And this can be no otherwise done but by the blood of Christ, as the Apostle at large there declares.

It is then no *easie thing* to make a discovery of forgiveness unto a soul, when the work and employment which *Conscience* upon unquestionable grounds challengeth unto it self, lyes in opposition unto it. Hence is the souls great desire to *establish its own Righteousness*, whereby its natural Principles may be preserved in their power. Let *self righteousness* be enthroned, and *natural conscience* desires no more; it is satisfied, and pacified. The *Law* it knows; and *Righteousness* it knows, but as for *forgiveness* it sayes, *whence is it*? Unto the utmost, until Christ perfects his conquest, there are on this account secret struglings in the heart against *free pardon* in the Gospel, and *fluctuations* of mind and Spirit about it. Yea, hence are the *doubts* and *fears*

of believers themselves: They are nothing but the strivings of *Conscience* to keep its whole dominion; to condemn the *sinner* as well as the *sin*. More or less it keeps up its pretensions against the Gospel, whilst we live in this world. It is a great work that the blood of Christ hath to do upon the *Conscience* of a sinner; for whereas, as it hath been declared, it hath a power, and claims a right to condemn both *sin* and *sinner*, the *one* part of this its power is to be cleared, strengthened, made more active, vigorous and watchful, the *other* to be taken quite away. It shall now see *more sins* than formerly, more of the *vileness of all sins* than formerly, and condemn them with more abhorrency than ever, upon more, and more glorious accounts than formerly; but it is also made to see an *interposition* between these *sins*, and the person of the *sinner*, who hath committed them; which is no small or ordinary work.

Testimony of the Law against the forgiveness of sin.

Secondly, The *Law lyes against this discovery*. The Law is a beam of the Holiness of God himself. What it speaks unto us, it speaks in the name and Authority of God; And I shall briefly shew concerning it these two things.

1. That this is the voyce of the *Law*; namely, that there is no *forgiveness* for a *sinner*.

2. That a *sinner* hath great reason to give credit to the Law in that Assertion.

It is certain that the *Law* knows neither *mercy* nor *forgiveness*. The very *sanction* of it lyes wholly against them: *The soul that sinneth shall dye. Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them*, Deut. 27. 26. Hence the Apostle pronounceth *universally* without exception, that they who are *under the Law, are under the curse*, Gal. 3. 10. And saith, he v. 12. *The Law is not of faith*. There is an inconsistency between the Law, and believing; they cannot have their abode in power together. *Do this, and live; sail and dye:* is the constant immutable voice of the Law. This it speaks in *general* to all; and this in *particular* to every one.

2. The sinner seems to have manifold and weighty Reasons to *attend to the voice of this Law*, and to acquiesce in its sentence. For,

1. The

1. The Law is *connatural* to him; his *Domestick*, his old acquaintance. It came into the world with him, and hath grown up with him from his Infancy. It was *implanted* in his heart by nature; is his own reason; he can never shake it off or part with it. It is his *Familiar, his Friend*, that cleaves to him as the flesh to the bone; so that they who have not the *Law written*, cannot but shew *forth the work of the Law*, Rom. 2. 14 15. and that because the Law it self is inbred to them; and all the faculties of the soul are at peace with it, in subjection to it. It is the *bond* and ligament of their union, harmony, and correspondency among themselves, in all their moral actings. It gives life, order, motion to them all. Now the *Gospel*, that comes to control this sentence of the Law, and to relieve the sinner from it, is *forraign* to his nature, a strange thing to him, a thing he hath no *acquaintance* or familiarity with; it hath not been bred up with him; nor is there any thing in him, to *side* with it, to make a party for it, or to plead in its behalf. Now shall not a man rather believe a *Domestick*, a Friend, indeed himself; than a *forreigner*, a stranger, that comes with *uncouth Principles*, and such as suit not its *Reason* at all, 1 *Cor.* 1. 18.

2. The *Law* speaks nothing to a sinner, but what his *Conscience* assures him to be true. There is a constant concurrence in the Testimony of the Law and conscience. When the Law says, *this or that is a sin*, worthy of death, conscience says it is even so, *Rom.* 1. 42. And where the Law of it self, as being a general Rule, rests, Conscience helps it on, and says, *This and that sin, so worthy of death, is the soul guilty of*; then *dye*, saith the Law, as thou hast deserved. Now this must needs have a mighty efficacy to prevail with the soul to give credit to the report and Testimony of the *Law*; it speaks not one word but what he hath a *witness* within himself to the truth of it. These witnesses always agree; and so it seems to be established for a truth, that there is no forgiveness.

3. The Law, though it speak against the souls *interest*, yet it speaks nothing but what is so *just, righteous and equal*, that it even forceth the souls consent. So *Paul* tells us, that men *know this voice of the Law to be the judgment of God*, Rom. 1. 32.

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They know it, and cannot but consent unto it, that it is the *Judgement of God*; that is, good, righteous, equal, not to be controlled. And indeed what can be more righteous than its sentence? It commands Obedience to the God of life and death? promiseth a Reward, and declares that for *non-performance* of duty, death will be inflicted. On these terms the sinner cometh into the world, they are good, righteous, holy; the soul accepts of them, and knows not what it can desire better or more equal. This the Apostle insists upon, Rom. 7. 12, 13. *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good; was then that which was good made death unto me? God forbid; but sin that it might appear sin, working death in me, by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.* Wherever the blame falls, the soul cannot but acquit the *Law*, and confess that what it sayes, is righteous and incontrollably equal. And it is meet things should be so; Now though the *Authority* and credit of a Witness, may go very far in a doubtful matter; when there is a *concurrence* of more witnesses it strengthens the Testimony; but nothing is so prevalent to beget belief, as when the *things* themselves that are spoken are just and good, not liable to any reasonable exception; And so is it in this case, unto the *Authority* of the Law, and *concurrence* of conscience, this also is added, the Reasonableness, and *equity* of the thing it self proposed, even in the *Judgment of the sinner*; namely, that every sin shall be punished, and every transgression receive *a meet recompence of reward.*

4. But yet further. What the *Law* sayes, it speaks in the *name and authority of God.* What it says then, must be *believed*, or we make God a Lyar. It comes not in its own name, but in the name of him who appointed it; you will say then, is it so indeed? Is there no *forgiveness with God?* for this is the constant voice of the Law, which you say speaks in the name and Authority of God, and is therefore to to be believed. I answer briefly with the Apostle; What the *Law speaks, it speaks to them that are under the Law.* It doth not speak to them that are in Christ, whom the *Law of the Spirit of life, hath set free from the Law of sin and death*; but to them that are under the *Law* it speaks, and it speaks the very Truth; and it speaks in the name of

of God, and its Testimony is to be received; It sayes there *is* no *forgiveness in God*, namely, to them that are under the Law; and they that shall flatter themselves with a contrary perswasion, will find themselves wofully mistaken at the great day.

On these and the like considerations, I say, there seems to be a great deal of *Reason*, Why a soul should conclude that it will be according to the testimony of the Law; and that he shall not find *forgiveness*. Law and Conscience close together, and insinuate themselves into the thoughts, mind, and judgement of a sinner. They strengthen the Testimony of one another, and greatly prevail. If any are otherwise minded; I leave them to the *tryal*. If ever God awaken their Consciences to a through-performance of their duty; if ever he open their souls, and let in the light and power of the *Law* upon them, they will find it no small work to *grapple* with them. I am sure that eventually they prevail so far that in the preaching of the Gospel, we have great cause to say, *Lord who hath believed our report?* we come with our *Report* of *forgiveness*, but who believes it? by whom is it received? neither doth the light, nor conscience, nor *conversation* of the most, allow us to suppose it is embraced.

Thirdly, *The ingrafted notions that are in the minds of men, concerning the Nature and Justice of God*, lie against this *discovery* also. There are in all men by nature *indelible characters* of the Holiness and Purity of God; of his justice and hatred of sin, of his *invariable Righteousness* in the Government of the world, that they can neither depose nor lay aside. For *notions of God*, what ever they are, will bear sway and rule in the heart, when things are put to the tryal. They were in the *Heathens* of old; they abode with them in all their darkness; as might be manifested by innumerable instances. But *so* it is in all men by nature; their inward thought is, that God is an *Avenger of sin*; that it belongs to his Rule and Government of the world, his Holiness and Righteousness, to take care, that *every sin be punished*; This is his *judgement* which all *men know*, as was observed before, *Rom.* 1. 32. They know, that it is a *Righteous thing* with God *to render tribulation unto sinners.* From thence is that dread and fear which surprizeth men at an apprehension of the presence of God; or of any thing *under him, above them,* that

that may ſeem to come on his errand. This notion of Gods avenging all ſin, exerts it ſelf, ſecretly, but effectually. So *Adam* trembled, and *hid* himſelf. And it was the ſaying of old, *I have ſeen God, and ſhall dye.* When men are under any dreadful Providence; *thunderings*, lightnings, tempeſts, in darkneſs, they tremble, not ſo much at what they ſee, or hear, or feel, as from their ſecret thoughts that *God is nigh*, and that he is a conſuming fire.

Now theſe *inbred notions* lye univerſally againſt all Apprehenſions of *forgiveneſs*; which muſt be brought into the ſoul from without doors; having no Principle of nature to promote them.

It is true! Men by nature have *preſumptions* and *common ingrafted notions*, of other properties of God, beſides his *Holineſs and Juſtice*; as of his *Goodneſs*, Benignity, Love of his Creatures, and the like: But all theſe have this ſuppoſition inlaid with them in the ſouls of men; namely, that all things ſtand between God and his Creatures, as they did at their firſt Creation; and as they have no natural *notion* of forgiveneſs, ſo the *interpoſition of ſin*, weakens, diſturbs, darkens them, as to any improvement of thoſe Apprehenſions of *Goodneſs* and *Benignity* which they have: If they have any notion of *forgiveneſs*, it is from ſome corrupt Tradition, and not at all, from any univerſal Principle, that is inbred in nature; ſuch as are *thoſe*, which they have of *Gods Holineſs*, and *Vindictive Juſtice*.

And this is the firſt ground from whence it appears, that a real, ſolid *diſcovery of forgiveneſs*, is indeed a great work; *many difficulties and hindrances lye in the way of its accompliſhment.*

False Preſumptions of forgiveneſs diſcovered. Differences between them, and Faith Evangelical.

False Preſumptions of Forgiveneſs.

Before I proceed to produce and manage the *remaining Evidences* of this Truth, becauſe what hath been ſpoken, lyes obnoxious and open to an *Objection*, which muſt needs riſe in the minds of many, that it may not thereby be rendered uſeleſs unto them, I ſhall remove it out of the way, that we may paſs on to what remains.

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It will then be ſaid, doth not all this lie directly contrary to our daily *experience?* Do ye not find all *men full enough*, moſt too full of Apprehenſions of *forgiveneſs* with God? what ſo common as *God is mercifull*? Are not the Conſciences, and Convictions of the moſt ſtifled, by this Apprehenſion? Can you find a man that is otherwiſe minded? Is it not a *common complaint* that men preſume on it, unto their eternal ruine? Certainly then, that which *all* men do, which *every* man can ſo eaſily do, and which you cannot keep men off from doing, though it be to their hurt, hath no ſuch *difficulty* in it as is pretended. And on this very account hath this weak endeavour to demonſtrate this Truth been by ſome laughed to ſcorn; men who have taken upon them the *teaching* of others, but (as it ſeems) had need be taught themſelves, the very firſt *Principles of the Oracles of God.*

Anſw. All this then I ſay is *ſo*, and much more to this purpoſe may be ſpoken. The folly and preſumption of poor ſouls herein, can never be enough lamented. But it is one thing to embrace a *cloud*, a ſhadow, another to have the *truth* in reality. I ſhall hereafter ſhew the true nature of *forgiveneſs*, and wherein it doth conſiſt, whereby the vanity of this *ſelf-deceiving* will be diſcovered and laid open. It will appear in the iſſue that notwithſtanding all their *pretenſions*, that the moſt of men know nothing at all, or not any thing to the purpoſe of that which is under conſideration. I ſhall therefore for the preſent, in ſome few *Obſervations*, ſhew how far this *deluſion* of many, differs from a true Goſpel *diſcovery* of forgiveneſs, ſuch as that we are enquiring after.

Firſt, The common notion of *forgiveneſs* that men have in the world, is twofold. (1.) An *Atheiſtical Preſumption* on God, that he is not ſo *Juſt* and *Holy*, or not *Juſt* and *Holy* in ſuch a way and manner as he is by ſome repreſented, is the ground of their *perſwaſion of forgiveneſs*. Men think that ſome *Declarations* of God, are fitted only to make them *mad*. That he takes little *notice* of theſe things, and that what he *doth*, he will *eaſily paſs by*, as they ſuppoſe better becomes him. Come, *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall dye.* This is their inward *thought*, *the Lord will not do good, nor will he do evil*; which, *ſays the Pſalmiſt*, *is* mens *thinking that God is ſuch a one*

as themselves, Psal. 50. 21. They have no deep nor serious thoughts of his Greatness, *Holiness* Purity, Severity, but think that he is like *themselves*; so far as not to be much *moved* with what they do. What *thoughts* they have of sin, the same they think God hath. If with them a slight *ejaculation*, be enough to expiate sin, that their consciences be no more *troubled*, they think it is enough with God, that it be not *punished*. The generality of men make *light work* of sin; and yet in nothing doth it more appear what thoughts they have of God. He that hath *slight* thoughts of sin, had never *great* thoughts of God. Indeed mens undervaluing of sin, ariseth meerly from their contempt of God. All sins concernments flow from its *Relation* unto God. And as mens apprehensions are of God, so will they be of sin, which is an *Opposition* to him. This is the frame of the most of men; they know *little* of God, and are *little* troubled about any thing that relates unto him. *God* is not reverenced, *sin* is but a trifle, *forgiveness* a matter of nothing; who so will may have it for asking. But shall this *Atheistical* wickedness of the heart of man be called a *discovery of forgiveness*? Is not this to make God an Idol? He who is not acquainted with Gods Holiness and Purity, who knows not sins desert and *sinfulness*, knows nothing of forgiveness.

Secondly, From the *doctrine of the Gospel* commonly *preached* and made known, there is a *general notion* begotten in the minds of men that God is ready to *forgive*. Men I say from hence, have a *doctrinal* Apprehension of this *truth*, without any real satisfactory foundation of that Apprehension, as to themselves. This they have heard, this they have been often *told*, so they *think*, and so they resolved to do. A general perswasion hereof, spreads it self over all to whom the sound of the Gospel doth come. It is not *fiducially* resolved into the Gospel, but is an *Opinion* growing out of the Report of it.

Some *relief* men find by it, in the common course of their *Conversation*, in the duties of *Worship* which they do perform, as also in their troubles and distresses, whether internal and of conscience, or external and of Providence, so that they resolve to retain it.

And this is that which I shall briefly speak unto; and therein manifest the differences between this *common prevailing Apprehension*

hension of Forgiveness, and Faiths *discovery* of it to the soul in its power.

First, That which we reject is *loose*, and *general*, not fixed, ingrafted, or planted on the mind. So is it alwayes, where the minds of men receive things, only in their notion, and not in their power. It wants fixedness and foundation: which defects accompany all notions of the mind that are only retained in the *memory*, not implanted in the *judgement*. They have general thoughts of it, which they use as *occasion serves*. They hear that God is a merciful God, and as *such* they intend to deal with him. For the true bottom, rise and foundation of it, whence or on what account, the *pure* and *holy* God who will do no iniquity, the *Righteous* God, whose judgement it is, *that they that commit sin are worthy of death*, should yet pardon iniquity, transgression and sin, they weigh it not, they consider it not; or if they do, it is in a slight and *notional* way, as they consider the thing it self. They take it for granted that *so it is*; and are never put seriously upon the enquiry, how *it comes to be so*; and that because indeed they have no real concernment in it. How many thousands may we meet with-all, who take it for granted, that *forgiveness* is to be had with God, that never yet had any serious exercise in their souls, about the *grounds* of it, and its consistency with his holiness and justice. But those that know it by faith, have a sense of it fixed *particularly* and distinctly on their minds. They have been put upon an enquiry into the rise and grounds of it in Christ; so that on a good and unquestionable foundation they can go to God, and say, *there is forgiveness with thee*. They see *how*, and by *what means*, more glory comes unto God by forgiveness, then by punishing of sin; which is a matter that the *other sort* of men are not at all solicitous about. If they may escape punishment, whether God have any glory or no, for the most part they are indifferent.

Secondly, The *first Apprehension ariseth without any tryal* upon enquiry in the Consciences of them in whom it is They have not by the power of their *convictions*, and *distresses* of Conscience, been put to make enquiry whether this thing be so or no. It is not a perswasion that they have arrived unto, in a way of seeking *satisfaction* to their own souls. It is not the result of

a deep enquiry after peace and rest. It is antecedent unto *Tryal and Experience*, and so is not faith, but Opinion. For although *Faith* be not *Experience* yet it is inseperable from it, as is every *practical habit* Distresses in their consciences have been *prevented* by this Opinion, not *removed*. The reason why the most of men are not troubled about their sins to any purpose, is from a perswasion that God is merciful and will pardon; when indeed none can *really*, on a Gospel acount, *ordinarily*, have that perswasion, but those who have been troubled for sin, and that to the purpose. So is it with them that make this discovery by faith. They have had *conflicts* in their own spirits, and being deprived of peace, have accomplished a diligent search, whether *forgiveness* were to be obtained or no The perswasion they have of it, be it more or less, is the issue of a *tryal* they have had in their own souls, of an enquiry how things stood between God and them, as to peace, and acceptation of their Persons. This is a vast difference; the *one sort* might possibly *have had trouble* in their consciences about sin, had it not been for their *Opinion of forgiveness*; this hath prevented, or *stifled* their convictions, not healed their wounds, which is the *work* of the Gospel; but kept them from being wounded, which is the work of *security*. Yea, here lyes the ruine of the most of them who perish under the preaching of the Gospel. They have received the *general notion of pardon*; it *floats* in their minds, and presently presents it self to their relief, on all occasions. Doth God at any time, in the *dispensation* of the Word, under an *Affliction*, upon some *great sin* against their *ruling light*, begin to deal with their consciences; before their conviction can ripen, or come to any perfection, before it draw nigh to its perfect work they choak it, and heal their consciences with this notion of pardon. Many a man between the *Assembly*, and his *dwelling house* is thus cured. You may see them go away *shaking their heads*, and striking on their breasts, and before they come home, be as whole as ever: Well! *God is merciful, there is pardon* hath wrought the cure The other sort, have obtained their perswasion, as a result of the discovery of Christ in the Gospel, upon a full conviction. *Tryals* they have had, and this is the issue

Thirdly, The [illegible] which we reject, worketh no *Love* to God,

God, no *Delight* in him, no *Reverence* of him, but rather a contempt, and *commonness* of Spirit in dealing with him. There are none in the world that deal worse with God, than those who have an *ungrounded perswasion* of forgiveness. And if they do fear him, or love him, or obey him in any thing, more or less, it is on other motives and considerations, which will not render any thing they do acceptable, and not at all on this. As he is good to the Creation they may *love*, as he is great and powerful they may *fear* him; but sense of *pardon*, as to any such ends or purposes, hath no power upon them. Carnal boldness, formality, and despising of God, are the common issues of such a notion and perswasion. Indeed this is the generation of great sinners in the world; men who have a general apprehension, but not a sense of the special power of pardon, *openly*, or *secretly*, in *fleshly* or *spiritual* sins, are the *great sinners* among men. Where faith makes a discovery of *forgiveness*, all things are otherwise. Great Love, Fear, and Reverence of God, are its attendants. *Mary Magdalen* loved *much*, because *much* was forgiven. *Great Love* will spring out of *great forgiveness*. There is *forgiveness* with thee, saith the *Psalmist*, that thou *maist be feared*. No unbeliever doth truly and experimentally know the truth of this inference. But so it is when men *fear the Lord, and his Goodness*, Hos. 3. 5. I say then, where pardoning mercy is truly apprehended, where faith makes a discovery of it to the soul, it is endeared unto God, and possessed of the great *springs*, of Love, Delight, Fear, and Reverence, *Psal.* 116. 1, 5, 6, 7.

Fourthly, This *notional apprehension* of the pardon of sin, begets no serious *thorough hatred and detestation of sin*; nor is prevalent to a relinquishment of it; nay, it rather secretly insinuates into the soul encouragements unto a continuance in it. It is the nature of it to lessen and extenuate sin, and to support the soul against its convictions. So *Jude* tells us, that some *turn* the *Grace of God into lasciviousness*, v. 4. and sayes he, they are *ungodly men*; let them profess what they will, they are *ungodly men*; But how can they turn the grace of our God into *lasciviousness*? Is *Grace* capable of a conversion into Lust or *Sin*? Will what was once *Grace*, ever become *Wantonness*? It is *Objective*, not *Subjective* Grace; the *Doctrine*, not the

real

real substance of Grace, that is intended. The *Doctrine* of *forgiveness*, is this Grace of God, which may be thus abused. From hence do men who have only a *general notion* of it, habitually draw secret encouragements to sin and folly. *Paul* also lets us know, that carnal men coming to a *doctrinal* acquaintance with Gospel Grace, are very apt to make such conclusions, *Rom.* 6. 1. And it will appear at the last day, how unspeakably this *glorious Grace* hath been perverted in the world. It would be well for many if they had never heard the name of *forgiveness*. It is otherwise where this *Revelation* is received indeed in the soul by *believing*, *Rom.* 6. 14. Our being *under Grace*, under the power of the belief of forgiveness, is our great preservative from our being *under the power of sin*.

Faith of forgiveness is the Principle of Gospel Obedience, *Titus* 2. 11, 12.

Fifthly, The *general notion* of forgiveness brings with it no *sweetness*, no *Rest* to the soul. *Flashes of joy* it may, *abiding rest* it doth not. The truth of the doctrine fluctuates to and fro in the minds of those that have it, but their *Wills* and Affections have no solid delight nor rest by it. Hence notwithstanding all that profession that is made in the world of forgiveness, the most of men *ultimately resolve* their peace and comfort unto themselves. As their apprehensions are of their own doing *good* or evil, according to their *ruling light* whatever it be, so as to *peace* and *rest* are they secretly tossed up and down. Every one in his several way pleaseth himself with what he doth in answer unto his own *convictions*, and is disquieted *as to his state and condition*, according as he seems to himself, to come short thereof. To make a full life of *contentation* upon pardon, they know not how to do it. One *duty* yields them more true repose than many thoughts of forgiveness. But *faith* finds sweetness and Rest in it; being thereby apprehended, it is the only *harbour* of the soul. It leads a man to *God* as *Good*, to Christ as *Rest*. Fading *evanid joys*, do oft-times attend the one; but *solid delight*, with constant Obedience, are the fruits only of the other.

Sixthly, Those who have the former only, take up their perswasion on *false grounds*, though the thing it self be true; and they cannot but use it unto *false ends* and purposes, besides

sides its natural and genuine tendency. For their grounds they will be discovered when I come to treat of the true nature of Gospel forgiveness. For the *End*, it is used generally only to fill up what is wanting. *Self-righteousness* is their bottom; and when that is too short, or narrow to cover them, they *piece* it out by *forgiveness*. Where conscience accuses, this must supply the defect. Faith lays it on its proper foundation; of which afterwards also; and it useth it to its proper *End*; namely to be the *sole* and *only* ground of our Acceptation with God. That is the proper use of *forgiveness*, *that all may be of Grace*; for when the *foundation is pardon*, the whole superstructure must needs be Grace. From what hath been spoken it is evident, that notwithstanding the pretences to the contrary, insinuated in the Objection now removed, it is a great thing to have *Gospel forgiveness* discovered unto a soul in a saving manner.

The true Nature of Gospel forgiveness. Its Relation to the Goodness, Grace, and Will of God. To the blood of Christ. To the Promise of the Gospel. The Considerations of Faith about it.

The difficulties that lye in the way of *faiths discovery* of forgiveness, whence it appears to be a matter of *greater* weight and importance, than it is commonly apprehended to be, have been insisted on in the *foregoing Discourse*. There is yet remaining another ground of the same Truth. Now this is taken from the Nature and Greatness of the thing it self discovered, that is, of *forgiveness*. To this end I shall shew, *what* it is, *wherein* it doth consist, what it comprizes and relates unto, according to the importance of the second *Proposition* before laid down. The true Nature of Gospel forgiveness.

I do not in this place take *forgiveness*, strictly and precisely, for the *Act of pardoning*; nor shall I dispute what that is, and wherein it doth consist. Consciences that come with *sin entanglements* unto God, know nothing of such *disputes*. Nor will this Expression, *there is forgiveness with God*, bear any such restriction, as that it should regard only *actual condonation* or pardon. That which I have to do is to enquire into the nature of that *pardon*, which poor convinced troubled souls seek

ſeek after; and which the Scripture propoſeth to them for their *relief* and reſt. And I ſhall not handle this *Abſolutely* neither, but in Relation to the Truth under conſideration; namely, that it is a *great thing*, to attain unto a *true Goſpel diſcovery of forgiveneſs*.

Forgiveneſs, as it relates to the Nature of God.

First, As was ſhewed in the opening of the words, the forgiveneſs enquired after, hath Relation unto the *Gracious Heart of the Father*. Two things I underſtand hereby.

1. *The Infinite Goodneſs and Graciouſneſs of his Nature.*
2. *The Soveraign purpoſe of his Will and Grace.*

There is conſiderable in it, the *infinite Goodneſs of his nature*. Sin ſtands in a contrariety unto God. It is a Rebellion againſt his *Soveraignty*, an Oppoſition to his *Holineſs*, a provocation to his *Juſtice*, a Rejection of his *yoke*, a caſting off, what lyes in the ſinner, of that dependance which a Creature hath on its Creator. That God then ſhould have pity and compaſſion on *ſinners*, in every one of whoſe *ſins*, there is all this evil, and inconceivably more than we can comprehend, it argues an infinitely Gracious, Good, and loving heart and nature in him. For God doth nothing, but ſuitably to the *Properties* of his Nature, and from them. All the *Acts* of his *Will*, are the *Effects* of his *Nature*.

Now whatever God propoſeth as an encouragement for ſinners to come to him; that is *of*, or hath a ſpecial influence into the *Forgiveneſs* that is with him. For nothing can encourage a *ſinner as ſuch*, but under this conſideration, that it is, or it reſpects *forgiveneſs*. That this *Graciouſneſs* of Gods nature, lies at the head or ſpring, and is the root from whence *forgiveneſs* doth grow, is manifeſt from that ſolemn Proclamation which he made of old of his *name*, and the Revelation of his nature therein, (for God aſſuredly is, what by himſelf he is *called*,) Exod 34. 6, 7. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion and ſin.* His *forgiving* of iniquity flows from hence; that in his *nature* he is *merciful*, *gracious*, *long-ſuffering*, *abundant in goodneſs*. Were he not ſo, infinite in all theſe, it were in vain to look for *forgiveneſs* from him. Having made this known to be his *Name*, and thereby declared his *Nature*, he

he in many places propoſeth it as a relief, a refuge for ſinners, an encouragement to come unto him, and to wait for mercy from him, Pſal. 9. 10. *They that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee.* It will encourage them ſo to do; others have no foundation of their confidence; but if this *name* of God be indeed made *known* unto us by the Holy Ghoſt, what can hinder why we ſhould not repair unto him, and reſt upon him? So Iſa. 50. 10. *Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkneſs, and hath no light, let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.* Not only ſinners, but ſinners in great *diſtreſs* are here ſpoken unto. *Darkneſs* of ſtate or condition, in the Scripture denotes every thing of *diſconſolation* and trouble. To be then in *darkneſs*, where yet there is ſome *light*, ſome relief, though darkneſs be *predominant*, is ſad and diſconſolate; but now not only to *be*, but alſo to *walk*, that is to continue a courſe in *darkneſs*, and that with *no light*, no diſcovery of help or relief; this ſeems an overwhelming condition; yet ſinners in this eſtate are called *to truſt in the name of the Lord.* I have ſhewed before, that nothing but *forgiveneſs*, or that which influenceth it, and encourageth to an Expectation of it, is of any uſe unto a *ſinner*, much more one in ſo great diſtreſs upon the account of ſin: yet is ſuch an one here ſent only to the NAME *of the Lord*, wherein his gracious heart and nature is revealed; That then is the very Fountain and Spring of *forgiveneſs*. And this is that which *John* would work a ſenſe of upon our ſouls, where he tells us, that *God is Love*, 1 *Ep. Chap.* 4. 8. or one, of an infinitely Gracious, Tender, Good, Compaſſionate, Loving Nature. Infinite Goodneſs and Grace is the ſoil wherein *forgiveneſs* grows. It is impoſſible this flower ſhould ſpring from any other root. Unleſs this be revealed to the ſoul, forgiveneſs is not revealed. To conſider *pardon* meerly as it is *terminated* on our ſelves, not as it flows from God; will bring neither profit to us, nor Glory to God.

And this alſo (which is our deſign in hand) will make it appear, That this diſcovery of forgiveneſs whereof we ſpeak, is indeed *no common thing*, is a great diſcovery. Let men come with a ſenſe of the *guilt of ſin*, to have deep aud ſerious

thoughts of God, they will find it no ſuch eaſie and light matter, to have their hearts truly and throughly apprehenſive of *this loving and gracious nature* of God, in reference unto *pardon*. It is an eaſie matter to ſay ſo in common, but the ſoul will not find it ſo eaſie to *believe* it for it ſelf. What hath been ſpoken before concerning the ingrafted notions that are in the minds of men about the *Juſtice*, *Holineſs* and ſeverity of God, will here take place. Though men profeſs that God is Gracious, yet that Averſation which they have unto him, and communion with him, doth abundantly manifeſt that they do not believe what they ſay and profeſs; if they did, they could not but delight and truſt in him, which they do not; for *they that know his name will put their truſt in him*. So ſaid the ſlothful ſervant in the Goſpel, I knew that *thou waſt auſtere*, and not for me to deal withal; it may be he profeſſed otherwiſe before, but *that* lay in his heart when it came to the tryal. But this I ſay, is neceſſary to them, unto whom this *diſcovery* is to be made; even a ſpiritual apprehenſion of the Gracious, loving heart and nature of God. This is the *ſpring* of all that follows; And the fountain muſt needs be infinitely *ſweet* from whence ſuch ſtreams do flow. He that conſiders the glorious fabrick of Heaven and Earth, with the things in them contained, muſt needs conclude that they were the product of *infinite Wiſdom and Power*; nothing leſs or under them could have brought forth ſuch an effect. And he that really conſidereth *forgiveneſs*, and looks on it with a ſpiritual eye, muſt conclude that it comes from *infinite Goodneſs and Grace*. And this is that which the Hearts of ſinners are exerciſed about, when they come to deal for pardon. Pſal. 86. 5. *Thou Lord art good and ready to forgive*. Nehem. 9. 17. *Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, ſlow to anger, and of great kindneſs*. And Micah 7. 19. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity —— becauſe he delighteth in Mercy*. And God encourageth them hereunto, wherever he ſays, that he *forgives ſins* and blots out iniquities, for his *own* ſake, or his *names* ſake; that is, he will deal with ſinners according to the *Goodneſs of his own Gracious Nature*. So Hoſ. 11. 9. *I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine Anger, I will not return to deſtroy* Ephraim, *for I am God, and not Man*. Were there no more

more Mercy, Grace, Compaſſion, to be ſhewed in this caſe, than it is poſſible ſhould be treaſured up in the *heart of a man*, it would be impoſſible that *Ephraim* ſhould be ſpared; But ſaith he, *I am God and not Man*; Conſider the infinite largeneſs, bounty, and goodneſs of the heart of God, and there is yet hope. When a ſinner is in good earneſt ſeeking after *forgiveneſs*, there is nothing he is more ſolicitous about than the heart of God towards him; nothing that he more labours to have a diſcovery of; There is nothing that Sin and Satan labour more to hide from him; This he rolls in his mind, and exerciſes his thoughts about; and if ever that voice of God, Iſa. 27. 4. *Fury is not in me*, ſound in his heart, he is relieved from his great diſtreſſes. And the fear of our hearts in this matter, our Saviour ſeems to intend the prevention or a removal of, John 16. 26, 27. *I ſay not that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himſelf loveth you*. They had good thoughts of the *tender heart* and care of Chriſt himſelf, the Mediator, towards them; but what is the heart of the Father, what acceptance ſhall they find with him? Will Chriſt pray that they may find favour with him? Why, ſaith he, as to the *Love of his heart* there is no need of it; for the *Father himſelf loveth you*. If this then belongeth to forgiveneſs, as who ever hath ſought for it, knoweth that it doth, it is certainly no *common diſcovery* to have it revealed unto us.

To have all the *clouds* and *darkneſs* that are raiſed by ſin, between us and the *Thorne of God*, diſpelled; to have the fire and ſtorms, and tempeſts that are kindled and ſtirred up about him by the *Law* removed; to have his glorious face *unvailed*, and his holy heart laid open, and a view given of thoſe *infinite treaſures* and ſtores of Goodneſs, Mercy, Love and Kindneſs, which have had an unchangeable habitation therein from all Eternity; to have a diſcovery of theſe eternal ſprings of *forbearance* and *forgiveneſs*, is that which none but Chriſt can accompliſh and bring about, *John* 17. 6.

Secondly, This is not all. This eternal *Ocean* that is infinitely ſatisfied with its own fulneſs and perfection, doth not *naturally* yield forth ſtreams for our refreſhment. *Mercy* and *pardon* do not come forth from God, as *Light* doth from the *Sun*, Gods Will

Forgiveneſs as it relates to the free Acts of

Sun, or *Water* from the *Sea*, by a neceſſary conſequence of their natures, whether they will or no. It doth not *neceſſarily* follow that any one muſt be made partaker of *forgiveneſs*, becauſe God is infinitely *Gracious*. For may he not do what he will with his own? *Who hath given firſt unto him that it ſhould be recompenced unto him again?* Rom. 11. 35. All the fruits of Gods Goodneſs, and Grace, are in the ſole keeping of his own *Soveraign Will* and pleaſure. This is his great Glory, Exod. 33. 18, 19. *Shew me thy glory*, ſaith *Moſes*. *And he ſaid, I will make all my Goodneſs paſs before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and I will be Gracious to whom I will be Gracious.* Upon that proclamation of the name of God, that he is *merciful, gracious, long-ſuffering, abundant in goodneſs*, ſome might conclude that it could not be otherwiſe with any but *well*; he is *ſuch a one*, as that men need ſcarce be *beholding* to him for Mercy; Nay ſaith he, but this is my great glory, that *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.* There muſt be an interpoſition of a *free Act* of the *Will of God*, to deal with us according to this his *abundant goodneſs*, or we can have no intereſt therein. This I call the purpoſe of his Grace; or the *good pleaſure that he hath purpoſed in himſelf*; Epheſ. 1. 9. or as it is termed, v. 5, 6 *The good pleaſure of his Will, that he hath purpoſed to the praiſe of his glorious grace.* This free and gracious pleaſure of God, or *purpoſe of his Will* to act towards ſinners according to his own *abundant goodneſs*, is another thing that influences the *forgiveneſs* of which we treat. Pardon flows immediatly from a *Soveraign Act* of free Grace. This free purpoſe of Gods will and Grace, for the pardoning of ſinners, is indeed that which is principally intended, when we ſay, *there is forgiveneſs with him.* That is, he is pleaſed to forgive; and ſo to do is agreeable unto his nature. Now the Myſterie of this Grace is *deep*; It is *eternal*, and therefore incomprehenſible. Few there are whoſe hearts are raiſed to a contemplation of it. Men reſt and content themſelves in a general *notion* of *mercy*, which will not be advantagious to their ſouls; freed they would be from *puniſhment*, but what it is to be *forgiven* they enquire not. So what they know of it, they come eaſily by, but will find in the iſſue, it will ſtand them in little ſtead. But theſe fountains of Gods

Gods actings, are revealed that they may be the fountains of our comforts.

Now of this *purpoſe* of Gods Grace, there are ſeveral Acts, all of them relating unto Goſpel *forgiveneſs*.

Firſt, There is his *purpoſe* of ſending his *Son* to be the great means of procuring, of purchaſing *forgiveneſs*. Though God be infinitely and incomprehenſibly *gracious*, though he *purpoſe* to exert his Grace and Goodneſs toward ſinners, yet he will ſo do it, do it in ſuch a way, as ſhall not be prejudicial to his own *Holineſs* and Righteouſneſs. His *Juſtice* muſt be ſatisfied, and his Holy indignation againſt ſin made known. Wherefore he purpoſeth *to ſend his Son*, and hath *ſent him*, to make way for the exerciſe of Mercy; ſo as no way to eclipſe the glory of his Juſtice, Holineſs, and hatred of ſin. Better we ſhould all eternally come ſhort of *forgiveneſs*, than that God ſhould loſe any thing of his *glory*. This we have, Rom 3. 25. *God ſet him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for the remiſſion of ſins that are paſt.* The *Remiſſion* of ſins is the thing aimed at; but this muſt be ſo brought about, as that therein, not only the mercy, but the *Righteouſneſs* of God may be *declared*; and therefore muſt it be brought forth by a *propitiation*, or making of an *Attonement*, in the blood of Chriſt. So *John* 3. 16. 1 *John* 4. 9. *Rom.* 5. 8. This, I ſay, alſo lyes in the myſterie of that *forgiveneſs* that is adminiſtred in the Goſpel; It comes forth from this eternal purpoſe of making way by the blood of Chriſt to the *diſpenſation of pardon*. And this greatly heightens the excellency of this diſcovery. Men who have ſlight thoughts of God, whoſe hearts were never awed with his dread or greatneſs, who never ſeriouſly conſidered his purity and holineſs, may think it no great matter that God ſhould *pardon* ſin. But do they conſider the way whereby it is to be brought about; even by the *ſending of his only Son*, and that to *dye*, as we ſhall ſee afterwards. Neither was there *any other way* whereby it might be done. Let us now lay aſide *common thoughts*, Aſſent upon reports and tradition, and rightly weigh this matter. Doubtleſs we ſhall find it to be a *great thing*, that *forgiveneſs* ſhould be ſo with God, as to be made out unto us, (we know ſomewhat what we are) by *ſending his only Son to dye*. Oh how little

little is this really believed, even by them who make a profeſſion of it? and what mean *thoughts* are entertained about it, when men ſeek for pardon? *Immunity from Puniſhment* is the utmoſt that lyes in the aims and deſires of moſt, and is all that they are exerciſed in the conſideration of, when they deal with God about ſin. Such men think and will do ſo, that we have an eaſie task in hand; namely, to prove that there is *forgiveneſs in God*; but this *eaſe* lyes in their own *ignorance* and darkneſs; If ever they come to ſearch after it indeed, to enquire into the Nature, Reaſons, Cauſes, fountain and ſprings of it, they will be able to give another account of theſe things. Chriſt is the *center* of the myſterie of the Goſpel, and *forgiveneſs* is laid up in the heart of Chriſt, from the love of the Father; in him are all the *Treaſures* of it hid. And ſurely it is no ſmall thing to have the *heart* of Chriſt revealed unto us. When Believers deal about *pardon*, their faith exerciſes it ſelf about this, that God with whom the ſoul hath to do, hath ſent the *Lord Chriſt* to dye, for this end, that it may be freely given out. General notions of *impunity* they dwell not on, they paſs not for: They have a cloſer converſe with God than to be ſatisfied with ſuch thoughts. They enquire into the *graciouſneſs* of his Nature, and the *good pleaſure* of his Will, the *purpoſe* of his *Grace*; they ponder, and look into the myſterie of his *Wiſdom* and Love in *ſending his Son*. If theſe *ſprings* be not clear unto them, the *ſtreams* will yield them but little refreſhment. It is not enough that we *ſeek after Salvation*; but we are to *enquire* and *ſearch diligently*, into the nature and manner of it. Theſe are the things that the *Angels deſire to bow down and look into*, 1 Pet. 1. 11, 12, 13. And ſome think, if they have got a form of words *about them*, they have gotten a ſufficient comprehenſion *of them*. It is doubtleſs one Reaſon why many who truely believe, do yet ſo fluctuate about *forgiveneſs* all their days; that they never exerciſed faith to look into the *ſprings* of it, its eternal fountains; but have meerly dwelt on *actual condonation*. However, I ſay, theſe things lye utterly out of the conſideration, of the common pretenders to an acquaintance with the truth we have in hand.

Secondly, There is another *Soveraign Act of Gods Will* to be conſidered in this matter; and that is his eternal *deſignation of*

of the perſons who ſhall be made partakers of this mercy. He hath not left this thing to hazard and uncertainties, that it ſhould as it were be *unknown* to him who ſhould be pardoned, and who not. Nay, none ever are made *partakers of forgiveneſs*, but thoſe whom he hath eternally and graciouſly deſigned thereunto. So the Apoſtle declares it, *Eph.* 1. 5, 6, 7. the *riſe* in his eternal *Predeſtination*; the end, the *glory of his Grace*, the *means*, Redemption in the blood of Chriſt; the thing it ſelf, *forgiveneſs of ſins*. None ever are, or can be made partakers thereof, but by vertue of this *Act of Gods Will and Grace*; which thereupon hath a peculiar influence into it, and is to be reſpected in the conſideration of it. I know this may be abuſed by pride, profaneneſs and unbelief; and ſo may the whole work of Gods Grace; and ſo it is, even the blood of Chriſt in an eſpecial manner; but in its proper place and uſe, it hath a *ſignal influence* into the glory of God, and the conſolation of the ſouls of men.

There are alſo other Acts of this purpoſe of Gods Grace, as of giving ſinners unto Chriſt, and giving ſinners an intereſt in Chriſt, which I ſhall not inſiſt upon, becauſe the nature of them is ſufficiently diſcovered in that one explained already.

Secondly, *Forgiveneſs* hath reſpect unto the *Propitiation* made in and by the blood of Chriſt the Son of God. This was declared in the opening of the words. Indeed here lyes the knot and center of Goſpel *forgiveneſs*. It flows from the *Croſs*, and ſprings out of the *Grave* of Chriſt. Forgiveneſs as it hath reſpect to the blood of Chriſt.

Thus *Elihu* deſcribes it, Job 33, 24. *God is gracious unto him, and ſaith, deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ranſom.* The whole of what is aimed at, lyes in theſe words. (1.) There is *Gods gracious and merciful heart* towards a ſinner; *He is gracious unto him.* (2.) There is *Actual Condonation* it ſelf, of which we ſhall treat afterward; *He ſaith, deliver him from going down to the pit.* And (3.) There is the *center* of the whole, wherein *Gods gracious heart* and *actual pardon* do meet; and that is the *ranſom*, the *propitiation* or attonement that is in the blood of Chriſt, of which we ſpeak, *I have found a ranſome.*

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The ſame is expreſſed, Iſa. 53. 11. *My righteous ſervant ſhall juſtifie many, for he ſhall bear their iniquities.* Of the Juſtification of ſinners, *Abſolution* or pardon is the firſt part. This ariſeth from Chriſts bearing their iniquities. Therein he *finiſhed the tranſgreſſion, made an end of ſin, and made Reconciliation for iniquity*; Dan. 9. 24. Even all the Sacrifices, and ſo conſequently the whole worſhip of the Old Teſtament, evinced this Relation between *forgiveneſs* and *bloodſhedding*; whence the Apoſtle concludes, that without *ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion*, Heb. 9. 22. that is, all pardon ariſeth from *bloodſhedding*, even of the blood of the Son of God. So that we are ſaid in him to have *Redemption, even the forgiveneſs of ſins*, Epheſ. 1. 17. Our Redemption in his blood is our forgiveneſs, not that we are *all actually pardoned* in the blood of his Croſs, for thereunto muſt be added Goſpel condonation, of which afterwards; but thereby it is procured, the grant of pardon is therein ſealed, and ſecurity given, that it ſhall in due time be made out unto us. To which purpoſe is that diſcourſe of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 3, 24, 25, 26. The work there mentioned, proceeds from Grace, is managed to the *intereſt* of Righteouſneſs, is carryed on by the *blood of Chriſt*, and iſſues in *forgiveneſs*; now the *blood of Chriſt* relates variouſly to the *pardon of ſin.*

Firſt, *Pardon is purchaſed and procured by it.* Our *Redemption* is our *forgiveneſs*; as the cauſe contains the effect. No ſoul is pardoned but with reſpect unto the blood of Chriſt, as the *procuring cauſe* of that pardon. Hence he is ſaid to have waſhed us in his blood, Rev. 1. 5. *In himſelf, to have purged our ſins*, Heb. 1. 3. by *one offering to have taken away ſin*, and for ever to have perfected them that are ſanctified, *Heb.* 10. to be the *ranſome and propitiation* of our ſins, 1 *John* 2. 2. to have made *an end of ſin*, Dan. 9. 24. and to have *made Reconciliation for the ſins of his people*, Heb. 2. 17. God hath encloſed his rich ſtores of pardon and mercy in the blood of Jeſus.

Secondly, Becauſe in his blood the Promiſe of *pardon* is ratified and confirmed, ſo that nothing is wanting to our compleat forgiveneſs, but our pleading the *Promiſe* by faith in him, 2 Cor. 1. 20. *All the promiſes of God, are in him Yea, and in him Amen*; that is, faithfully, and irrevocably, and immutably eſtabliſhed. And therefore the Apoſtle having told us,

us, that this is the Covenant of God, that he *would be merciful to our ſins and iniquities*, Heb. 8. 12. He informs us, that in the undertaking of Chriſt, this Covenant is become a *Teſtament*, *Chap.* 9. 15, 16, 17. So ratified in his blood, that mercy and forgiveneſs of ſin is irrevocably confirmed unto us therein.

Thirdly, Becauſe he *hath in his own Perſon as the Head of the Church, received an acquitment for the whole body*; His *Perſonal diſcharge* upon the accompliſhment of his work, was a pledge of the *diſcharge* which was in due time to be given to his whole myſtical body. *Peter* tells us, *Acts* 2. 24. That it was *impoſſible he ſhould be detained by death.* And why ſo? becauſe death being penally inflicted on him, when he had *paid the debt*, he was legally to be acquitted; Now for whom, and in whoſe name and ſtead he ſuffered; for them, and in their name and ſtead, he received his acquitment.

Fourthly, Becauſe upon his death, *God the Father hath committed unto him the whole management of the buſineſs of forgiveneſs*, Acts 5. 31. *He* (now) *gives repentance and the forgiveneſs of ſins.* It is Chriſt that *forgives us*, Col. 3. 13. All *forgiveneſs* is now at his diſpoſal, and he pardoneth whom he will; even all that are given unto him of the Father, not caſting out any that come to God by him. He is intruſted with all the ſtores of his Fathers purpoſe, and his own purchaſe; and thence tells us, that *all things that the Father hath are his*, John 16. 15.

In all theſe reſpects doth *forgiveneſs relate to the blood of Chriſt.* Mercy, Pardon and Grace, could find no other way to iſſue forth from the *heart of the Father*, but by the *heart blood of the Son*, and ſo do they ſtream unto the *heart* of the ſinner.

Two things are principally to be conſidered in the reſpect that forgiveneſs hath to the blood of Chriſt. (1.) *The way of its procurement*; (2.) The *way of its Adminiſtration* by him: The firſt is *deep*, myſterious, dreadful. It was by his blood, the blood of the Croſs, the travel of his ſoul; his undergoing wrath and curſe. (2) The other is *gracious*, merciful and tender; whence ſo many things are ſpoken of his mercifulneſs, and faithfulneſs, to encourage us to *expect forgiveneſs* from him.

This alſo adds to the myſterious depths of *forgiveneſs*; and

makes its diſcovery a great matter. The ſoul that looks after it in earneſt, muſt conſider what it coſt. How light do moſt men make of pardon? What an eaſie thing is it to be acquainted with it? and no very hard matter to obtain it. But to hold communion with God, in the blood of his Son, is a thing of another nature than is once dreamed of by many, who think they know well enough what it is to be pardoned. God be merciful is a common ſaying; and as common, to deſire he would be ſo *for Chriſts ſake.* Poor Creatures are caſt into the mould of ſuch expreſſions, who know neither God, nor Mercy, nor Chriſt, nor any thing of the myſterie of the Goſpel. Others look on the outſide of the Croſs; to ſee into the Myſterie of the Love of the Father, working in the blood of the Mediator, to conſider by faith the great tranſaction of Divine Wiſdom, Juſtice and Mercy therein, how few attain unto it? To come unto God, by Chriſt for *forgiveneſs*, and therein to behold the Law iſſuing all its threats and curſes in his blood, and looſing its *ſting*, putting an end to its obligation unto puniſhment in the Croſs, to ſee all ſins gathered up in the hands of Gods Juſtice, and made to meet on the Mediator; and eternal love ſpringing forth triumphantly from his blood, flouriſhing into Pardon, Grace, Mercy, Forgiveneſs, this the heart of a ſinner can be enlarged unto only by the Spirit of God.

Forgiveneſs as it relates unto the Promiſe.

Thirdly, There is in *forgiveneſs, free condonation*, diſcharge, or *pardon*, according to the tenor of the Goſpel; and this may be conſidered two ways.

Firſt, As it lyes in the *Promiſe* it ſelf; and ſo it is Gods gracious declaration of *pardon* to ſinners, in and by the blood of Chriſt; his *Covenant* to that end and purpoſe; which is variouſly propoſed, according as he knew needful for all the ends and purpoſes of ingenerating Faith, and communicating that conſolation which he intends therein.

This is the *Law of his Grace*; the declaration of the myſterie of his love, before inſiſted on.

Secondly, There is the bringing home, and *Application* of all this mercy to the ſoul of a ſinner by the Holy Ghoſt; wherein we are *freely forgiven all our Treſpaſſes*, Col. 2. 13.

Goſpel

Goſpel forgiveneſs, I ſay, reſpects all theſe things, theſe Principles, they have all an influence into it. And that which makes this more evident, wherewith I ſhall cloſe this conſideration of the nature of it, is, that *Faith* in its Application of it ſelf unto God about, and for Forgiveneſs, doth diſtinctly apply it ſelf unto, and cloſe with, ſometimes *one* of theſe ſeverally and ſingly, ſometimes *another*; and ſometimes joyntly takes in the conſideration of them all expreſly. Not that at any time it fixes on any or either of them *excluſively* to the others; but that *eminently* it finds ſome ſpecial encouragement at ſome ſeaſon, and ſome peculiar attractive from *ſome one* of them, more than from the reſt; and then that proves an *inlet*, a door of entrance unto the *treaſures* that are laid up in the reſt of them. Let us go over the ſeverals by Inſtances. What Faith reſpects in Forgiveneſs.

Firſt, Sometimes faith fixes upon the *Name and infinite Goodneſs* of the nature of God, and draws out forgiveneſs from thence. So doth the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. 86. 6. *Thou Lord art good and ready to forgive.* He rolls himſelf in the purſuit and expectation of pardon, on the infinite goodneſs of the nature of God. So Nehem. 9. 17. *Thou art a God of pardons*, or ready to forgive; of an infinite, gracious, loving nature; not ſevere and wrathful; And this is that which we are encouraged unto, *Iſa.* 50 10. to ſtay on the *name of God*, as in innumerable other places.

And thus Faith oftentimes finds a peculiar ſweetneſs and encouragement in and from the conſideration of *Gods gracious nature.* Sometimes this is the *firſt thing* it fixes on, and ſometimes the laſt that it reſts in; and oft-times it makes a ſtay here, when it is driven from all other holds; It can ſay however it be, *yet God is gracious*; and at leaſt make that concluſion which we have from it, Joel 2. 13, 14. *God is gracious and merciful, who knoweth but he will return.* And when faith hath well laid hold on this conſideration, it will not eaſily be driven from its expectation of relief and *forgiveneſs*, even from hence.

Secondly, Sometimes the ſoul by *faith* addreſſeth it ſelf in a peculiar manner to the *Soveraignty of Gods Will*; whereby he

is gracious to whom he will be gracious, and merciful to whom he will be merciful, which as was shewed, is another considerable Spring or principle of forgiveness. This way *Davids* faith steared him in his great streight and perplexity, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. *If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do unto me as seemeth good unto him.* That which he hath in consideration is, whether God have any *delight in him or no*; that is, whether God would graciously *remit and pardon* the great sin against which at that time he manifested his indignation. Here he layes himself down before the *Soveraign Grace of God*, and awaits patiently the discovery of the *free Act of his Will* concerning him; and at this door, as it were, enters into the consideration of those other *springs of pardon*, which Faith enquires after and closeth withal. This sometimes is all the *cloud* that appears to a distressed soul, which after a while fills the Heavens by the addition of the other considerations mentioned, and yields *plentifully refreshing showers.* And this condition is a sin entangled soul oft-times reduced unto in looking out for relief; It can discover nothing but this, that God is *able*, and can if he graciously please relieve and acquit him. All other supportments, all springs of relief are shut up, or hid from him. The *springs* indeed may be *nigh*, as that was to *Hagar*, but their eyes are withheld, that they cannot see them. Wherefore they cast themselves on *Gods Soveraign pleasure*, and say with *Job, though he slay us, we will put our trust in him*, we will not let him go. In our selves we are lost, that is, unquestionable; how the Lord will deal with us we know not; we see not our signs and tokens any more; evidences of Gods Grace in us, or of his Love and favour unto us, are all out of sight. To a *present special interest* in Christ we are strangers; and we lye every moment at the door of Eternity; what course shall we take, what way shall we proceed? If we abide at a distance from God, we shall assuredly perish: who ever *hardned himself against him and prospered*? Nor is there the least relief to be had but from and by him; *for who can forgive sins but God*? We will then bring our *guilty souls* into his presence, and attend the pleasure of his Grace; what he speaks

speaks concerning us, we will willingly submit unto. And this sometimes proves an Anchor to a *tossed* soul; which though it gives it not rest and peace, yet it *saves it from the rock* of despair. Here it abides until Light do more and more break forth upon it.

Thirdly, Faith dealing about forgiveness, doth commonly eye in a peculiar manner its *relation to the mediation and blood of Christ*. So the Apostle directs, 1 John 2. 2. *If any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.* If any one hath sinned, and is in *depths* and entanglements about it; what course shall he take, how shall he proceed to obtain deliverance? why he must unto God for *pardon*; but what shall he rely upon to *encourage* him in his so doing? saith the Apostle, consider by faith the *Attonement* and *propitiation* made for sin by the blood of Christ; and that he is still pursuing the work of Love to the suing out of pardon for us; and rest thy soul thereon. This I say most commonly is that which faith in the first place immediatley fixes on.

Fourthly, Faith eyes *actual pardon or condonation*. So God proposeth it as a motive to further believing, Isa 44 22. *I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.* Actual pardon of sin is proposed to faith, as an encouragement unto a full returning unto God in all things, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. And the like may be said of all the other particulars which we have insisted on. There is not any of them, but will yield *peculiar relief* unto a soul dealing with God about forgiveness, as having some one special concernment or other of forgiveness inwrapped in them. Only as I said, they do it not *exclusively*, but are the special doors, whereby believing enters into the whole. And these things must be spoken unto afterwards.

Let us now take along with us, the end for which all these considerations have been insisted on. It is to manifest, that a *real discovery of Gospel Forgiveness, is a matter of greater consequence and importance than at first proposal, (it may be) it appeared unto some to be.* Who is not in hopes, in expectation of pardon? who thinks not that they know well enough at least *what it is*, if they might but obtain it? But men may have

have general thoughts of *impunity*, and yet be far enough from any ſaving acquaintance with Goſpel mercy.

Forgiveneſs diſcovered, or Revealed only to Faith. Reaſons thereof.

Forgiveneſs diſcovered to Faith alone.

For a cloſe of this Diſcourſe, I ſhall only add, what is included in that Propoſition which is the foundation of the whole; namely; *that this diſcovery of forgiveneſs is, and can be made to faith alone.* The nature of it is ſuch, as that nothing elſe can diſcover it, or receive it. No *Reaſonings*, no enquiries of the heart of man can reach up to it. That gueſs or glimpſe which the *Heathens* had of old of ſomewhat ſo call'ed, and which *falſe Worſhippers* have at preſent, is not the *forgiveneſs* we inſiſt upon, but a meer imagination of their own hearts.

This the Apoſtle informs us, Rom. 1. 17. The *Righteouſneſs of God, is (in the Goſpel) revealed from faith to faith.* Nothing but faith hath any thing to do with it. It is that *Righteouſneſs of God* whereof he ſpeaks, that conſiſts in the *forgiveneſs* of ſins by the blood of Chriſt, declared in the Goſpel. And this is revealed *from the faith of God* in the Promiſe, to the *faith of the Believer*; to him that mixes the Promiſe with faith. And again more fully, 1 Cor. 2. 9. *Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* The ways whereby we may come to the knowledge of any thing, are by the *ſeeing of the eye*, or the *hearing of the ear*, or the *Reaſonings* and meditations of the *heart*; but now none of theſe will reach to the matter in hand; by none of theſe ways can we come to an acquaintance with the things of the Goſpel that are *prepared* for us in Chriſt. How then ſhall we obtain the knowledge of them? that he declares, v. 10. *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* Now it is *faith* only that receives the *Revelations of the Spirit*; nothing elſe hath to do with them.

To give evidence hereunto, we may conſider, that this great myſterie,

1. Is too *Deep*,
2. Is too *Great*, for ought elſe to diſcover: and

3. That

3. That nothing elſe but faith is *ſuited* to the making of this *diſcovery*.

Firſt, It is too *deep* and myſterious to be *fathomed* and reached by any thing elſe. *Reaſons line* is too ſhort to fathom the depths of the *Fathers Love*, of the *blood of the Son*, and the Promiſes of the Goſpel built thereon, wherein *forgiveneſs* dwells. Men cannot by their rational conſiderations launch out into *theſe deeps*, nor draw water by them from theſe *Wells of Salvation*. Reaſon ſtands by amazed, and cryes *how can theſe things be?* it can but gather *Cockle ſhells*, like him of *old*, at the ſhoar of this Ocean; a few *Criticiſms* upon the outward letter; and ſo bring an evil report upon the Land, as did the Spies. All it can do, is but to *hinder faith* from venturing into it; crying *ſpare* thy ſelf, this attempt is vain, theſe things are impoſſible. It is among the things that faith puts off, and layes aſide, when it engageth the ſoul into this great work. This then, that it may come to a diſcovery of forgiveneſs, cauſeth the ſoul *to deny it ſelf*, and all its own Reaſonings, and to give up it ſelf to an *infinite fulneſs* of Goodneſs and Truth. Though it cannot go into the bottom of theſe depths, yet it enters into them, and finds reſt in them. Nothing but *faith* is ſuited to reſt, to ſatiate, and content it ſelf, in *myſterious, bottomleſs, unſearchable depths*. Being a *ſoul-emptying*, a Reaſon-denying Grace, the more it meets withal beyond its ſearch and reach, the more ſatisfaction it finds. This is that which I looked for, ſaith Faith, even for that which is *infinite* and *unſearchable*: When I know that there is abundantly more *beyond me* that I do not comprehend, than what I have attained unto; for I know that nothing elſe will do good to the ſoul. Now this is that which really *puzzles* and overwhelms *Reaſon*, rendring it uſeleſs. What it cannot *compaſs*, it will *neglect* or deſpiſe. It is either amazed and confounded, and dazled like weak eyes at too great a light; or fortifying of it ſelf by inbred pride and obſtinacy, it concludes, that this *preaching of the Croſs* of *forgiveneſs* from the Love of God, by the *blood* of Chriſt is plain *folly*, a thing not for a *wiſe man* to take notice of, or to trouble himſelf about; So it appeared to the wiſe *Geeeks* of old, 1 *Cor.* 1: 24. Hence when a ſoul is brought under the power of a real *conviction* of ſin, ſo as that it would

deſirouſly

deſirouſly be freed from the *galling entanglements* of ſi, it is then the hardeſt thing in the world to perſwade ſuch a ſoul of this *forgiveneſs*. Any thing appears more *rational* unto it; any *ſelf Righteouſneſs*, in this world, any *Purgatory* hereafter.

The greateſt part of the world of convinced Perſons have forſaken *forgiveneſs* on this account; *Maſſes, Penances, Merits*, have appeared more eligible. Yea, men who have no other deſire but to be forgiven, do chuſe to cloſe with any thing rather than *fogiveneſs*. If men do eſcape theſe Rocks, and reſolve that nothing but *pardon* will relieve them, yet it is impoſſible for them to receive it in the *Truth* and power of it, if not enabled by *faith* thereunto. I ſpeak not of men that take it up by *hearſay*, as a common report, but of thoſe ſouls who find themſelves *really concerned* to look after it; When they know it is their ſole concernment, all their hope and relief; when they know that they muſt *periſh everlaſtingly without it*, and when it is declared unto them in the words of truth and ſoberneſs, yet they cannot receive it; What is the Reaſon of it; what ſtaves off theſe *hungry* creatures from their proper food? Why, they have nothing to lead them into the *myſterious depths* of eternal Love, of the bloud of Chriſt, and Promiſes of the Goſpel? How may we ſee poor *diſeaſed* ſouls ſtanding every day at the ſide of this *Pool*, and yet not once venture themſelves into it all their days.

Secondly, it is too *Great* for any thing elſe to diſcover. *Forgiveneſs* is a thing choſen out of God from all Eternity, to *exalt and magnifie the glory of his Grace*; and it will be made appear to all the world at the day of Judgement to have been a great thing. When the ſoul comes in any meaſure to be made ſenſible of it, it finds it ſo great, ſo excellent and aſtoniſhable, that it ſinks under the thoughts of it. It hath dimenſions, a *length, breadth, depth* and *height*, that no line of the rational ſoul can take or meaſure. There is *exceeding Greatneſs in it*, Eph. 1. 19. That is a great work which we have preſcribed, Epheſ. 3, 19. Even *to know the Love of Chriſt that paſſeth knowledg*. Here I ſuppoſe, Reaſon will confeſs it ſelf at a ſtand, and an iſſue; *to know that which paſſeth knowledge*, is none of its work. It cannot be *known*, ſaith Reaſon, and ſo ends the matter.

matter. But this is faiths proper work; even to know that which paſſeth knowledge. To know that, in its *power, vertue*, ſweetneſs, and efficacy, which cannot be throughly known in its nature and excellency; to have by believing all the *Ends of a full comprehenſion* of that which cannot be *fully comprehended* Hence, *Heb.* 11. 1. it is ſaid to be the *evidence of things not ſeen*: their *ſubſiſtence*; though in themſelves *abſent*, yet *faith* gives them a *preſent ſubſiſtence* in the ſoul. So it *knows* things that paſs *knowledge*, by *mixing* it ſelf with them, it draws out, and communicates their benefit to the ſoul. From all which is evident, what in the third place was propoſed; of faiths being *only ſuited* to be the means of this diſcovery, ſo that I ſhall not need farther to inſiſt thereon.

Diſcovery of Forgiveneſs in God a great ſupportment to ſin-entangled ſouls. Particular Aſſurance attainable.

Diſcovery of Forgiveneſs a great ſupportment.

There yet remains a brief confirmation of the *Poſition* at firſt laid down, and thus cleared, before I come to the *improvement* of the words eſpecially aimed at. I ſay then, this *diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God, is a great ſupportment for a ſin-entangled ſoul, although it hath no ſpecial perſwaſion of its own particular intereſt therein.* Somewhat is *ſuppoſed* in this Aſſertion, and ſomewhat *affirmed*.

Particular Aſſurance attainable.

Firſt, It is *ſuppoſed* that there may be a gracious perſwaſion and *Aſſurance* of faith, in a man, concerning his own *particular intereſt in forgiveneſs*. A man may, many *do* believe it for themſelves; ſo as not only to have the *benefit* of it, but the *comfort* alſo. Generally all the Saints mentioned in Scripture had this *Aſſurance*, unleſs it were in the caſe of *depths*, diſtreſſes, and *deſertions*, ſuch as that in this *Pſalm. David* expreſſeth his confidence of the Love and Favour of God unto his *own ſoul* hundreds of times, *Paul* doth the ſame for himſelf, Gal. 2 20. *Chriſt loved* ME *and gave himſelf* FOR ME, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *There is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which God the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day.* And that this *boaſting* in the Lord and his Grace, was not an encloſure to himſelf, he ſhews *Rom.* 8, 38, 39.

Nothing can be more vain, than what is usually pleaded, to remove this *Sheat Anker* of the *Saints* Consolation; namely that *no mans particular name is in the Promise.* It is not said to this *or that man by name; that his sins are forgiven him,* But the matter is far otherwise. To think that it is necessary, that the *names* whereby we are known among our selves, and are distinguished here one from another, should be *written* in the *Promise*, that we may believe in particular every Child of God is in the *Promise*. And *believing* makes it very legible to him. Yea, we find by *Experience* that there is no need of *Argumentation* in this case. The soul by a *direct Act* of faith believes its own forgiveness, without making inferences or gathering conclusions; and may do so, upon the Proposition of it to be believed in the Promise. But I will not digress from my work in hand; and therefore shall only observe one or two things upon the *Supposition* laid down.

credo

Duty of Believers

First, It is the *duty of every Believer, to labour after an Assurance of a Personal interest in forgiveness*; and to be diligent in the cherishing and preservation of it when it is attained The Apostle exhorts us all unto it, Heb. 10. 22, *Let us draw near in full Assurance of faith*; that is, of our acceptance with God through forgiveness in the blood of Jesus. This he plainly discovereth of. And this Principle of our *faith and confidence*, he would have us to *hold fast* unto the end, *Chap.* 3. 14. It is no small evil in Believers not to be pressing after *perfection* in believing and obedience. Oft-times some *sinful indulgence* to sin or the world or both is the cause of it. Hence few come up to *Gospel Assurance*. But yet most of our priviledges, and indeed the matter all our comforts depend on this one thing. A little by the way, to *encourage* unto this duty, I shall desire you to consider both *wherein* this *Assurance is produced*, and what it doth *produce*; what it is the *fruit* of, and what *fruit* it bears.

to him on that text

First, It is in general the *product* of a more *plentiful communication* of the Spirit than ordinary, as to a sense and participation of the choice fruits of the death of Christ, procured for

for those who are justified by their *acceptance of the Atonement*.

It flourish th not without his *sealing, witnessing*, establishing, and *shedding abroad* the Love of God in our hearts. See *Rom.* 5. 2, 3, 4, 5. And what believer ought not to *long* for, and press after the enjoyment of these things. Nay to *read* of these things in the Gospel not *experiencing* them in our own hearts, and yet to sit down quietly on this side of them, without continual pressing after them, is to despise the blood of Christ, the Spirit of Grace, and the whole work of Gods Love. If there are *no such things*, the Gospel is not true: if there are, if we press not after them, we are *despisers* of the Gospel. Surely he hath not the *Spirit*, who would not have more of *him*, all of *him* that is promised by Christ. These things are the *hundredfold* that Christ hath left us in the world, to counterpoise our sorrows, troubles and losses: and shall we be so foolish as to neglect our only abiding riches and treasures? In *particular*, as is the product of an *exercised*, vigorous, active faith. That our faith should be such, always, in every state and condition, I suppose it our duty to endavour. Not only our *comforts*, but our Obedience also depends upon it. The *more faith*; that is true, and of the right kind, the *more obedience*. For all our *obedience*, is the *obedience of faith*.

(2.) For *its own fruit*, and what it produceth, they are the choicest actings of our souls towards God; as Love, delight, rejoycing in the Lord, Peace, Joy, and Consolation in ourselves, readiness to do, or suffer, cheerfulness in so doing. If they *grow* not from this *root*, yet their *flourishing* wholly depends upon it. So that surely it is the duty of every Believer to break through all difficulties in pressing after this *particular Assurance*. The Objections that persons raise against themselves, in this case, may be afterwards considered.

(2.) In *ordinary dispensation* of God towards us, and dealings with us, it is *mostly our own negligence and sloth* that we come short of this *Assurance*. It is true, it depends in a peculiar manner on the *Soveraignty* of God. He is as *absolute* in giving *Peace to believers*, as in giving *Grace to sinners*. This takes place, and may be proposed as a relief, in times of tryals and distress. He createth *light*, and causeth

darkneſs, as he pleaſeth. But yet conſidering what Promiſes are made unto us; what encouragements are given us, what love and tenderneſs there is in God to receive us, I cannot but conclude, that ordinarily the cauſe of our coming ſhort of this *Aſſurance* is where I have fixed it. And this is the firſt thing that is ſuppoſed, in the foregoing Aſſertion.

Saving Faith where there is no Aſſurance.

Secondly, It is ſuppoſed, that there is, or may be *a ſaving perſwaſion or diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God*, where there is *no Aſſurance* of any particular intereſt therein; or that our own ſins in particular are pardoned. This is that which hath a Promiſe of gracious Acceptance with God, and is therefore *ſaving*, Iſa. 50 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkneſs and hath no light; Let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon his God.* Here is the *fear of the Lord and Obedience*, with a bleſſed encouragement to reſt in God, and his All-ſufficiency, yet no *Aſſurance*, nor *light*, but *darkneſs*, and that *walked* in, or continued in for a long ſeaſon. For he cannot *walk in darkneſs*, meet with nothing but darkneſs, without any *beam* or ray of light, as the words ſignifie, who is perſwaded of the Love of God in the pardon of his ſins. And yet the *faith* of ſuch an one, and his Obedience ſpringing from it, have this Gracious Promiſe of Acceptance with God. And innumerable teſtimonies to this purpoſe might be produced, and *inſtances* in great plenty. I ſhall only tender a little Evidence unto it, in *one* Obſervation concerning the *nature of faith*, and *one more*, about the propoſal of the thing to be believed, or forgiveneſs. And,

1. Faith is called, and is a *cleaving unto the Lord*, Deut 4 4. *Ye that did cleave*, or adhere *unto the Lord*; that is, who did believe. *Joſh.* 23. 8. *cleave*, or adhere *unto the Lord your God.* The ſame word is uſed alſo in the New Teſtament, Acts 11. 23. *He exhorted them that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*, or continue ſtedfaſt in believing. It is alſo often expreſſed by *truſting* in the Lord, *rolling our burden*, or *caſting our care upon him*, by *committing our ſelves*, or our ways unto him. Now all this goes no further than the ſouls *Reſignation* of

of it ſelf unto God to be dealt withall by him according to the tenor of the Covenant of Grace, ratified in the bloud of Chriſt. This a ſoul *cannot do* without a diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God. But this a ſoul *may do*, without a *ſpecial Aſſurance* of his own intereſt therein. This *faith* that thus adheres to God, that cleaves to him, will carry men to conclude, that it is their *Duty*, and their *Wiſdom*, to give up the diſpoſal of their ſouls unto God, and to *cleave* and adhere unto him as revealed in Chriſt, waiting the pleaſure of his Will; It enables them to make *Chriſt* their choice; and ſtill carry men to Heaven ſafely, though it may be at ſome ſeaſons not very comfortably.

2. The *Revelation* and diſcovery of *forgiveneſs* that is made in the Goſpel, evidenceth the ſame truth. The *firſt propoſal of it*, or concerning it, is not to any man, that *his ſins are forgiven.* No, but it is only that there is *Redemption and forgiveneſs* of ſins in Chriſt. So the Apoſtle lays it down, Acts 13.38,39. *Be it known unto you therefore Men and Brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins, and by him all that believe are juſtified from all things; from which they could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes.* All this may be believed, without a mans Aſſurance of his own perſonal intereſt in the things mentioned. Now where they are believed with the faith the Gospel requires, that faith is ſaving, and the *root* of Goſpel acceptance. The *Ranſome* I ſay, the *Attonement* by Chriſt, *the ſtuff of the Redemption* that is in him, and ſo *Forgiveneſs* in his bloud for Believers, from the *Good Will*, Grace, and Love of the Father, is the firſt *Goſpel-diſcovery* that a ſinner in a loving manner cloſeth withal. Particular Aſſurance ariſeth, or may ariſe afterwards, and this alſo is *ſuppoſed* in the *Aſſertion.*

Diſcovery of Forgiveneſs a great ſupportment to intangled ſouls.

2. That which is affirmed in it, is, *That a diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God, without any particular Aſſurance of perſonal intereſt therein, is a great ſupportment to a ſin entangled ſoul.* And let no man deſpiſe the day of this *ſmall thing*, ſmall in the eyes of ſome, and thoſe good men alſo, as if it did not deſerve the *name of faith.* Now as hath been made to appear, this *diſcovery of forgiveneſs*, is the ſouls perſwaſion, on Goſpel grounds, that

that however it be with him, and whatever his state and condition be, or is like to be, yet that God in his own Nature is *infinitely gracious*, and that he hath determined in a *Sovereign Act of his will* from Eternity, to be *gracious* to sinners; and that he hath made way for the Administration of *forgiveness* by the *Blood* of his Son, according as he hath abundantly manifested, and declared in the Promises of the Gospel. However it be with me, yet thus it is with God; There is *forgiveness with him*. This is the *first thing* that a soul in its *depths* riseth up unto: And it is a supportment for it; enabling it unto all *present duties* until consolation come from above.

Thus hath it been to, and with the Saints of old, Hos. 14. 3. *Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon Horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our Gods, for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.* A solemn *Renunciation* we have of all other helps, Reliefs or Assistances, *Civil* or *Religious*, that are not Gods. There in a solemn *Resolution* in their great distress of cleaving unto God alone. Both which are great and blessed effects of faith. What is the bottom and foundation of this blessed Resolution? namely that *Proposition*, *in thee the fatherless findeth mercy*; that is, there is *forgiveness* with thee, for helpless sinners. This *lifted* up their hearts in their *depths*, and supported them in *waiting*, unto the receiving of the blessed Promises, of Mercy, Pardon, Grace and Holiness, which ensue in the next Verses. Until they came home unto them in their Efficacy and Effects, they made a *life* on this, *in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.*

The state and condition of things seem to lye yet *lower* in that proposal we have, Joel 2. 13, 14. *Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil, who knoweth if he will return, and repent, and leave a blessing.* That which is proposed to the faith of those here spoken unto is, that the Lord is *gracious and merciful*; that there is *forgiveness* in him. The *Duty* they are provoked unto hereupon, is *Gospel-Repentance*. The *Assent* unto the proposition demanded, as to their own interest amounts but unto this, *who knows, but the Lord may return and leave a blessing*, or deal with us according to the manifestation he hath made of himself,

himself, that he is *merciful and gracious*. This is far enough from any *comfortable perswasion* of a particular interest in that Grace, mercy or Pardon. But yet saith the *Prophet*, come but thus far, and here is a firm foundation of dealing with God about further discoveries of himself, in a way of Grace and Mercy. When a soul sees but so much in God, as to conclude; well, *Who knoweth but that he may return, and have mercy upon me also*, it will *support* him and give him an entrance into further light.

The Church in the *Lamentations* gives a sad account of her state and condition in this matter. For she maketh that hard conclusion against her self, Chap. 3. 8. *My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord. And when I cry and shout, he shuts out my prayer*, v. 18. So far is she from a comfortable perswasion of a *particular interest* in Mercy and Acceptance; that under her *Pressures*, and in her *Temptations*, she is ready positively to determine on the other side; namely, that she is rejected and cast off for ever. What course then shall we take? Shall she give over waiting on God, and say there is no hope? no, saith she, I will not take that way; for v. 26. *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of God.* But yet there seems small encouragement for her so to do, if things be with her as was expressed; Things indeed, saith she, are very sad with me, *My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is bowed down to me*, v. 20. but yet, somewhat *I recall to mind, and therefore have I hope*, v. 21. *It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassion fails not.* There is mercy and never-failing compassion in God, so that though my own present *condition* be full of darkness, and I see no deliverance, yet I purpose still to abide *waiting* on him: Who knows what those infinite stores and treasures of mercy and relief that are with him, may at length afford *unto me?* and many instances of the like kind may be added.

We may observe by the way, how far this *Relief* extends it self; and what it enables the soul unto. As,

1. The soul is enabled thereby *to resign it self unto the disposal of Sovereign Grace*, in *self-abhorrency*, and a Renunciation of all other ways of Relief. Lam. 3. 29. *He putteth his mouth in the* Effects of the Discovery of Forgiveness in God.

the dust, if so be there may be hope. What *God will*, is his Language. Here he lyes at his dispofal, humble, broken, but abiding his pleasure. *Though he slay me*, saith *Job, yet I will trust in him, Chap.* 13. 15. "It is all one, how he deals with "me; whatever be the event I will [illegible]ving unto him. "I will not think of any other w[illegible]ring my self "from my distress. I will ne[illegible]*b*, nor *hide* "like *Adam*, nor take any othe[illegible]ance. Saith "the soul, *God is a God that* [illegible]n me, Isa. "45. 15. *I walk in darkness and ha*[illegible]p 50. 10. "*My flesh faileth, and my heart faileth*, [illegible]3. 26. So that "I am overwhelmed with trouble. *Mine I*[illegible]*quities have* "*taken such hold on me, that I cannot look up*, Psal. 40. 12. "*The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me*; "Every day am I in dread and terror, and am ready utterly "to faint, and no relief can *I obtain.* What then shall I do? "Shall *I curse God and dy?* or cry this *evil is of the Lord, why* "*should I wait for him any longer?* Shall I take the course "of the world, and seeing it will be no better, be wholly "*regardless* of my latter end? No; I know what ever "my *lot* and portion be, that there is *forgiveness with* "*God*: *This* and that *poor man trusted in him, they cried* "*unto him, and were delivered.* So did *David in his* great- "est distress, *he encouraged his heart in the Lord his God*, "2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. It is good for me to cast my self "into his arms; it may be, he will *frown*; it may be he "is *wroth* still; but all is one, this way I will go; as it seems "good unto him to deal with me, so let it be: And un- "speakable are the *Advantages* which a soul obtains by this "*self-Resignation*, which the *faith* treated of, will infallibly "produce.

2. It extends it self unto a *Resolution of waiting in the condition wherein the soul is.* This the Church comes unto, Lam 3.26. *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* I will not give over *my expectation*, I will not *make haste*, nor limit God; but I will lye at his foot, until his *own appointed time* of mercy shall come. Expectation and Quietness make up *waiting.* These the soul attains unto with this supportment. It looks *upwards*, as a *servant that looks*

looks to the hands of his Master, still fixed on God to see what he will do, to hear what he will speak concerning him; missing no season, no opportunity wherein any discovery of the will of God may be made to him. And this he doth in *quietness*, without repining, or murmuring, turning all his complaints against himself and his own vileness, that hath cut him short from a participation of that fulness of Love and Grace which is with God. That this *Effect* also attends this Faith will fully appear in the close of the *Psalm.*

3. It supports unto *waiting in the use of all means* for the attainment of a sense of forgiveness, and so hath its Effect in the whole course of our obedience. There is forgiveness with thee, *that thou maist be feared.* To *fear the Lord*, is an expression comprehensive of *his* whole worship; and all *our* duty. This I am encouraged, saith the *Psalmist* unto, in my *depths*; because there is forgiveness with thee. I will abide in *all duties*, in all the *ways of thy Worship*, wherein thou maist be found. And however it be for a while, the latter end of that soul who thus abideth with God, will be peace. Let us then nextly see by what *ways* and *means* it yields this supportment.

Means whereby a Discovery of forgiveness yields supportment.

1. It begets a *liking* of God in the soul; and consequently some *love* unto him. The soul apprehends God as one infinitely to be desired and delighted in by those who have a share in *forgiveness*. It cannot but consider him as *good and gracious*, however its own estate be *hazardous*, Psal. 73. 1, 2. *Yet God is Good to* Israel, *to such as are of a clean heart, as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt.* However the state stands with me, yet I know that God is *good, good to Israel*; and therewith shall I *support* my self. When once this ground is got upon the soul, that it considers God in Christ as one to be delighted in, and loved, great and blessed effects will ensue. (1.) Self-abhorrency and Condemnation, with Resignation of all to God, and permanency therein, do certainly attend it. (2.) Still somewhat or other in God will be brought to mind to relieve it under faintings, some new *springs of hope* will be every day opened. (3.) And

the soul will be insensibly wrought upon to *delight it self in dealing with God.* Though in its own particular, it meets with frownings, chidings and repulses, yet this still relieves him, that God is so as hath been declared; so that he says, *however it be,* yet God is good; and it is good for me to wait upon him. Without this discovery the soul *likes not God,* and whatever it doth with respect unto him, it is because it *dares do no otherwise*, being over-awed with his terror and greatness. And such Obedience God may have from Devils.

2. It removes sundry *overwhelming difficulties*, that lye in the souls way before it close with this discovery of forgiveness. As,

1. It takes away all those *Hinderances* that were formerly insisted on, from the Greatness, Holiness and severity of God, the inexorableness and strictness of the Law, and the natural actings of conscience, rising up against all hopes of forgiveness. All these are by *this faith* removed, and taken out of the way. Where this faith is, it discovers not only *forgiveness*, as hath been shewed, but also the *true nature of Gospel forgiveness.* It reveals it as flowing from the *Gracious Heart* of the Father, through the *blood of the Son.* Now this *Propitiation* in the blood of the Son, removeth all these difficulties, even antecedently unto our special sense of an interest therein. It shews how all the *properties* of God may be exalted, and the *Law* fulfilled, and yet *forgiveness* given out to sinners. And herein lyes no small advantage unto a soul in its approaches unto God. All those dreadful Apprehensions of God, which were wont to beset him in the first thoughts of *coming to him,* are now taken out of the way; so that he can quietly apply himself unto his own particular concernments before him.

2. In particular it removes the *overwhelming consideration of the unspeakable greatness of sin*; This presseth the soul to death when once the heart is possessed with it. Were not their sins *so great*, such as no heart can imagine, or tongue declare, it might possibly be well with them, say distressed sinners. They are not so troubled that they are *sinners*, as that they are *great sinners*; Not that these, and those sins they are guilty of,

of, but that they are *great sins* attended with fearful aggravations. Otherwise they could deal well enough with them. Now though this discovery free men not from the entanglement of *their* sins as *theirs*; yet it doth, from the whole entanglement of their sins, as *great* and *many.* This consideration may be abstracted. The soul sees enough in God to forgive *great sins*, though it doth not as yet, to forgive *his sins.* That *great sins* shall be pardoned, this discovery puts out of Question. Whether *his sins* shall be pardoned, is now all the enquiry. Whatever *any faith* can do, that *this faith* will do, unless it be the making of *particular Application* of the things believed unto it self. The soul then can no longer justly be troubled about the *greatness of sin*; the infiniteness of forgiveness that he sees in God will relieve him against it. All that remains, is, that it is his *own sin*, about which he hath to deal, whereof afterwards. These, and the like difficulties are removed by it.

3. It gives some life in, and Encouragement unto *duty.* And that (*First*) Unto *duty as duty*, Eying God by faith in such a fulness of Grace, the soul cannot but be encouraged to *meet him* in every way of duty, and to lay hold upon him thereby. Every way *leading to him*, as leading to him, must be well *liked* and approved of; and (*Secondly*,) To *all duties*; and herein lyes no small advantage. God is oftentimes found in *duties*, but in what, or of what *kind* he will be found of any one in particular, is *uncertain.* This faith puts the soul *on all:* So it did the *Spouse* in the *parallel* to that in hand, *Cant.* 3. 2, 3, 4. Now what supportment may be hence obtained, is easily apprehended; supportment not *from them*, or *by them*, but *in them*, as the means of entercourse between God and the soul.

From these *Effects* of this *discovery of forgiveness in God*, three things will ensue, which are sufficient to maintain the *spiritual life* of the soul.

1. A Resolution to *abide with God*, and to commit all unto him. This the word, as was observed, teaches us; *There is forgiveness with thee, and therefore thou shalt be feared.* Because this I found, this I am perswaded of, therefore I will abide with

him in the way of his *Fear* and *Worship*. This our Saviour calls unto, John 15. 4. *Abide in me*; except you do so, *ye can bear no fruit*. So the Lord representing his taking of the Church unto himself, under the Type of the Prophets *taking an Adultress* in vision, doth it on these terms, Hos. 3. 3 *Thou shalt abide for me many days; Thou shalt not play the Harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee.* Now this *abiding* with God, intimates two things: (1.) *Oppositions*, Solicitations, and Temptations unto the contrary: (2.) *Forbearing to make any other choice*, as unto that end for which we abide with God.

Abiding with God, wherein it consisteth

1. It argues Oppositions. To *abide*, to be *stable*, and permanent, is to be so, against Oppositions. Many discouragements are ready to rise up in the soul against it; In *Fears* especially that it shall not hold out, that it shall be rejected at last, that all is nought and *hypocritical* with it; that it shall not be forgiven, that God indeed regards it not, and therefore it may well enough *give over* its hopes, which seems often as the *giving up of the Ghost*, will assault it. Again, *Oppositions* arise from *corruptions* and *temptations* unto sin, contrary to the Life of faith. And these often proceed to an high degree of prevalency, so that the guilt contracted upon them is ready to cast the soul quite out of all expectation of mercy: I shall one day perish, by *these means*, saith the soul, if I am not already lost.

But now where faith hath made this *discovery of forgiveness*, the soul will abide with God against all these discouragements and *Oppositions*. It will not leave him, it will not give over waiting for him. So *David* expresseth the matter in the instance of himself, Psal. 73. 2. *But as for me my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt*: and v. 13. *Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain*; but yet after all his conflicts, this at last he comes unto, v. 26. *Though my flesh and my heart faileth, yet* (v 28) *It is good for me to draw near unto God.* I will yet *abide* with God, I will not let go his fear, nor my profession. Although I walk weakly, lamely, unevenly, yet I will still follow after him. As it was with the *Disciples*, when many upon

upon a *strong temptation* went back from Christ, and walked no more with him; *Jesus said unto them, will ye go away also?* to which *Peter* replies in the name of the rest of them, *Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of Eternal Life*, John 6. 66, 67, 68. It is thus and thus with me, saith the soul, I am *tossed and afflicted, and not comforted*; little life, little strength, real guilt, many sins, and much disconsolation. What then saith God by his word, *Wilt thou go away also?* no, saith the soul, there is *forgiveness with thee*, thou hast the words of Eternal Life, and therefore I will *abide* with thee.

2. This abiding with God argues a *forbearance of any other choice*. Whilst the soul is in this condition, having not attained any evidences of its own special interest in forgiveness: Many *Lovers* will be soliciting of it to *play the harlot* by taking them into its embraces. Both *self-righteousness* and *sin* will be very importunate in this matter. The *former* tenders it self as exceeding useful to give the soul some Help, Assistance, and supportment in its condition. *Samuel* doth not come, saith *Saul*, and the *Philistims* invade me, I will venture and *offer Sacrifice* my self contrary to the Law. The *Promise* doth not come to the soul for its particular relief, it hath no evidence as to an especial interest in forgiveness: Temptation invades the mind; try thy self, says it, to take relief in somewhat of thine own providing. And this is to play the harlot from God. To this purpose *self righteousness* variously *disguises* it self, like the *Wife of Jeroboam* when she went to the Prophet. Sometimes it appears as *duty*, sometimes as *signs*, and *tokens*; but its end is to get somewhat of the *faith* and *trust* of the soul to be fixed upon it. But when the soul hath indeed a *discovery of forgiveness*, it will not give ear to these solicitations. No, saith it, I see such a Beauty, such an Excellency, such a desireableness and suitableness unto my wants and condition, in that *forgiveness that is with God*, that I am resolved to abide in the Gospel desire and expectation of it, all the days of my life; here my *choice is fixed*; and I will not alter. And this *Resolution gives glory to the Grace of God.* When the soul without an evidence of an interest in it, yet prefers it above that which with many reasonings and pretences offers it self as a present relief

relief unto it, Hereby is *God glorified*, and Christ exalted, and the spiritual life of the soul secured.

Waiting on God from a Discovery of Forgiveness.

2. This discovery of *forgiveness in God*, with the effects of it before-mentioned, will produce a Resolution of *waiting on God* for peace and consolation, in *his own time and way*. *He that believeth will not make haste*, Isa. 28. 16. not make haste; to what? not to the enjoyment of the thing believed. *Haste* argues precipitation and impatience; this the soul that hath this discovery is freed from, resolving to wait the *time of Gods appointment*, for peace and consolation; God speaking of his accomplishment of his Promises, says, *I the Lord will hasten it*, Isa. 60. 22. Well then, if God will *hasten* it may not we *hasten to it?* nay, saith he, I will *hasten it*, *but in its time*. All oppositions and *impediments* considered it shall be *hastned*, but in *its time*, its due time, its appointed time. And this the soul is to wait for, and so it will.

As when *Jacob* had seen the beauty of *Rachel* and loved her, he was contented to *wait seven years* for the enjoyment of her to be his wife; and thought no time long, no toyle too hard that he might obtain her; so the soul having discovered the beauty and excellency of *forgiveness*, as it is with God, as it is in his gracious Heart, in his eternal purpose, in the Bloud of Christ, in the Promise of the Gospel, is resolved to wait quietly and patiently for the time wherein God will clear up unto it, its own personal interest therein; Even one *experimental embracement* of it, even at the *hour of death*, doth well deserve the waiting, and obedience of the whole course of a mans life.

And this the *Psalmist* manifests to have been the Effect produced in his heart and spirit; For upon this discovery of *forgiveness in God*, he resolveth both to *wait* upon him himself, and encourageth others so to do.

Discovery of Forgiveness prepares the soul to receive it.

3. This *prepares the soul, for the receiving of that consolation* and deliverance out of its pressures, by an evidence of a special interest in forgiveness, which it waiteth for.

1. For this makes men to *hearken after it*; It makes the *soul* like

like the *Merchant* who hath great Riches, all his wealth in a far Country, which he is endeavouring to bring home safe unto him. If they come he is *well provided for*; if they miscarry, he is lost and undone. This makes him *hearken* after *tydings* that they are safe there; and as *Solomon* says, *Good news* in this case from *a far Country*, *is as cold water to a thirsty soul*, (*Prov.* 25. 25.) full of refreshment. Though he cannot look upon them as his *own*, yet absolutely because he hath them not in possession, he is glad they are *safe* there. So is it with the soul; These Riches that it so *values* are as to its apprehensions in a far Country: So is the Promise, *that he shall behold the Land that is very far off*, Isa. 33. 17. He is glad to hear news that they are *safe*; to hear *forgiveness preached*, and the Promises insisted on, though he cannot as yet look upon them as his own.

The *Merchant* rests not here, but he *hearkeneth* with much solicitousness after the things that should bring home his riches, especially if they have in them his All. Hence such Ships are called *Ships of desire*, Job 9. 26. Such a man greatly desires the speeding of them to their Port. He considers the Wind and the Weather, all the occasions and inconveniencies and danger of the way; And blame him not; his *All* is at stake. The soul doth so in like manner; it *hearkeneth* after all the ways and means whereby this *forgiveness* may be particularly brought home unto it; is afraid of sin, and of Temptation, glad to find a fresh Gale of the Spirit of Grace, hoping that it may bring in his *Return* from the *Land of Promise*. This prepares the heart for a spiritual sense of it, when it is revealed.

Secondly, It so *prepares* the soul, by giving it a due *Valuation* of the Grace and Mercy desired. The *Merchantman* in the Gospel was not *prepared* to enjoy the *Pearl* himself, until it was discovered to him to be of great *price*; then he knew how to purchase it, procure it, and keep it. The soul having by this acting of faith upon the discovery of forgiveness insisted on, come to find that the *pearl hid in the field is indeed precious*, is both stirred up to seek after possession of it, and to give it its due Saith such a soul, "How excellent, how precious is "this *forgiveness* that is with God? Blessed, yea ever blessed "are

"are they who are made partakers of it! What a life of joy, "Rest, Peace, and Consolation do they lead? Had I but their "Evidence of an interest in it, and the spiritual consolation "that ensues thereon, how would I despise the world, and "all the temptations of Satan, and rejoyce in the Lord "in every condition? And this Apprehension of Grace, also exceedingly prepares and fits the soul, for a receiving of a blessed sense of it, so as that God may have glory thereby.

3. It *fits* the soul by giving a *Right Understanding* of it; of its Nature, its Causes, and Effects. At the first, the soul goes no further, but to look after *impunity*, or freedom from punishment, any way. *What shall I do to be saved*, is the utmost it aims at, *Who shall deliver me, how shall I escape?* And it would be contented to escape any way; by the *Law*, or the *Gospel*, all is one, so it may escape. But upon this *discovery of forgiveness* treated of, which is made by faith of *Adherence unto God*, a man plainly sees the *nature of it*, and that it is so *excellent* that it is to be desired for *its own sake*. Indeed when a soul is brought under trouble for sin, it knows not well what it would have. It hath an *uneasiness*; or disquietment that it would be freed from; a dread of some evil condition that it would avoid. But now the soul can tell what it desires, what it aims at, as well as what it would be freed from. It would have an interest in *Eternal Love*, have the gracious kindness of the heart of God turned towards it self; a *sense* of the everlasting purpose of his Will *shed abroad in his heart*; have an especial interest in the precious bloud of the Son of God, whereby Attonement is made for him, and that all these things be testified unto his *Conscience* in a word of promise mixed with faith. These things he came for, this way alone he would be saved and no other. It sees such a Glory of Wisdom, Love, and Grace in *forgiveness*, such an Exaltation of the Love of Christ in all his Offices, in all his undertaking, especially in his *Death*, *Sacrifice*, and *bloudshedding*, whereby he procured or made Reconciliation for us, that it exceedingly longs after the participation of them.

All these things in their several degrees, will this *discovery of*

of forgiveness in God, without an evidence of an especial interest therein, produce. And these will assuredly maintain the *spiritual life* of the soul, and keep it up unto such an obedience as shall be accepted of God in Christ. Darkness, sorrow, storms, they in whom it is may meet withal, but their eternal condition is secured in the Covenant of God; their souls are bound up in the bundle of life.

From what hath been spoken, we may make some Inferences in our passage concerning the true notion of believing. For,

Vain pretences of Faith discovered.

(1.) These *Effects* ascribed to this *faith of forgiveness* in God, and always produced by it, make it evident that the most of them who pretend unto it, who pretend to *believe that there is forgiveness with God*, do indeed believe no such thing. Although I shall on set purpose afterwards evince this, yet I cannot here utterly pass it by. I shall then only demand of them who are so forward in the *profession* of this faith, that they think it *almost impossible* that any one should not believe it; what *Effects* it hath produced in them, and whether they have been by It enabled to the performance of the duties before-mentioned? I fear with many, things on the account of their *pretended faith* are quite otherwise. They *love sin* the more for it, and God *never the better*; supposing that a few *barren words* will issue the controversie about their sins, they become insensibly to have *slight thoughts of sin*, and of God also. This perswasion is not of him that calls us. Poor souls your *faith* is the *Devils greatest Engine* for your ruine; the highest contempt of God and Christ, and forgiveness also, that you can be guilty of; a means to let you down quietly into Hell; the *Pharisees Moses*, trusted in, and will condemn you, As none is saved but *by faith*, so you if it were not for your *faith*, (as you call it) might possibly be saved. If a mans *Gold* prove counterfeit, his *Jewels* painted Glass, his *Silver* lead or dross, he will not only be found *poor* when he comes to be tryed, and want the benefit of *Riches*, but have withal a fearful aggravation of his poverty by his disappointment and surprizal. If a mans *faith* which should be more *precious then Gold*, be found rotten and

corrupt, if his *light* be darkness, how *vile* is that faith, how *great* is that darkness? Such it is evident will the *faith* of too many be found in this business.

2. The work we are carrying on, is the *rising of a sin-entangled soul out of its depths*, and this we have spoken unto, is that which must give him his first relief. Commonly when souls are in distress, that which they look after is *Consolation*. What is it that they intend thereby? that they may have *Assurance* that their sins are forgiven them, and so be freed from their present perplexities. What is the issue? Some of them continue *complaining* all their days, and never come to *Rest* or *Peace*; so far do they fall short of *Consolation and Joy*. And some are utterly discouraged from attempting any progress in the ways of God. What is the Reason hereof? Is it not, that they would fain be *finishing* their building, when they have not laid the foundation. They have not yet made through work in *believing forgiveness with God*, and they would immediatly be at Assurance in themselves. Now God delights not in such a frame of Spirit; for,

1. It is *selfish*; The great design of faith is to *give glory unto God*, Rom. 4. 20. The end of Gods giving out *forgiveness*, is the praise of his *glorious grace*, Ephes 1. 6. But let a soul in this frame have *peace* in it self, it is very little solicitous about giving *glory* unto God. He crys like *Rachel*, *Give me Children or I dye*; give me peace, or I perish. That God may be honoured, and the *forgiveness* he seeks after be rendred glorious, It is cared for in the second place, if at all. This *selfish earnestness*, at first to be thrusting our hand in the side of Christ, is that which he will *pardon* in many, but *accepts* in none.

2. It is *impatient*. Men do thus deport themselves, because they will not *wait*. They do not care for *standing afar off* for any season, with the *Publican*. They love not to submit their souls to lye at the *foot of God*, to give him the glory of his Goodness, Mercy, Wisdom, and Love, in the disposal of them, and their concernments. This *waiting* comprizeth the *universal subjection* of the soul unto God, with a resolved Judgement that it is meet and right that we, and all we desire

desire and aim at, should be at his Soveraign disposal, This *gives glory* to God; a duty which the *impatience* of these poor souls will not admit them to the performance of; and both these arise,

3. From *weakness*; it is *weak*; it is *weakness* in any condition that makes men *restless* and weary. The state of *Adherence* is as safe a condition, as the state of *Assurance*; only it hath more combats and wrestling attending it. It is not then *fear of the event*, but weakness and *weariness* of the *combate* that makes men anxiously solicitous about a deliverance from that state, before they are well entred into it.

Let then the sin-entangled soul remember always, this Way, Method, and Order of the Gospel, that we have under consideration. First, Exercise *faith on forgiveness in God*, and when the soul is fixed therein, it will have a ground and foundation whereon it may stand securely, in making Application of it unto it self. Drive this *principle* in the first place unto a stable issue upon Gospel evidences; Answer the *Objections* that lye against it, and then you may proceed. In believing, the soul makes a *conquest* upon Satans Territories. Do then as they do, who are entring on an Enemies Country, secure the *passages*, fortifie the Strong holds as you go on, that you be not cut off in your progress. Be not as a *Ship at Sea* which passeth on, and is no more possessed or *Master* of the *Water* it hath gone through; than of that whereunto it is not yet arrived. But so it is with a soul, that fixeth not on these *foundation principles*; he presseth forwards and the ground crumbles away under his feet, and so he wilders away all his days in uncertainties. Would men but lay this principle well in their souls, and secure it against assaults, they might proceed though not with so *much speed* as some do, yet with *more safety*. Some pretend at once to fall into *full Assurance*, I wish it prove not *a broad presumption* in the most. It is to no purpose for him to *strive to fly*, who cannot yet *go*; to labour to come to *Assurance in himself* who never well believed *forgiveness in God*. Now that we may be enabled to fix this perswasion against all opposition, that which in the next place I shall do, is to give out such *unquestionable evidences* of this Gospel truth, as the soul

may safely build and rest upon: And these contain the confirmation of the principal Proposition before laid down.

Evidences of Forgiveness in God No inbred Notions of any free Acts of Gods Will. Forgiveness not revealed by the Works of Nature, nor the Law.

Essential properties of Gods Nature how made known.

1. The things that are *spoken*, or to be *known* of God are of two sorts: (1.) *Natural* and *Necessary*; such as are his *Essential properties*, or the Attributes of his nature, his Goodness, Holiness, Righteousness, Omnipotency, Eternity, and the like. These are called, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *Rom.* 1. 19. *That which may be known of God* And there are two ways, as the Apostle there declares, whereby that which he there intimates of God may be known, (1.) By the *inbred light of Nature*; φανερὸν ἐστιν ἐν αὐτοῖς, v. 19. *It is manifest in themselves*; in their own hearts; They are taught it by the common conceptions and *presumptions* which they have of God by the light of nature. From hence do all mankind know concerning God, that *He is*, that he is *Eternal*, infinitely Powerful, Good, Righteous, Holy, Omnipotent. There needs no *special Revelation* of these things that men may know them. That indeed they may be *known savingly*, there is; and therefore they that *know* these things by *nature*, do also *believe* them on Revelation. Heb. 11. 6. *He that cometh unto God must* B E L I E V E *that he is, and that he is a rewarder.* Though men *K N O W God* by the light of nature, yet they cannot *C O M E* to God by that knowledge.

2. These *Essential properties* of the nature of God are revealed by his W O R K S. So the Apostle in the same place, ver. 20. *The invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead:* See also, Psalm 19. 1, 2, 3. And this is the first sort of things that *may be known* of God.

2. There

Free Acts of Gods Will, how they may be known.

2 There are the *free Acts of his Will* and Power; or his free *eternal purposes*, with the *temporal dispensations* that flow from them. Now of this sort, is the *forgiveness* that we are enquiring after; It is not a property of the Nature of God, but an *Act* of his Will, and a *Work* of his Grace. Although it hath its rise and spring in the infinite Goodness of his Nature, yet it proceeds from him, and is not exercised but by an *absolute free and Soveraign Act of his Will.* Now there is nothing of God, or with him, of this sort that can be any ways known, but only by especial Revelation: For,

1. There is no *inbred notion* of the Acts of Gods Will in the heart of man, which is the *first way* whereby we come to the knowledge of any thing of God. *Forgiveness* is not revealed by the light of nature. Flesh and blood, which nature is, declares it not: By that means, *No man hath seen God at any time*, John 1. 8. that is, as a God, of mercy and pardon, as the *Son* reveals him. *Adam* had an intimate acquaintance, according to the limited capacity of a creature, with the properties and excellencies of the nature of God. It was implanted in his heart, as indispensably necessary unto that natural worship, which by the Law of his creation he was to perform, But when he had sinned, it is *evident*, that he had not the least apprehension that there was *forgiveness with God* Such a thought would have laid a foundation of some further treaty with God about his condition. But he had no other design but of *flying and hiding himself*, Gen. 3. 10. so declaring that he was utterly ignorant of any such thing as *pardoning mercy.* Such, and no other, are all the first, or purely natural conceptions of sinners; namely, that it is δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ, *the Judgment of God*, Rom. 1. 32. that sin is to be punished with death. It is true, these conceptions in many are *stifled*, by Rumors, Reports, Traditions, that it may be otherwise; but all these are far enough from that *Revelation of forgiveness*, which we are enquiring after.

2 The consideration of the *Works of Gods creation* will not help a man to this knowledge; that there is *forgiveness with God.* The Apostle tells us, *Rom.* 1. 20. what it is of God that his

his works reveal; even his *eternal power and Godhead*, or the Essential Properties of his nature; but no more: Not any of the *purposes of his Grace*, not any of the free Acts of his Will; not pardon and forgiveness. Besides God made all things in such an estate and condition, namely, of *Rectitude*, *Integrity*, and *Uprightness*, Eccles. 7. 29. that it was impossible they should have any respect unto *sin*, which is the *Corruption* of all, or to the *Pardon* of it, which is their *Restitution*, whereof they stood in no need. There being no such thing in the world, as a *sin*, nor any such thing supposed to be, when *all things* were made of *nothing*, how could any thing declare or reveal the forgiveness of it.

3. No *works of Gods Providence* can make this discovery. God hath indeed born Testimony to himself and his Goodness in all Ages from the foundation of the world in the works of his Providence: So Acts 14. 15, 16. 17. *We preach unto you, that you should turn from these vanities, unto the living God, which made Heaven, and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein; who in times past, suffered all Nations to walk in their own ways: nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness:* ἐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἑαυτὸν ἀφῆκε, *He left not himself without witness*; that is, by the work of his Providence there recounted, he thus far *bare Testimony* to himself, that he *is*, and *is good*, and doth good, and ruleth the world, so that they were utterly *inexcuseable* who taking no notice of these works of his, nor the fruits of his goodness, which they lived upon, turned away after τὰ μάταια, *vain things*, as the Apostle there calls the *Idols* of the Gentiles. But yet these things did not discover *pardon* and *forgiveness*. For still God suffered them to go on in their *own ways*, and *winked at their Ignorance*. So again, Acts 17. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. *Whom you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you, God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is the Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in Temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with mens hands, as though he needeth any thing, seeing he giveth unto all life and breath, and all things, and hath made of one blood all Nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the Earth*

Earth (where by the way there is an allusion to that of Gen. 11. 8. *the Lord scattered them abroad upon the face of the Earth*) *and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might seek after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.* By Arguments taken from the *works of God* both of Creation and Providence; the Apostle proves the *Being* the *properties* of God. Yea, he lets *them* know with whom he had to do, that God designed by his works so far to reveal himself unto them, as the *true and living God*, the Maker and Governour of all things, as that they ought to have enquired more *diligently* after him, and not to look on him alone as the *Unknown God*, who alone might be known: all their Idols being *vain* and *nothing*. But of the discovery of *Pardon and forgiveness* in God by these ways and means, he speaks not; yea, he plainly shews that this was not done thereby. For the *Great Call* to saving Repentance is by the Revelation of forgiveness. But now by these works of his Providence God called not the Gentiles to *saving Repentance*. No saith he, he *suffered them to walk still in their own ways*, Chap. 14. 16. *and winked at the times of their ignorance*; but *now*, that is, by the Word of the Gospel, *commandeth them to Repent*, *Chap.* 17. 30.

II. Whereas there had been one *signal Act of Gods Providence* about sin, when man first fell into the snares of it. It was so far from the revealing *forgiveness in God*, that it rather severely intimated the contrary. This was Gods dealing with *sinning Angels*. The *Angels* were the first sinners; and God dealt first with them about sin. And what was his dealing with them, the Holy Ghost tells us, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. ἀγγέλων ἁμαρτησάντων οὐκ ἐφείσατο, *he spared not the sinning Angels*. he spared them not; It is the same word which he useth where he speaks of laying all our iniquities on Christ, he undergoing the *punishment* due unto them, *Rom.* 8. 32. οὐκ ἐφείσατο, *he spared him not*; that is, he laid on him the *full punishment* that by the Curse and sanction of the Law was due unto sin. So he dealt with the *Angels* that sinned; *he spared them not*, but inflicted on them the punishment due unto sin, shutting them up under chains

Forgiveness not revealed by the work of Providence about the first sin.

chains of darkneſs for the Judgment of the great Day, Hitherto then God keeps all thoughts of *forgiveneſs* in his own Eternal Boſom: There is not ſo much as the leaſt dawning of it upon the world. And this was at firſt no ſmall prejudice againſt any thoughts of *forgiveneſs*. The world is made, ſin enters by the moſt glorious part of the Creation, whoſe recovery by *pardon* might ſeem to be more deſirable, but not the leaſt appearance of it is diſcovered. Thus it was *hid in God from the foundation of the world*, Eph. 3. 9.

III. God gave unto Man a Law of Obedience immediatly upon his Creation. Yea, for the main of it, he implanted it in him, by, and in his Creation. This *Law* it was ſuppoſed that man might *tranſgreſs*. The very nature of a *Law* preſcribed unto *free Agents*, attended with *Threatnings* and Promiſes of *Reward*, requires that ſuppoſition. Now there was not annexed unto this Law, or revealed with it, the leaſt intimation of *pardon* to be obtained, if Tranſgreſſion ſhould enſue. *Gen.* 2. 17. we have this Law, *In the day thou eateſt thou ſhalt ſurely dye*: *dying thou ſhalt dye*; or bring upon thy ſelf *aſſuredly* the guilt of death temporal and eternal. There God leaves the *ſinner* under the power of that commination. Of *forgiveneſs* or pardoning mercy there is not the leaſt intimation. To this very day, that Law, which was then the whole Rule of life and Acceptance with God knows no ſuch thing. *Dying thou ſhalt dye*, *O ſinner*, is the preciſe and final voyce of it. From theſe previous conſiderations, added to what was formerly ſpoken, ſome things preparatory to the enſuing diſcourſe may be inferred: as,

1. That it is a *great and rare thing* to have *forgiveneſs* in God diſcovered unto a ſinful ſoul. A thing it is, that as hath been ſhewed Conſcience and Law, with the inbred Notions that are in the heart of man about Gods *Holyneſs and Vindictive Juſtice* do lye againſt. A matter whereof we have no *natural preſumption*; whereof there is no *common notion* in the mind of man. A thing which no conſideration of the works of God, either of Creation or Providence will reveal, and which the great *Diſtance* of Gods dealing with *ſinning Angels* renders deep, admirable and myſterious. Men who have common and *ſlight thoughts*

thoughts of God, of themſelves, of Sin, of Obedience, of the Judgment to come, of Eternity, that feed upon the aſhes of rumors, reports, hearſays, traditions, without looking into the reality of things, may, and do take this to be an *ordinary and acknowledged truth*, eaſie to be entertained, which upon the matter no man disbelieves. But *convinced ſinners*, who make a tryal of theſe things, as running into Eternity, have other thoughts of them. And as to that which it is pretended every one believes, we have great cauſe to cry out, *Lord who hath believed our report, to whom hath this arm of the Lord been revealed?*

2. That the diſcovery of *forgiveneſs* in God, being a matter of ſo great difficulty, is a thing *precious and excellent*, as being the foundation of all our Communion with God here, and of all undeceiving Expectation of our enjoyment of him hereafter. It is a pure *Goſpel truth* that hath neither ſhadow, footſtep, nor intimation elſewhere; the whole creation hath not the leaſt obſcure impreſſion of it left thereon; ſo that,

3. It is undoubtedly greatly incumbent on us to *enquire diligently* as the *Prophets did of old* into this Salvation; to conſider what ſure Evidences faith hath of it, ſuch as will not, as cannot fail us. To be ſlight and common in this matter, to take it up at random, is an Argument of an unſound rotten heart. He that is not ſerious in his enquiry into the Revelation of this matter, is ſerious in nothing wherein God or his ſoul is concerned. The Holy Ghoſt knows what our frame of heart is, and how ſlow we are to receive this bleſſed truth in a gracious ſaving manner. Therefore doth he confirm it unto us with ſuch weighty conſiderations, as Heb. 6. 17, 18. *God willing more abundantly to ſhew unto the heirs of promiſe the immutability of his counſell, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impoſſible for God to lye, we might have ſtrong conſolation.* It is of *forgiveneſs* of ſin that the Apoſtle treats, as hath been made evident by the deſcription of it before given. Now to give evidence hereunto, and to beget a belief of it in us, he firſt engages a *Property* of Gods Nature in that buſineſs. He with whom we deal, is ἀψευδὴς —— as *Tit.* 1. 2. The God that cannot *lye*, that cannot *deceive*, or be

decieved. It is *impoſſible* it ſhould be ſo with him. Now as this extends it ſelf in general, to all the Words and Works of God, ſo there is peculiarly in this whereof he treats τὸ ἀμετάθετον τῆς βουλῆς, an eſpecial *immutability of his counſel.* Men may think that although there be words ſpoken about forgiveneſs, yet it is *poſſible* it may be otherwiſe; no ſaith the Apoſtle, it is ſpoken by God, and it is *impoſſible he ſhould lye.* Yea, but upon the manifold provocations of ſinners he may *change* his mind and thoughts therein; no, ſaith the Apoſtle, there is a *peculiar immutability in his counſel* concerning the execution of this thing, there can be no change in it. But how doth this appear that indeed this is the counſel of his will? Why, ſaith he? he hath declared it by his *Word*; and that given in a way of *promiſe*; which as in its own nature it is ſuited to raiſe an expectation in him or them to whom it is made or given; ſo it requires exact *faithfulneſs* in the diſcharge and performance of it, which God on his part will aſſuredly anſwer. But neither is this all; but that no place might be left for any cavilling Objection in this matter, ἐμεσίτευσεν ὅρκῳ, he *interpoſed himſelf by an oath*, Thus we have this Truth *deduced* from the *veracity* of Gods nature, one of his *Eſſential Excellencies*, *eſtabliſhed* in the *immutable* purpoſe of his will, *brought forth* by a word of promiſe, and *confirmed* by Gods interpoſing himſelf againſt all occaſions of exception, (ſo to put an end unto all ſtrife about it) by an *Oath*, ſwearing by himſelf that ſo it ſhould be. I have mentioned this only to ſhew what weight the Holy Ghoſt lays upon the delivery of this great Truth, and thence how deeply it concerns us to enquire diligently into it, and after the grounds and evidences which may be tendred of it, which among others are theſe that follow.

Diſcovery

Diſcovery of Forgiveneſs in the firſt Promiſe. The Evidence of the Truth that lyes therein. And by the Inſtitution of Sacrifices. Their Uſe and End. Alſo by the preſcripton of Repentance unto ſinners.

Forgiveneſs diſcovered in the firſt Promiſe.

The firſt Diſcovery of *forgiveneſs* in God, (and which I place as the firſt Evidence of it) was made in his firſt dealing with our *Parents* after their ſhameful ſin and fall. Now to make it appear, that this is an evidence that carries along a great conviction with it, and is ſuch as *faith* may ſecurely reſt upon and cloſe withall, the enſuing *Obſervations* are to be conſidered.

The firſt ſin in the world, was on many accounts the greateſt ſin that ever was in the world. It was the ſin as it were of Humane Nature, wherein there was a conſpiracy of all Individuals, *omnes eramus unus ille homo*; in that one man, or that one ſin, *we all ſinned*, Rom. 5. 12. It left not God *one ſubject* as to *moral obedience* on the earth, nor the leaſt ground for any ſuch to be unto Eternity. When the *Angels* ſinned the whole race or kind did not prevaricate. *Thouſand thouſands of them, and ten thouſand times ten thouſands* continued in their obedience, *Dan.* 7. 10. But here, all and every *individual* of mankind (he only excepted which was not then in *Adam*) were imbarked in the ſame crime and guilt. Beſides it diſturbed the Government of God in and over the whole Creation. God had made all things in number, weight, and meaſure, in order and beauty: pronouncing himſelf concerning his whole work that it was טוב מאוד exceeding *beautiful and good*, Gen. 1. 31. Much of this beauty lay in the *ſubordination* of one thing to another, and of all to himſelf by the mediation and interpoſition of man, through whoſe *Prayſes and Obedience* the reſt of the Creation being made ſubject unto him, was to return their tribute of Honour and Glory unto God. But all this Order was deſtroyed by this ſin; and the very *creation made ſubject to vanity*, Rom. 8. 20. On which, and the like accounts, it might be eaſily made to appear that it was the greateſt *ſin* that ever was in the world.

2. *Man who had ſinned ſubſcribed in his heart and conſcience unto the righteous ſentence of the Law.* He knew what he had deſerved, and looked for nothing but the immediate Execution of the ſentence of *death* upon him. Hence he meditates not *a defence*, expects no *pardon*, ſtays not for a tryal, but *flies and hides*, and attempts an eſcape. Gen. 3. 10. *I was afraid*, ſaith he, *and hid myſelf*; than which never were there words of greater horror in the world, nor ſhall be until the day of Judgment. Poor Creature, he was full of expectation of the vengance due for a broken Covenant.

3. *God hath newly declared in the ſinning Angels what his Juſtice required, and how he could deal with ſinning man without the leaſt impeachment of his Government, Holineſs or Goodneſs.* See 2 *Pet.* 2 4.

4. *There was nothing without God himſelf that ſhould move him in the leaſt, ſo much as to ſuſpend the execution of his wrath for one moment*; he had not done ſo with the Angels. All things lay now under wrath, curſe, confuſion, and diſorder: nothing was left good, lovely, or deſirable in his eye. As in the firſt Creation, that which was firſt brought forth from nothing was תהו ובהו *without form and void*, empty of all order and beauty; nothing was in it to induce or move God to bring forth all things in the glory that enſued, but the whole deſign of it, proceeded from his own infinite Goodneſs and Wiſdom; ſo was it now again. There was an *Emptineſs* and *Vanity* brought by ſin upon the whole creation. Nothing remained that might be a *motive* unto a merciful Reſtoration, but all is again devolved on his Soveraignty. All things being in this ſtate and condition wherein all doors ſtood open to the Glory of Gods Juſtice in the *puniſhing of ſin*, nothing remaining *without him* to hold his hand in the leaſt; the whole creation, and eſpecially the *ſinner* himſelf lying trembling in Expectation of a dreadful doom, what now cometh forth from him? the bleſſed word which we have, Gen. 3. 15. *The ſeed of the Woman ſhall break the Serpents head.* It is full well known that the whole myſterie of *forgiveneſs* is wrapt up in this one word of promiſe. And the great way of its coming forth from God by *the blood of the Meſſiah*, whoſe

heel was to be *bruiſed*, is alſo intimated. And this was the firſt diſcovery that ever was made of *forgiveneſs in God.* By a word of *pure Revelation* it was made, and ſo faith muſt take it up and receive it. Now this *Revelation* of forgiveneſs with God in this one *Promiſe*, was the bottom of all that Worſhip that was yielded unto him by *ſinners* for many Ages. For we have ſhewed before, that without this, no ſinner can have the leaſt encouragement to approach unto him; and this will continue to the end of the world, as a notable evidence of the truth in hand, a firm foundation for *faith* to reſt and build upon. Let a ſinner ſeriouſly conſider the ſtate of things as they were then in the world laid down before, and then view God coming forth with a word of pardon and *forgiveneſs*, meerly from his own Love, and thoſe *counſells of peace* that were between the *Father* and the *Son*, and he cannot but conclude under his greateſt difficulties, that yet *there is forgiveneſs with God* that he may be feared. Let now the Law and Conſcience, let Sin and Satan ſtand forth and except againſt his Evidence; enough may be ſpoken from it whatever the particular caſe be, about which the ſoul hath a conteſt with them, to put them all to ſilence.

II. *God revealed this Sacred truth by his Inſtitution of Sacrifices.* Sacrifices by bloud, do all of them reſpect Attonement, Expiation, and conſequentially *forgiveneſs*. It is true indeed, they could not themſelves take away ſin, *nor make them perfect who came unto God by them*, Heb. 10. 1. but yet they undeniably evince the taking away of ſin, or the *forgiveneſs* of it, by what they did denote and *typifie*. I ſhall therefore look a little back into their Riſe and Intendment. Sacrifices an Evidence of Forgiveneſs.

1. The *Original* and firſt ſpring of *Sacrifices* is not in the Scripture expreſly mentioned, only the *practice* of the Saints is recorded. But it is certain from infallible Scripture Evidences, that they were of Gods *immediate* Inſtitution and Appointment. God never allowed that the Will or Wiſdom of man, ſhould be the ſpring and Rule of his Worſhip. That ſolemn word wherewith he Fronts the command that is the Rule of his Worſhip, לא תעשה לך *Thou ſhalt not make to thy ſelf*, which is the life of the command, (that which follows being an explanation

and

and confirmation of the Law it ſelf by Inſtances (cuts off all ſuch pretences, and is as a *flaming ſword* turning every way to prevent mens arbitrary approaches to Gods Inſtitutions. God will not part with his glory of being the only *Law-giver* as to the whole concernment of his worſhip, or any part of it, unto any of the ſons of *men.*

2. Neither is the *time* of their Inſtitution mentioned. Some of the *Papiſts diſpute* (as there are a generation of *philoſophical diſputers* amongſt them, by whom their tottering cauſe is ſupported) that there ſhould have been *Sacrifices* in *Paradice*, if a man had not ſinned. But as in all their opinions, our firſt enquiry ought to be, what do they *get by this or that*, their whole Religion being pointed unto their carnal intereſt; ſo we may in particular do it, upon this *uncouth Aſſertion*, which is perfectly contradictious to the very Nature and End of moſt *Sacrifices*; namely, that they ſhould be *offered* where there is no ſin. Why, they hope to eſtabliſh hence a *general rule*, that there *can be no true Worſhip of God in any ſtate or condition without a Sacrifice*, What then I pray? Why then it is evident that the *continual Sacrifice of the Maſs is neceſſary in the Church*, and that without it there is no *true Worſhip* of God; and ſo they are quickly come home to their *advantage* and profit; the *Maſs* being that exhauſtible Spring of Revenue which feeds their pride and luſt throughout the world. But there is in the Church of Chriſt an *Altar* ſtill, and a *Sacrifice* ſtill, which they have rejected for the abominable figement of *their Maſs*; namely, *Chriſt himſelf*, as the Apoſtle informs us, *Heb.* 13. 10. But as the Sacrifices of Beaſts could not have been before the entrance of ſin, ſo it may be evidenced that they were inſtituted *from the foundation of the world*, that is preſently after the entrance of ſin. Chriſt is called the *Lamb of God*, John 1. 29. which he was in reference unto the Sacrifices of old, as 1 *Pet.* 2. 18, 19. whence he is repreſented in the Church, as a *Lamb ſlain*, *Rev.* 5. 6. or giving out the efficacy of all Sacrifices to his Church. Now he is ſaid to be *a Lamb ſlain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. 13. 8. which could not be, unleſs ſome *Sacrifice* prefiguring his being *ſlain* had been then offered. For it denotes not only the efficacy of his Mediation, but the way. Beſides

ſides the Apoſtle tells us, that *without ſhedding of bloud there was no remiſſion*, Aeb. 9. 22. That is, God to demonſtrate that all pardon and forgiveneſs related to the *bloud* of Chriſt from the foundation of the world, gave out no word of *pardon*, but by and with bloud. Now I have ſhewed before, that he revealed *pardon* in the firſt promiſe, and therefore there enſued thereon the *ſhedding of bloud* and *Sacrifices*; and thereby that *Teſtament* or Covenant was *dedicated with bloud* alſo, *ver.* 18. Some think that the Beaſts, of whoſe *skins* God made garments for *Adam*, were offered in *Sacrifices*. Nor is the conjecture vain. Yea, it ſeems not to want a ſhaddow of a *Goſpel Myſterie*; that their *nakedneſs* which became their ſhame upon their ſin, (whence the pollution and ſhame of ſin is frequently ſo termed) ſhould be covered with the *skins* of their Sacrifices. For in the true *Sacrifice*, there is ſomewhat anſwerable thereunto. And the Righteouſneſs of him whoſe *Sacrifices* takes away the guilt of our ſin, is called our *cloathing*, that hides our pollution and ſhame.

3. That after the giving of the Law, the greateſt, moſt noble, and ſolemn part of the worſhip of God conſiſted in *Sacrifices*. And this kind of worſhip continued with the approbation of God in the world about *four thouſand years*; that is, from the entrance of ſin until the death of the *Meſſiah*, the true *Sacrifice*, which put an end unto all that was *typical.*

Theſe things being premiſed, we may conſider what was the mind and aim of God in the Inſtitution of this worſhip. One inſtance, and that of the moſt ſolemn, of the whole kind, will reſolve us in this enquiry, *Lev.* 16. 5. Two Kids of the *Goats* are taken for an offering for ſin. Conſider only (that we do not enlarge on particulars) how one of them was dealt withal, ver 20, 32, 22 *He ſhall bring the live Gout, and* Aaron *ſhall lay both his hands on the head of the live Goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of* Iſrael, *and all their tranſgreſſion in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the Goat, and ſhall ſend him away by the hand of a fit man into the Wildernes, and the Goat ſhall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a Land not inhabited,*

Let us ſee to what end is all this Solemnity, and what is declared

clared thereby. Wherefore ſhould God appoint poor *ſinful men* to come together, to take a Goat or a Lamb, and to confeſs over his head all their ſins and tranſgreſſions, and to devote him to deſtruction under that confeſſion? Had men *invented* this themſelves, it had been a matter of no moment. But it was an *Inſtitution* of God which he bound his Church to the Obſervation of upon the penalty of his higheſt diſpleaſure. Certainly this was a ſolemn declaration that there is *forgiveneſs* with him. Would that God who is infinitely *Good*, and ſo will not, who is infinitely *True*, holy and faithful, and ſo *cannot deceive*, call men out whom he loved, to a ſolemn Repreſentation of a thing wherein their chiefeſt, their eternal concernment did lye, and ſuffer them to feed upon *Aſhes?* Let men take heed that they *mock not God*; for of a truth God mocketh not man, until he be finally rejected by him. For four thouſand years together then, did God declare by *Sacrifices*; that there is *forgiveneſs* with him, and lead his people by them to make a publick Repreſentation of it in the face of the world. This is a ſecond uncontrolable Evidence of the Truth aſſerted, which may poſſibly be of uſe to ſouls that come indeed deeply and ſeriouſly to deal with God; for though the *Practice* be ceaſed, yet the *Inſtruction* intended in them continues.

Forgiveneſs with God, manifeſted by his Preſcription of Repentance.

III. *Gods appointment of Repentance unto ſinners, doth reveal that there is forgiveneſs in himſelf.* I ſay the preſcription of *Repentance* is a Revelation of *forgiveneſs*, After the *Angels* had ſinned, God never once called them to *Repentance*. He would not deceive them, but let them know what they were to look for at his hands; he hath no *forgiveneſs* for them, and therefore would require no *Repentance* of them. It is not, nor ever was a duty incumbent on them to *repent*. Nor is it ſo unto the *damned* in Hell. God requires it not of them, nor is it their duty. There being no *forgiveneſs* for them, what ſhould move them to *repent?* Why ſhould it be their duty ſo to do? Their eternal *anguiſh* about ſin committed hath nothing of *Repentance* in it. Aſſignation then of *Repentance* is a Revelation of *forgiveneſs*. God would not call upon a ſinful creature

creature to *humble* it ſelf and bewail its ſin, if there were no way of recovery, or relief, And the only way of recovery from the guilt of ſin, is *pardon*, ſo *Job* 30. 27, 28. *He looketh on men, and if any ſay, I have ſinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; he will deliver his ſoul from going into the pit*, and his life *ſhall ſee the light*. In the foregoing *Verſes* he declares the various ways that God uſed to bring men unto *Repentance*. He did it by *dreams*, ver. 15, 16. by *Afflictions*, ver. 19. by the *preaching of the Word*, ver. 23. What then doth God aim at in and by all theſe *various ways* of teachings? It is to cauſe man to ſay, *I have ſinned and perverted that which was right*. It is to bring him to *Repentance*: What now, if he obtain his end, and man cometh to that which is aimed at? Why then there is *forgiveneſs* for him, as is declared, *ver* 28. To improve this evidence, I ſhall confirm by ſome few obvious conſiderations theſe two things.

1. *That the preſcription of Repentance doth indeed evince that there is forgiveneſs with God.*

2. *That every one in whom there is Repentance wrought towards God, may certainly conclude that there is forgiveneſs with God for him.*

1. *No Repentance is acceptable with God but what is built, or leans on the faith of forgiveneſs.* We have a cloud of witneſſes unto this Truth in the Scripture. Many there have been, many are recorded who have been convinced of ſin, perplexed about it, ſorry for it, that have made open confeſſion and acknowledgement of it, that under the preſſing ſenſe of it, have cryed out even to God for deliverance, and yet have come ſhort of mercy pardon and acceptance with God. The caſes of *Cain*, *Pharaoh*, *Saul*, *Ahab*, *Judas*, and others, might be inſiſted on. What was wanting that made all that they did abominable? Conſider one inſtance for all: It is ſaid of *Judas* that *he repented*, Mat. 27. 3. μεταμεληθεὶς, *he repented himſelf*; but wherein did this repentance conſiſt? he was convinced of his ſin in general; ἥμαρτον, ſaith he, *I have ſinned*, ver. 4 2. He was ſenſible of the particular ſin whereof he ſtood charged in conſcience before God. I have, ſaith he, *betrayed innocent blood:* I am guilty of blood, innocent blood, and that in the vileſt manner, by *treachery*;

ſo that he comes (3) To a full and open *confeſſion* of his ſin: (4.) He makes Reſtitution of what he was advantaged by his ſin, *he brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver*, v. 3. all teſtifying an hearty ſorrow that *ſpirited* the whole. Methinks now *Judas* his *Repentance* looks like the young mans *obedience*, who cryed out, all theſe things have I done; Is there any thing yet *lacking*? Yea, one thing was wanting to that *young man*, he had no *true faith* nor love to God all this while, which vitiated and ſpoyled all the reſt of his performances. One thing alſo is wanting to this *Repentance of Judas*; he had no *faith of forgiveneſs* in God; that he could not believe; and therefore after all this ſorrow inſtead of coming to him he bids him the utmoſt defiance, and goes away *and hangs himſelf*.

Indeed faith of *forgiveneſs*, as hath been ſhewed, hath many degrees. There is of them, that which is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to render *Repentance* acceptable. What it is in particular, I do not diſpute. It is not an *Aſſurance* of the Acceptance of our perſons in general. It is not that the *particular ſin* wherewith it may be, the ſoul is perplexed, is *forgiven*. A *general*, ſo it be a *Goſpel diſcovery* that there is *forgiveneſs in God*, will ſuffice. The Church expreſſeth it, Hoſ. 14. 3. *In thee the fatherleſs findeth mercy*, and Joel 2. 14 *Who knows but he will return and repent*. I have this ground, ſaith the ſoul; God is in himſelf gracious and merciful; the *fatherleſs*, the deſtitute and helpleſs that come to him by Chriſt, find mercy in him. None in Heaven and earth can evince but that he *may return* to me alſo. Now let a mans *Convictions* be never ſo great, ſharp, wounding, his *ſorrow* never ſo abundant, overflowing, abiding, his *confeſſion* never ſo full, free or open, if this one thing be wanting, all is nothing but what tends to death.

4. To preſcribe *Repentance* as a *duty* unto ſinners, without a foundation of *pardon* and *forgiveneſs* in himſelf; is inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom, Holineſs, Goodneſs, Faithfulneſs, and all other glorious Excellencies and Perfections of the nature of God: for.

1, The Apoſtle lays this as the great foundation of all conſolation, that God *cannot lye or deceive*, Heb. 6. 18. And again, he engageth the faithfulneſs and *veracity* of God to the ſame purpoſe

purpoſe. Tit. 1. 2. *God who cannot lye hath promiſed it*. Now there is a *lye*, a *deceit* in *Things* as well as in *Words*. He that doth a thing, which in its own nature is apt to deceive them that conſider it, with an intention of deceiving them, is no leſs a *lyar*, than he which affirms that to be true, which he knows to be falſe. There is a *lye in Actions* as well as in words. The whole life of an hypocrite is a lye; ſo ſaith the Prophet of *Idolaters*, there is a *lye in their right hand*, Iſa. 44. 20.

2. The propoſal of *Repentance*, is a thing fitted and ſuited in its own nature, to beget thoughts in the mind of a ſinner that there is *forgiveneſs with God*. Repenting is for ſinners only. *I came not*, ſaith our Saviour, *to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance*. It is for them, and them only. It was no duty for *Adam* in *Eden*; it is none for the *Angels* in Heaven nor for the *damned* in Hell. What then may be the language of this appointment? O ſinners, come and deal with God by Repentance: Doth it not openly ſpeak *forgiveneſs* in God? and if it were otherwiſe could men poſſibly be more fruſtrated or deceived? would not the Inſtitution of Repentance be a *lye*? Such a deluſion may proceed from *Satan*, but not from him who is the fountain of Goodneſs, Holineſs and Truth. His Call to Repentance, is a full Demonſtration of his readineſs to forgive, *Acts* 17. 30, 31, 32. It is true, many do thus deceive themſelves. They raiſe themſelves unto an expectation of immunity, not on Goſpel grounds; and their diſappointment is a great part of their puniſhment. But God deceives none: whoever comes to him on his propoſal of *Repentance*, ſhall find forgiveneſs. It is ſaid of ſome indeed, that he *will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh*, Prov. 1, 26. He will aggravate their miſery, by giving them to ſee what their pride and folly hath brought them nnto. but who are they? only ſuch as refuſe his *Call to Repentance*, with the Promiſes of the Acceptation annexed.

3. There is then no cauſe, why thoſe who are under a Call to *Repentance*, ſhould queſtion whether there be *forgiveneſs* in God or no. This concerns my ſecond Propoſition. *Come*, ſaith the Lord, *unto the ſouls of men; leave your ſinful ways, turn unto me, humble your ſelves with broken and contrite heart*: Alas,

ſay poor convinced ſinners, we are poor, dark and *ignorant* creatures; or we are *old* in ſin, or *greater* ſinners, or *back-ſliders*, or have fallen *often* into the ſame ſins; can we expect there ſhould be forgiveneſs for us? Why, you are under Gods Invitation to Repentance; and to disbelieve *forgiveneſs*, is to call the Truth, Holineſs and Faithfulneſs of God into queſtion. If you will not believe *forgiveneſs*, pretend what you pleaſe, it is in truth becauſe you hate *Repentance*. You do but deceive your ſouls when you pretend you come not up to *Repentance*, becauſe you cannot believe *forgiveneſs*. For in the very Inſtitution of this duty God engageth all his Properties to make it good that he hath pardon and mercy for ſinners.

4. Much leſs cauſe is there to doubt of *forgiveneſs*, where *ſincere Repentance* is in any meaſure wrought. No ſoul comes to Repentance but upon Gods call. God calls none but whom he hath mercy for upon their coming. And as for thoſe who ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, as they ſhut themſelves out from *forgiveneſs*, ſo they are not called to *Repentance*.

5. God expreſly declares in the Scripture, that the forgiveneſs that is with him, is the foundation of his preſcribing repentance unto man. One inſtance may ſuffice, Iſa. 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his way* (רשע a perverſe wicked one; ואיש און) *and the man of iniquity his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord: and he will have mercy: and to our God, For* ירבה לסלוח *he will multiply to pardon.* You ſee to whom he ſpeaks; to men *perverſly wicked*, and ſuch as *make a trade of ſinning*. What doth he call them unto? plainly to *Repentance*, to the duty we have inſiſted on. But what is the ground of ſuch an invitation, unto ſuch a profligate ſinners; Why, the *abundant forgiveneſs* and pardon that is with him, ſuper-abounding unto what the worſt of them can ſtand in need of: as *Rom.* 5. 20.

And this is another way whereby God hath revealed that there is *forgiveneſs* with him: and an infallible bottom for faith to build upon in its approaches unto God it is. Nor can the certainty of this Evidence be called into queſtion, but on ſuch grounds as are derogatory to the Glory and Honour of God. And this connexion of *Repentance* and *forgiveneſs* is that principle

ciple from whence God convinces a ſtubborn unbelieving people, that all his ways and dealings with ſinners are juſt and equal, *Ezek.* 18. 25. And ſhould there be any failure in it they could not be ſo. Every ſoul then that is under a call to *Repentance*, whether out of his natural condition, or from any *back-ſliding into folly* after Converſion, hath a ſufficient foundation to reſt on, as to the *pardon* he enquires after. God is ready to deal with him on *terms of mercy*; if out of *love to ſin*, or the power of unbelief, he refuſe to cloſe with him on theſe terms, his condemnation is juſt. And it will be well that this conſideration be well imprinted on the minds of men. I ſay, notwithſtanding the *general preſumptions* that men ſeem to have of this matter; yet theſe *principles* of it ought to be *inculcated*. For,

Confirmation of the Truth of Forgiveneſs neceſſary.

1 Such is the *Atheiſm* that lies lurking in the hearts of men by nature, that notwithſtanding their pretences, and profeſſions, we have need to be preſſing upon them *Evidences* of the very Being and Eſſential Properties of God. In *ſo doing* we have the Aſſiſtance of *inbred notions* in their own minds which they cannot eject, to help to carry on the work. How much more is this neceſſary in reference unto the *free Acts of the Will* of God, which are to be known only by meer Revelation. Our Word had need be *line upon line*: Aud yet when we have done, have cauſe enough to cry out, as was ſaid, *Lord who hath believed our report, and to whom hath this arm of the Lord been revealed?*

2. What was ſpoken before of the *obſtacles* that lye in the way hindring ſouls from a ſaving reception of this Truth, ought to be remembred. Thoſe who have no experience of them between God and their ſouls, ſeem to be ignorant of the true nature of Conſcience, Law, Goſpel, Grace, Sin and *Forgiveneſs*.

3. Many who are come to a *ſaving perſwaſion* of it, yet having not received it upon clear and unqueſtionable grounds, and ſo not knowing how to reſolve their faith of it into its *proper principles*, are not able to anſwer the Objections that lie againſt it in their own Conſciences, and do ſo miſerably fluctuate about

about it all their days. Theſe had need to have theſe principles inculcated on them. Were they pondred aright, ſome might have cauſe to ſay with the *Samaritans*, who firſt gave credit to the report of the *woman*, *John* 4. They had but a *report* before, but now they find all things to be according unto it, ye to exceed it. A little experience of a mans own unbelief, with the Obſervation that may eaſily be made of the uncertain progreſſes and fluctuations of the ſpirits of others, will be a ſufficient conviction of the neceſſity of the work we are engaged in.

But it will yet be ſaid, that it is needleſs to multiply *Arguments* and *Evidences* in this caſe. The *Truth* inſiſted on being granted as one of the *fundamental principles of Religion*. As it is not then by *any called in queſtion*, ſo it doth not appear that ſo much time and pains is needful for the confirmation of it. For what is *granted* and *plain*, needs little confirmation. But ſeveral things may be returned in Anſwer hereunto: All which may at once be here pleaded for the *multiplication* our *Arguments* in this matter.

Neceſſity of producing Arguments to prove Forgiveneſs.

That it is generally *granted by all, is no Argument that it is effectually believed by many*. Sundry things are *taken for granted* in point of opinion, that are not ſo *believed* as to be improved in practice. We have in part ſhewed before, and ſhall afterwards undeniably evince, that there are *very few* that believe this Truth, with that faith that will intereſt them in it, and give them the benefit of it. And what will it avail any of us, that there is *forgiveneſs of ſin with God*, if our ſins be not forgiven? no more than that ſuch or ſuch a *King* is rich, whilſt we are poor and ſtarving. My aim is not to prove it *as an opinion*, or a meer *ſpeculative* Truth; but ſo to evidence it in the principles of its *Being* and *Revelation*; as that it may be *believed*, whereon all our bleſſedneſs depends.

2. *It needs never the leſs confirmation becauſe it is a plain fundamental Truth*; but rather the more; and that becauſe both of the *Worth* and *Weight* of it. *This is a faithfull ſaying, ſaith the Apoſtle, worthy of all acceptation, that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſave ſinners*. So I ſay of this, which for the *ſubſtance* of

of it, is the ſame with that. It is *worthy of all acceptation*, namely that there is *forgiveneſs with God*. And therefore ought it to be fully confirmed. Eſpecially whilſt we make uſe of no other *demonſtrations* of it, but thoſe only which God hath furniſhed us withal to that purpoſe; and this he would not have done, but that he knew them *needful* for us. And for the *plainneſs* of this Truth, it is well if it be ſo *unto us*. This I know, nothing but the *Spirit of God* can make it ſo. Men may pleaſe themſelves and others ſometimes with *curious notions*, and make them ſeem to be things of great ſearch and attainment: which when they are well examined, it may be they are not *true*, or if they are, are yet of a very *little conſequence* or importance. It is theſe *fundamental Truths* that have the myſteries of the Wiſdom and Grace of God inwrapped in them; which who ſo can *unfold* aright, will ſhew himſelf a *workman that needs not be aſhamed*. Theſe *ſtill waters are deep*; and the farther we *dive* into them, the greater diſcovery ſhall we make of their *depths*. And many other *Sacred Truths* there are, whoſe *mention* is common, but whoſe *depths* are little ſearched, and whoſe *efficacy* is little known.

3. We *multiply* theſe Evidences, becauſe they are *multitudes* that are concerned in them. All that *do believe*, and all that *do not believe* are ſo. Thoſe that do *believe*, that they may be eſtabliſhed; and thoſe that *do not believe*, that they may be encouraged ſo to do. Among both theſe ſorts *ſome evidences* may be more profitable and uſeful, one to one, ſome to another. It may be amongſt all, all will be gathered up, that no *fragments* be loſt. They are all (I hope) *inſtruments* provided by the Holy Ghoſt for this end; and by this *Ordinance* do we endeavour to put them into his hand, to be made *effectual* as he will. One may reach *one ſoul*, another another, according to his pleaſure. One may be of uſe to eſtabliſhment, *another* to conſolation, a *third* of encouragement, according as the neceſſities of poor ſouls do require. However God who hath *provided* them, knows them all to be needful.

4. They are ſo alſo upon the account of the *various conditions* wherein the Spirits of Believers themſelves may be. One may give help to the *ſame ſoul* at one ſeaſon, another at another;

ther; one may *secure* the soul againg a *temptation*, another *stir* it up to *Thankfulness* and Obedience.

These things have I spoken, that you may not think we dwell too long on this considerarion. And I pray God that your Consolation and Establishment may abound in the reading of these *Meditations*, as I hope they have not been altogether without their fruit in their *preparation*.

Further Evidences of Forgiveness with God. Testimonies that God was well pleased with some that were sinners. The Patience of God towards the world; an evidence of Forgiveness. Experience of the Saints of God to the same purpose.

Some Sinners actually pardoned and accepted with God.

I V, Let us then in the *fourth place*, as a fourth *Evidence* of this truth, consider *those*, both under the *Old Testament* and the *New*, concerning whom we have the *greatest Assurance* that God was *well pleased with them*, and that they are now in the enjoyment of him. And this *Argument* unto this purpose the *Apostle* insists upon, and presseth from sundry instances, *Heb.* 11. How many doth he there reckon up who of old *obtained a good report, and this Testimony, that they pleased God:* ver. 25. *All these inherited the Promises through believing*; that is, obtained the *forgiveness of sin*. For whereas by *nature they were children of wrath*, and under the Curse as well as others, obtaining an infallible interest in the *favour of God*, and this Testimony, *that they pleased him*, it could no otherwise be. For without this, on a just account, every one of them would have continued in the state wherein *Adam* was, when *he heard the voyce of God and was afraid*. Wherefore it being evident that some persons in all Generations, have enjoyed the *friendship*, *love* and *favour* of God in this world, and at their *departure* out of it have entred into *Glory*; it makes it evident that there is *forgiveness of sin* with him, without which these things could not be.

Let us, after the example of the *Apostle*, mention some particular instances in this matter. Look unto *Abraham*. he was the *friend of God*, and *walked with God*; God made a solemn *Covenant* with him, and takes it for his *memorial* throughout all

all generations, that he is *the God of Abraham*. And he is doubtless now *at rest* with God. Our Saviour calls the *place* or condition whereinto blessed souls are gathered, *Abrahams Bosom*; He is at rest with whom others are at rest.

The condition was the same with *Isaac* and *Jacob*. They also are in *Heaven*, being alive unto, and with God. Our Saviour proves it from the tenour of the Covenant, *I am the God of* Abraham, *the God of* Isaac, *the God of* Jacob, *God is not the God of the dead but of the living*, Math. 22. 32. They are yet *alive*, *alive* unto God, and with him by vertue of the Covenant; or after their death, *God would not be said, to be their God*. This is the force of our Saviours Argument in that place; that after their death, *God was still their God*. Then death had not reached their whole persons. They were still *alive with God* in Heaven; and their *bodies* by vertue of the same *Covenant*, were to be recovered out of the dust.

The same is the state with *David* He was a *man after Gods own heart*, that *did all his Will*, and fulfilled all his pleasure. And although he *dyed*, and his *body saw corruption*, yet he is not *lost*, he is with *God in Heaven*. Hence he ended his days *triumphantly* in a full apprehension of *Eternal Rest*, beyond what could in this *world* be attained, and that by vertue of the Covenant. For *these are the last words of* David, *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an Everlasting Covenant*, ascertaining unto him sure and eternal mercies, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5.

Peter also is in Heaven. Christ prayed for him *that his faith should not fail*; and *in his death he glorified God*, John 21. 19.

So is *Paul*. He also is in *Heaven*; he knew that when he *was dissolved he should be with Christ*. Here then we are encompassed about with a *cloud of witnesses*. For,

1. *It is most certain, that they were all sinners*; They were all so *by nature*; for therein there is no difference between any of the Children of men. And *personally* they were sinners also. They *confessed so* of themselves, and *some* of the sins of all of them stand upon record. Yea, some of them were *great sinners*, or guilty of great and signal miscarriages. Some *before their Conversion*, as *Abraham* who was an Idolater,

Joſh 24. 2, 3. and *Paul* who was a *Perſecutor* and a *Blaſphemer*. Some after their Converſion. Some in ſins *of the fleſh* againſt their Obedience, as *David*; and ſome in ſins of *Profeſſion* againſt *faith* as *Peter*. Nothing then is more evident, than that *no one* of them came to reſt with God but by *forgiveneſs*. Had they never been guilty of any one ſin, but only what is left upon *Record* concerning them in *Holy Writ*, yet they could be ſaved no other way. For he *that tranſgreſſeth the Law in any one point, is guilty of the breach of the whole*. James 2. 10.

What ſhall we now ſay? Do we think that God hath *forgiveneſs* only for this or that individual perſon? No man queſtions but that *all theſe* were pardoned. Was it by vertue of any eſpecial *perſonal priviledge* that was peculiar unto them? Whence ſhould any *ſuch priviledge* ariſe, ſeeing *by nature* they were no better than others, nor would have been ſo *perſonally*, had not they been delivered from ſin, and prepared for Obedience by *Grace*, Mercy and Pardon? Wherefore they all *obtained forgiveneſs* by vertue of the *Covenant* from the *forgiveneſs which is with God*. And this is equally ready for *others*, who come to God the ſame way that they did; that is, by faith and Repentance.

2. Many of thoſe concerning whom we have the Aſſurance mentioned, *were not only ſinners, but great ſinners*, as was ſaid which muſt be alſo inſiſted on, to obviate another objection. For ſome may ſay, that although they were *ſinners*, yet they were not *ſuch ſinners* as we are. And although they *obtained forgiveneſs*, yet this is no *Argument* that we ſhall do ſo alſo, who are guilty of other ſins than they were, and thoſe attended with other *Aggravations* than theirs were. To which I ſay, that I delight not in *aggravating*, no nor yet in *Repeating* the ſins and faults of the Saints of God of old. Not only the *Grace of God*, but the *ſins of men* have by ſome been *turned into laſciviouſneſs*; or been made a *cloak* for their luſts. But yet for the ends and purpoſes for which they are recorded by the Holy Ghoſt, we may make mention of them. That they may *warn us* of our *duty*, that we take heed leſt we alſo fall, that they may *yield us a relief* under our *ſurprizals*, are they written. So then where the

the mention of them tends to the Advancement of *Soveraign Grace and Mercy*, which is the caſe in hand, we may inſiſt on them. I think then that without mention of particulars, I may ſafely ſay, *that there is no ſin, no degree of ſin, no aggravating circumſtance of ſin, no kind of continuance in ſin, (the only ſin excepted) but that there are thoſe in Heaven who have been guilty of them.*

It may be yet, ſome will ſay that they have conſidered the ſins and falls of *Lot*, *David*, *Peter*, *Paul*, and the *Thief himſelf* on the Croſs, and yet they find not their own condition *Exemplified*, ſo as to conclude, that they ſhall have the ſame ſucceſs with them.

Ans. 1. I am not ſhewing that *this or that man* ſhall be pardoned, but only demonſtrating that *there is forgiveneſs with God*, and that for *all ſorts of ſins and ſinners* which theſe *Inſtances* do aſſuredly confirm. And moreover they manifeſt, that if other men are *not pardoned*; it is meerly becauſe they make not that *Application* for forgiveneſs which they did.

2. Yet by the way to take off this Objection alſo, conſider what the *Apoſtle* ſays in particular concerning the *ſeveral ſorts of ſinners* that obtained mercy, 1. Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God; and ſuch were ſome of you. But you are waſhed, but you are ſanctified, but you are juſtified.* Hell can ſcarce in no more words yield us a ſadder *Catalogue*. Yet ſome of all theſe ſorts were *juſtified* and *pardoned*.

3. Suppoſe this *Enumeration* of ſins doth not reach the condition of the ſoul, becauſe of ſome *eſpecial Aggravation* of its ſin, not expreſſed. Let ſuch a one add that of our Saviours, Math. 12. 31. *I ſay unto you all manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men, but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt.* They are not, they ſhall not be all *actually* remitted, and pardoned unto *all men*; but they are all *pardonable*, unto thoſe that ſeek to obtain *pardon* for them according unto the Goſpel. There is with God *forgiveneſs* for them all. Now certainly there is no ſin, but *only that excepted*, but it comes within the compaſs of *all manner of ſins and blaſphemy*, and ſo conſequently ſome that have been guilty of it are *now in Heaven*.

We take it for a *good token* and evidence of *a vertuous healing water*, when without fraud or pretence, we see the *crutches* of cured *Cripples*, and impotent persons hung about it, as a *memorial* of its efficacy. And it is a great *demonstration* of the skill and ability of a *Physician*, when many come to a *sick person* and tell him, that we had the same distemper with you, he had the same *symptoms*, the same *effects*, and by his skill and care we are cured: Oh saith the *sick man* bring him unto me, I will *venture* my life in his hand. Now all the *Saints of Heaven* stand about a *sin-sick soul*; for in this matter we are compassed *with a cloud of witnesses*, Heb 12. 1. And what do they *bear witness* unto? What say they unto a poor guilty sinner? *As thou art, so were we; so guilty, so perplexed, so obnoxious to wrath, so fearing destruction from God.* And what way did you steer, what course did you take to obtain the blessed condition wherein now you are? Say they, *We went all to God through Christ for forgiveness, and found plenty of Grace, Mercy and Pardon in him for us all.* The *rich man* in the *Parable* thought it would be a great means of conversion, if one should *rise from the dead* and preach. But here we see that all the *Saints departed*, and now in glory do *joyntly preach* this fundamental Truth that *there is forgiveness with God.*

Poor souls are apt to think that all those whom they read or hear of to be *gone to Heaven*, went thither because they were *so good and so holy.* It is true many of them were eminently and exemplarily so in their *generations.* All of them were so according to their degrees and measures: for *without holiness no man can see God.* And it is our duty to labour to be like unto them in Holiness: if ever we intend to be so in Happiness and Glory. But yet not *one* of them, not *any one* that is now in Heaven, *Jesus Christ* alone excepted, did ever come thither any other way but by *forgiveness of sin*; and that will also bring us thither, though we come short of many of them in Holiness and Grace.

And this *Evidence of forgiveness* I the rather urge, because I find the Apostle *Paul* doing of it eminently in his own *person*, 1 Tim. 1. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. *I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into*

into the Ministry; who was before a Blasphemer and a Persecutor, and injurious. But I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them that should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. A great sinner saith he, the *chiefest* of sinners I was, which he manifests by some notable instances of his sin. I was saith he a *blasphemer*, the highest sin against God; a *Persecutor*, the highest sin against the Saints; *Injurious*, the highest wickedness towards mankind. But saith he, *I obtained mercy*, I am pardoned, and that with a blessed effect. First, That he should after all this be so *accounted faithful as to be put into the Ministry.* And then that the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in him *and towards him was exceeding abundant.* And what was the Reason, what was the cause, that he was thus dealt withal? Why, it was that he might be a *pattern*, an Evidence, an *Argument*, that there was Grace, Mercy, *Forgiveness* to be had for all sorts of sinners that would believe to life Everlasting.

To conclude then this *Evidence.* Every one who is now in Heaven hath his *pardon* sealed in the bloud of Christ. All these *pardons* are as it were hanged up in the Gospel; they are all *enrolled* in the *Promises* thereof, for the encouragement of them that stand in need of *forgiveness* to come and sue out theirs also. Fear not then the *Guilt of sin*, but the *Love* of it, and the *power* of it. If we love and like *sin* better than *forgiveness*, we shall assuredly go without it. If we had but rather be *pardoned* in Gods way, than *perish*, our condition is secure.

V. The same is evident from the *Patience of God towards the world, and the end of it.* For the clearing hereof we may observe,

Patience of God towards the World, an evidence of Forgiveness.

1. That the first *entrance* of sin and breach of that *Covenant* which God had made with mankind in *Adam*, he might immediatly have executed the Threatned *Curse*, and have brought *eternal death* upon them that sinned. Justice required

required that it ſhould be ſo, and there was nothing in the whole creation to interpoſe ſo much as for a *reprieve* or a reſpite of vengance. And had God then ſent *ſinning man* with the *Apoſtate Angels* that induced him into ſin, immediatly into eternal deſtruction, he would have been glorified in his Righteouſneſs and *Severity*, by and among the *Angels* that ſinned not; or he could have created a *new race of innocent creatures* to have worſhipped him and glorified him for his Righteous Judgment; even as the *Elect* at the laſt day, ſhall do for the deſtruction of ungodly men.

2. *God hath not taken this courſe.* He hath continued the *race of mankind* for a long ſeaſon on the earth; he hath watched over them with his Providence, and exerciſed exceeding *Patience*, forbearance and long-ſuffering towards them. Thus the Apoſtle *Paul* at large diſcourſeth on, *Acts* 14 15, 16, 17. *Chap.* 17. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. as alſo *Rom.* 2. 4. And it is open and manifeſt in their event. The whole world is every day filled with tokens of the *power and patience* of God. Every Nation, every City, every Family is filled with them.

3. That there is a common *Abuſe* of this patience of God viſible in the world in all Generations. So it was of old; God ſaw it to be ſo, and complained of it, *Gen.* 6. 5, 6. All the evil, ſin, wickedneſs, that hath been in the world, which no heart can conceive, no tongue can expreſs, hath been all an *abuſe* of this *patience* of God. This with the moſt is the conſequent of Gods *patience* and forbearance. Men count it a ſeaſon to fulfill all the abominations that their evil hearts can ſuggeſt unto them, or Satan draw them into a *combination* with himſelf in. This the ſtate of things in the world proclaims, and every ones *experience* confirms.

4. Let us therefore conſider what is the true and proper *end* of this *patience* of God towards the world, *enduring* it in ſin and wickedneſs, for ſo long a ſeaſon, and ſuffering one Generation to be multiplyed after another. Shall we think that God hath no other *deſign*, in all this Patience towards mankind in all Generations, but meerly to ſuffer them all and every one without Exception, to ſin againſt him, diſhonour him, provoke

voke him, that ſo he may at length *everlaſtingly deſtroy them all?* It is confeſſed that this is the *Conſequent*, the event of it with the moſt, through their perverſe wickedneſs, with their love of ſin and pleaſure. But is this the deſign of God? his only deſign? hath he no other purpoſe but meerly to *forbear* them a while in their folly and then to *avenge* himſelf upon them? Is this his intendment not only towards thoſe who are *obſtinate* in their Darkneſs, Ignorance and Rebellion againſt him, whoſe *damnation is juſt and ſleepeth not*; but alſo towards thoſe whom he ſtirs up by his Grace to ſeek after a *Remedy* and Deliverance from the ſtate of ſin and death? God forbid; yea, ſuch an apprehenſion would be contrary to all thoſe notions of the *infinite Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs* of God which are ingrafted upon our hearts by nature, and which all his works manifeſt and declare. Whatever therefore it be, this cannot be the deſign of God, in *his patience towards the world.* It cannot be, but that he muſt long ſince have cut off the *whole race of mankind*, if he had no other thoughts and purpoſes towards them.

5. If this *Patience* of God hath any other Intention towards any, any other effect upon ſome, upon any, *that* is to be reckoned the *principal End of it*, and for the ſake whereof it is evidently extended unto ſome others, *conſequentially* unto all. For thoſe concerning whom God hath an *eſpecial deſign* in his patience, being to be brought forth in the world after the ordinary way of mankind, and that in *all Ages* during the continuance of the world from the beginning unto the end thereof, the *patience* which is extended unto *them* muſt alſo of neceſſity reach unto all, in that variety wherein God is pleaſed to exerciſe it. The *whole world* therefore is continued under the patience of God, and the fruits of it, for the ſake of *ſome* that are in it.

6. Let us therefore ſee what is the *End* of this *Patience*, and what it teacheth us. Now it can have no *end poſſible* but only that before rejected, unleſs there be *forgiveneſs of ſins with God.* Unleſs God be ready and willing *to forgive the ſins* of them that come to him according unto his appointment, his *patience* is meerly ſubſervient unto a deſign of wrath, anger, ſeverity, and a *Reſolution to deſtroy*: Now this is an abomination once

to

to suppose, and would reflect unspeakable dishonour upon the Holy God. Let a *Man* but deal thus, and it is a token of as *evil an habit* of mind, and perverse, as any can befall him. Let him *bear* with these that are in his power in *their faults*, for *no other end*, or with no other design, but that he may take advantage to bring a greater punishment and revenge upon them, and what more *vile affection*, what more *wretched corruption* of heart and mind, can he manifest? and shall we think that this is the *whole design* of the patience of God? God forbid.

It may be objected that this *Argument* is not *cogent*, because of the *instance* that lyes against it in Gods dealing with the *Angels*, that sinned. It is evident that they fell into their *transgression* and *Apostacy*, before mankind did so: For they led and seduced our first Parents into sin. And yet God *bears with them*, and exerciseth *patience* towards them to this very day, and will do so unto the *consummation* of all things, when they shall be cast into the fire *prepared for the Devil and his Angels*. And yet it is granted, that there is *no forgiveness in God* for them; so that it doth not necessarily follow, that there is so for man, because of his *patience* towards them.

I answer, That this must be more *fully spoken* unto when we come to remove that *great Objection* against this whole Truth which was mentioned before, taken from Gods dealing with the *sinning Angels*, whom he spared not; at present two or three Observations will remove it out of our way. For,

1. That the *case is not the same* with the *sinning Angels*, and the *race of mankind* in all Generations. There are no other Angels in this condition, but only those *individuals* who first sinned in their own persons. They are not in the Providence and Patience of God, *multiplyed* and increased in succeeding times and seasons; but they continue the *same individual persons* who first sinned, and no more. So that *immediate execution* of the whole punishment due unto their sin, would not have prevented any increase of them. But now with man it is otherwise. For God continues his *patience* towards them to the *production of millions* of other persons who were not actually in the first sin. Had not God so continued his *forbearance*, their *being*

Being and consequently their *sin* and misery had been prevented; so that the *case* is not the same with sinning Angels and Men.

2 Indeed God *exerciseth no patience* toward the Angels that sinned; and that because he had *no forgiveness* for them. So *Peter* tells us; 2 Epistle 2. 6 *God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down into Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness.* Immediately upon their sin they were *cast out of the presence of God*, whose *vision* and enjoyment they were made for, and which they received some experience of. And they were *cast into Hell*, as the place of their *ordinary retention*, and of their present anguish under the sense of Gods curse and displeasure. And although they may some of them be permitted *to compass the Earth, and to walk to and fro therein* to serve the ends of Gods holy wise Providence, and so to be *out of their prison*; yet they are still in their *chains*: for they were delivered *unto chains of darkness to be kept unto the last Judgement.* And in these things they lie actually under the execution of the curse of God: So that there is indeed *no patience* exercised towards them. If a notorious Malefactor, or *Murtherer* be committed unto a *Dungeon*, and kept bound with *Iron chains* to prevent his escape, untill the *appointed day of his solemn Judgment* and Execution, without the least intention to *spare him*, None will say, there is *patience* exercised towards him; Things being disposed only so, as that his punishment may be secure and severe. And such is the case, such is the *condition* of the Angels that sinned, who are not therefore to be esteemed *objects* of Gods patience.

3. The reason why the *full and final punishment* of these Angels is reserved and respited unto the appointed season, is not for their *own sakes*, their good, benefit, or advantage at all; but meerly that the end of Gods patience towards mankind might be accomplished. When this is once brought about, they shall not be *spared a day, an hour, a moment.* So that Gods dispensation towards them, is nothing but a meer *withholding the infliction* of the utmost of their punishment, until he hath accomplished the *blessed ends of his patience towards mankind.*

But you will say (Secondly) Is it not said, that God *willing*

to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endures with much long-suffering, the Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, Rom. 9. 22. So that it seems that the *End* of Gods endurance and long-suffering, to some at least, is only their *fitting unto destruction.*

Answ. 1. It is one thing to *endure with much long-suffering*, another thing to *exercise and declare patience.* The former only intimates Gods *withholding for a season of that destruction* which he might justly inflict, which we speak not of; the other denotes an *acting in a way of Goodness* and kindness for some especial end.

2. The *next Verse* declares the great end of Gods *patience*, and answers this Objection. That *he might make known the riches of his glory in the vessels of mercy which he had prepared for glory.* ver. 23. This is the great End of Gods patience, which whilst he is in the *pursuit* of towards the Vessels of mercy; he *endureth* others with much *long-suffering*, and forbearance. This then is fully evident, that there could be no sufficient Reason assigned of the *patience* of God *towards sinners*, but that there is *forgiveness* prepared for them that come to him by Christ.

And this the Scripture clearly testifies unto, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. The Question is, what is the reason why God *forbears the Execution of his Judgment upon wicked and ungodly men.* Some would have it, that God is *slack*; that is, *regardless* of the sins of men; and takes no notice of them. No, saith the Apostle, God hath another design in his *patience*, and long-suffering; what is this? It is to manifest, *that he is not willing we should perish.* That is it which we have proved. For our freedom from destruction is by *Repentance*, which necessarily infers the *forgiveness* of Sin. So *Paul* tells us, that in the Gospel is declared what is the *End of Gods patience* and forbearance; it is saith he *the remission of sins*, Rom 3. 35.

Let us therefore also mind this *Evidence* in the Application of our selves to God for *pardon.* It is certain that God might have taken us from the *womb*, and have cast us into utter darkness. And in the course of our lives we have been guilty of such *provocations*, as God might justly have taken the Advantage

tage of, to glorifie his Justice and Severity in our ruine. But yet we have *lived thus long in the patience* and forbearance of God. And to what end hath he thus spared us, and let pass *those Advantages* for our destruction, that we have put into his hand? Is it not that he might by his *patience*, give us leave and space to get an interest in that *forgiveness* which he thus testifies to be in himself; Let us then be *encouraged* by it, to use it unto the end and purpose for which it is exercised towards us. You that are yet in *doubt of your condition*, consider that the *patience* of God was extended unto you this day, this very day, that you might use it for the obtaining of the *remission of your sins.* Lose not *this day*, nor *one day* more, as you love your souls. For woful will be their condition, who shall perish for despising or *abusing the patience of God.*

VI. *The faith and experience of the Saints in this world*, give in testimony unto this truth; and we know that their *Record* in this matter is true. Let us then ask of them what they believe, what they have found, what they have *Experience* of, as to the *forgiveness of sin.* This God himself directs and leads us unto, by appealing unto our own *experience*, whence he shews us that we may take relief and supportment in our distresses, Isa. 40. 28. *Hast thou not heard; hast thou not known?* Hast not thou thy self, who now cryest out that thou art *lost and undone*, because God hath *forsaken thee*, found and known by *experience* the contrary from his former dealings with thee? And if our own *Experiences* may confirm us against the workings of our unbelief, so may those of others also. And this is that which *Eliphaz* directs *Job* unto, Chap. 6. 1. *Call now if there be any that will answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou look.* It is not a supplication to them for *help*, that is intended, but an enquiry after the *Experience* in the case in hand, wherein he wrongfully thought they could not justifie *Job.* וְאֶל מִי מִן־הַקְּדֹשִׁים תִּפְנֶה *to which of the Saints*, on the right hand or left, *wilt thou have regard* in this matter? Some would foolishly hence seek to confirm the *Invocation of the Saints departed*; when indeed if they were intended, it is rather forbidden and discountenanced than

Experience of the Saints giving Testimony to Forgiveness.

than directed unto. But the קדשים here, are the קדשים אשר בארץ Psal. 16. 2. *The Saints that are in the Earth*, whose experiences *Job* is directed to enquire into and after. *David* makes it a great encouragement unto waiting upon God, as a God hearing *prayers*, that others had done so and found success, *Psal.* 34. 6. *This poor man cryed unto the Lord, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of his troubles.* If *he* did so and had that blessed Issue, why should not we do so also? The *experiences* of one, are often proposed for the confirmation and establishment of others: so the same *David*, *Come*, saith he, *and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.* He contents not himself to mind them of the Word, Promises, and Providence of God, which he doth most frequently; but he will give them the encouragement and supportment also of his own *Experience*. So *Paul* tells us, *that he was comforted of God in all his tribulation, that he might be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he himself was comforted of God*, 2 Cor. 1. 4. That is, that he might be able to communicate unto them his own *experience* of Gods dealing with him, and the *satisfaction* and *Assurance* that he found therein. So also he proposeth the example of Gods dealing with him in the pardon of his sins, as a great *motive* unto others to believe, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14, 15, 16. And this mutual communication of satisfying *experiences* in the things of God, or of our spiritual *sense* and evidence of the Power, Efficacy and *Reality* of Gospel Truths, being rightly managed, is of singular use to all sorts of Believers. So the same Great *Apostle* acquaints us in his own example, Rom. 1. 11, 12. *I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end you may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me:* He longed not only to be *instructing* of them in the pursuit of the work of the Ministry committed unto him, but to *confer* also with them about their mutual faith, and what *Experiences* of the peace of God in Believing, they had attained.

We have in our case called in the Testimony of the *Saints in Heaven*, with whom these on earth do make up one family, even *that one family in Heaven and Earth which is called after the*

the name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. 3. 14, 15. And they all *agree* in their Testimonie, as becomes the *Family* and Children of God. But these below, we may deal *personally* with; whereas we *gather* the *Witness* of the other, only from what is left upon record concerning them. And for the clearing of this *Evidence*, sundry things are to be observed. As,

The Evidence that is in Spiritual Forgiveness.

1. *Men living under the profession of Religion, and not experiencing the power, vertue, and efficacy of it in their hearts, are, whatever they profess, very near to Atheism, or at least exposed to great temptations thereunto.* If they profess they know God, but in works deny him, *they are abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate*, Tit. 1. 16. Let such men lay aside *Tradition* and *Custome*, let them give up themselves to a free and a rational consideration of things, and they will quickly find that all their *profession* is but a miserable *self-deceiving*, and that indeed they believe not one word of the Religion which they profess. For of what their Religion affirms to be *in themselves*, they find not any thing true or real. And what Reason have they then to believe that the things which it speaks of that are without them, are one jot better? If they have no *Experience* of what it affirms to be within them, what *confidence* can they have of the Reality of what it reveals to be without them? *John* tells us, that *he who saith he loves God whom he hath not seen, and doth not love his Brother whom he hath seen, is a lyar.* Men who do not things of an equal concernment unto them wherein they *may be tryed*, are not to be believed in what they profess about *greater things* whereof no tryal can be had. So he that believes not, who *experienceth not* the power of that which the Religion he professeth affirms to be in him, if he says that he doth believe other things which he can have no *Experience* of, he is a lyar. For instance, he that professeth the Gospel, avows that the *death* of Christ doth *crucifie sin*, that *faith* purifieth the heart, that the *Holy Ghost* quickens and enables the soul unto duty; that *God* is good and gracious unto all that come unto him: that there is precious *Communion* to be obtained with him by Christ; that

that there is great *Joy* in believing. These things are *plainly, openly, frequently* inlisted on in the Gospel? Hence the Apostle presseth men unto *Obedience* on the account of them; and as it were leaves them at liberty from it, if they were not so, *Phil.* 2. 11. Now if men have lived long in the profession of these things, saying that they are so, but indeed find nothing of *Truth, Reality*, or *Power* in them, have no *experience* of the effects of them, in their own hearts or souls, what stable ground have they of believing any thing else in the Gospel whereof they cannot have *experience?* A man professeth that the death of Christ will *mortifie* sin, and subdue corruption; Why doth he believe it? because it is so affirmed in the *Gospel*: How then, doth he find it to be so? Hath it this effect upon his soul, in his own heart? not at all; he finds no such thing in him. How then can this man *believe* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, because it is affirmed in the Gospel; seeing that he finds no real truth of that which it affirms to be in himself? So our Saviour argues, John 3. 12. *If I have told you Earthly things and ye believe not; how will you believe, if I tell you Heavenly things?* If you believe not the *doctrine of Regeneration*, which you ought to have *experience* of, as a thing that is wrought in the hearts of men on the Earth; how can you assent unto those Heavenly mysteries of the Gospel, which at first are to be received by a pure Act of faith, without any present sense or experience.

Of all *dangers* therefore in profession, let *professors* take heed of this; namely, of a customary, traditional, or *doctrinal* owning such truths, as ought to have their effects and accomplishment in themselves, whilst they have no experience of the reality and efficacy of them. This is plainly to have a *form of Godliness*, and to *deny the power thereof*. And of this sort of men do we see many turning *Atheists*, Scoffers, and open Apostates; they find in themselves that their profession was a *lye*; and that in truth they had none of those things which they talked of; And to what end should they continue longer in the avowing of that which is not? Besides finding these things which they have professed to be in *them*, not to be so; they think that what they have believed of the things

things that are *without them*, are of no other nature, and so reject them altogether.

You will say then, What shall a man do, who cannot find or obtain *an experience in himself* of what is affirmed in the Word? he cannot find the death of Christ *crucifying sin in him*, and he cannot find the Holy Ghost *sanctifying* his nature, or obtain *Joy* in believing. What shall he then do? Shall he not believe, or profess those things to be so, because he cannot obtain a blessed *Experience* of them? I answer, Our Saviour hath perfectly given direction in this case, John 7. 17. *If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* Continue in following after the things revealed in the Doctrine of the Gospel, and you shall have a *satisfactory experience* that they are *true*, and that they are of God; cease not to act faith on them and you shall find their effects; *for then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*, Hosea 6. 3. *Experience* will ensue upon *permanency in faith and obedience.* Yea, the first Act of sincere believing, will be accompanied with such a *taste*, will give the soul so much experience as to produce a firm adherence unto the things believed. And this is the way *to prove, what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God*, which is revealed unto us, *Rom.* 12. 2.

Where there is an inward spiritual Experience of the power, reality and efficacy of any supernatural truth; it gives great satisfaction, stability and assurance unto the soul. It puts the soul out of danger, or suspicion of being deceived; and gives it to have the Testimony of God in it self. So the Apostle tells us, *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself*, 1 John 5. 9. He had discoursed of the manifold testimony that is given in Heaven by all the *holy persons of the Trinity*, and on earth by Grace and Ordinances, unto the *forgiveness of sin*, and eternal life to be obtained by Jesus Christ. And this *Record* is true, firm, and stable, an abiding *foundation* for souls to rest upon, that will never deceive them. But yet all this while it is *without us*; It is that which we have no *Experience* of in our selves: Only we rest upon it, because of the Authority and faithfulness of them that gave it. But now he that

actually

actually believeth, he hath the *Teſtimony in himſelf*; he hath by experience a real evidence and aſſurance of the things teſtified unto, namely that God hath given us eternal life. *And that this life is in the Son*, v. 12. Let us then a little conſider, wherein this *evidence* conſiſteth, and from whence this *aſſurance* ariſeth. To this end ſome few things muſt be conſidered: As,

1. *That there is a great Anſwerableneſs, and Correſpondency between the heart of a Believer, and the truth that he doth believe.* As the *Word* is in the Goſpel ſo is *Grace* in the heart; yea, they are the ſame thing variouſly expreſſed, Rom. 6. 17. *Ye have obeyed from the heart, εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς, the form of Doctrine delivered unto you.* As our *Tranſlation* doth not, ſo I know not how in ſo few words to expreſs that which is *emphatically* here inſinuated by the Holy Ghoſt. The meaning is, that the Doctrine of the Goſpel begets the *form, figure, image*, or *likeneſs* of it ſelf in the hearts of them that believe: So they are caſt into the *mould* of it. As is the one, ſo is the other. The principle of *Grace* in the heart, and that in the *Word*, are as children of the ſame Parent, compleatly reſembling and repreſenting one another. Grace is a *living Word*, and the Word is figured, *limned Grace*: As is Regeneration, ſo is a Regenerate heart: As is the *Doctrine* of faith, ſo is a Believer. And this gives great *Evidence* unto, and *Aſſurance* of the things that are believed. As we have heard, ſo we have ſeen and found it; ſuch a ſoul can produce the *duplicate* of the Word, and ſo *adjuſt* all things thereby.

2. *That the firſt Original Expreſſion of Divine Truth is not in the Word, no not as given out from the infinite Abyſſe of Divine Wiſdom and Veracity, but it is firſt hid, laid up, and expreſſed in the Perſon of Chriſt.* He is the ἀρχέτυπον, the firſt pattern of truth which from him is expreſſed in the *Word*, and [illegible], and by the word, impreſſed on the hearts of Believers; ſo that as it hath pleaſed God that all the *treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge ſhould be in him*, dwell in him, have their principal reſidence in him, *Col.* 2. 3. So the whole Word is but a Revelation of the *Truth in Chriſt*, or an expreſſion of his Image and likeneſs to the Sons of men. Thus we are ſaid to *learn the Truth as it is in Jeſus*, Eph. 4. 21. It is *in Jeſus originally*, and from

really, and from him it is communicated unto us by the Word. We are thereby *taught*, and do learn it; for thereby as the Apoſtle proceeds, *we are renewed in the Spirit of our mind, and do put on the new man which after God is created in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs*, ver. 23, 24. Firſt, the Truth is in Jeſus; then it is expreſſed in the Word; this Word learned, and believed, becomes Grace in the heart, every way anſwering unto the Lord Chriſt his *Image* from whom this *transforming Truth* did thus proceed. Nay, this is carried by the Apoſtle yet higher, namely unto God the Father himſelf whoſe *Image* Chriſt is, and Believers his, through the Word, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *We all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image, from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord*, whereunto add, Chap. 4. 6. *God who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.* The firſt pattern or Example of all Truth and Holineſs is God himſelf: hereof Chriſt is the *Image*, ver. 4. Chriſt is the Image of God, *The brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his perſon*, Heb. 1. 3. *The Image of the inviſible God*, Col. 1 15. Hence we are ſaid to ſee the glory of God in the *face of Jeſus Chriſt*; becauſe he being *his Image*, the Love, Grace, and Truth of the Father are repreſented and made conſpicuous in him. For we are ſaid to behold it *in his face*, becauſe of the open and *illuſtrious* manifeſtation of the glory of God in him. And how do we behold this glory? in a Glaſs (*as in a glaſs*) that is, in the Goſpel, which hath the *Image* and likeneſs of Chriſt, who is the *Image of God* reflected upon it, and communicated unto it. So have we traced Truth and Grace, from the Perſon of the Father, unto the Son as a *Mediator*, and thence transfuſed into the Word. In the *Father* it is *Eſſentially*; in Jeſus Chriſt *originally and exemplarily*; and in the Word as in a *tranſcript* or Copy. But doth it abide there? No, God by the Word of the Goſpel *ſhines into our hearts*, Chap. 4. 6. He irradiates our minds with a ſaving light into it, and apprehenſion of it. And what thence enſues? the ſoul of a believer is *changed into the ſame Image* by the effectual working of the Holy Ghoſt, *Chap.* 3. 18. that is, the *likeneſs* of Chriſt implanted on the Word, is

impressed on the *soul* it self, whereby it is renewed into the Image of God, whereunto it was at first created. This brings all into a perfect Harmony. There is not where Gospel Truth is effectually received, and *experienced* in the soul, only a *consonancy* meerly between the *soul* and the *Word*, but between the *soul* and *Christ* by the word, and the *soul* and *God* by Christ. And this gives assured establishment unto the soul in the things that it doth believe. Divine truth so conveyed unto us, is firm, stable and immoveable. And we can say of it in a spiritual sense, *that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life*, we know to be true. Yea, a Believer is a Testimony to the certainty of truth in what he *is*, much beyond what he is in all that he *saith*. Words may be pretended; Real effects have their Testimony inseparably annexed unto them.

3. Hence it appears that *there must needs be great Assurance of these Truths which are thus received, and believed.* For hereby are *the senses exercised to discern good and evil*, Heb. 5 14. Where there is a spiritual sense of Truth, of the *Good* and *Evil* that is in Doctrines, from an inward *experience* of what is *so good*, and from thence an Aversation unto the contrary; and this obtained διὰ τὸ ἕξιν, by reason of an *habit*, or an habitual frame of heart, there is *strength*, there is *stedfastness*, and Assurance. This is the teaching of the *Unction*, which will not, which cannot deceive. Hence many of *old* and of *late*, that could not *dispute*, could yet *dye* for the Truth. He that came to another, and went about to prove by *Sophistical reasonings* that there was no such thing as *motion*; had only this return from him, who either was not *able* to answer his cavilling, or *unwilling* to put himself to trouble about it, *he arose and walking up and down* gave him a real confutation of his *Sophistrie*. It is so in this case; when a soul hath a real experience of the Grace of God, of the Pardon of sins, of the Vertue and Efficacy of the death of Christ, of Justification by his bloud, and peace with God by believing; let men, or Devils, or Angels from Heaven oppose these things, if it cannot answer their *Sophisms*, yet he can *rise up and walk*: he can with all holy confidence and Assurance oppose his own satisfying

tisfying experience unto all their arguings and suggestions. A man will not be disputed out of what he *sees* and *feels*. And a Believer will abide as firmly by his *spiritual* sense, as any man can by his *natural*.

This is the meaning of that Prayer of the Apostle, Col. 2. 2. *That your hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, unto all riches of the full Assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mysterie of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.* Understanding in the mysteries of the Gospel they had; but he prays that by a farther *experience* of it, they might come to the *Assurance of understanding*. To be *true*, is the property of the Doctrine it self, to be *certain or assured* is the property of our minds. Now this *experience* doth so unite the mind and truth, that we say, such a *Truth* is most *certain*, whereas *certainty* is indeed the property of our *minds* or their knowledg, and not of the truth known. It is certain unto us, that is, we have an assured knowledge of it, by the *Experience* we have of it. This is the *Assurance of Understanding* here mentioned. And he further prays, that we may come to the *Riches of this Assurance*; that is to an *abundant* plentiful Assurance. And that εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν, *to the acknowledgment of the Mysterie of God*, owning it from a sense and *experience* of its excellency and worth.

And this is in the Nature of all Gospel Truths; they are fitted and suited to be *experienced* by a believing soul. There is nothing in them so *sublime* and high, nothing so *mysterious*, nothing so seemingly low and outwardly contemptible, but that a gracious soul hath *experience* of an Excellency, Reality, Power and Efficacy in it all. For instance; look on that which concerns the *Order* and *Worship* of the Gospel: This seems to many to be a meer *external thing*, whereof a soul can have no inward sense or relish. Notions there are many about it, and endless contentions, but what more? why let a gracious soul in simplicity and sincerity of Spirit, give up himself to walk with Christ according to his *Appointment*, and he shall quickly find such a *tast and relish* in the fellowship of the Gospel, in the Communion of Saints, and of Christ amongst them, as that he shall come up to such *Riches of Assurance* in the Understanding

ing and Acknowledgment of the ways of the Lord, as others by their *diſputing* can never attain unto. What is ſo High, Glorious, and Myſterious as the Doctrine of the *ever bleſſed Trinity*? Some *wiſe men* have thought meet to keep it veiled from *ordinary* Chriſtians: And ſome have delivered it in ſuch terms, as that they can underſtand nothing by them. But take a Believer who hath taſted how *gracious the Lord is*, in the *Eternal Love of the Father*, the great Undertaking of the *Son* in the work of Mediation and Redemption, with the Almighty work of the Spirit creating Grace and comfort in the ſoul, and hath had an *experience* of the Love, Holineſs and Power of God in them all, and he will with more firm confidence adhere to this Myſterious Truth, being lead into it and confirmed in it, by *ſome few plain Teſtimonies* of the Word, than a thouſand *Diſputers* ſhall do, who only have the notion of it in their minds. Let a *real Tryal* come, and this will appear. Few will be found to ſacrifice their lives on bare ſpeculations. *Experience* will give Aſſurance and Stability.

We have thus cleared the *credit* of the Teſtimony, now to be improved. It is evident on theſe grounds, that there is a great certainty in thoſe Truths, whereof Believers *have experience*. Where they communicate their *power* unto the heart, they give an unqueſtionable Aſſurance of their *Truths*. And when that is once realized in the ſoul, all *diſputes* about it are put to ſilence.

Theſe things being ſo, let us enquire into the *faith and experience of the Saints on the Earth*, as to what they know of the Truth propoſed unto confirmation; namely, that *there is forgiveneſs with God*. Let us go to ſome poor ſoul that now walks comfortably under the Light of Gods countenance, and ſay unto him, *Did we not know you ſome while ſince to be full of ſadneſs, and great anxiety of Spirit; yea, ſorrowful almoſt to death and bitter in ſoul?*

Anſw. Yes ſaith he, ſo it was indeed; my days were conſumed with mourning, and my life with ſorrow; and I walked heavily in fear and bitterneſs of Spirit all the day long.

Why what ayled you, what was the matter with you; ſeeing as to the outward things you were in Peace?

Anſw.

Anſw. The Law of God had laid hold upon me, and ſlain me; I found my ſelf thereby a woful ſinner, yea, overwhelmed with the guilt of ſin. Every moment I expected *Tribulation and wrath* from the hand of God; *My ſore ran in the night and ceaſed not, and my ſoul refuſed comfort.*

How is it then that you are thus delivered, that you are no more ſad? Where have you found eaſe and peace? have you been by any means delivered, or did your trouble wear off, and depart of its own accord?

Anſw. Alas no; had I not met with an effectual Remedy, I had ſunk and everlaſtingly periſhed.

What courſe did you take?

Anſw. I went unto him by Jeſus Chriſt againſt whom I have ſinned, and have found him better unto me, than I could expect, or ever ſhould have believed, had not he overpowred my heart by his Spirit. Inſtead of *wrath* which I feared, and that juſtly becauſe I had deſerved it, he ſaid unto me in Chriſt, *fury is not in me.* For a long time I could not believe it; I thought it impoſſible that there ſhould be mercy and pardon for me, or ſuch a one as I. But he ſtill ſupported me, ſometimes by one means, ſometimes by another: untill taking my ſoul near to himſelf, he cauſed me to ſee the folly of my unbelieving heart, and the vileneſs of the hard thoughts I had of him, and that indeed there is with him *forgiveneſs and plenteous Redemption.* This hath taken away all my ſorrows, and given me quietneſs with Reſt and Aſſurance.

But are you ſure now that this is ſo, may you not poſſibly be deceived?

Anſw. Says the ſoul; I have not the leaſt *ſuſpicion* of any ſuch matter; and if at any time ought doth ariſe to that purpoſe, it is quickly overcome.

But how are you confirmed in this perſwaſion?

Anſw. That *ſenſe* of it which I have in my heart, that *ſweetneſs* and reſt which I have *experience* of, that *influence* it hath upon my ſoul, that *Obligation* I find laid upon me by it unto all thankful Obedience; that Relief, Supportment and Conſolation that it hath afforded me in tryals and troubles, in the mouth of the Grave, and Entrances of Eternity, all anſwering

ſwering what is declared concerning theſe things in the Word, will not ſuffer me to be deceived. I could not indeed receive it, until God was pleaſed to ſpeak it unto me. But now let Satan do his utmoſt, I ſhall never ceaſe to bear this Teſtimony, that *there is mercy and forgiveneſs with him.*

How many *thouſands* may we find of theſe in the world, who have had ſuch a *ſeal* of this Truth in their hearts, as they cannot only ſecurely lay down their lives in the confirmation of it, if called thereunto, but alſo do chearfully and triumphantly venture their Eternal Concernments upon it. Yea, this is the riſe of all that peace, ſerenity of mind, and ſtrong conſolation which in this world they are made partakers of.

Now this is to me, on the principles before laid down, an *evidence* great and important. God hath not manifeſted this Truth unto the Saints, thus *copied* it out of his word, and exemplified it in their ſouls, to leave them under any poſſibility of being deceived.

Inſtitution of Religious Worſhip an Evidence of Forgiveneſs.

Religious Worſhip of ſinners, an Evidence of Forgiveneſs with God.

6. *Gods Inſtitution of Religious Worſhip and Honour therein to be rendred unto him by ſinners, is another Evidence, that there is forgiveneſs with him.* I have inſtanced before in one particular of *Worſhip* to this purpoſe; namely, in that of *Sacrifices.* But therein we intended only their particular nature and ſignification, how they declared and *manifeſted* Reconciliation, Attonement, and *Pardon.* That now aimed at, is to ſhew, how all the *Worſhip* that God hath appointed unto us, and all the *Honour* which we give unto his holy Majeſty thereby, is built upon the ſame foundation, namely, a ſuppoſition of *forgiveneſs*; and is appointed to teach it, and to aſcertain us of it, which ſhall briefly be declared. To this end obſerve,

1. *That the General End of all Divine and Religious Worſhip is to raiſe unto God a Revenue of glory out of the creation.* Such is Gods infinite natural ſelf-ſufficiency, that he ſtands in need of no

no ſuch Glory and Honour. He was in himſelf no leſs infinitely and eternally glorious, before the Creation of all or any thing whatever, than he will be, when he ſhall be encompaſſed about with the praiſes of all the works of his hands. And ſuch is his abſolute perfection, that no *Honour* given unto him, no *Admiration* of him, no Aſcription of Glory and Praiſe, can add any thing unto him. Hence ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *My goodneſs extends not unto thee,* Pſal. 16. 2. It doth not ſo reach thee as to *add* unto thee, to profit thee, as it may do the *Saints that are on Earth.* As he in *Job,* Chap. 22. 23. *Can a man be profitable unto God, as a man that is wiſe may be profitable unto himſelf? Is it any pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous, or is it gain unto him that thou makeſt thy ways perfect?* There is no doubt, but that it is *well pleaſing* unto God, that we ſhould be righteous and upright. But we *do him not a pleaſure* therein, as though he ſtood in *need of it,* or it were *advantage* or gain unto him. And again, Chap. 35. 7. *If thou be Righteous what giveſt thou him, or what receiveth he at thine hand?* And the Reaſon of all this the Apoſtle gives us, Rom. 11. 36. *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* Being the firſt Soveraign Cauſe, and laſt abſolute End of all things, every way perfect and ſelf-ſufficient, nothing can be added unto him. Or as the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks, *God that made the World and all things therein, ſeeing that he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, is not worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth unto all life and breath, and all things,* Acts 17. 24, 25. As he himſelf pleads at large, Pſal. 50. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

2. Wherefore, *All the Revenue of Glory that God will receive by his Worſhip, depends merely on his own voluntary Choice and Appointment.* All Worſhip, I ſay, depends now on the Soveraign Will and Pleaſure of God. It is true there is a *natural Worſhip* due from rational creatures, by the Law of their Creation. This was indiſpenſibly and abſolutely neceſſary at firſt. The very Being of God, and order of things required that it ſhould be ſo. Suppoſing that God had made ſuch creatures as we are, it could not be, but that *Moral Obedience* was due unto him; namely, that he ſhould be *believed* in, *truſted* and obeyed

as the First Cause, Last End, and Soveraign Lord of all. But the entrance of sin, laying the sinner absolutely under the *Curse* of God, utterly put an end to this *Order* of things. Man was now to have perished immediatly, and an end to be put unto the Law of this Obedience. But here, in the Soveraign Will of God, an *Interposition* was made between sin and the sentence; and man was respited from destruction. All *Worship* following hereon, even that which was before *natural* by the Law of creation, is now resolved into an Arbitrary Act of Gods will.

And unto this end is all worship designed, namely to *give glory unto God.* For as God hath said, that *he will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him,* that is in his worship, *and that therein he will be glorified,* Lev. 10. 3. and *that he that offereth him praise,* that is, performeth any part of his Worship and Service, *Glorifieth him,* Psal 50. 23. So the nature of the thing it self declareth that it can have no other end. By this he hath all his glory even from the *inanimate* Creation.

4. Consider, That *God hath not prescribed any Worship of himself, unto the Angels that sinned.* They are indeed under his Power, and he useth them as he pleaseth to serve the ends of his holy providence. Bounds he prescribes unto them by his *Power*, and keeps them in dread of the full execution of his Wrath. But he requires not of them that they should *believe* in him. *They believe* indeed *and Tremble.* They have a natural Apprehension of the *Being*, Power, Providence, Holiness and Righteousness of God, which is inseparable from *their Natures*, and they have an expectation from thence of that punishment, and vengeance which is due unto them, which is inseparable from them *as sinners.* And this is their faith. But to *believe in God*, that is, to put their trust in him, to resign up themselves unto him, God requires it not of them. The same is the case with them also, as to Love, and Fear, and Delight, all *inward Affections* which are the Proper *Worship* of God. These they have not, nor doth God any longer require them in them. They *eternally* cast them off in their first sin. And where these are not, where they are not required, where they cannot be, there *no outward Worship*

Worship can be prescribed or appointed. For *External instituted Worship* is nothing but the way that God assigns, and chooseth to express and exercise the *inward Affections* of our minds towards him. He rules the fallen Angels *per nutum Providentiæ*, not *verbum Præcepti.* Now as God dealt with the *Angels*, so also would he have dealt with *mankind*, had he left them all under the Curse without remedy or hope of relief. As he doth with *them*, he eternally satisfies himself in that *Revenue of Glory* which ariseth unto him in their punishment; so also he would have done with *these*, had there been no *forgiveness* with him for them. He would not have required them to fear, love or obey him, or have appointed unto them any *way of worship*, whereby to express such affections towards him. For to what end should he have done it? What *Righteousness* would admit, that Service, Duty and Obedience should be prescribed unto them, who could not, ought not to have any Expectation or hope of Acceptance or Reward? This is contrary to the very first Notion which God requires in us of his Nature. *For he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of all them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. which would not be so, should he appoint a *voluntary Worship*, and not propose a Reward to the Worshippers. Wherefore,

3. It is evident that God by the prescription *of a Worship unto sinners*, doth fully declare that there is *forgiveness* with him for them. For,

1. He maninifests thereby that he is willing to receive a new *Revenue of Glory* from them. This, as we have proved, is the end of Worship. This he would never have done, but with a design of Accepting and Rewarding to his creatures. For do we think that he will be beholding unto them? That he will take and admit of their voluntary reasonable service according to his Will and Command, without giving them a Reward, yea, and such an one as their Obedience holds no proportion unto? no such thing would become his infinite self-sufficiency, Goodness and Bounty. This the Wife of *Manoah* well pleads, Judg. 13. 23. *If saith she, the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a meat-offering, and a burnt-offering, at our hands.* His Acceptance of *Worship* from us, is

an infallible Demonstration, that he will not execute against us the severity of the first Curse. And this is clearly evidenced in the first Record of solemn *instituted Worship* performed by sinners, *Gen.* 4. 4. *God had respect unto* Abel *and his Offering*. Some think that God gave a visible pledge of his acceptance of *Abel* and his Offering; it may be it was by fire from Heaven. For how else should *Cain* so instantly know, that his Brother and his Offering were accepted, but that he and his were refused? However it were, it is evident that what Testimony God gave of the Acceptance of his Offering, the same he gave concerning his Person; and that in the first place he had respect unto *Abel* and then to his *Offering*. And therefore the Apostle saith, that thereby he obtained *witness that he was righteous*, Heb. 11. 4. that is, the Witness or Testimony of God himself. Now this was in the forgiveness of his sins, without which he could neither be Righteous nor accepted, for he was a sinner. This God declared by acceptance of his Worship. And thus we also, if we have any Testimony of Gods acceptance of us in any part of his Worship, should employ it to the same end. Hath God enlarged our hearts in Prayer? hath he given us an Answer unto any of our supplications? hath he refreshed our hearts in the ministry and dispensation of the Word, or any other Ordinance? We are not to rest in the particular, about which our *communion* with him hath been. Our doing so is the cause why we lose our experiences. They lye scattered up and down, separated from their proper root, and so are easily lost. But this is that which we should first improve such particular experiences in the Worship of God unto; namely, that God hath *pardoned our sins*, and accepted our persons thereon; for without that, none of our Worship or Service would please him, or be accepted with him.

2. Hereby God lets us know, *that he deals with us upon new Terms*, so that *notwithstanding sin, we may enjoy his love and favour*. For this we have the engagement of his Truth and Veracity, and he cannot deceive us; but yet by this command of his for his Worship, we should be deceived if there were not forgiveness with him. For it gives us *encouragement* to expect, and *Assurance* of finding *Acceptance* with him, which without

without it cannot be obtained. This then God declares by his Institution of, and Command for his Worship, namely, that there is nothing that shall *indispensably* hinder those who give up themselves unto the Obedience of Gods Commands, from enjoying his love, and favour, and communion with him.

4. For *matter of fact*, it is known and confessed that God hath appointed a *Worship* for sinners to perform. All the Institutions of the Old and New Testament bear witness hereunto. God was the Author of them. And men know not what they do, when either they neglect them, or would be intermixing their own Imaginations with them. What can the mind of man conceive or invent, that may have any *influence* into this matter, to secure the souls of Believers of their Acceptance with God? Is there any need of their *Testimony* to the Truth, Faithfulness, and Goodness of God? These things he hath taken upon himself. This then is that which is to be fixed on our Souls, upon our first Invitation into Religious Worship; namely, that God intends a new Revenue of Glory from us, and therefore declares that there is a way for the taking away of all our sins, without which we can give no Glory to him by our Obedience, and this is done only by *forgiveness*.

5. There are *some Ordinances of Worship appointed for this very end and purpose to confirm unto us the forgiveness of sin*. Especially that Worship which is instituted by the Lord Jesus upon the New Testament. I shall instance in one or two.

Especial Ordinances evidencing forgiveness.

First, The *Ordinance of Baptism*. This was accompanied with the dawning of the Gospel, in the Ministry of *John Baptist*. And he expressly declared in his Sermons upon it, that it was instituted of God to declare the *Remission of sins*. Mark 1. 4.

It is true, the Lord Christ submitted unto *that Ordinance*, (and was baptized by *John*) who had *no sin*. But this belonged unto the Obedience which God required of him, as for *our sakes*, he was made *under the Law*. He was to observe all Ordinances and Institutions of the Worship of God; not for any need he had in his own Person of the especial Ends, and *significations* of some of them; yet as he was our *Sponsor*, sure-

ty and Mediator, standing in our stead in all that he so did; he was to yield obedience unto them, that so he might *fulfill all Righteousness*, Matth. 3. 13. So was he *circumcised*, so he was *baptized*, both which had respect unto sin, though absolutely free from all sin in his own Person; and that because he was free from no Obedience unto any Command of God.

But as was said, *Baptism* it self as appointed to be an *Ordinance of Worship* for sinners to observe, was a Declaration of that *forgiveness* that is with God. It was so in its first Institution. God calls a man in a marvellous and miraculous manner; gives him *a Ministry from Heaven*; commands him to *Go and Baptize* all those who confessing their sins and professing Repentance of them, should come to him, to have a Testimony of forgiveness. And as to the especial nature of this *Ordinance*, he appoints it to be such, as to represent the certainty and truth of his Grace in pardon, unto their senses by a *visible pledge*. He lets them know that he would *take away their sin*, wherein their spiritual defilement doth consist, even as Water takes away the outward filth of the body; and that hereby they shall be saved, as surely as *Noah* and his Family were *saved in the Ark* swimming upon the waters, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. Now how great a *deceit* must needs in this whole matter have been put upon poor sinners, if it were not infallibly certain, that they might obtain forgiveness with God.

After the Entrance of this *Ordinance* in the *Ministry of John*, the *Lord Christ* takes it into his own hand, and commands the observation of it unto all his Disciples. I dispute not now, who are the proper immediate objects of it; whether they only who actually can make profession of their faith, or Believers with their *infant seed*. For my part, I believe that all whom Christ loves and pardons are to be made partakers of the pledge thereof. And the sole *Reason* which they of old insisted on, why the *Infants* of Believing Parents should not be *baptized*; was because they thought they had *no sin*, and therein we know their mistake. But I treat not now of these things; only this I say is certain, that in the prescription of this Ordinance unto his Church, the great Intention of the Lord Christ was, to ascertain unto us the *forgiveness of sins*. And sinners are invited to a participation of this Ordinance for

for that End, that they may receive the pardon of their sins; that is an infallible pledge and Assurance of it, *Acts* 2. 38. And the very *nature* of it declareth this to be its *End*, as was before intimated. This is another engagement of the Truth and Faithfulness and Holiness of God, so that we cannot be deceived in this matter. *There is*, saith God, *forgiveness with me*; saith the soul, how Lord shall I know, how shall I come to be assured of it, for by reason of the perpetual Accusations of Conscience, and the Curse of the Law upon the guilt of my sin, I find it a very hard matter for me to believe: Like *Gideon* I would have a *Token* of it: why behold, saith God, *I will give thee a pledge and a token of it which cannot deceive thee. When the world of old had been overwhelmed with a deluge of waters by reason of their sins, and those who remained, though they had just cause to fear that the same Judgment would again befall them or their posterity, because they saw there was like to be the same cause of it, the thoughts and imaginations of the hearts of men being evil still, and that continually; to secure them against these fears, I told them that I would destroy the Earth no more with water; and I gave them a token of my faithfulness therein, by placing my bow in the cloud. And have I failed them? though the sin and wickedness of the world hath been since that day unspeakably great, yet mankind is not drowned again, nor ever shall be: I will not deceive their expectation from the token I have given them. Wherever then there is a word of promise confirmed with a token, never fear a disappointment. But so is this matter. I have declared that there is forgiveness with me, and to give you assurance thereof, I have ordained this pledge and sign, as a seal of my word, to take away all doubts and suspicion of your being deceived. As the world shall be drowned no more, so neither shall they who believe, come short of forgiveness.*

And this is the *Use* which we ought to make of this Ordinance. It is Gods security of the *pardon of our sins*, which we may safely rest in.

2. The same is the *End* of that other Great Ordinance of the Church, the *Supper of the Lord*. The same thing is therein confirmed unto us by another *Sign*, Pledge, Token, or *Seal*. We have shewed before, what respect *Gospel forgiveness* hath unto the death or blood of Jesus Christ. *That* is the

Means whereby for us it is procured, the *Way* whereby it comes forth from God, unto the glory of his Righteousness, and Grace, which afterwards must be more distinctly insisted on. This Ordinance therefore designed and appointed on purpose for the Representation and calling to Remembrance of the *death of Christ*, with the communication of the benefits thereof unto them that believe; doth principally intend our faith and comfort in the Truth under consideration. And, therefore in the very *Institution* of it besides the General End before mentioned, which had been sufficient for our security, there is moreover added an especial mention of the *forgiveness of sin*; for so speaks our Saviour in the Institution of it for the use of the Church unto the end of the world, Matth. 26. 28. *This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the Remission of sins.* As if he had said, The end for which I have appointed the Observance of this Duty and Service unto you, is that I may testifie thereby unto you, that by my *Blood*, the Sacrifice of my self, and the Atonement made thereby, I have purchased for you the Remission of your sins, which you shall assuredly be made partakers of. And more I shall not add unto this consideration, because the death of Christ respected in this Ordinance, will again occurr unto us.

3. What is the end of all *Church Order*, Assemblies, and Worship? What is a *Church?* Is it not a company of *sinners* gathered together according unto Gods appointment, to give glory and praise to him for pardoning Grace, for the *forgiveness* of sins, and to yield him that obedience which he requires from us, on the account of his having so dealt with us? This is the nature, this is the end of a Church. He that understandeth it not, he that useth it not unto that End, doth but abuse that great Institution. And such abuse the world is full of. Some endeavour to make their own secular *Advantages* by the pretence of the Church. Some discharge the duty required in it, with some secret hopes that it shall be their *Righteousness* before God. Some answer only their *Light*, and *Convictions* in an empty profession. This alone is the true end, the true Use of it. We assemble our selves to *learn* that there is forgiveness with God through Christ; to pray that we may be made *partakers* of it. To bless and praise God for our *Interest* in it, to engage our selves unto that *Obedience* which he requires upon the account of it. And were this constantly upon our minds, and in our designs, we might be more established in the faith of it, than it may be the most of us are.

4. One particular instance more of this nature shall conclude this Evidence; God hath *commanded us*, the Lord Christ hath *taught us to pray for the pardon of sin*, which gives us unquestionable security that it may be attained, that it is to be found in God; for the clearing whereof observe, Prayer for the Pardon of sin commanded.

1. That the Lord Christ in the Revelation of the Will of God unto us, as unto the duty that he required at our hands, hath taught and instructed us *to pray for the forgiveness of sin*. It is one of the Petitions which he hath left on record for our use and imitation in that *summary* of all prayer which he hath given us, Matth. 6. 12. *Forgive us our debts, our trespasses*, our sins: *Some* contend that this is a *form of Prayer* to be used in the *prescript limited words* of it. All grant that it is a *Rule* for prayer, comprizing the heads of all necessary things, that we are to pray for, and obliging us to make supplications for them. So then upon the *Authority* of God revealed unto us by Jesus Christ, we are bound in duty to pray for pardon of sins, or *forgiveness*.

2. On this supposition, it is the highest *Blasphemy* and reproach of God imaginable, to conceive that there is not forgiveness with him for us. Indeed if we should go upon our own heads without his *Warranty* and Authority, to ask any thing at his hand, we might well expect to meet with disappointment. For what should *encourage* us unto any such boldness? But now when God himself shall *command us to come*, and ask any thing from him, so making it thereby our Duty, and that the neglect thereof should be our great sin and *Rebellion* against him; to suppose he hath not the thing in his *Power* to bestow on us, or that his Will is wholly averse from so doing, is to reproach him with want of Truth, Faithfulness and Holiness, and not to be God. For what *sincerity* can be in such proceedings? Is it consistent with any *Divine Excellency?* Could it have any other end, but to deceive poor creatures? either to *delude* them if they do pray according to

to his command, or to *involve* them in further guilt, if they do not? God forbid any ſuch thoughts ſhould enter into our hearts. But,

3. To put this whole matter out of queſtion, God hath *promiſed to hear our prayers*, and in particular thoſe which we make unto him for the *forgiveneſs of ſin*. So our *Saviour* hath aſſured us, that what *we ask in his name, it ſhall be done for us*. And he hath, as we have ſhewed, taught us to ask this very thing of God as our *Heavenly Father*; that is in *his name*. For in and through him alone is he a *Father* unto us. I need not inſiſt on particular Promiſes to this purpoſe, they are as you know multiplyed in the Scriptures.

What hath been ſpoken may ſuffice to eſtabliſh our preſent Argument, namely, that Gods *preſcription of Religious Worſhip unto ſinners*, doth undenyably prove that with him there is forgiveneſs; eſpecially conſidering that the principal parts of the Worſhip ſo preſcribed and appointed by him, are peculiarly deſigned to confirm us in the faith thereof.

And this is the deſign of the words that we do inſiſt upon; *There is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou maiſt be feared*. The *fear* of God as we have ſhewed in the Old Teſtament, doth frequently expreſs not that gracious Affection *of our minds*, which is diſtinctly ſo called; but that *whole Worſhip* of God wherein that and all other Gracious Affections towards God are to be exerciſed. Now the *Pſalmiſt* tells us that the *foundation* of this *fear* or Worſhip, and the only motive and encouragement for ſinners to engage in it, and give up themſelves unto it is this, that there is *forgiveneſs with God*. Without this no ſinner could *fear*, ſerve, or *worſhip* him. This therefore is undeniably proved by the *Inſtitution* of this Worſhip, which was propoſed unto confirmation.

The end of all theſe things, as we ſhall afterwards at large declare, is to encourage poor ſinners to believe, and to evidence how *inexcuſable* they will be left, who notwithſtanding all this, do through the power of their luſts and *unbelief*, refuſe to come to God in Chriſt that they may be pardoned. Yea, the laying open of the *certainty* and fulneſs of the evidence given unto this truth, makes it plain and conſpicuous, whence it is that men periſh in and for their ſins. Is it for *want* of Mercy,

Mercy, Goodneſs, Grace or Patience in God? Is it through any *defect* in the Mediation of the Lord Chriſt? Is it for *want* of the mightieſt encouragements and moſt infallible Aſſurances that with God there is *Forgiveneſs?* Not at all, but meerly on the account of their own obſtinacy, ſtubbornneſs and perverſneſs. They *will not come* unto this Light, yea they *hate* it, becauſe their deeds are evil. They will not come to Chriſt, that they may have life. It is meerly darkneſs, blindneſs, and love of ſin, that brings men to deſtruction. And this is laid open, and all pretences and excuſes are removed, and the ſhame of mens luſts made naked by the full confirmation of this Truth, which God hath furniſhed us withall.

Take heed you that *hear* or *read* theſe things; if they are not *mixed with faith*, they will add greatly to your miſery. Every *Argument* will be your *Torment*. But theſe conſiderations muſt be inſiſted on afterwards.

Moreover, if you will take into your minds what hath been delivered in particular, concerning the *nature* and *end* of the Worſhip of God which you attend unto, you may be inſtructed in the *uſe* and due *obſervation* of it. When you addreſs your ſelves unto it, remember that this is that which God requires of you who *are ſinners*. That this he would not have done, but with thoughts and intention of mercy for *ſinners*. Bleſs him with all your ſouls, that this is laid as the Foundation of all that you have to do with him. You are not utterly caſt off, becauſe you are ſinners. Let this ſupport and warm your hearts, when you go to hear, to pray, or any duty of Worſhip. Conſider what is your principal work in the whole. You are going to deal with God about Forgiveneſs, in the *Being*, *Cauſes*, *Conſequents*, and *Effects* of it. Hearken what he ſpeaks, declares or reveals about it; mix his Revelation and promiſes with Faith. Enquire diligently into all the Obedience and Thankfulneſs, all thoſe duties of Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs, which he juſtly expects from them who are made partakers of it; ſo ſhall you obſerve the Worſhip of God unto *his Glory*, and your *own Advantage*.

The giving and eſtabliſhing of the New Covenant another Evidence of Forgiveneſs with God. The Oath of God engaged in the confirmation thereof.

Forgiveneſs manifeſted in the New Covenant.

VIII. Another *Evidence* hereof may be taken from the making, eſtabliſhing and ratifying of the *New Covenant*. That God would make a *new Covenant* with his people is often promiſed, often declared. See among other places, *Jer.* 31. 31, 32. and that *he hath done ſo* accordingly, the Apoſtle at large doth manifeſt, *Heb.* 8. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Now herein ſundry things unto our preſent purpoſe may be conſidered. For,

1. It is ſuppoſed that God had before made *another Covenant* with mankind. With reference hereunto is this ſaid to be a *new one*. It is oppoſed unto *another* that was before it, and in compariſon whereof that is called *old*, and this ſaid to be *new*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks expreſly in the place before mentioned. Now a *Covenant* between God and man is a thing *Great* and *Marvellous*; whether we conſider the *nature* of it, or the Ends of it; In its own *nature* it is a *Convention*, Compact and Agreement, for ſome certain ends and purpoſes between the holy Creator and his poor creatures. How infinite, how unſpeakable muſt needs the *Grace* and Condeſcenſion of God in this matter be? For what is *poor miſerable man*, that God ſhould ſet his heart upon him, that he ſhould as it were give *bounds to his Sovereignty* over him, and enter into terms of *Agreement* with him? For whereas before, he was a *meer object* of his *Abſolute Dominion*, made at his *Will*, and for his *Pleaſure*, and on the ſame reaſons to be cruſhed at any time into nothing; Now he hath a *bottom*, and *ground* given him to ſtand upon, whereon to expect *good things* from God upon the account of his Faithfulneſs and Righteouſneſs. God in a *Covenant*, gives thoſe holy properties of his Nature unto his Creatures; as his hand or *arm* for him to lay hold upon, and by them to plead and *argue* with him. And without this a man could have no foundation for any entercourſe or *Communion* with God, or of any expectation from him, nor any *direction* how to deal with him in any of his concernments. Great and *ſignal* then was the *condeſcenſion* in God, to take his poor Creature

ture *into Covenant* with himſelf. And eſpecially will this be manifeſt, if we conſider the *Ends* of it, and why it is that God thus deals with man. Now theſe are no other than that man might *ſerve him aright*, be bleſſed by him, and be brought unto the everlaſting enjoyment of him, all unto his Glory. Theſe are the *Ends* of every Covenant that God takes us into with himſelf. And theſe are the *whole of man*. No more is required *of us* in a way of *duty*; no more can be required *by us* to make us *bleſſed and happy*, but what is contained in them. That we might *live to God*, be accepted with him, and come to the eternal fruition of him, is the *whole of man*, All that we were made for, or are capable of; and theſe are the *Ends of every Covenant* that God makes with men; being all comprized in that ſolemn word, that *he will be their God, and they ſhall be his people*.

Secondly, This being the *Nature*, this the *End* of a *Covenant*, there muſt be ſome great and important cauſe, to change, alter, and *abrogate a Covenant* once made and eſtabliſhed, to lay aſide *one Covenant*, and to enter into *another*. And yet this the Apoſtle ſayes expreſly that God had done, *Heb.* 8. 13. and proves it, becauſe himſelf calls that which he promiſed, a *New Covenant*, which undeniably confirms two things. *Firſt*, That the other was become *old*; and *Secondly*, That being become *ſo*, it was *changed*, altered and removed. I know the Apoſtle ſpeaks immediately of the *Old Adminiſtration* of the Covenant under the Old Teſtament of *Moſaical* Inſtitutions: but he doth ſo with reference unto that *revival* which in it was given to the *firſt Covenant* made with *Adam*. For in the giving of the *Law*, and the *Curſe* wherewith it was accompanyed which were immixed with that Adminiſtration of the Covenant, there was a ſolemn *revival* and Repreſentation of the *firſt Covenant*, and its *Sanction*, whereby it had life and power given it to keep the people in bondage all their dayes. And the end of the Abolition or taking away of the Legal *Adminiſtration of the Covenant*, was meerly to take out of Gods dealing with his people, all uſe and Remembrance of the *firſt Covenant*. As was ſaid therefore, to take away, *diſannul*, and change a Covenant ſo made, ratified, and eſtabliſhed betwixt God and man, is a matter that muſt be reſolv-

ed into ſome cogent, important, and indiſpenſable cauſe. And this will the more evidently appear, if we conſider,

Nature, Uſe and End of the firſt Covenant.

First, In general; *that the firſt Covenant was Good*, Holy, Righteous and Equal. It was ſuch as *became God* to make, and was every way the *happineſs of the Creature* to accept of. We need no other Argument to prove it *holy and good*, than this, that God made it. It was the effect of infinite Holineſs, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Goodneſs and Grace. And therefore in it ſelf was it every way perfect; for ſo are all the works of God. Beſides it was ſuch, as *man*, when through his own fault he cannot obtain any good by it, and muſt periſh everlaſtingly by vertue of the Curſe of it; yet cannot but ſubſcribe unto its Righteouſneſs and Holineſs. The Law was the Rule of it, therein is the tenor of it contained. Now, ſaith the Apoſtle, whatever becomes of the ſin, and the ſinner, *the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and juſt, and good*, Rom. 7. 12. *Holy* in it ſelf, and its own Nature, as being the Order and Conſtitution of the moſt holy God. *Juſt* and equal with reference unto us; ſuch as we have no reaſon to complain of, or repine againſt the Authority of it, and the terms of it are moſt *righteous*. And not only ſo, but it is *good* alſo, that which notwithſtanding the appearance of Rigor and ſeverity which it is accompanied withal, had in it an exceeding mixture of Goodneſs and Grace, both in the Obedience conſtituted in it, and the Reward annexed unto it; as might be more fully manifeſted, were that our preſent work.

Secondly, In particular it was *Good*, *Holy* and *Righteous* in all the *Commands* of it, in the *Obedience* which it required. And two things there were that rendred it exceeding *Righteous*, in reference unto its Precepts or Commands. First, That they were all ſuited unto the Principles of the Nature of man created by God; and in the regular acting whereof conſiſted his perfection. God in the firſt Covenant required nothing of man, preſcribed nothing unto him, but what there was a *Principle* for the doing and accompliſhing of it ingrafted and implanted on his Nature; which rendred all thoſe commands equal, holy and good. For what need any man complain of that which requires nothing of him, but what he is from his own

own frame and Principles inclined unto? Secondly, All the Commands of it were proportionate unto the *ſtrength and ability of them to whom they were given*. God in that Covenant required nothing of any man, but what he had before *enabled* him to perform: nothing above his ſtrength, or beyond his power: and thence was it alſo *righteous*. Secondly, It was exceeding *Good* Holy and Righteous upon the account of its *Promiſes* and Rewards. *Do this*, ſaith the Covenant; *this which thou art able to do*, which the *Principles of thy Nature are fitted* for, and inclined unto. Well, what ſhall be the iſſue thereof? Why *do this and live*; Life is promiſed unto Obedience, and that ſuch a Life, as both for the preſent and future condition of the creature, was accompanyed with every thing that was needful to make it bleſſed and happy. Yea, this *Life* having in it the eternal enjoyment of God, *God himſelf as a Reward*, was exceedingly above whatever the Obedience of man could require as due, or have any Reaſon, on any other account, but meerly of the Goodneſs of God to expect.

Thirdly, There was *proviſion* in that Covenant for the *Preſervation and manifeſtation of the Glory of God*, whatever was the Event on the part of man. This was provided for in the Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs of God. Did man *continue* in his Obedience, and fulfill the terms of the Covenant; all things were laid in ſubſerviency to the Eternal Glory of God in his *Reward*. Herein would he for ever have manifeſted and exalted the Glory of his *Holineſs*, *Power*, Faithfulneſs, Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs. As an Almighty Creator, and Preſerver, as a faithful God, and Righteous Rewarder would he have been glorified. On ſuppoſition on the other ſide, that man by ſin and Rebellion ſhould tranſgreſs the terms and tenor of this Covenant, yet God had made proviſion that no detriment unto his Glory ſhould enſue thereon. For by the conſtitution of a *puniſhment* proportionable in his *Juſtice* unto that ſin and demerit, he had provided that the glory of his Holineſs Righteouſneſs and *Veracity in his Threatnings* ſhould be exalted, and that to all Eternity. God would have loſt no more glory and honour by the ſin of man, than by the ſin of Angels, which in his infinite Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs is become a great *Theatre* of his Eternal Glory. For he is no

leſs

leſs Excellent in his Greatneſs and Severity, than in his Goodneſs and Power.

Reaſon of Alteration of the firſt Covenant.

Wherefore we may now return unto our former enquiry. All things being thus excellently and admirably diſpoſed in infinite Wiſdome and Holineſs in this *Covenant*, the whole Duty and Bleſſedneſs of man being fully provided for, and the Glory of God abſolutely ſecured upon all Events, what was the Reaſon that God left not all things to ſtand or fall according to the terms of it? Wherefore doth he reject and *lay aſide this Covenant*, and Promiſe to make another, and do ſo accordingly? Certain it is, that he might have continued it with a bleſſed ſecurity to his own Glory; and he makes *all things for himſelf, even the wicked for the day of evil.*

God himſelf ſhews what was the only and ſole Reaſon of this diſpenſation, *Heb.* 8. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. The ſumm of it is this. Notwithſtanding the bleſſed Conſtitution of the *firſt Covenant*; yet there was no proviſion for the *pardon of ſin*, no room or place for *forgiveneſs* in it; but on ſuppoſition that *man ſinned*, he was in that Covenant left remedileſs. God had not in it revealed that there was any ſuch thing as *forgiveneſs* with him; nor had any ſinner the leaſt hope or grounds of expectation from thence of any ſuch thing in him. *Dye he muſt and periſh*, and that without remedy or recovery. Now, ſaith God, this muſt not be. Mercy, Goodneſs, Grace require another ſtate of things. This Covenant will not manifeſt them; their effects will not be communicated to poor ſinners by it. Hence ſaith he it is *faulty*; that is *defective*, I will not loſe the glory of them, nor ſhall ſinners be unrelieved by them. And therefore although I may ſtrictly tye up all mankind unto the terms of this; yet, I will make *another Covenant* with them, wherein they ſhall know and find, that there is *forgiveneſs with me, that they may fear me.*

Now next to the *Blood of Chriſt*, whereby this Covenant was ratified and confirmed, this is the *greateſt Evidence* that can poſſible be given, that there is *forgiveneſs with God.* To what end elſe doth God make this *great alteration* in the effects of his Will in his way of dealing with mankind. As forgiveneſs of ſin is *expreſſly contained* in the tenor and words of the Cove-

Covenant, ſo ſet it aſide, and it will be of no more uſe or advantage than the former. For as this Covenant is made directly with ſinners, nor was there any one in the world, when God made it that was not a *ſinner*, nor is it of uſe unto any but *ſinners*, ſo is *forgiveneſs of ſins* the very life of it.

Hence we may ſee two things. Firſt, The *greatneſs of forgiveneſs*, that we may learn to value it: and Secondly, The *certainty of it*, that we may learn to believe it.

Firſt, The *greatneſs* of it. God would not do ſo great a thing as that mentioned, but for a great, the *greateſt end.* Had it not been a matter of the greateſt importance unto the glory of God, and the good of the ſouls of men, God would not for the ſake of it, have laid aſide *one Covenant*, and made *another.* We may evidently ſee how the heart of God was ſet upon it, how his Nature and Will were engaged in it. All this was done that we might be *pardoned.* The old glorious fabrick of Obedience and Rewards ſhall be taken down to the ground, that a new one may be erected for the honour and glory of forgiveneſs. God forbid that we ſhould have *ſlight thoughts* of that which was ſo ſtrangely and wonderfully brought forth, wherein God had as it were embarked his great Glory. Shall all this be done for our ſakes, and ſhall we undervalue it, or diſeſteem it? God forbid. God could, if I may ſo ſay, more eaſily have made a *new world* of Innocent Creatures, and have governed them by the *Old Covenant*, than have eſtabliſhed this new one for the ſalvation of poor ſinners; but then where had been *the glory of forgiveneſs?* It could never have been known, that there was *forgiveneſs* with him. The *Old Covenant* could not have been preſerved, and *ſinners* pardoned. Wherefore God choſe rather to leave the Covenant, than ſinners unrelieved, than Grace unexalted, and Pardon unexerciſed. Prize it, as you prize your ſouls, and give glory unto God for it, as all thoſe that believe will do unto Eternity.

Secondly, For the *ſecurity of it, that we may believe it.* What greater can be given? God deceiveth no man, no more than he is deceived. And what could God *that cannot lye*, do more, to give us ſatisfaction herein than he hath done? Would you be made partakers of this forgiveneſs? Go unto God, ſpread before

before him this whole matter; plead with him that he himſelf hath ſo far *laid aſide the firſt Covenant*, of his own Gracious Will as to make a *new one*; and that meerly becauſe it had no *forgiveneſs* in it. This he hath made on purpoſe that it might be known, that there is forgiveneſs in him. And ſhall not we now be made partakers of it? Will he now deny that unto us, which he hath given ſuch Aſſurance of, and raiſed ſuch expectations concerning it? Nothing can here wrong us, nothing can ruine us but *unbelief*. Lay hold on this Covenant, and we ſhall have pardon. This God expreſſeth, *Iſa.* 27. 4, 5. Will we continue on the old bottom of the *firſt Covenant*? All that we can do thereon, is but to *ſet thorns and bryars in the way of God*, to ſecure our ſelves from his coming againſt us and upon us with his indignation and fury. Our ſins are ſo, and our Righteouſneſs is no better. And what will be the iſſue? both they and we ſhall be *trodden down conſumed and burnt up*. What way then, what remedy is left unto us? only this of *laying hold on the arm and ſtrength of God* in that Covenant, wherein forgiveneſs of ſin is provided. Therein alone he ſaith, *fury is not in me*; and the end will be *that we ſhall have peace* with him both here and for ever.

Forgiveneſs confirmed by the Oath of God.

IX. *The Oath of God engaged and interpoſed in this matter* is another Evidence of the truth inſiſted on. Now becauſe this is annexed unto the Covenant before mentioned, and is its eſtabliſhment, I ſhall paſs it over the more briefly. And in it we may conſider;

1. The *Nature of the Oath of God*; The Apoſtle tells us that he *ſware by himſelf*: And he gives this Reaſon of it, becauſe he had *no greater to ſwear by*, Heb. 6 13. An *Oath* for the confirmation of any thing, is an Invocation of a *Supream Power* that can judge of the truth that is ſpoken, and vindicate the breach of the engagement. This God hath none other but himſelf, *Becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he ſwear by himſelf*. Now this God doth, (1.) By expreſs *Affirmation* that he hath ſo ſworn by himſelf, which was the form of the firſt ſolemn Oath of God Gen. 22. 16. *By my ſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the Lord.* The meaning whereof is, I have taken it upon my ſelf *as I am God*, or let me not be ſo, if I perform not this thing. And this is expreſſed

expreſſed by his *ſoul*, Jer. 51. 14. *The Lord of Hoſts hath ſworn by his Soul*, that is, by *himſelf*, as we render the words. Secondly, God doth it by the eſpecial Interpoſition of ſome ſuch Property of his nature, as is ſuited to give credit and confirmation to the word ſpoken; as of his *Holineſs*, Pſal. 89. 35. *I have ſworn by my Holineſs*: So alſo *Amos* 4. 2. Sometime by his *life*; *As I live*, ſaith the Lord. חַי אָנִי *I live ſaith God*, it ſhall be ſo. And ſometimes by his *Name*, Jer. 44. 26. God as it were engageth the Honour and Glory of the Properties of his Nature for the *certain accompliſhment* of the things mentioned. And this is evident from the manner of the Expreſſion, as in that place of Pſal. 89. 35. *Once have I ſworn by my holineſs, that I will not lye unto David*; ſo we; in the Original the words are *eliptical: If I lye unto David*, that is, Let me not be ſo, nor be eſteemed to be ſo, *if I lye unto David.*

Secondly, For the *End of his Oath*; God doth not give it to make his Word or Promiſe *ſure and ſtedfaſt*, but to give *Aſſurance and Security* unto us of their accompliſhment. Every Word of God is ſure and certain, truth it ſelf, becauſe it is his; and he might juſtly require of us, the belief of it without any further Atteſtation. But yet knowing what great *Objections* Satan and our own unbelieving hearts will raiſe againſt his Promiſes, at leaſt as to our own concernment in them, *to confirm our minds*, and to take away all pretences of unbelief, he *interpoſeth his Oath* in this matter. What can remain of diſtruſt in ſuch a caſe? If there be a matter in *doubt* betwen men, and an *Oath* be interpoſed in the confirmation of that which is called in queſtion, it is *an End*, as the Apoſtle tells us, *unto them of all ſtrife*, Heb. 6. 16. How much more ought it to be ſo on the part of God, when his *Oath* is engaged. And the Apoſtle declares this *End of his Oath*, it is to *ſhew the immutability of his counſel*, Heb. 6. 17. His *counſel* was declared before in the *Promiſe*; but now ſome doubt or *ſtrife* may ariſe, whether on one occaſion or other, God may not *change his counſel*; or whether he hath not changed it with ſuch conditions as to render it uſeleſs unto us? In what caſe ſoever it be, to remove all doubts and ſuſpicions of this nature, God *adds his Oath*, manifeſting the unqueſtionable *immutability of his counſel* and Promiſes. What therefore is thus confirmed is aſcertained

unto the height of what any thing is capable of. And not to believe it, is the height of Impiety.

Thirdly, In this *Interpoſition of God by an Oath*, there is unſpeakable *condeſcention of Grace*, which is both an exceeding great *motive unto faith*, and a great Aggravation of Unbelief. For what are *we*, that the holy and bleſſed God ſhould thus *condeſcend unto us*, as for our ſatisfaction and ſurety, *to engage himſelf by an Oath*! One ſaid well of old; *Fœlices nos quorum cauſa Deus jurat; O infœlices, ſi nec juranti Deo credimus.* It is an ineſtimable advantage that God ſhould for our ſakes *engage himſelf by his Oath*. So it will be our *miſery*, if we believe him not when he *ſwears* unto us. What can we now object againſt what is thus confirmed? What pretence, colour, or excuſe can we have for our unbelief? How juſt, how righteous, how holy muſt their deſtruction be, who upon this ſtrange, wonderful and unexpected *Warranty*, refuſe to ſet their ſeal, that God is true.

Theſe things being premiſed, we may conſider how variouſly God hath *engaged his Oath*, that there is *forgiveneſs* with him. Firſt, He *ſweareth that he hath no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner, but rather that he repent and live*, Ezek. 33. 11. *As I live*, ſaith the Lord, *I have no pleaſure in the death of a ſinner:* Now without *forgiveneſs* in him, every ſinner muſt dye, and that withot remedy. Confirming therefore with his Oath, that it is his will the ſinner ſhould return, repent and live, he doth in the firſt place *ſwear by himſelf*, that there is forgiveneſs with him for theſe ſinners that ſhall ſo repent and turn unto him.

Again, whereas the great means he hath appointed for the *forgiveneſs of ſins*, is by the Mediation of the Lord Chriſt, as we ſhall afterwards ſhew, he hath on ſeveral occaſions confirmed his purpoſe in him, and the counſel of his Will by *his Oath*. By this Oath he promiſed him unto *Abraham*, and *David* of old, which proved the foundation of the Churches ſtability in all generations; and alſo of their Security and Aſſurance of Acceptance with him; ſee *Luke* 1. 73, 74, 75. And in his taking upon him that *Office* whereby in an eſpecial manner *the forgiveneſs of ſins* was to be procured, namely of his being a *Prieſt* to offer Sacrifice, to make an Attonement for ſinners, he confirmed *it unto him*, and *him in it* by his Oath, Heb. 7. 20.

7, 20. *He was not made a Prieſt without an Oath.* And to what end? Namely, that he might be a *ſurety of a better Teſtament*, v. 22. And what was that *better Teſtament?* Why, that which brought along with it the *forgiveneſs of ſin*, Chap. 8. 12, 13. So that it was *forgiveneſs* which was ſo confirmed by the *Oath of God*. Further, the Apoſtle ſhews, that the great *Original Promiſe* made unto *Abraham*, being confirmed by the *Oath of God*, all his other Promiſes were in like manner confirmed. Whence he draws that bleſſed concluſion which we have, *Heb.* 6 17, 18. As to every one, ſaith he, that *flyes for refuge to the hope that is ſet before him*, that is, who ſeeks to eſcape the guilt of ſin, the curſe and the ſentence of the Law, by an Application of himſelf unto God in Chriſt for pardon, he hath *the Oath of God* to ſecure him that he ſhall not fail thereof. And thus are all the concernments of the forgiveneſs of ſin teſtified unto by the *Oath of God*; which we have manifeſted to be the higheſt ſecurity in this matter, that God can give, or that we are capable of.

The Name of God confirming the Truth and Reality of Forgiveneſs with him. As alſo the ſame is done by the Properties of his Nature.

X. Another foundation of this Truth, and infallible Evidence of it may be taken from that eſpecial *Name* and *Title* which God takes unto himſelf in this matter. For he owns the name of the *God of Pardons*; or the *God of forgiveneſs*. So is he called, *Nehem.* 9. 17. אֱלוֹהַּ סְלִיחוֹת we have rendred the words, *Thou art a God ready to forgive*; but they are as was ſaid, *And thou art the God of Pardons, Forgiveneſs, or Propitiations.* That is his Name, which he *owneth*, which he accepteth of the *Aſcription* of unto himſelf. The *Name* whereby he will be known. And to clear this *Evidence* we muſt take in ſome conſiderations of the *Name of God*, and the Uſe thereof. As, Forgiveneſs confirmed by the Name of God.

1. The *Name of God is that whereby he reveals himſelf unto us*, whereby he would have us know him, and own him. It is ſomething *expreſſive of his Nature* or *Properties* which he hath appropriated unto himſelf. Whatever therefore any name of God expreſſeth him to be, that he is, that we may expect to

find him; for he will not decieve us by giving himſelf a wrong, or a *falſe Name*. And on this account he requires us to *truſt in his Name*, becauſe he will aſſuredly be found unto us, what his *Name* imports. *Reſting* on his name, *flying* unto his name, *calling* upon his name, *praiſing* his name, things ſo often mentioned in the Scripture, confirm the ſame unto us. Theſe things could not be our duty, if we might be deceived in ſo doing. God *is* then, and *will* be to us what his Name declareth.

2. On this Ground and Reaſon, God is ſaid then *firſt* to be known by *any name*, when thoſe to whom he reveals himſelf, do in an eſpecial manner *reſt on that name* by faith, and have that accompliſhed towards them which that name imports, ſignifies or declares. And therefore God did not under the *Old Teſtament* reveal himſelf to any by the name of the *Father of Jeſus Chriſt*, or the *Son incarnate*, becauſe the Grace of it unto them was not to be accompliſhed, *God having provided ſome better thing for us, that they without us, ſhould not be made perfect*; they were not entruſted with the full Revelation of God, by all his bleſſed names. Neither doth God call us to truſt in any name of his however declared, or revealed, unleſs he gives it us in an eſpecial manner, by way of *Covenant* to reſt upon. So he ſpeaks, Exod. 6. 3. *I appeared unto* Abraham, *unto* Iſaac, *and to* Jacob (באל שדי) *in the name of* God *Almighty*, *but my name* Jehovah *was I not known unto them.* It is certain that both theſe names of God *Elſhaddai* and *Jehovah*, were known among his people before. In the firſt mention we have of *Abrahams* addreſſing himſelf unto the Worſhip of God, he makes uſe of the *name Jehovah*, Gen. 12. 7. *He built an Altar unto Jehovah*; and ſo afterwards not only doth *Moſes* make uſe of that Name in the *Repetition of the Story*, but it was alſo of frequent uſe amongſt them. Whence then is it ſaid, that God appeared unto them by the name of *Elſhaddai*, but not by the name of *Jehovah?* The Reaſon is becauſe that was the name which God gave himſelf in the ſolemn confirmation of the Covenant with *Abraham*, Gen. 17. 1. אני אל שדי I am *Elſhaddai*, *God Almighty*, God Alſufficient. And when *Iſaac* would pray for the bleſſing of the Covenant on *Jacob*, he makes uſe of that name, Gen. 28. 3. *God Almighty bleſs thee.* He

He invocates that name of God which was engaged in the *Covenant* made with his Father *Abraham*, and himſelf. That therefore we may with full Aſſurance reſt on the *name* of God, it is not onely neceſſary that God reveal that *name* to be his, but alſo that he give it out unto us for that end and purpoſe, that we might *know him* thereby, and place our truſt and confidence in him according unto what that *name of his imports*. And this was the caſe where ever he revealed himſelf unto any in a peculiar manner, by an *eſpecial Name*. So he did unto *Jacob*, Gen. 28. 13. *I am the God of* Abraham *and* Iſaac; aſſuring him, that as he dealt faithfully in his Covenant with his Fathers *Abraham* and *Iſaac*, ſo alſo he would deal with him. And Gen 31. 13. *I am the God of Bethel*; he who appeared unto thee there, and bleſſed thee, and will continue ſo to do. But when the ſame *Jacob* comes to *aſk* after *another name* of God, he anſwers him not, as it were commanding him to live by faith, on what he was pleaſed to reveal. Now then God had not made himſelf known to *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* by his name *Jehovah*, becauſe he had not peculiarly called himſelf unto them by *that name*; nor had engaged it in his *Covenant* with them, although it were otherwiſe known unto them. They lived and reſted on the name of *God Almighty*, as ſuited to their ſupportment and conſolation in their wandring helpleſs condition, before the Promiſe was to be accompliſhed. But now when God came to fulfil his *Promiſes*, and to bring the people by vertue of his Covenant into the *Land of Canaan*, he reveals himſelf unto them *by*, and renews his Covenant with them *in* the name of *Jehovah*. And hereby did God declare, that he came to give *ſtability* and Accompliſhment unto his *Promiſes*. To which end they were now to live upon this name of *Jehovah* in an expectation of the *fulfilling* of the Promiſes; as their Fathers did on that of *God Almighty* in an expectation of *protection* from him in their *wandring ſtate* and condition. Hence this *name* became the foundation of the *Judaical Church*, and ground of the faith of them who did ſincerely believe in God therein. And it is *ſtrangely fallen out* in the Providence of God, that ſince the *Jews* have rejected the Covenant of their Fathers, and are caſt out of the Covenant for their Unbelief, they have utterly

forgot-

forgot that Name of God. No *Jew* in the world knows what it is, nor how to *pronounce it*, or make mention of it. I know themſelves, and others pretend ſtrange *Myſteryes* in the *Letters* and *Vowels* of that name which make it *ineffable*. But the truth is, being caſt out of *that Covenant* which was built and eſtabliſhed on that name, in the juſt Judgement of God, through their own blindneſs and ſuperſtition, they are no more able to make *mention* of it, or to take it into their *mouths*. It is required then that the *name of God* be given unto us as engaged in *Covenant*, to ſecure our expectation that he will be unto us according to his name.

3. All the whole *Gracious Name of God*, every Title that he hath given himſelf, every Aſcription of Honour unto himſelf that he hath owned, is *confirmed* unto us, (unto as many as believe,) in Jeſus Chriſt. For as he hath declared unto us *the whole name of God*, John 17. 6. ſo not this, or that Promiſe of God, *but all the Promiſes of God are in him, Yea and Amen.* So that as of old, every *particular Promiſe* that God made unto the people, ſerved *eſpecially* for the particular occaſion on which it was given, and *each Name of God* was to be reſted on, as to that diſpenſation whereunto it was ſuited to give relief and confidence; as the name of *Elſhaddai* to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and the name *Jehovah* to *Moſes* and the people; ſo now by *Jeſus Chriſt* and in him, every *particular Promiſe* belongs unto all believers in all their occaſions; and *every Name of God* whatever, is theirs alſo, at all times, to reſt upon and put their truſt in. Thus the *particular Promiſe* made unto *Joſhuah* at his entrance into *Canaan*, to encourage and ſtrengthen him in that great enterprize of conquering the Land, is by the Apoſtle applyed unto all Believers in all their occaſions whatever. *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. So likewiſe doth every *name of God* belong now unto us, as if it had in particular manner been *engaged* in Covenant unto us. And that becauſe the *whole Covenant* is ratified and confirmed unto us by Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. *Chap.* 7. 1. This then abſolutely ſecures unto us an intereſt *in the Name of God* inſiſted on, *the God of forgiveneſs*, as if it had been given unto every one of us to aſſure us thereof.

4. God takes this name, *the God of forgiveneſs* to be his *in a peculiar*

peculiar manner, as that whereby he will be diſtinguiſhed and known. He *appropriates* it to himſelf as expreſſing that, which the Power and Goodneſs of no other can extend unto. There *are Lords many, and Gods many*, ſaith the Apoſtle; λεγόμενοι θεοι, ſome that are called ſo; ſuch as ſome account ſo to be. How is the *true God* diſtinguiſhed from theſe *Gods by Reputation?* He is ſo by this *name*, He is the *God of Pardons*, Micah 7. 18. *Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?* This is his Prerogative; herein none is equal to him, like him, or a ſharer with him. Who is a God like unto thee, that may be called a *God of Pardons*. The *Vanities* of the Nations cannot give them *this rain*; they have no refreſhing ſhowers of Mercy and Pardon in their power. Neither *Angels*, nor *Saints*, nor *Images*, nor *Popes*, can Pardon Sin. By this name doth he diſtinguiſh himſelf from them all.

5. To be *known by this Name* is the *Great Glory of God* in this world. When *Moſes* deſired to ſee the Glory of God, the Lord tells him *that he could not ſee his face*, Exod. 33. 18, 20. The face of God or the glorious Majeſty of *his Being*, his *Eſſential Glory*, is not to be ſeen of any in this life; We cannot ſee him as *he is*. But the *glorious manifeſtation* of himſelf we may behold and contemplate. This we may ſee as the *back-parts* of God; That *ſhadow* of his excellencies which he caſteth forth in his paſſing by us in his works and diſpenſations. This *Moſes* ſhall ſee. And wherein did it conſiſt? Why in the Revelation and Declaration of this *name of God*, Chap. 34. 6, 7. *The Lord paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, Merciful and Gracious, long-ſuffering, and Abundant in Goodneſs and in Truth, keeping Mercy for thouſands, Forgiving Iniquity, Tranſgreſſions, and Sin.* To be known by this Name, to be honoured, feared, believed as that declares him, is the *great glory of God*. And ſhall this fail us? Can we be deceived truſting in it, or expecting that we ſhall find him to be what his Name declares? God forbid.

Let us lay together theſe *Conſiderations*, and we ſhall find that they will give us another *ſtable foundation* of the Truth inſiſted on; and a great encouragement to poor ſinful Souls to draw nigh to God in Chriſt for Pardon. God hath *no Name* but what he gives unto himſelf. Nor is it lawfull to know

him,

him, or call him otherwise; as he *calls himself*, so is he. What his *Name* imports, so is his *Nature*. Every name also of God is engaged in *Jesus Christ* in the Covenant, and is proposed unto us to place our Trust and Confidence in. Now this is his name and his memorial, even *the God of Forgiveness*. By this he distinguisheth himself from all others, and expresseth it as the principal *Title of his Honour*, or his peculiar Glory. According to this *name* therefore all that believe shall assuredly find, *There is forgiveness with him.*

Attributes of Gods Nature, manifesting Forgiveness.

XI. The consideration of the *Essential Properties* of the Nature of God, and what is required to the *manifestation* of them, will afford us further Assurance hereof. Let us to this end take in the ensuing Observations.

1. God being *absolutely perfect, and absolutely self-sufficient*, was eternally glorious, and satisfied with, and in his own holy *Excellences* and *Perfections*, before, and without the creation of all or any thing, by the putting forth or the exercise of his *Almighty* Power. The making therefore of all things depends on a meer Sovereign Act of *the Will and Pleasure of God*. So the whole Creation makes its acknowledgment, *Rev.* 4. 11. Chap. 5. 12. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, Honour and Power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* God could have omitted all this great work, without the least impeachment of his Glory. Not one Holy Property of his Nature would have been diminished, or abated in its *Eternal Glory* by that omission. This then depended on a pure Act of his Will and Choice.

2. On supposition that God would work *ad extra*, by his *Power* produce any thing *without himself*, it was absolutely necessary that *himself should be the End* of his so doing. For as before the production of all things, there was nothing that could be the *end* why any of them should be brought forth *out of nothing*, or towards which they should be disposed: So God being *an infinite Agent* in Wisdom and Understanding and Power, he could have no End in his Actings, but that also which is *infinite*. It is therefore natural and necessary unto God to do all things *for himself*. It is impossible he should have any other end; and he hath done so accordingly, Prov. 16. 4. *The Lord hath made*

made all things for himself. He aimed at himself in all that he did; there being no other infinite Good for him to make his Object, and his End, but himself alone.

3. This doing things, *all things for himself*, cannot intend an Addition or Acrewment thereby of any new real good unto himself. His absolute *Eternal Perfection and All-sufficiency* render this impossible. God doth not become more Powerful, Great, Wise, Just, Holy, Good or Gracious by any of his works, by any thing that he doth. He can add nothing to himself. It must therefore be the *Manifestation and declaration* of the Holy Properties of his Nature that he doth intend and design in his works. And there are two things required hereunto.

1. That he *make them known*; that by wayes suited to his Infinite Wisdome, he both declare that such Properties do belong unto him; as also what is the nature of them according as the creature is able to apprehend.

What it is to give Glory to God.

So he doth things *to make his power known*, to *shew his power*, and to *declare his name* through the earth, Rom. 9. 17, 22. So it was said, that by the works of Creation, τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, *that which may be known of God* is made manifest, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. And what is that? even the natural essential Properties of his Being; his *Eternal Power and Godhead*. To this Head are referred all those *Promises* of God that he *would glorifie* himself, and the *prayers* of his Saints that he would do so. And the *Attestations* given unto it in the Scripture that he hath done so. He hath made known his Wisdom, Holiness, Power, Goodness, Self-sufficiency, and the like perfections of his nature.

2. That he *attain an Ascription*, an Attribution of Praise, and Glory to himself upon their account. His design is to be *admired in all them that believe*, 2 Thess. 1. 10. That is, that upon an Apprehension of his Excellencies, which he hath revealed, and as he hath revealed them, they should *admire*, adore, applaud, glorifie and praise him, worship, believe in and trust him in all things, and endeavour the *enjoyment* of him as an eternal reward. And this is also threefold.

1. *Interpretative*; so the inanimate and brute Creatures *ascribe* unto God the glory of his Properties, even by what

they are, and do. By what they *are* in their *Beings*, and their obſervation of the *Law* and inclination of their nature, they give unto God the glory of that *Wiſdom and Power* whereby they are made; and of that *Soveraignty* whereon they depend. Hence nothing more frequent in the praiſes of God of old, than the calling of the *inanimate creatures*, Heaven and Earth, Winds, Storms, Thunder, and the *Beaſts of the field*, to give Praiſe and Glory to God. That is, by *what they are*, they do ſo, in as much as from the impreſſion of Gods glorious Excellencies in their Effects upon them, they are made known and manifeſt.

2. *Involuntary* in ſome *rational creatures*. Sinning Men and *Angels* have no deſign, no will, no deſire to give glory to God. They do their utmoſt endeavour to the contrary, to hate him, reproach and blaſpheme him. But they cannot yet caſt off the *yoke* of God. In their Minds and Conſciences they are forced and ſhall be for ever to acknowledge that God is *infinitely Holy*, infinitely Wiſe, Powerful and Righteous. And he hath the glory of all theſe Properties from them, in their very deſires that he were otherwiſe. When they would that God were not *Juſt* to puniſh them, *Powerful* to torment them, *Wiſe* to find them out, *Holy* to be diſpleaſed with their luſts and ſins, they do at the ſame time, in the ſame thing, own acknowledge and give unto God the glory of his *Being*, *Juſtice*, *Wiſdome*, *Power* and *Holineſs*. When therefore God hath made known his Properties, the Aſcription of glory unto him on their account, is to *rational creatures*, natural and unavoidable.

3. It is *voluntary* in the *reaſonable ſervice*, Worſhip, Fear, Truſt, Obedience, of Angels and Men. God having revealed unto them the Properties of his Nature, they acknowledge, adore them, and place their confidence in them, and thereby *glorifie* him as God. And this glorifying of God conſiſteth in three things.

1. In making the *Excellencies of God* revealed unto us, the Principle and Chief Object of all the *moral actings* of our ſouls, and of all the actings of our Affections. To *fear the Lord and his Goodneſs*, and to fear him for his Goodneſs; to *truſt* in his Power and Faithfulneſs, to *obey* his Authority, to *delight* in his

his Will and Grace, to *love* him above all, becauſe of his Excellencies and Beauty, this is *to glorifie him*.

2. To *pray* for, and *to rejoyce in* all the wayes and means whereby he will, or hath promiſed further to manifeſt or declare theſe Properties of his Nature and his Glory in them. What is the reaſon why we pray for, long for the accompliſhment of the *Promiſes of God* towards his Saints, of his Threatnings towards his Enemies, of the fulfilling of the glorious Works of his Power and Grace that yet remain to be done, of the *coming of the Kingdom of Chriſt*, of the approach of glory? Is it not chiefly and principally; that the *glorious Excellencies of Gods Nature may be made more manifeſt*, be more known, more exalted; that God may appear more *as he is*, and as he hath declared himſelf to be? This is to give glory to God. So likewiſe our Joy, Rejoycing and Satisfaction in any of the ways and works of God, it is ſolely on this account, that in them, *God in his properties*, that is, his Power, Wiſdom, Holineſs, and the like, is revealed, declared and made known.

3. *In their joint actual Celebration of his praiſes*; which as it is a Duty of the greateſt importance, and which we are indeed of all others moſt frequently exhorted unto, and moſt earneſtly called upon for: ſo in the nature of it, it conſiſts in our believing rejoycing expreſſion of what God is, and what he doth; that is, our admiring, adoring and bleſſing him becauſe of his Holineſs, Goodneſs, and the reſt of his Properties, and his works of Grace and Power, ſuitable unto them. This it is to praiſe God, *Rev.* 5.

4. Obſerve that none of theſe *Properties of God* can be thus manifeſted and known, nor himſelf be glorified for them, *but by his declaration of them, and by their Effects*. We know no more of God than he is pleaſed to reveal unto us. I mean not meer Revelation by his Word, but any wayes or means, whether by his *Word*, or by his *Works*, or by Impreſſions from the Law of Nature upon our hearts and minds. And what ever God thus *declares of himſelf*; He doth it by exerciſing, putting forth, and manifeſting the *effects* of it. So we know his Power, Wiſdome, Goodneſs and Grace; namely, by the effects of them, or the works of God that proceed from them, and are ſuited unto them. And what ever is in God that is

not thus made known, we cannot apprehend nor glorifie God on the account of it. God therefore doing all things, as hath been ſhewed, for the glory of theſe his Properties, he doth ſo reveal them, and make them known.

5. Upon this deſign of God, it is neceſſary that he ſhould reveal, and make known *all the Attributes and Properties of his Nature*, in works and effects peculiarly proceeding from them and anſwering unto them, that he might be *glorified in them*, and which as the Event manifeſts, that he hath done accordingly. For what Reaſon can be imagined, why God will be *glorified in one Eſſential Excellency of his Nature*, and not in another? Eſpecially muſt this be affirmed of thoſe Properties of the Nature of God, which the *Event manifeſteth* his principal glory to conſiſt in, and ariſe from, and the knowledge whereof is of the greateſt uſe behoof and benifit unto the Children of men in reference unto his deſign towards them.

Glory ariſing to God by Forgiveneſs.

6. Theſe things being ſo, let us conſider how it ſtands in reference unto that which is under conſideration. God in the Creation of all things, *glorified* or manifeſted his Greatneſs, Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, with many other properties of the like kind. But his *Soveraignty*, *Righteouſneſs* and Holineſs, how are they declared hereby? either not at all, or not in ſo evident a manner as is neceſſary, that he might be fully glorified in them, or for them. What then doth he do? leave them in *darkneſs*, vailed, undiſcovered, ſatisfiing himſelf in the glory of thoſe Properties which his work of Creation had made known? Was there any Reaſon, why he ſhould do ſo, deſigning to do all things for himſelf and for his own glory? Wherefore he gives his holy Law as a Rule of Obedience unto men and Angels. This plainly reveals his *Soveraignty* or *Authority* over them, his *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs* in the Equity and Purity of things he required of them: ſo that in and by theſe *Properties* alſo he may be glorified. As he *made all things for himſelf*, that is, the manifeſtation of his Greatneſs, Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, ſo he *gave the Law for himſelf*, that is, the manifeſtation of his Authority, Holineſs and Righteouſneſs. But is this all? Is there not *Remunerative Juſtice* in God, in a way of Bounty? Is there not *Vindictive Juſtice* in him, in a way of

of Severity? There is ſo, and in the purſuit of the deſign mentioned, they alſo are to be manifeſted, or God will not be glorified in them. This therefore he did alſo in the Rewards and Puniſhments that he annexed unto the Law of Obedience that he had preſcribed. To manifeſt his *Remunerative Juſtice* he promiſed a *Reward* in a way of Bounty, which the Angels that ſinned not were made partakers of; and in the *penalty threatned*, which ſinning Angels and Men incurred, he revealed his *Vindictive Juſtice* in a way of Severity. So are all theſe Properties of God made known by their *Effects*, and ſo is God glorified in them, or on their account.

But after all this, are there *no other Properties* of his Nature, Divine Excellencies that cannot be ſeparated from his *Being*, which by none of theſe means, are ſo much as once intimated to be in him? It is evident that there are; ſuch are *Mercy*, *Grace*, *Patience*, Long-ſuffering, Compaſſion and the like: concerning which obſerve,

1. That where there are no *Objects* of them, they cannot be declared, or manifeſted, or exerciſed. As Gods *Power* or Wiſdom could not be manifeſt, if there were no *Objects* of them, no more can his Grace or Mercy. If never any ſtand in need of them, they can never be exerciſed, and conſequently never be known. Therefore were they not revealed, neither by the *Creation* of all things, nor by the *Law* or its Sanction, nor by the Law written in our hearts. For all theſe ſuppoſe *no Objects of Grace* and Mercy. For it is *ſinners* only, and ſuch as have made themſelves *miſerable* by ſin, that they can be exerciſed about.

2. There are no *Excellencies* of Gods nature, that are more expreſſive of Divine *Goodneſs*, Lovelineſs and Beauty, than theſe are, of Mercy, Grace, Long-ſuffering and Patience: and therefore there is nothing that God ſo requireth *our likeneſs unto him* in, our conformity unto his *Image*, as in theſe; namely, Mercy, Grace and readineſs to forgive. And the contrary frame in any he doth of all things moſt abhor. *They ſhall have judgment without mercy, who ſhewed no mercy.* And therefore it is certain that God will be glorified in the manifeſtation of theſe Properties of his Nature.

3. Theſe *Properties* can be no otherwiſe exerciſed, and conſequently

ſequently no other ways known, but only in and by the *pardon of ſin*; which puts it beyond all queſtion, that there is Forgiveneſs with God. God will not loſe the glory of theſe his Excellencies; he will be revealed in them, he will be known by them, he will be glorified for them; which he could not be, if there were not *forgiveneſs with him*: So that here comes in not only the *Truth*, but the *Neceſſity* of *forgiveneſs* alſo.

Forgiveneſs manifeſted in the ſending of the Son of God to dye for ſin. And from the Obligation that is on us to forgive one another.

Forgiveneſs manifeſted in the Death of Chriſt.

XII. In the next place, we ſhall proceed unto the *Fountain* and *Spring* which is the *Center* wherein all the lines of this Doctrine before going do meet and reſt: The *fountain* of all thoſe *ſtreams* of Refreſhment that are in them, that which *animates* and gives life and efficacy unto them. This lyes in *Gods ſending of his Son*. The conſideration hereof will leave no pretence or excuſe unto unbelief in this matter.

To make this *Evidence* more clear and *legible*, as to what is intended in it, we muſt conſider,

1. What was the *Riſe* of this *ſending*, we ſpeak of.
2. *Who* it was that was *ſent*.
3. *How* or in what manner he was *ſent*.
4. Unto what *end* and purpoſe.

Firſt, the *Riſe* and ſpring of it is to be conſidered. It came forth from the Eternal *mutual conſent and counſel* of the Father and the Son, Zech. 6. 13. *The Counſel of Peace ſhall be between them both*. It is of Chriſt *the Branch*, of whom he ſpeaks. *He ſhall build the Temple of the Lord, and he ſhall bear the glory. And ſhall ſit and rule upon his Throne; and ſhall be a Prieſt upon his Throne, and the Counſel of Peace ſhall be between them both.* That is, between God the Father, who ſends him, and himſelf; There lay the *Counſel of Peace-making* between God and Man in due time accompliſhed by him who *is our Peace*, Eph. 2. 16. So he ſpeaks, Prov. 8. 30, 31. *Then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight; rejoycing alwayes before him. Rejoycing in the habitable parts of the Earth, and my delights were with the Sons of men.* They are the words of the *Wiſdom*, that is, of the Son of God. When was this done? *Then* I was with him. *Why before the Mountains were ſetled, whilſt as yet he had not made the Earth nor the Fields*; That is, before the creation of the world, or from eternity, v. 25, 26. *But how then could he rejoyce in the habitable parts of the Earth?* And how could *his delight be with the Sons of men?* ſeeing as yet they were not? I anſwer, It was the *Counſel of Peace* towards them before mentioned, in the purſuit whereof he was to be ſent to converſe amongſt them on the earth. He rejoyced in the fore-thoughts of his being *ſent* to them, and the work he had to do for them. *Then*, with his own conſent and delight was he *fore-ordained* unto his work, even before the *foundation of the world*, 1 Pet. 1. 20. and received of the Father *the Promiſe of eternal life, even before the world began*, Tit. 1. 2. That is, to be given unto ſinners, by way of *Forgiveneſs through his blood*. So is this whole *Counſel* expreſſed, *Pſalm* 40. 7, 8. Whence it is made uſe of by the *Apoſtle*, Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7. *Then ſaid* I, *lo* I *come, in the volume of thy Book it is written of me*, I *delight to do thy will O God. Thy Law is in the midſt of my heart*. There is the *Will of the Father* in this matter, and the Law of its performance. And there is the *Will of the Son*, in anſwer thereunto; and his *delight* in fulfilling that Law which was preſcribed unto him.

Let us now conſider, to what purpoſe was this *Eternal Counſel of Peace*, This *Agreement* of the Father and Son from Eternity about the State and Condition of Mankind? If God would have left them all to periſh under the guilt of their ſins, there had been no need at all of any ſuch thoughts, deſign or *Counſel*. God had given unto them a Law, Righteous and Holy, which if they tranſgreſſed, he had threatned them with eternal deſtruction. Under the Rule diſpoſal and power of *this Law*, he might have righteouſly left them to ſtand or fall according to the *verdict* and *ſentence* thereof. But now he aſſures us, he *reveals* unto us that he had other thoughts in this matter; that there were other *Counſels* between the *Father and the Son* concerning us. And theſe ſuch as the *Son* was delighted in the proſpect of his Accompliſhment of them. What can theſe thoughts and counſels be, but about a way for their *deliverance*, which could no otherwiſe be, but by the *forgive-*

neſs

ness of sins? For whatever else be done, yet if *God mark iniquities there is none can stand.* Hearken therefore *poor sinner*, and have hope. God is *consulting* about thy deliverance and freedom. And what cannot the Wisdom and Grace of the Father and Son effect and accomplish? And to this end was the Son *sent* into the world, which is the *second thing* proposed to Consideration.

2. *Whom did God send about this business?* The Scripture layes great weight and *Emphasis* on this consideration, faith must do so also: John 3. 16. *God so loved the world that he gave his onely begotten Son*: So 1 *John* 4. 9. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his *only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.* And again, v. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and sent* his Son *to be the propitiations of our sins.* And who is this that is thus sent and called the *only begotten Son of God?* Take a double description of him, one out of the *Old Testament*, and another from the *New*. The first from Isa. 9. 6. *To us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderfull, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*: The other from Heb. 1. 2, 3. *God hath spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* This is he who *was sent*; in *Nature* he was glorious; even over all God blessed for ever. *In Answerableness* unto the Father; the *brightness* of his *Glory, and the express Image of his Person*: possessed of all the same essential Properties with him. So that what we find in him, we may be assured of in the *Father* also; for he that hath seen him, hath seen the *Father*, who is in him. In *Power, Omnipotent*, for he *made all things*, and upholding all things with an unspeakable facility, by the Word of his Power. In *Office* exalted over all, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high. In *Name*, the *Mighty God*, the *Everlasting Father*; so that whatever he came about, he will assuredly accomplish and fulfill; for what should hinder or let this *Mighty One* from perfecting his design.

Now

Now this consideration raiseth our *Evidence* to that height, as to give an unquestionable *Assurance* in this matter. Here is a near and a *particular Object* for faith to be exercised about, and to rest in. Wherefore did this glorious *Son of God* come and *Tabernacle* amongst poor sinners? *We beheld the glory of the Eternal Word, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, and he was made flesh, καὶ ἐσκήνωσε, and pitched his Tabernacle amongst us*, Joh. 1. 14. To what end? It was no other but to work out, and accomplish the *Eternal Counsel of Peace towards sinners* before-mentioned, to procure for them, and to declare unto them the *forgiveness of sin.* And what greater evidence, what greater *Assurance* can we have, that there is *forgiveness with God* for us? he himself hath given it as a Rule, that what is done by giving an *only begotten*, or an *only beloved Son*, gives assured Testimony of reality and sincerity in the thing that is confirmed by it. So he sayes unto *Abraham*, Gen. 22. 12. *Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou hast not withheld thy Son, thy only Son from me.* This way it may be known, or no way. And they are blessed Conclusions that Faith may make from this consideration; now *I know that there is forgiveness with God*, seeing he hath not withheld *his Son*, his *only Son*, that he might accomplish it. To this purpose the Apostle teacheth us to reason, *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*

What further can any soul desire? What ground remains for unbelief to stand upon in this matter? Is there any thing more to be done herein? It was to manifest that there is *forgiveness with him*, and to make way for the exercise of it, that God sent his Son; that the *Son of God* came into the world, as will afterwards more fully appear.

3. To this *sending* of the Son of God to this purpose, there is evidence and security added from the *Manner* wherein he was sent. How was this? Not in Glory, not in Power, not in an open *discovery* of his Eternal Power and Godhead. Had it been so, we might have thought, that he had come meerly to manifest and glorifie himself in the world. And this he might have done without thoughts of Mercy or Pardon towards us. But he came quite in another *manner*: He was

ſeen in the *likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*, Rom 8. 3. *In the form of a ſervant*, Phil. 2. 10. Being *made of a woman, made under the Law*, Gal. 4. 4. What he endured, ſuffered, underwent in that ſtate and condition, is in ſome meaſure known unto us all. All this could not be meerly, and *firſtly* for himſelf. All that he expected at the cloſe of it, was *to be glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the world was*, John 17. 5. It muſt then be for our ſakes; and for what? to ſave and deliver us from that condition of wrath at preſent, and future expectation of Vengeance, which we had caſt our ſelves into by ſin; that is, to procure for us the *forgiveneſs of ſin*. Had not God deſigned *Pardon for ſin*, he would never have ſent his Son *in this manner*, to teſtifie it: And he did it, becauſe it could no other way be brought about, as hath been declared. Do we doubt whether there be *forgiveneſs with God* or no? or whether we ſhall obtain it, if we addreſs our ſelves unto him for to be made partakers of it? Conſider the *Condition of his Son in the world*; review his Afflictions, Poverty, Temptation, Sorrows, Sufferings; Then ask our ſouls, To what *end* was all this? And if we can find any other deſign in it, any other Reaſon, Cauſe, or Neceſſity of it, but only and meerly to teſtifie and declare, that there is *forgiveneſs with God*, and to purchaſe and procure the Communication of it unto us, let us abide in, and periſh under our fears. But if this be ſo, we have ſufficient warranty to aſſure our ſouls in the expectation of it.

4. Beſides all this, there enſues upon what went before, that great and wonderfull Iſſue, in the *death of the Son of God*. This thing was great and marvellous, and we may a little enquire into what it was, that was *deſigned therein*. *And hereof the Scripture* gives us a full account. As,

1. That he *dyed* to make *Attonement for Sin, or Reconciliation for Iniquity*, Dan. 9. 24. He gave his life a ranſom for the *ſins of many*, Matth. 20. 28. 1 Tim. 2. 6. He was in it made *ſin, that others might become the righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. 20. Rom. 8. 3. Therein he bare our *ſins in his body on the Tree*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. This was the ſtate of this matter. Notwithſtanding all the Love, Grace and condeſcention before mentioned, yet our ſins were of that nature, and ſo directly oppoſite

oppoſite unto the *Juſtice* and Holineſs of God, that unleſs *Attonement* were made, and a Price of Redemption paid, there could be no Pardon, no *forgiveneſs* obtained. This therefore he *undertook to do*, and that by the *Sacrifice* of himſelf; anſwering all that was *prefigured* by, and repreſented in the Sacrifices of old; as the *Apoſtle largely declares*, Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. And herein is the *forgiveneſs that is in God*, copied out and exemplified ſo clearly and evidently, that he that cannot read it, will be *curſed unto Eternity*. Yea, and let him be accurſed; for what can be more required to juſtifie God in his eternal deſtruction? He that will not believe his Grace as teſtified and *exemplified* in the Blood of his Son, let him periſh without remedy. Yea but,

2. The *Curſe and Sentence of the Law* lyes on record againſt ſinners. It puts in its *Demands* againſt our acquittance, and layes an obligation upon us unto puniſhment. And God will not reject, nor deſtroy his *Law*, unleſs it be anſwered there is no acceptance for ſinners. This therefore in the next place his death was deſigned unto. As he *ſatisfied* and made *Attonement* by it unto Juſtice, (that was the fountain, ſpring and cauſe of the Law) ſo he fulfilled and anſwered the demands of the *Law* as it was an *Effect of the Juſtice of God*: So *Rom.* 8. 13. He ſuffered in *the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, that the Righteouſneſs of the Law might be fulfilled*, and anſwered. He anſwered the *Curſe of the Law* when he was *made a Curſe for us*, Gal. 3. 13. And ſo became as to the Obedience of the Law, *the end of the Law for Righteouſneſs unto them that do believe*, Rom. 10. 3, 4. And as to the *penalty* that it threatned, he bore it, removed it, and took it out of the way. So hath he made way for *forgiveneſs* through the very *heart of the Law*; it hath not one word to ſpeak againſt the pardon of them that do believe. But,

3. Sinners are under the *power of Satan*; he layes a claim unto them, and by what means ſhall they be reſcued from his intereſt and dominion? This alſo his *death* was deſigned to accompliſh. For as he was *manifeſt to deſtroy the works of the Devil*, 1 Joh. 3. 8. So by *death he deſtroyed him that had the power of death*, Heb. 2. 14. That is, to deſpoil him of his Power, to deſtroy his Dominion, to take away his plea unto ſinners that believe; as we have at large elſewhere declared.

And by all theſe things, with many other concernments of his *death* that might be inſtanced in, we are abundantly ſecured of the *forgiveneſs that is with God*: And of his willingneſs that we ſhould be made partakers thereof.

5. Is this all? Did his Work ceaſe in his death? Did he no more for the ſecuring of the *forgiveneſs of ſins* unto us, but only that he dyed for them? Yes, he *lives alſo after death* for the ſame end and purpoſe. This *Son of God* in that nature which he aſſumed to expiate ſin by death, *lives again after death* to ſecure unto us, and to compleat the *forgiveneſs* of ſins. And this he doth two wayes.

1. Being raiſed from that death which he underwent, to make Attonement for ſin by the Power and Good Will of God, he evidenceth and teſtifieth unto us, that he hath fully *performed the work* he undertook; and that in our behalf, and for us, he hath received a *diſcharge*. Had he not anſwered the guilt of ſin by his death, he had never been *raiſed* from it.

2. He lives after death, a *Mediatory Life* to make interceſſion for us, that we may receive the *forgiveneſs of ſin*, as alſo himſelf to give it out unto us: which things are frequently made uſe of, to encourage the ſouls of men to believe, and therefore ſhall not at preſent be further inſiſted on.

Thus then ſtands this matter, that *Mercy* might have a way to *exerciſe* it ſelf in *forgiveneſs*, with a conſiſtency unto the Honour of the Righteouſneſs and Law of God, was the Son of God ſo ſent for the ends and purpoſes mentioned. Now herein conſiſteth the *greateſt Work* that God did ever perform, or ever will. It was the moſt *eminent product* of Infinite Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Grace and Power. And herein do all the *Excellencies* of God ſhine forth more gloriouſly than in all the works of his hands. Let us then wiſely ponder and conſider this matter; let us bring our own ſouls with their Objections unto this *Evidence*, and ſee what exception we have to lay againſt it. I know nothing will ſatisfie *unbelief*: the deſign of it is to make the Soul find that to *be ſo hereafter*, which it would perſwade it of here; namely, that *there is no forgiveneſs in God*. And *Satan*, who makes uſe of this Engine, knows full well, that there is none for them who believe there is none; or rather will not believe that there is any. For it will at

at the laſt day be unto men according unto their Faith or Unbelief. He that believeth aright, and he that believeth not, that *forgiveneſs is with God*, as to their own particulars ſhall neither of them be deceived. But what is it that can be reaſonably excepted againſt this evidence, this foundation of our faith in this matter? God *hath not ſent his Son* in vain, which yet he muſt have done, as we have ſhewed, had he not deſigned to manifeſt and exerciſe *forgiveneſs* towards ſinners. Wherefore to confirm our faith from hence, let us make a little ſearch into theſe things, in ſome particular enquiries.

1. Seeing the *Son of God dyed* in that way and manner that he did according to the determinate Counſel and Will of God, wherefore did he do ſo, and what aimed he at therein?

Anſw. It is plain that he *dyed for our ſins*, Rom. 4. 25. that is, to make *reconciliation* for the ſins of his people, *Heb.* 2. 17, 18. This *Moſes* and the Prophets, this the whole Scripture teſtifieth unto; and without a ſuppoſal of it, not one word of it can be aright believed. Nor can we yield any due Obedience unto God without it.

2. What then did God do unto him? What was in tranſaction between God as the Judge of all, and him that was the *Mediator of the Church?*

Anſw. God indeed laid *on him the iniquities of us all*, Iſa. 53. 6. all the ſins of all the *Elect*; yea, he made him a *curſe for us*, Gal. 3. 13. And making him a ſin-offering, or an *offering for ſin*, *he condemned ſin in the fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. 2 Cor. 5. 21. So that, all that which the Juſtice or Law of God had to require about the puniſhment due unto ſin, was all laid and executed on him.

3. What then did Chriſt do in his death? What did he aim at and deſign? What was his intention in ſubmitting unto, and undergoing the Will of God in theſe things?

Anſw. He bare our ſins in his own body upon the Tree, 1 Pet. 2. 24. *He took our ſins upon him*, undertook to anſwer for them, to *pay our debts*, to make an end of the difference about them between God and ſinners, *Dan.* 9. 24. His aim undoubtedly was by all that he underwent and ſuffered, ſo to make *Attonement* for ſin, as that no more could on that account be expected.

4. Had

4. Had God any more *to require* of ſinners on the account of ſin, that his *Juſtice* might be ſatisfied, his *Holineſs* vindicated, his *Glory* exalted, his *Honour* be repaired, than what he charged on Chriſt? Did he lay *ſomewhat of the penalty* due to ſin on him, execute *ſome part* of the curſe of the Law againſt him, and yet reſerve ſome wrath for ſinners themſelves?

Anſw. No doubtleſs: He *came to do the whole Will of God*, *Heb.* 10. 7, 8. And God *ſpared him not* any thing that in his holy will he had appointed to be done unto ſin, *Rom.* 8. 32. He would never have ſo dealt with *his Son*, to have made an half work of it; nor is the work of making ſatisfaction for ſin ſuch, as that any, the leaſt part of it ſhould ever be undertaken by another. Nothing is more injurious, or blaſphemous againſt God and Chriſt, than the fooliſh imagination among the *Papiſts* of works ſatisfactory for the *puniſhment due to ſin*, or any part of it: As alſo is their *Purgatory* pains to *expiate* any remaining *guilt* after this life. This work of *making ſatisfaction for ſin* is ſuch, as no creature in Heaven or Earth can put forth an hand unto. It was wholly committed to the *Son of God*, who alone was able to undertake it, and who hath perfectly accompliſhed it. So that God now ſayes, *fury is not in me*, he that will lay hold on my ſtrength *that he may have peace*, he ſhall have peace, *Iſa.* 21. 4.

5. What then *became of the Lord Chriſt* in his undertaking? Did he go through with it? or did he faint under it? Did he only teſtifie his Love, and ſhew his good will for our deliverance? or did alſo effectually purſue it, and not faint, until he had made a way for the *exerciſe of forgiveneſs*?

Anſw. It was not poſſible that *he ſhould be detained by the pains of death*, Acts 2. 24. He knew before hand, that he ſhould be *carried through his work*, that he ſhould not be *forſaken* in it, nor faint under it, *Iſa.* 50. 6, 7, 8. And God hath given this unqueſtionable evidence of his *diſcharge of the debt of ſin* to the utmoſt, in that he was acquitted from the whole account, when he was *raiſed from the dead*. For he that is given up to priſon upon the *ſentence of the Law* for the debt of ſin, ſhall not be freed, untill he have paid the utmoſt farthing. This therefore he manifeſted himſelf to have done, by his *Reſurrection from the dead*.

6. What

6. What then is now become of him? Where is he, and what doth he? Hath he ſo done his work and laid it aſide, or doth he *ſtill continue* to carry it on until it be brought unto its perfection?

Anſw. It is true, *he was dead*, *but he is alive*, and lives for ever; and hath told us, that becauſe *he liveth we ſhall live alſo*; And that, becauſe this is the end of his *mediatory life* in Heaven: he lives for *ever to make Interceſſion for us*, Heb. 7. 26, 27. And to this *end* that the forgiveneſs of ſin which he hath procured for us, may be communicated unto us, that we might be made *partakers* of it, and live for ever.

What ground is left of *queſtioning* the Truth in hand? What *link of this Chain* can unbelief break in, or upon? If men reſolve, notwithſtanding all this Evidence and Aſſurance that is tendred unto them thereof, that they will not yet believe that there is *forgiveneſs with God*, or will not be encouraged to attempt the *ſecuring of it* unto themſelves, or elſe *deſpiſe* it as a thing not worth the looking after; It is enough for them that declare it, that *preach theſe things*, that they are a *ſweet ſavour* unto God in them *that periſh*, as well as in them that are ſaved. And I bleſs God that I have had this Opportunity to bear *Teſtimony* to the Grace of God in Chriſt, which if it be not received, it is becauſe *the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of men*, *that the light of the Goſpel of the Glory of God ſhould not ſhine into their minds*. But Chriſt will be glorified in them that believe on theſe Principles and Foundations.

Our Obligation unto mutual forgiveneſs, proves forgiveneſs in God.

XIII. Another *Evidence* of the *ſame Truth* may be taken from hence, that God requires *forgiveneſs in us*; that we ſhould forgive one another; and therefore doubtleſs there is *forgiveneſs with him* for us. The ſenſe of this Conſideration unto our preſent purpoſe will be manifeſt in the enſuing Obſervations.

First, It is certain, that God hath required this of us: The *Teſtimonies* hereof are many, and known, ſo that they need not particularly to be repeated or inſiſted on. See *Luke* 17. 3, 4. *Epheſ.* 4. 32. *Math.* 18. 24. unto the end. Only there are ſome things that put a ſingular *Emphaſis* upon this Command, manifeſting the great importance of this duty in us, which may be marked. As,

1. That

1. That our Saviour requires us to carry a ſenſe of our Integrity and *Sincerity* in the diſcharge of this duty, along with us, in our *Addreſſes* unto God in prayer. Hence he teacheth and enjoyns us to pray, or plead for the *forgiveneſs of our debts* to God, (that is, our ſins or treſpaſſes againſt him, which make us *debtors* to his Law and Juſtice,) even as we *forgive them* that *ſo treſpaſs or offend againſt* us, as to ſtand in need of our forgiveneſs, *Matth.* 6. 12. Many are ready to devour ſuch as are not ſatisfied, that the words of that *Rule of Prayer*, which he hath preſcribed unto us, are to be *preciſely read* or *repeated* every day; I wiſh they would as *heedfully mind* that preſcription which is given us herein, for that frame of heart and ſpirit which ought to be in all our ſupplications. It might poſſibly abate of their wrath in that and other things. *But here is a Rule for all prayer*, as all acknowledge, as alſo of the things that are requiſite to make it acceptable. This in particular is required, that before the *ſearcher of all hearts*, and in our addreſſes unto him, in our greateſt concernments, we *profeſs our ſincerity* in the diſcharge of this duty, and do put our obtaining of what we deſire upon that iſſue. This is a *great Crown* that is put upon the *head of this duty*, that which makes it very eminent, and evidenceth the great concern of the Glory of God, and our own ſouls therein.

2. We may obſerve, that no other duty whatever is expreſly placed in the ſame *ſeries, order, or rank* with it; which makes it evident, that it is ſingled out to be profeſſed as a token and *pledge* of our ſincerity in all other parts of our Obedience unto God. It is by Chriſt himſelf made the inſtance, for the tryal of our ſincerity in our *Univerſal Obedience*, which gives no ſmall honour unto it. The Apoſtle puts great weight on the *Fifth Commandment*, *Honour thy Father and Mother*, becauſe it is the *firſt Commandment with promiſe*, Epheſ. 6. 2. All the Commandments indeed had a *promiſe*, Do this and live, life was promiſed to the obſervance of them all: But this is the firſt that had a *peculiar promiſe* annexed unto it, and accompanying of it. And it was ſuch a promiſe, as had a peculiar foundation through Gods Ordinance in the thing it ſelf. It is, that the *Parents* ſhould prolong the lives of their Children that were obedient. וארוכ ימיך Exod. 20. 11. *They ſhall prolong thy*

thy dayes; that is, by *praying* for their proſperity, *bleſſing* them in the name of God, and *directing* them in thoſe wayes of *Obedience*, whereby they might live and poſſeſs the Land. And this Promiſe is now tranſlated from the *Covenant of Canaan*, into the Covenant of Grace. The *bleſſing of Parents* going far towards the intereſſing their Children in the Promiſe thereof, and ſo *prolonging their dayes* unto eternity, though their dayes in this world ſhould be of little continuance. So it is ſaid of our Saviour, that he *ſhould ſee his ſeed, and prolong his dayes*, Iſa. 53. 10. Which hath carried over that Word, and that which is ſignified by it, unto eternal things. But this by the way. As the ſingular promiſe made to that Command, renders it ſingular, ſo doth this eſpecial *inſtancing* in this duty in our prayer, render it alſo. For though as all the Commandments had a Promiſe, ſo we are to carry a *Teſtimony* with us of our ſincerity in *Univerſal Obedince* in our addreſſes unto God: yet the ſingling out of this *inſtance* renders it exceeding remarkable; and ſhews what a value God puts upon it, and how well he is pleaſed with it.

3. That God requires this *forgiveneſs in us*, upon the account of the *forgiveneſs we receive from him*; which is to put the greateſt *obligation* upon us unto it, that we are capable of: and to give the ſtrongeſt and moſt powerful motive poſſible unto its performance: See *Epheſ.* 4. 32.

4. That this duty is more directly and expreſly required in the *New Teſtament* than in the *Old*. Required then it was, but not ſo *openly*, ſo plainly, ſo expreſly as now. Hence we find a different frame of Spirit between them under that diſpenſation, and thoſe under that of the New Teſtament. There are found amongſt them ſome ſuch Reflections upon their enemies, their Oppreſſors, Perſecutors, and the like, as although they were warranted by ſome actings of the Spirit of God in them, yet being ſuited unto the Diſpenſation they were under, do no way become us now, who by Jeſus Chriſt receive *grace for grace*. So *Zechariah* when he *died*, cryed, *The Lord look on, and require*; but *Stephen* dying in the ſame cauſe and manner ſaid, *Lord lay not this ſin to their charge*. *Elijah* called for *fire from Heaven*: But our Saviour reproves the leaſt inclination in his *Diſciples*, to imitate him therein. And the reaſon of this diſ-

ference is, becauſe *forgiveneſs* in God is under the New Teſtament far more *clearly*, eſpecially in the nature and cauſe of it, diſcovered in the *Goſpel*, *which hath brought life and immortality to light*, than it was under the Law. For all our *Obedience* both in matter and manner, is to be ſuited unto the *diſcoveries* and Revelation of God unto us.

5. This *Forgiveneſs of of others*, is made an expreſs Condition of our *obtaining Pardon and forgiveneſs from God.* Mat.6.14,15. And the nature hereof is expreſly declared, *Chap.*18.24. Such *Evangelical Conditions* we have not many. I confeſs, they have no *cauſal influence* into the accompliſhment of the *promiſe*; but the *non-performance* of them, is a ſufficient *barr* againſt our pretending to the Promiſe, a ſufficient *evidence* that we have no *pleadable intereſt* in it. Our *forgiving of others* will not procure forgiveneſs for our ſelves: But our *not forgiving* of others proves, that we our ſelves are not forgiven. And all theſe things do ſhew what weight God himſelf layes on this duty.

Secondly, Obſerve, that this *Duty* is ſuch, as that there is nothing more comely, uſeful, or honourable unto, or *praiſe worthy* in any, than a due performance of it. To be *morose*, implacable, inexorable, revengeful, is one of the greateſt degeneracies of humane nature. And no men are commonly, even in this world, more branded with real infamy, and diſhonour amongſt Wiſe and Good men, than thoſe who are of ſuch a frame, and do act accordingly. To remember *Injuries*, to retain a ſenſe of *Wrongs*, to watch for Opportunities of *Revenge*, to *hate* and be maliciouſly perverſe, is to repreſent the *Image of the Devil* unto the world in its proper colours; He is the *great Enemy and ſelf avenger:* On the other ſide, no Grace, no Vertue, no Duty, no Ornament of the mind, or Converſation of man, is in it ſelf ſo *lovely*, ſo *comely*, ſo praiſe-worthy, or ſo uſeful unto mankind, as are *Meekneſs*, *Readineſs to forgive and pardon.* This is that principally which renders a man a *good man*, for whom one *would even dare to dye*: And I am ſorry to add, that this Grace or duty is recommended by its *rarity*. It is little found amongſt the Children of men. The conſideration of the defect of men herein, as in thoſe other fundamental duties of the Goſpel, in ſelf-denyal, readineſs for the Croſs, and forſaking the world, is an Evidence, if not how *little*

little ſincerity there is in the world; Yet at leaſt it is, of how little *growing*, and thriving there is amongſt Profeſſors.

3. That there is *no Grace*, *Vertue*, or *Perfection* in any man, but what is as an *Emanation* from the *Divine Goodneſs and Bounty*, ſo *expreſſive* of ſome *Divine Excellencies* or perfection; ſomewhat that is in God, in a way and manner *Infinitely more Excellent.* We were created *in the Image of God.* Whatever was good or comely in us, was a part of that Image: Eſpecially the Ornaments of our Minds, the perfections of our ſouls. Theſe things had in them a reſemblance of, and a correſpondency unto *ſome excellencies* in God, whereunto by the way of *Analogie* they may be reduced. This being for the moſt part loſt by ſin, a ſhadow of it only remaining in the *faculties of our ſouls*; and that *Dominion* over the Creatures, which is permitted unto men in the patience of God. The recovery that we have by *Grace*, is nothing but an initial *Renovation of the Image of God in us*, *Epheſ.* 4.22. It is the implanting upon our Natures thoſe Graces, which may render us again like unto him. And nothing is *Grace* or *Vertue*, but what ſo anſwers to ſomewhat in God. So then whatever is in us of this kind, is in God abſolutely, perfectly, in a way and manner infinitely more excellent.

Let us now therefore put theſe things together. God requires of us, that there ſhould be *forgiveneſs in us* for thoſe that do offend us; Forgiveneſs without limitation and bounds; The Grace hereof he beſtoweth on his Saints; ſets an high price upon it, and manifeſts many wayes, that he accounts it among the moſt *excellent* of our *endowments*; one of the moſt lovely and praiſe-worthy qualifications of any perſon. What then ſhall we now ſay? Is there *forgiveneſs with him* or no? *He that made the Eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that planted the Ear, ſhall he not hear?* He that thus preſcribes *forgiveneſs to us*, that beſtows the Grace of it upon us, is there not *forgiveneſs with him?* It is all one as to ſay, Though we are *good*, yet God is not; though we are *Benign* and Bountiful, yet he is not. He that finds this Grace wrought in him in any meaſure, and yet fears that he ſhall not find it in God for himſelf, doth therein, and ſo far prefer himſelf above God; which is the natural Effect of curſed unbelief.

But the Truth is, were there not *forgiveneſs with God*, *forgiveneſs in man* would be no vertue, with all thoſe qualities that encline thereto; ſuch are meekneſs, pity, patience, compaſſion and the like. Which what were it, but to ſet looſe Humane Nature to rage and madneſs? For as every *Truth* conſiſts in its anſwerableneſs to the *Prime and Eternal Verity*; So *vertue* conſiſts not abſolutely nor primarily in a conformity to a rule of Command, but in a *Correſpondency* unto the firſt abſolute perfect *Being* and its perfections.

Properties of Forgiveneſs. The Greatneſs and Freedom of it.

Properties of Divine Forgiveneſs.

The *Arguments* and *Demonſtrations* foregoing have, we hope, undeniably evinced the great Truth we have inſiſted on, which is the life and ſoul of all our Hope, Profeſſion, Religion and Worſhip. The *end* of all this Diſcourſe is, to lay a *firm foundation* for Faith to reſt upon, in its addreſſes unto God *for the forgiveneſs of ſins*; as alſo to give encouragements unto all ſorts of perſons ſo to do. This *End* remains now to be explained and preſſed; which work yet before we directly cloſe withall, two things are further to be premiſed. And the firſt is, to propoſe ſome of thoſe *Adjuncts* of, and *conſiderations* about this forgiveneſs, as may both encourage and *neceſſitate* us to ſeek out after it, and to *mix* the *Teſtimonies* given unto it and the *Promiſes* of it *with faith* unto our Benefit and Advantage. The *other* is to ſhew, how needfull all this endeavour is, upon the account of that great *Unbelief* which is in the moſt in this matter. As to the *firſt* of theſe then we may conſider,

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1. God himſelf doth really ſeparate and diſtinguiſh *his forgiveneſs*, from any thing that our thoughts and *imaginations* can reach unto, and that becauſe it is *his*, and like himſelf. It is an *object* for *faith* alone? which can reſt in that, which it cannot comprehend. It is never *ſafer*, than when it is as it were *overwhelmed with infiniteneſs*. But ſet meer rational thoughts, or the *imaginations* of our minds at work about ſuch things, and they fall unconceivably ſhort of them. They can neither *conceive* of them aright, nor *uſe* them unto their proper end and purpoſe. Were not forgiveneſs in God ſomewhat beyond what men could *imagine*, no fleſh could be ſaved. This himſelf expreſſeth, Iſa. 55. 7,8,9. *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your wayes my wayes, ſaith the Lord; for as the Heavens are higher than the earth, ſo are my wayes higher than your wayes, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* They are, as is plain in the context, *thoughts of forgiveneſs*, and *wayes of pardon* whereof he ſpeaks. Theſe our Apprehenſions come ſhort of; we know little or nothing of the *infinite largeneſs of his heart* in this matter. He that he ſpeaks of, is רָשָׁע an *impiouſly wicked* man, and אִישׁ אָוֶן *a man of deceit*, *and* perverſe wickedneſs. He whoſe deſign and courſe is nothing but a lye, ſin, and iniquity. Such an one as we would have little or no hopes of; that we would ſcarce think it worth our while to deal withal about a hopeleſs Converſion; or can ſcarce find in our hearts *to pray for him*, but are ready to give him up, as one profligate and deſperate. But let him turn to the Lord and he ſhall obtain *forgiveneſs*. But how can this be? Is it poſſible there ſhould be mercy for ſuch an one? Yes! For the Lord יַרְבֶּה לִסְלוֹחַ *will multiply to pardon*. He hath *forgiveneſs* with him to outdo all the multiplyed ſins of any that turn unto him, and ſeek for it. But this is very hard, very difficult for us to apprehend. This is not the way and *manner of men*: We deal not thus with profligate Offenders againſt us. True, ſaith God; *But your wayes are not my wayes*: I do not act in this matter like unto you, nor as you

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are accuſtomed to do. How then ſhall we apprehend it; how ſhall we conceive of it? You can never do it by your *Reaſon* or Imaginations; *For as the Heavens is above the Earth, ſo are my thoughts* in this matter *above your thoughts*. This is an expreſſion to ſet out the largeſt and moſt unconceivable *diſtance* that may be. The *creation* will afford no more ſignificant expreſſion or repreſentation of it. The Heavens are inconceivably *diſtant from* the Earth, and inconceivably glorious *above it*. So are the *Thoughts* of God; they are not only *diſtant* from ours, but have a *Glory* in them alſo that we cannot riſe up unto. For the moſt part when we come to deal with God about forgiveneſs, we hang in every bryar of *diſputing* quarrelſom unbelief. This or that *Circumſtance* or Aggravation, this or that unparallel'd particular, bereaves us of our Confidence. Want of a due conſideration of him with whom we have to do, meaſuring him by that *line of our own Imaginations*, bringing him down unto our *Thoughts* and our *Wayes*, is the cauſe of all our diſquietments. Becauſe we find it hard to *forgive our Pence*, we think he cannot *forgive Talents*. But he hath provided to obviate ſuch thoughts in us, *Hoſ.* 11. 9. *I will not execute the fierceneſs of my wrath, I will not return to deſtroy* Ephraim, *for* I AM GOD AND NOT MAN. Our ſatisfaction in this matter, is to be taken from his *Nature*; were he *a man*, or as the Sons of men, it were impoſſible that upon ſuch and ſo many provocations, he ſhould turn away from the fierceneſs of his Anger. But he is God. This gives an *Infiniteneſs*, and an inconceivable *boundleſneſs* to the *forgiveneſs* that is with him; and exalts it above all our *thoughts* and *wayes*. This is to be lamented; *Preſumption* which turns God into an *Idol*, aſcribes unto that *Idol*, a greater *largeneſs in forgiveneſs*, than Faith is able to riſe up unto, when it deals with him as a God of infinite *Excellencies* and *Perfections*. The reaſons of it I confeſs are obvious. But this is certain, no *preſumption* can falſly imagine that *forgiveneſs* to it ſelf from the *Idol* of its heart, as *Faith* may in the way of God, *find* in him, and obtain from him. For,

Secondly, God engageth his *infinite Excellencies* to demonſtrate the Greatneſs and *Boundleſneſs* of his *forgiveneſs*. He propoſeth them unto our Conſiderations to convince us, that we ſhall find pardon

pardon with him ſuitable and anſwerable unto them. See Iſa. 40. 27,28,29,30,31. *Why ſayeſt thou O* Jacob, *and ſpeakeſt O* Iſrael, *my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is paſſed over from my God? Haſt thou not known, haſt thou not heard, that the Everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no ſearching of his underſtanding; He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he encreaſeth ſtrength: even the youths ſhall faint and be weary, and the young men ſhall utterly fail; but they that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength, they ſhall mount up with wings as Eagles, they ſhall run and not be weary, and they ſhall walk and not be faint.* The matter in *queſtion* is, whether Acceptance with God, which is *only by forgiveneſs*, is to be obtained or no; This ſinfull *Jacob* either deſpairs of, or at leaſt deſponds about. But faith God, *My thoughts are not as your thoughts* in this matter. And what courſe doth he take to convince them of their miſtake therein? What Argument doth he make uſe of to free them from their unbelief, and to rebuke their fears? Plainly, he calls them to the conſideration of *himſelf*, both *Who* and *What he is*, with whom they had to do. That they might expect acceptance and forgiveneſs, ſuch as did become him. Minding them of his power, his Immenſity, his Infinite Wiſdom, his Unchangableneſs, all the Excellencies and properties of his nature, he demands of them, whether they have not juſt ground to expect *Forgiveneſs and Grace*, above all their thoughts and apprehenſions, becauſe anſwering the infinite largeneſs of his heart from whence it doth proceed?

And *Moſes* manageth this plea for the *forgiveneſs* of that people under an high provocation, and a moſt ſevere threatning of their deſtruction thereon, *Numb.* 14. 17, 18. He pleads for *pardon* in ſuch a way and manner, as may anſwer the great and glorious *Properties* of the Nature of God, and which would manifeſt an infiniteneſs of *Power* and Al-ſufficiency to be in him.

This I ſay is an *encouragement* in general unto Believers. We have, as I hope, upon unqueſtionable grounds evinced that *there is forgiveneſs with God*, which is the hinge on which turneth the iſſue of our eternal condition. Now this is *like himſelf*, ſuch as becomes him; that anſwers the infinite perfecti-

ons.

ons of his nature; that is exerciſed and given forth by him *as God*. We are apt to *narrow and ſtreighten* it by our unbelief, and to render it *unbecoming* of him. He leſs diſhonours God (or as little) who being wholly under the power of the Law, believes that there is *no forgiveneſs with him*, none to be obtained from him, or doth not believe it, that ſo it is, or is ſo to be obtained, for which he hath the voice and *ſentence of the Law* to countenance him, than thoſe who being convinced of the principles and grounds of it before mentioned, and of the *Truth* of the Teſtimony given unto it, do yet by ſtreightning and narrowing of it, render it *unworthy* of *him*, whoſe Excellencies are all infinite, and whoſe wayes on that account are incomprehenſible. If then we reſolve to *treat with God* about this matter, which is the buſineſs now in hand, let us do it, as it becomes his *Greatneſs*, that is, indeed, as the *wants of our ſouls* do require. Let us not entangle our own Spirits by *limiting* his Grace. The Father of the *Child poſſeſſed with a Devil* being in a great *Agony* when he came to our Saviour, cryes out, *If thou canſt do any thing have compaſſion on us, and help us*, Mark 9. 22. He would fain be delivered, but the matter was *ſo great*, that he queſtioned whether the Lord Chriſt had either *Compaſſion* or *Power* enough for his relief. And what did he obtain hereby? nothing but the *retarding* of the Cure of his Child for a ſeaſon. For our Saviour *holds him off* untill he had inſtructed him in this matter; ſaith he, v. 23. *If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible unto him that believeth*. Miſtake not, if thy *Child be not cured*, it is not for want of *power or pity in me*, but of *faith* in thee. My power is ſuch as renders *all things poſſible*, ſo that they be believed. So it is with many, who would deſirouſly be made *partakers of forgiveneſs*. If it be *poſſible* they would be pardoned, but they do not ſee it *poſſible*. Why where is the defect? God hath *no pardon* for them, or ſuch as they are, and ſo it may be they come finally ſhort of pardon. What, becauſe *God cannot pardon them*, it is not poſſible with him? Not at all! but becauſe *they cannot*, they *will not believe*, that the forgiveneſs that is with him is ſuch, as that it would anſwer all the *wants of their ſouls*, becauſe it anſwers the *infinite largeneſs* of his heart. And if this doth not wholly *deprive* them of

of Pardon, yet it greatly *retards* their Peace and Comfort. God doth not take it well to be *limited* by us in any thing, leaſt of all in his Grace. This he calls a *Tempting* of him, a *provoking Temptation*, Pſal. 78. 41. *They turned back and tempted God, they limited the Holy One of Iſrael*. This he could not bear with. If there be any pardon with God, it is ſuch as becomes him to give. When he pardons, he will *abundantly pardon*. Go with your *half forgiveneſs* limited, conditional Pardons with *reſerves* and limitations unto the Sons of men; it may be, it may become them, it is *like themſelves*. That of God is abſolute and perfect, before which our ſins are as a *Cloud* before the *Eaſt Wind*, and the riſing Sun. Hence he is ſaid to do this work, with his *whole heart, and his whole ſoul*; χαρίζεσθαι, *freely*, bountifully, largely to *indulge* and forgive unto us our ſins. And to *caſt them into the bottom of the Sea*, Mic. 7. 19. into a bottomleſs Ocean, an Emblem of infinite mercy. Remember this, poor ſouls, when you are to deal with God in this matter, all things are poſſible unto them that do believe.

Secondly, *This forgiveneſs is in or with God*, not only ſo, as that we *may apply our ſelves unto it* if we *will*, for which he will not be offended with us, but ſo alſo, as that he *hath placed his great Glory in the Declaration and communication of it*; nor can we honour him more than by coming to him to be made partakers of it, and ſo to receive it from him. For the moſt part, we are as it were ready rather to *ſteal forgiveneſs* from God, than to receive from him as one that gives it *freely* and largely. We take it up, and lay it down, as though we would be glad to have it, ſo God did not, as it were, *ſee us take it*; for we are afraid *he is not willing* we ſhould have it indeed. We would ſteal this fire from Heaven, and have a ſhare in Gods *Treaſures and Riches* almoſt without his conſent. At leaſt we think that we have it from him ἀγρὲ, with much difficulty, that it is rarely given and ſcarcely obtained. That he gives it out, ἑκὼν ἀεκουσῖῃ θύμῳ, with a kind of *unwilling willingneſs*; as we ſometimes give Alms without Chearfulneſs. And that he *loſeth ſo much by us*, as he giveth out in Pardon. We are apt to think that we *are very willing* to have forgiveneſs, but that God is *unwilling* to beſtow it, and that becauſe he ſeems to be a *loſer* by it, and to forego the *glory of inflicting puniſh-*

ment for our ſins, which of all things we ſuppoſe he is moſt loth to part withal. And this is the very nature of *unbelief*. But indeed things are quite otherwiſe. He hath in this matter through the Lord Chriſt ordered all things in his dealings with ſinners to the *praiſe of the glory of his Grace*, Eph. 1.6. His deſign in the whole myſtery of the Goſpel, is to make his *Grace glorious*, or to exalt *pardoning mercy*. The great fruit and product of his Grace is *forgiveneſs*; the forgiveneſs of ſinners. This God will render himſelf *Glorious* in and by. All the Praiſe, Glory and Worſhip, that he deſigns from any in this world, is to redound unto him by the way of this Grace, as we have proved at large before. For this cauſe *ſpared he the world*, when ſin firſt entred into it: for this cauſe did he *provide a New Covenant*, when the old was become unprofitable. For this cauſe did he *ſend his Son* into the world. This hath he teſtified by all the Evidences inſiſted on. Would he have loſt the *praiſe of his Grace*, nothing hereof would have been done or brought about. We can then no way ſo eminently bring or *aſcribe glory unto God*, as by our *receiving forgiveneſs* from him, he being willing thereunto upon the account of its tendency unto his own Glory, in that way, which he hath peculiarly fixed on for its manifeſtation. Hence the Apoſtle exhorts us to come *boldly to the Throne of Grace*, Heb. 4. 16. That is, with the Confidence of faith, as he expounds *boldneſs*, *Chap.* 10. 19, 20. We come about a buſineſs wherewith he is well pleaſed; ſuch as he delights in the doing of, as he expreſſeth himſelf, Zeph.3.17. *The Lord thy God in the midſt of thee, is mighty; he will ſave, he will rejoyce over thee with joy. He will reſt in his love, he will joy over thee with ſinging.* This is the way of Gods Pardoning; he doth it in a *rejoycing triumphant manner*, ſatisfying abundantly his own holy ſoul therein, and reſting in his love. We have then abundant encouragement to *draw nigh to the Throne of Grace*, to be made partakers of what God is ſo willing to give out unto us. And to this end ſerves alſo the *Oath of God* before inſiſted on, namely, to root out all *the ſecret reſerves of unbelief*, concerning Gods *Unwillingneſs* to give Mercy, Grace and *Pardon* unto ſinners. See *Heb.* 6. 17, 18. where it is expreſſed. Therefore the tendency of our *former Arguments*, is not meerly to prove

prove that there is *forgiveneſs with God*, which we *may* believe and not be miſtaken, but which we *ought* to believe. It is our *duty* ſo to do. We think it our duty to *pray*, to *hear* the Word, to *give alms*, to love the Brethren, and to abſtain from ſin; and if we fail in any of theſe, we find the guilt of them reflected upon our Conſcience unto our diſquietment. But we ſcarce think it *our duty to believe* the forgiveneſs of our ſins. It is well it may be, we think, with them that *can do it*, but we think it not *their fault* who *do not*. Such perſons may be *pityed*, but as we ſuppoſe not juſtly *blamed*, no not by God himſelf. Whoſe Conſcience almoſt is burdened with this as a ſin, that he doth not as he ought, *believe the forgiveneſs of his ſins?* And this is meerly becauſe men judge it not their *duty* ſo to do. For a *non-performance* of a duty apprehended to be ſuch, will *reflect* on the Conſcience a ſenſe of the guilt of ſin. But now what can be required to make any thing *a duty* unto us, that is wanting in this matter? For,

1. There *is forgiveneſs with God*, and this manifeſted, revealed, declared. This manifeſtation of it is that which makes it the *Object* of our faith. We believe things to be in God, and with him, not meerly and formally becauſe they *are ſo*, but becauſe he hath *manifeſted* and revealed them ſo to be, 1 *John* 1. 2. What he ſo declares, it is our *duty* to believe, or we fruſtrate the end of his Revelation.

2. We are expreſly *commanded* to believe, and that upon the *higheſt Promiſes*, and under the greateſt penalties. This Command is that which makes *believing* formally a *duty*. Faith is a *Grace* as it is freely *wrought* in us by the Holy Ghoſt, the root of all Obedience and duties, as it is radically fixed in the heart. But as it is *commanded*, it is *a duty*; and theſe Commands, you know, are ſeveral wayes expreſſed, by *Invitations*, *Exhortations*, Propoſitions, which all have in them the nature of Commands, which take up a great part of the *Books* of the New Teſtament.

3. It is a duty, as we have ſhewed, of the *greateſt concernment* unto the Glory of God.

4. Of the *greateſt importance* unto our ſouls, here and hereafter. And theſe things were neceſſary to be added, to bottom our enſuing Exhortations upon.

Evidences that moſt men do not believe Forgiveneſs.

Forgiveneſs believed by few.

That which ſhould now enſue, is the peculiar *improvement* of this Truth all along aimed at; namely, to give *Exhortations*, and encouragments unto believing. But I can take few ſteps in this work, wherein methinks I do hear ſome ſaying, *Surely all this is needleſs; Who is there that doth not believe all that you go about to prove? And ſo theſe pains are ſpent to little or no purpoſe.* I ſhall therefore before I perſwade any unto it, endeavour to ſhew *that they do it not already.* Many I ſay, the *moſt of men* who live under the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, do wofully deceive their own ſouls in this matter. They *do not believe* what they *profeſs themſelves to believe*, and what they think they believe. Men talk of *fundamental Errors*; this is to me the *moſt fundamental error* that any can fall into, and the moſt pernitious. It is made up of theſe two parts. (1.) *They do not indeed believe forgiveneſs.* (2.) *They ſuppoſe they do believe it*, which keeps them from ſeeking after their only remedy. Both theſe miſtakes are in the *foundation*, and do ruine the ſouls of them that live and die in them. I ſhall then by a brief enquiry put this matter to a *tryal.* By ſome plain Rules and Principles may this *important Queſtion*, whether we *do indeed believe forgiveneſs or no*, be anſwered and decided. But to the Reſolution intended, I ſhall premiſe two Obſervations.

1. Men in this caſe, are *very apt to deceive themſelves.* Self-love, vain Hopes, liking of Luſt, common falſe Principles, ſloth, unwillingneſs unto ſelf-examination, Reputation with the world, and it may be in the *Church*, all vigorouſly concurr unto mens *ſelf-deceivings* in this matter. It is no eaſie thing for a ſoul to *break through* all theſe, and all ſelf-reaſonings that riſe from them, to come unto a *clear judgment* of its own acting in dealing with God about forgiveneſs. Men alſo find *a Common Preſumption* of this Truth, and its being an *eaſie relief* againſt gripings of Conſcience, and diſturbing thoughts about ſin; which they daily meet withal. Aiming therefore only at the removal of *trouble*, and finding their preſent *Imagination of it*, ſufficient thereunto, they never bring their *perſwaſion* to the tryal.

2. As

2. As men are apt to do thus, *ſo they actually do ſo*, they *do deceive themſelves*, and know not that they do ſo. The *laſt day* will make this evident, if men will no ſooner be convinced of their folly. When our *Saviour* told his Diſciples, that *one of them twelve* ſhould betray him; though it were but *one of twelve* that was in danger, yet *every one of the twelve* made a particular enquiry about himſelf. I will not ſay, that *one in each twelve* is here miſtaken: But I am ſure the Truth tells us, *That many are called, and but few are choſen*; they are but few, who do really believe forgiveneſs. Is it not then incumbent on every one to be enquiring in what number he is likely to be found at the laſt day? Whilſt men put this *enquiry* off from themſelves, and think or ſay, it may be the concernment of *others*, it is not *mine*, they periſh, and that without remedy. Remember what *poor Jacob* ſaid, when he had loſt *one Child*, and was afraid of the loſs of another, Gen. 43. 14. *If I be bereaved of my Children, I am bereaved.* As if he ſhould have ſaid, if *I loſe my Children*, I have no more to loſe, they are my all. Nothing worſe can befall me in this world. Comfort, Joy, yea, Life and all go with them. How much more may men ſay in this Caſe, *If we are deceived here, we are deceived*; all is loſt, hope, and life, and *ſoul*, all muſt periſh, and that for ever. There is no help or relief for them who deceive themſelves in this matter. They have found out a way *to go quietly down into the pit.*

Now theſe things are premiſed, only that they may be *incentives* unto *ſelf-examination* in this matter, and ſo render the enſuing Conſiderations uſefull. Let us then addreſs our ſelves unto them.

1. In General; *This is a Goſpel Truth*; yea, the *great fundamental*, and moſt important Truth of the Goſpel. It is the turning point of the *two Covenants*, as God himſelf declares, *Heb.* 7. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Now a very eaſie Conſideration of the *wayes and walkings of men* will ſatisfie us as to this Enquiry, whether they do indeed believe the *Goſpel*, the *Covenant* of Grace, and the *fundamental* Principles of it. Certainly their *Ignorance*, *Darkneſs*, *Blindneſs*, their *Corrupt Affections*, and *Worldly Converſations*, their *Earthly-mindedneſs* and open *diſavowing of the Spirit*, *Wayes and Yoke of Chriſt*, ſpeak no ſuch language.

guage. Shall we think that *proud, heady, worldly, ſelf-ſeekers,* haters of the people of God, and his wayes, deſpiſers of the *Spirit* of grace, and his work, Sacrificers to their own luſts, and ſuch like, do believe the *Covenant of Grace*, or Remiſſion of ſins? God forbid we ſhould entertain any one thought of ſo great diſhonour to the Goſpel. Wherever that is received or believed, it produceth other effects, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. *Iſa.* 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. It teacheth men *to deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts.* It changeth their hearts, natures and wayes; It is not ſuch a *barren*, impotent and fruitleſs thing, as ſuch an Apprehenſion would repreſent it.

2. They that really believe *forgiveneſs* in God, do thereby *obtain forgiveneſs. Believing* gives an *intereſt* in it; it brings it home to the ſoul concerned. This is the inviolable Law of the Goſpel. *Believing* and *forgiveneſs* are inſeparably conjoyned. Among the *Evidences* that we may have of any one being intereſted in forgiveneſs, I ſhall only name one; *They prize and value it above all the world.* Let us enquire what *Eſteem and valuation* many of thoſe have of forgiveneſs, who put it out of all queſtion that they do believe it. Do they look upon it as their *Treaſure*, their *Jewel*, their Pearl of price? Are they *ſolicitous* about it? Do they often look and examine whether it continues ſafe in their poſſeſſion or no? Suppoſe a man have a *precious Jewel*, laid up in ſome place in his houſe; Suppoſe it be unto him as the poor Widdows *two mites*, all her ſubſtance or living; will he not carefully ponder on it? Will he not frequently ſatisfie himſelf that it is ſafe? We may know that *ſuch an houſe*, ſuch fields or lands do not belong unto a man when he paſſeth by them daily, and taketh little or no notice of them. Now how do moſt men look upon *forgiveneſs?* What is their common deportment in reference unto it? Are their hearts continually filled with thoughts about it? Are they *ſolicitous* concerning their intereſt in it? Do they reckon, that *whileſt that is ſafe*, all is ſafe with them? When it is, as it were, *laid out of the way* by ſin and unbelief, do they give themſelves no reſt, untill it be afreſh diſcovered unto them? Is this the *frame* of the moſt of men? The Lord knows it is not. They *talk of forgiveneſs*, but eſteem it not, prize it not, make no particular enquiries after it. They put it to an *ungrounded*

grounded venture, whether ever they be partakers of it or no; for a relief againſt ſome pangs of Conſcience it is called upon, or elſe ſcarce thought of at all.

Let not any ſo minded flatter themſelves that they have any acquaintance with the myſtery of Goſpel *forgiveneſs.*

3. Let it be enquired of them who pretend unto this *perſwaſion*, how they came by it; that we may know whether it be of *him who calleth us*, or no; that we may try whether they have broken through the *difficulties* in the Entertaining of it, which we have manifeſted abundantly to lye in the way of it.

When *Peter* confeſſed our Saviour to be *the Chriſt the Son of the living God*; He told him that *fleſh and blood* did not *reveal that unto him, but his Father who is in Heaven.* Matth. 16. 17. It is ſo with them who indeed believe *forgiveneſs* in God: *Fleſh and blood* hath not revealed it unto them. It hath not been furthered by any thing within them or without them, but all lyes in oppoſition unto it. *This is the work of God that we believe*, John. 6. 29. A great work, the *greateſt work* that God requireth of us. It is not only a great thing in it ſelf (the *Grace of believing* is a great thing,) but it is great in reſpect of *its Object*, or what we have to believe, or *forgiveneſs* it ſelf. The great honour of *Abrahams* faith lay in this, that *deaths* and difficulties lay in the way of it. *Rom.* 4. 18, 19, 20. But what is a *dead body*, and a *dead womb*, to an *accuſing* Conſcience, a *killing Law*, and apprehenſions of a God terrible as a conſuming fire? all which as was ſhewed, oppoſe themſelves unto a ſoul called to believe *forgiveneſs.*

What now have the moſt of men, who are confident in the *profeſſion of this faith*, to ſay unto this thing? Let them ſpeak clearly, and they muſt ſay, that indeed they never found the *leaſt difficulty* in this matter; they never *doubted* of it; they never *queſtioned* it, nor do know any reaſon why they ſhould do ſo. It is a thing which they have *ſo taken for granted*, as that it never coſt them an *hours labour* prayer or meditation about it. Have they had *ſecret reaſonings* and contendings in their hearts about it? No; Have they conſidered how the *Objections* that lye againſt it may be removed? *Not at all*; But is it ſo indeed, that this *perſwaſion* is thus bred in you, you know not how? Are the corrupted *Natures* of men, and the

Goſpel

Goſpel ſo ſuited, ſo complying? Is the *New Covenant* grown ſo *connatural* to fleſh and blood? Is the *greateſt ſecret* that ever was revealed from the boſom of the *Father*, become ſo *familiar* and eaſie to the wiſdom of the fleſh? Is that which was *folly* to the wiſe *Greeks*, and a ſtumbling block to the Wonder-gazing *Jews*, become on a ſuddain Wiſdom, and a plain path to the ſame principles that were in them? But the truth of this mater is, that ſuch men have a general, uſeleſs barren *notion of Pardon*, which Satan, Preſumption, Tradition, Common Reports, and the *Cuſtomary hearing of the Word* have furniſhed them withal; But for that *Goſpel diſcovery* of forgiveneſs whereof we have been ſpeaking, they are utterly ignorant of it, and unacquainted with it. To convince ſuch poor creatures of the folly of their *preſumption*, I would but deſire them to go to ſome real Believers, that are or may be known unto them; Let them be asked whether they came ſo eaſily by their *Faith*, and Apprehenſions of forgiveneſs, or no? Alas, ſaith *One*, theſe *twenty years* have I been following after God, and yet I have not arrived unto an *abiding Chearing perſwaſion* of it. I know what it coſt me, what tryals, difficulties, temptations I wreſtled with, and went through withal before I obtained it, ſaith *another*. What I have attained unto, hath been of unſpeakable mercy. And it is my daily prayer, that I may be preſerved in it; by the exceeding greatneſs of the Power of God; for I continually wreſtle with ſtorms that are ready to drive me from my Anchor. A little of this diſcourſe may be *ſufficient* to convince poor, dark, carnal creatures of the folly and vanity of their confidence.

4. There are *certain Means* whereby the Revelation and diſcovery of this *Myſterie* is made unto the ſouls of men. By theſe they do obtain it, or they obtain it not. The myſterie it ſelf was a *ſecret*, hidden in the Counſel of God from Eternity; nor was there any way whereby it might be revealed, but by *the Son of God*. And that is done in the Word of the Goſpel. If then you ſay *you know it*; Let us enquire how you *came* ſo to do? And by what means it hath been declared unto you? Hath this been done by a *Word of Truth?* by the Promiſe of the Goſpel? Was it by *preaching* of the Word unto you, or by *reading* of it, or *meditating* upon it? Or did you receive it from

from and by ſome *ſeaſonable word*, of, or from the Scriptures ſpoken unto you? Or hath it inſenſibly gotten ground upon your hearts and minds, upon the *ſtrivings* and conflicts of your ſouls about ſin, from the truth wherein you had been inſtructed in General? Or by what other wayes or means have you come to that acquaintance with it, whereof you boaſt? You can tell how you came by your *wealth*, your Gold, and Silver; you know how you became *learned*, or obtained the knowledge of the *myſterie of your trade*, who taught you in it, and how you came by it. There is not any thing wherein you are concerned, but you can anſwer theſe Enquiries in *reference* unto it. Think it then no great matter, if you are put to anſwer this Queſtion alſo; By *what way* or *means* came you to the *knowledge of forgiveneſs* which you boaſt of? Was it by any of thoſe before mentioned, or ſome other? If you cannot anſwer diſtinctly to theſe things, only you ſay, you have *heard it*, and *believed* it ever ſince you can remember; ſo thoſe ſaid that went before you, ſo they ſay with whom you do converſe, you never *met with any one* that called it into queſtion, nor heard of any, unleſs it were one or *two deſpairing wretches*; it will be juſtly queſtioned, whether you have any portion in this matter or no. If uncertain rumours, reports, general notions, lye at the bottom of your perſwaſion, do not ſuppoſe that you have any Communion with Chriſt therein.

5. Of them who profeſs to believe *forgiveneſs*, how few are there who indeed know *what it is*. They believe they ſay, but as the *Samaritans* Worſhipped, they *know not what*. With ſome, a *bold preſumption*, and crying *peace, peace*, goes for the belief of *forgiveneſs*.

A General *Apprehenſion of impunity* from God, and that though they are ſinners, yet they ſhall not be puniſhed, paſſeth with others at the ſame rate.

Some think they ſhall prevail with God by *their prayers* and deſires to let them alone, and not caſt them into Hell. One way or other to eſcape the *Vengeance of Hell*, not to be puniſhed in another world, is that which men fix their minds upon.

But is this that *forgiveneſs* which is revealed in the Goſpel? that which we have been treating about? The *Riſe* and *Spring*

of our *forgiveneſs* is in the *heart and gracious Nature of God*, declared by his *Name*; Have you enquired ſeriouſly into this? Have you ſtood at the ſhore of that *infinite Ocean of Goodneſs* and Love? Have your ſouls found ſupportment and relief from that Conſideration? And have your *hearts* leaped within you with the thoughts of it? Or if you have never been affected in an eſpecial manner herewithal, have you bowed down your ſouls under the Conſiderations of that *Sovereign Act of the Will of God*, that is the next ſpring of *forgiveneſs*; that glorious acting of free Grace, that when all might juſtly have periſhed, all *having ſinned and come ſhort of his Glory*, God would yet *have mercy on ſome?* Have you given up your ſelves to this Grace? Is this any thing of that you do believe? Suppoſe you are ſtrangers to this alſo: What communion with God have you had about it in the *blood of Chriſt?* We have ſhewed how forgiveneſs relates thereunto; how way is made thereby for the exerciſe of mercy, in a conſiſtency with the Glory and Honour of the Juſtice of God, and of his Law; how *Pardon* is procured and purchaſed thereby; with the *myſterious* Reconciliation of Love and Law; and the new diſpoſal of *Conſcience* in its work and duty by it. What have you to ſay to theſe things? Have you ſeen *pardon* flowing from the *heart* of the *Father* through the *blood* of the Son? Have you looked upon it as the *price of his life*, and the purchaſe of his blood? Or have you general thoughts that Chriſt dyed for ſinners? and that on one account or other forgiveneſs relates unto him, but are ſtrangers to the myſterie of this great work. Suppoſe this alſo; Let us go a little further and enquire whether you know any thing that yet remains of the like importance in this matter? *Forgiveneſs* as we have ſhewed, is manifeſted, tendred, exhibited in the *Covenant of Grace* and Promiſes of the Goſpel. The *Rule* of the *Efficacy* of theſe is, that they be *mixed with faith*, Heb. 4. 2. It is well if you are grown up hereunto; but you that are ſtrangers to the things before mentioned, are no leſs to *this* alſo. Upon the matter you know not then *what forgiveneſs* is, nor *wherein it* conſiſts, nor *whence* it comes, nor how it is *procured*, nor by what means *given* out unto ſinners. It is to no purpoſe for ſuch perſons to pretend that they believe that whereunto either *notionally*, or *practically*, or both, they are ſuch utter ſtrangers.

6. Ano-

6. Another Enquiry into this matter regards the *State and Condition wherein ſouls muſt be*, before it be poſſible for them to believe forgiveneſs. If there be *ſuch an Eſtate* and it can be evinced that very many of the *pretenders* concerning whom we deal, were never *brought into it*, it is then evident that they neither do nor can believe forgiveneſs, however they do and may delude their own ſouls.

It hath been ſhewed that the firſt diſcovery that was made of pardoning Grace was unto *Adam*, preſently after the *fall*. What was then his State and Condition? How was he prepared for the reception of this great myſterie in its firſt diſcovery? that ſeems to be a conſiderable Rule of proceeding in the ſame matter. That which is *firſt* in any kind, is a Rule to all that follows. Now what was *Adams* condition when the Revelation of forgiveneſs was firſt made to him? it is known from the Story; *convinced* of ſin, *afraid* of puniſhment, he lay *trembling* at the foot of God. Then was forgiveneſs revealed unto him; So the *Pſalmiſt* ſtates it, Pſalm 130. v. 3. *If thou Lord ſhouldſt mark iniquity, O Lord who ſhall ſtand?* Full of thoughts he is of the deſert of ſin, and of inevitable and eternal ruine, in caſe God ſhould deal with him according to the Exigence of the Law. In that ſtate is the great ſupport of *Forgiveneſs with God*, ſuggeſted unto him by the Holy Ghoſt. We know what work our Saviour had with the *Phariſees* on this account. *Are we*, ſay they, *blind alſo?* No, ſaith he, you ſay, *you ſee, therefore your ſin remaineth*, John 9. 40, 41. It is to no purpoſe to talk of forgiveneſs to ſuch perſons as you are, you muſt of neceſſity abide in your ſins. I came not to call ſuch *righteous perſons* as you are, but *ſinners to Repentance*, who not only *are ſo*, as you are alſo, and that to the purpoſe, but are *ſenſible* of their being ſo, and of their undone condition thereby. *The whole have no need of the Phyſitian, but the ſick.* Whilſt you are *ſeeming Righteous* and *whole*, it is to no *End* to tell you of *forgiveneſs*, you cannot underſtand it, nor receive it. It is impoſſible then that any one ſhould in a due manner believe *forgiveneſs in God*, unleſs in a due manner he be convinced of *ſin in himſelf*. If the *fallow ground* be not broken up, it is to no purpoſe to ſow the ſeed of the Goſpel. There is neither Life, Power, nor ſweetneſs

in this Truth, unleſs a door be opened for its Entrance by Conviction of ſin.

Let us then on this ground alſo, continue our Enquiry upon the ordinary boaſters of their *skill* in this myſtery. You believe there is forgiveneſs with God; *Yes*; but have you been convinced of ſin? *Yes*; *you know that you are ſinners well enough.* Anſwer then but once more as to the *nature of this conviction* of ſin, which you ſay you have; Is it not made up of theſe two ingredients. (1.) *A general notion that you are ſinners* as all men alſo are. (2.) *Particular troubleſome reflections upon your ſelves*, when on any eruption of ſin, Conſcience accuſes, rebukes, condemns? You will ſay, *Yes, what would you require more?* This is not the *Conviction* we are enquiring after; That is a work of the *Spirit* by the Word; this you ſpeak of, a meer *Natural work*, which you can no more be without than you can ceaſe to be men. This will give no Aſſiſtance unto the receiving of forgiveneſs. But it may be you will ſay, *you have proceeded farther than ſo*; *and theſe things have had an improvement in you.* Let us then a little try whether your *proceſs* have been according to the mind of God. And ſo whether this *invincible barr* in your way be removed or no. For although every convinced perſon do not believe forgiveneſs; yet no one *who is not convined* doth ſo. Have you then been made *ſenſible* of your condition by *Nature*; what it is to be *alienated from the life of God*, and to be obnoxious to his wrath? Have you been convinced of the *Univerſal Enmity* that is in your hearts to the mind of God; and what it is to be at *Enmity* againſt God? Hath the unſpeakable *multitude* of the ſins of your lives been ſet in order by the Law before you? And have you conſidered what it is for ſinners, *ſuch ſinners* as you are, to have to deal with a Righteous and a holy God? Hath the Holy Ghoſt wrought a ſerious Recognition in your hearts of all theſe things, and cauſed them to abide with you and upon you? If you will anſwer truly, you muſt ſay, many of you, that indeed *you have not been ſo exerciſed.* You have heard of theſe things many times, but to ſay that you have gone through with this work, and have had *Experience* of them, that you cannot do. Then I ſay you are *ſtrangers* to forgiveneſs, becauſe you are ſtrangers unto ſin: But and if you

you ſhall ſay that you have *had thoughts to this purpoſe*; and are perſwaded that you have been throughly convinced of ſin, I ſhall yet ask you *one Queſtion* more; What Effects hath your *Conviction* produced in your hearts and lives? Have you been filled with perplexities and conſternation of Spirit thereupon? Have you had *fears, dreads* or terrors to wreſtle withall? It may be you will ſay, *No*; Nor will I inſiſt upon that enquiry; but this I deal with you in. Hath it filled you with *ſelf-loathing* and abhorrency, with ſelf-condemnation, and abaſement? If it will do any thing this it will do. If you come ſhort here, it is juſtly to be feared that all your other pretences are of no value; Now where there is no *work of conviction*, there is no *faith of forgiveneſs*, whatever is pretended. And how many vain boaſters this Sword will cut off, is evident.

7. We have yet a greater evidence than all theſe. *Men live in ſin, and therefore they do not believe forgiveneſs of ſin.* Faith in general *purifies the heart*, Acts 15. 19. Our ſouls are purified *in obeying the Truth*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. and the life is made fruitful by it, James 2. 22. *Faith worketh by works*, and makes it ſelf perfect by them. And the Doctrine concerning forgiveneſs hath a ſpecial influence into *all Holineſs*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. *The Grace of God which bringeth ſalvation, teacheth us to deny all unrighteouſneſs and worldly luſts, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.* And that is the *Grace* whereof we ſpeak. No man can then *believe forgiveneſs of ſin*, without a deteſtation and relinquiſhment of it. The ground of this might be farther manifeſted, and the way of the Efficacy of *faith of forgiveneſs* unto a forſaking of ſin, if need were. But all that own the Goſpel muſt acknowledge this principle. The real *belief* of the pardon of ſin, is prevalent with men *not to live* longer in ſin.

But now what are the *greateſt number* of thoſe who pretend to receive this Truth? Are their hearts purified by it? Are their conſciences purged? Are their lives changed? Do they deny all ungodlineſs and worldly luſts? Doth forgiveneſs teach them ſo to do? Have they found it effectual to theſe purpoſes? Whence is it then that there is ſuch a bleating and bellowing to the contrary amongſt them?

Some

Some of you are *Drunkards*, ſome of you *Swearers*, ſome of you unclean *perſons*, ſome of you *lyars*, ſome of you *worldly*, ſome of you *haters* of all the wayes of Chriſt, and all his concernments upon the Earth; proud, covetous, boaſters, ſelf-ſeekers, envious, wrathful, backbiters, malitious praters, ſlanderers, and the like. And ſhall we think that ſuch as theſe *believe forgiveneſs of ſin?* God forbid. Again, Some of you are dark, ignorant, blind, utterly unacquainted with the myſterie of the Goſpel, nor do at all make it your buſineſs to enquire into it. Either you hear it not at all, or negligently, ſlothfully, cuſtomarily, to no purpoſe. Let not ſuch perſons deceive their own ſouls: to live in ſin and yet to believe the forgiveneſs of ſin, is utterly impoſſible. Chriſt will not be a Miniſter of ſin, nor give his Goſpel to be a Doctrine of *licenciouſneſs* for your ſakes. Nor ſhall you be *forgiven* that you may be delivered to do more Abominations. God forbid.

If any ſhall ſay, that they thank God, they are no ſuch *Publicans* as thoſe mentioned; they are no *drunkards*, no *ſwearers*, no *unclean perſons*, nor the like, ſo that they are not concerned in this conſideration. Their lives and their duties give another account of them: then yet conſider further,

That the *Phariſees* were all that you ſay of your ſelves; and yet the *greateſt deſpiſers* of *forgiveneſs* that ever were in the world, and that becauſe they *hated the light*, on this account, *that their deeds were evil*. And for your *duties* you mention, what I pray is the root and ſpring of them? are they influenced from this *Faith of forgiveneſs* you boaſt of or no? May it not be feared that it is utterly otherwiſe? you do not perform them becauſe you *love the Goſpel*, but becauſe you *fear the Law*. If the truth were known, I doubt it would appear, that you get nothing by your *believing of pardon*, but an encouragement unto ſin. Your *Goodneſs* ſuch as it is, ſprings from another root. It may be alſo that you ward your ſelves by it againſt the *ſtrokes of Conſcience*, or the guilt of particular ſins, this is as bad as the other. It is as good be encouraged unto ſin, to *commit it*, as be encouraged under ſin, ſo as to be kept from *humiliation* for it. None under Heaven are more remote from the belief of Grace and Pardon, than ſuch perſons are: All their *Righteouſneſs* is from the *Law*, and their *Sin* in a great meaſure from the *Goſpel*.

8. They

8. They that believe *forgiveneſs* in a due manner, believe it for the Ends and Purpoſes for which it is revealed of God. This will further improve and carry on the former conſideration. If God reveals any thing for *one end* and purpoſe, and men uſe it quite unto another; they do not receive the Word of God, nor believe the thing revealed, but *ſteal* the Word and delude their own ſouls.

Let us then weigh to what *Ends* and purpoſes this *forgiveneſs* was firſt revealed by God; for which alſo its manifeſtation is ſtill continued in the Goſpel. We have ſhewed before *who* it was to whom this *Revelation* was firſt made, and what condition he was in when it was ſo made unto him. A loſt, wretched Creature, without hope or help he was; how he ſhould come to obtain *Acceptance* with God, he knew not. God reveals forgiveneſs unto him by Chriſt to *be his All*. The intention of God in it was, that a *Sinners All ſhould be of Grace*, Rom. 11. 6. If any thing be added unto it for the ſame End and purpoſe, then *Grace is no more Grace*. Again, God intended it as a new Foundation of Obedience, of Love and Thankfulneſs. That men ſhould Love becauſe Forgiven, and be *Holy* becauſe *Pardoned*; as I have ſhewed before, that it might be the *Righteouſneſs* of a Sinner, and a *ſpring* of new Obedience in him, all to the praiſe of Grace, were Gods Ends in its Revelation.

Our Enquiry then is, whether men do receive this Revelation as unto *theſe Ends*, and uſe it for theſe purpoſes, and theſe only. I might evince the contrary, by paſſing through the *General abuſes* of the Doctrine of Grace, which are mentioned in the Scripture, and common in the world; but it will not be needfull. Inſtead of *Believing*, the moſt of men ſeem to put a *ſtudyed deſpight* on the Goſpel. They either proclaim it to be an *unholy* and *polluted way*, by turning its grace into Laſciviouſneſs, or a *weak and inſufficient* way, by ſtriving to twiſt it in with their own Righteouſneſs, both which are an Abomination unto the Lord.

From theſe and ſuch other Conſiderations of the like importance as might be added, it is evident that our Word is not in vain; nor the *Exhortation* which is to be built upon it. It appears, that notwithſtanding the *great noyſe* and pretences

to

to this purpoſe that are in the World, they are but few who ſeriouſly receive this *fundamental truth* of the Goſpel; Namely, *that there is forgiveneſs with God.* Poor Creatures *ſport themſelves with their own deceivings*, and periſh by their own deluſions.

Exhortation unto the Belief of the Forgiveneſs that is with God. Reaſons for it, and the Neceſſity of it.

Exhortations unto Believing.

We ſhall now proceed unto the *direct uſes* of this great Truth. For having laid our *foundation* in the Word that will not fail, and having given as we hope, ſufficient *Evidence* unto the *truth* of it, our laſt work is to make that *improvement* of it unto the Good of the Souls of men, which all along was aimed at. The *perſons* concerned in this *Truth* are all *Sinners* whatever. *No ſort* of ſinners are *unconcerned* in it, none are *excluded* from it. And we may caſt them all under *Two* heads.

Firſt, Such as never yet *ſincerely cloſed with the promiſe of Grace*; Nor have ever yet received *forgiveneſs* from God, in a way of believing. Theſe we have already endeavoured to *undeceive*; and to diſcover thoſe *falſe preſumptions* whereby they are apt to ruine and deſtroy their own ſouls. Theſe we would *guide* now into ſafe and *pleaſant paths*, wherein they may find aſſured Reſt and Peace.

Secondly, Others there are, who have received it, but being *again entangled by ſin*, or *clouded* by darkneſs and temptations, or *weakned* by unbelief, know not how to improve it to their Peace and Comfort. This is the condition of the *ſoul* repreſented in this *Pſalm:* And which we ſhall therefore apply our ſelves unto in an eſpecial manner, in its proper place.

Our *Exhortation* then is unto *both*; to the *firſt*, that they would receive it, *that they may have life*, to the *latter*, that they would *improve it*, that they may have *peace*. To the *former* that they would not overlook, diſregard, or neglect *ſo great ſalvation* as is tendred unto them; to the *latter*, that they would *ſtir up the Grace of God that is in them*, to mix with the *Grace of God* that is *declared unto them.*

I ſhall begin with the *firſt ſort*, thoſe who are yet *utter ſtrangers*

ſtrangers from the Covenant of Grace? who never yet upon ſaving grounds believed *this forgiveneſs*; who never yet once taſted of *Goſpel Pardon. Poor ſinners!* this word is unto you.

Be it, that you have heard or read the *ſame word* before, or others like unto it, to the ſame purpoſe: It may be often, it may be an hundred times. It is your concernment to *hear it again.* God would have it ſo; The *Teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt* is thus to be accompliſhed. This *Counſel of God we muſt declare* that we may be free from the blood of all men, *Act* 20. 26, 27. And that not once or twice, but in *preaching the Word*, we muſt be *inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon, reproving, rebuking, exhorting, with all long-ſuffering and doctrine*, 2 Tim. 4. 2. And for you, *wo unto you*, when God leaves *thus ſpeaking unto you*; when he refuſeth to *Exhort* you any more, *wo unto you.* This is *Gods departure* from any perſon or people, when he will deal with them no more about *forgiveneſs*; and ſaith he, *Wo unto them when I depart from them*, Hoſ. 9. 12. O that God therefore would give unto ſuch *perſons, ſeeing Eyes, and hearing Ears*, that the word of Grace may never more be ſpoken unto them in vain. Now in our *Exhortation* to ſuch perſons, we ſhall proceed *gradually*, according as the matter will bear, and the nature of it doth require. Conſider therefore,

1. That *notwithſtanding all your ſins*, all the evil that your own hearts know you to be guilty of, and that *hidden Maſs* or *evil treaſure of ſin* which is in you, which you are not able to look into; notwithſtanding that charge that lyes upon you from your own *Conſciences*, and that dreadful ſentence and curſe of the *Law* which you are obnoxious unto; notwithſtanding all the juſt grounds that you have to apprehend that *God is your Enemy*, and will be ſo unto eternity; yet there are *Terms of Peace* and Reconciliation, provided and propoſed between him and your ſouls. This in the firſt place is ſpoken out by the *Word* we have inſiſted on. Whatever elſe it informs us of, this it *poſitively* aſſerts; namely, *that there is a way* whereby ſinners may come to be accepted with God: For *there is forgiveneſs with him that he may be feared.* And we hope that we have not confirmed it by *ſo many Teſtimonies*, by *ſo many Evidences* in vain. Now that you may ſee how great

a *priviledge* this is, and how much your concernment lyes in it; Conſider,

1. That *this belongs unto you in an eſpecial manner*, it is your peculiar advantage.

It is not ſo with the *Angels that ſinned*. There were never any *terms of peace or Reconciliation* propoſed unto them, nor ever ſhall be unto Eternity. There is no *way of eſcape* provided for them. Having *once ſinned*, as you have done a thouſand times, *God ſpared them not*, but caſt them down to Hell, and delivered them unto *Chains of darkneſs*, to be reſerved unto Judgement, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4.

It is not ſo with *them that are dead in their ſins*, if but *one moment paſt*. Ah how would many ſouls who are departed it may be not *an hour ſince* out of this world rejoyce for an intereſt in this priviledge, the *hearing of Terms of peace* once more between God and them. But their time is paſt, their houſe is left unto them deſolate. As the *tree falleth*, ſo it muſt lye: *It is appointed unto all men once to dye, and after that is the Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. After death there are *no terms of peace*, nothing but Judgement. The *Living*, the living, he alone is capable of this Advantage.

It is not ſo with *them to whom the Goſpel is not preached*. God ſuffers them *to walk in their own wayes*, and calls them not *thus* to repentance. The *Terms of reconciliation* which ſome *fancy* to be offered in the *ſhining of the Sun*, and *falling of the rain*, never brought ſouls to peace with God. *Life and Immortality* are brought to light only by the Goſpel. This is *your priviledge* who yet *live*, and yet have the *Word* ſounding in your Ears.

It is not *thus* with *them who have ſinned againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, though yet *alive*, and living where the *word* of forgiveneſs is preached. God propoſeth unto them *no terms of Reconciliation*. *Blaſphemy againſt him*, ſaith Chriſt, *ſhall not be forgiven*, Matth. 12. 31. There is *no forgiveneſs* for ſuch ſinners. And we, if we knew them, ought not *to pray for them*, 1 John 5. 16. Their *ſin is unto death*. And what numbers may be in this Condition God knows.

This *Word* then is unto *you*; Theſe *terms of peace* are propoſed unto you. This is that which in an eſpecial manner *you*

you are to apply your ſelves unto. And wo unto you, if you ſhould be found to have neglected it at the laſt day. Wherefore conſider,

2. *By whom theſe terms are propoſed unto you*, and by whom they were procured for you. *By whom are they propoſed?* Who ſhall undertake to *umpire the buſineſs*, the controverſie between God and Sinners? No creature doubtleſs is either meet or worthy to interpoſe in this matter. I mean *originally* on his own account. For *who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſeller?* Wherefore it is *God himſelf* who propoſeth theſe terms; and not only propoſeth them, but *invites*, *exhorts*, and perſwades you to accept of them. This the whole *Scriptures* teſtifie unto. It is fully expreſſed, 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, 19, 20. He hath *provided* them, he hath *propoſed* them, and makes uſe only of *men*, of *Miniſters* to act in his Name. And excuſe us if we are a little earneſt with you in this matter. Alas, our utmoſt that we can by *zeal* for his glory, or *compaſſion* unto your Souls, raiſe our thoughts, minds, ſpirits, words unto, comes infinitely ſhort of his own *preſſing earneſtneſs* herein. See *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Oh infinite condeſcention!* O bleſſed Grace! Who is this that thus beſpeaks you? He, *againſt whom you have ſinned*, of whom you are juſtly afraid. He whoſe *Laws* you have broken, and whoſe *Name* you have diſhonoured; He who *needs not you*, nor your Love, nor your Friendſhip, nor your Salvation. It is *He* who propoſeth unto you theſe terms of Reconciliation and Peace. Conſider the Exhortation of the Apoſtle upon this conſideration, Heb. 12. 25. *See that you refuſe not him that ſpeaketh from Heaven. It is God* that ſpeaks unto you in this matter: And he ſpeaks unto you *from Heaven*. And he doth therein forego all the *Advantage* that he hath againſt you for your deſtruction. *Wo* would be unto your ſouls, and that for ever, if you ſhould refuſe him.

3. *By whom* were theſe *Terms* procured for you? and by what means? Do not think that this matter was brought about by Chance, or by an ordinary undertaking. Remember that the propoſal made unto you this *day* coſt no leſs than the price of the *blood of the Son of God*. It is the fruit of the *travail of his ſoul*. For this he *prayed*, he *wept*, he ſuffered, he

dyed. And ſhall it now be neglected or deſpiſed by you? Will you yet account the *blood* of the *Covenant to be a common thing?* Will you exclude your ſelves from all benefit of the *purchaſe of theſe terms*, and only leave your ſouls to anſwer for the *Contempt of the price* whereby they were purchaſed?

4. Conſider, *that you are ſinners*, great ſinners, curſed ſinners; Some of you it may be, worſe than innumerable of your *fellow ſinners were*, who are now in Hell. God might long ſince have caſt you off everlaſtingly, from all expectation of mercy, and have cauſed all your *hopes* to periſh. Or he might have left you *alive*, and yet have refuſed to deal with you any more. He could have cauſed your Sun to go down at Noon-day, and have given you Darkneſs inſtead of Viſion. He could *reſpite your lives* for a ſeaſon, and yet *ſwear in his wrath*, that you ſhould never enter into his reſt. It is now otherwiſe. How *long* it may be ſo, nor you, nor I know any thing at all. *God only knows* what will be your time, what your continuance. We are to ſpeak *whileſt it is called to day*. And this is that for the preſent which I have to offer unto you. God declares that there *is forgiveneſs with him*; that your condition is not deſperate nor helpleſs. There are yet *terms of Peace* propoſed unto you. Methinks it cannot but ſeem ſtrange, that *poor ſinners* ſhould not at the leaſt ſtir up themſelves to enquire after them. When a poor man had ſold *himſelf* of old, and his *Children* to be ſervants, and parted with the *land of his Inheritance* unto another becauſe of his poverty; with what heart do you think did he hear the *ſound of the Trumpet*, when it began to proclaim the *Year of Jubilee*, wherein he and all his were to go out at liberty, and to return unto his poſſeſſion and Inheritance? And ſhall not *poor ſervants of ſin*, ſlaves unto Satan, that have forfeited all their Inheritance in this world, and that which is to come, attend unto any *Proclamation* of the year of Reſt, of the acceptable year of the Lord? And this is done in the tender of terms of Peace with God in this matter. Do not put it off; this thing belongs unto you; The great concernment of your ſouls lyes in it. And it is a great matter; for conſider,

5. That when the *Angels* came to bring the news of the Birth of our *Lord Jeſus*, they ſay, We bring *tydings of great joy*

joy to the whole people, Luke 2. 10. What are *theſe joyful tydings?* What was the *matter* of this report? Why, *this day is born a Saviour, Chriſt the Lord*, v. 11. It is only this; *a Saviour is born*; *a way of eſcape* is provided, and further they do not proceed. Yet this they ſay *is a matter of great joy*, as it was indeed. It is ſo to every burdned *convinced ſinner*, a matter of unſpeakable joy and rejoycing. Oh bleſſed words! *a Saviour is born*. This gives life to a ſinner, and opens *a door of hope in the valley of Achor*. The firſt reſcue of a ſin diſtreſſed ſoul. Upon the matter, it was all that the *Saints* for many Ages had to live upon; and that not in the *enjoyment*, but only the expectation. They lived on that word, *the ſeed of the Woman ſhall break the Serpents head*; that is, a *way of deliverance is provided* for ſinners. This with all *diligence they enquired into*, 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11, 12. and improved it to their eternal advantage. As of *old*, *Jacob* when he ſaw the *Waggons* that his *Son Joſeph* had ſent to bring him unto him, it is ſaid *his ſpirit revived*: So did they upon their *obſcure diſcovery of a way of forgiveneſs*. They looked upon the *Promiſe* of it as that which God had ſent to bring them unto him; and they ſaw the *day* of the coming of Chriſt in it, and rejoyced. How much more have ſinners now reaſon ſo to do, when the *ſubſtance of the promiſe* is exhibited, and the news of his Comeing proclaimed unto them. This then is a *great matter*; namely, that *terms of Peace* and Reconciliation are propoſed; in that it is made known, *that there is forgiveneſs with God*. Upon theſe Conſiderations then we purſue that *Exhortation* which we have in hand.

If any of you were juſtly condemned to a *cruel and ſhamefull death*, and lay trembling in the expectation of the execution of it, and a man deſigned for that purpoſe ſhould come unto him, and tell him that *there were terms propounded* on which his life might be ſpared, only he came away like *Ahimaaz* before he heard the particulars; would it not be a *reviving* unto him? would he not cry out, *Pray enquire what they are*, for there is not any thing ſo difficult which I will not undergoe to free my ſelf from this miſerable condition: Would it not change the whole frame of the ſpirit of ſuch a man, and as it were *put new life* into him? but now if inſtead

instead hereof, he should be froward, stubborn and obstinate, take no notice of the Messenger, or say, *Let the Judge keep his terms to himself*, without inquiring what they are; that he would have nothing to do with them; would not such a person be deemed to *perish deservedly?* doth he not bring a double destruction upon himself; first of deserving death by his *crimes*, and then by refusing the *honest* and good way of delivery tendred unto him? I confess it often times falls out, that men may come to enquire after these *terms of Peace*, which when they are revealed, they like them not, but with the *young man in the Gospel* they go away sorrowfull. The cursed wickedness and misery of which Condition, which befalls many *convinced persons*, shall be spoken unto afterwards. At present I speak unto them who never yet *attended in sincerity* unto these terms, nor seriously enquired after them. Think you what you please of your Condition, and of your selves; or choose whether you will think of it or no, pass your time in a *full regardlesness*, of your present and future Estate. Yet indeed thus it is with you, as to your eternal concerns; you lye under *the sentence of a bitter, shamefull, and everlasting death*; you have done so in the midst of all your *jollity*, ever since you came into this world: And you are in the *hand of him*, who can in the twinkling of an eye destroy both *body and soul* in Hell fire. In this state and condition, men are sent on purpose, to let you know that there *are terms of Peace*, there is yet a way of escape for you: And that you may not avoid the issue aimed at, they tell you, that *God that cannot lye*, hath commanded them to tell you so; if you *question* the truth of what they say, they are ready to produce their *warrant* under Gods own hand and seal; here then is no room for tergiversation or excuses. Certainly, if you have any care of your *eternal estate*, if you have any drop of tender blood running in your veins towards your own souls, if you have any *rational considerations* dwelling in your minds, if all be not defaced and obliterated through the *power of lust*, and *love of sin*, you cannot but take your selves to be unspeakably concerned in this proposal; But now if instead hereof, you give up your selves unto the *power of unbelief*, the *will of Satan*, the *love* of your lusts, and this present world,

world, so as to take no notice of this errand or message from God, nor once seriously to enquire after the *nature and importance of the terms proposed*, Can you escape? shall you be delivered? will your latter end be peace? The Lord knows it will be otherwise with you, and that unto Eternity.

So the Apostle assures us: 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the Glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine into them.* If you *receive not* this Word, if it be *hid* from you, it is from the power and efficacy of *Satan* upon your minds: And what will be the end? Perish you must, and shall, and that for ever.

Remember the *Parable* of our Saviour, *Luke* 14. 31, 32. *What King, going to make warre against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with Ten Thousand to meet him that cometh against him with Twenty Thousand; or else while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an Ambassage and desireth conditions of Peace.* That which he teacheth in this *Parable* is, the necessity that lyes on us, of *making peace with God*, whom we have provoked, and justly made to be our Enemy; as also our *utter impotency* to resist and withstand him, when he shall come forth in a way of Judgment and Vengeance against us. But here lyes a *difference* in this matter, such as is allowed in all *similitudes*; Amongst men at variance, it is not his part who is the *stronger*, and secure of success, to send to the *weaker*, whom he hath in his power, to accept of terms of Peace. Here it is otherwise, God who is *infinitely powerfull*, justly provoked, and able to destroy poor sinners in a moment; when now he is not *very far off*, but at the *very door*, sends himself an *Ambassage* with Conditions of Peace. And shall he be refused by you? will you yet neglect his offers? How great then will be your destruction?

Hear then once more poor *sin-hardened senseless souls, ye stout-hearted*, that are far from Righteousness. Is it nothing unto you, that the *great and holy God* whom ye have provoked all your days, and whom you yet continue to provoke, who hath not the least *need of you* or your salvation, who can when he pleaseth eternally glorifie himself in your destruction,

on, ſhould of his *own accord* ſend unto you, to let you know that he is willing to *be at peace* with you, on the terms he had prepared? The *Enmity* began on your part, the *danger* is on your part only; and he might juſtly expect that the *meſſage for peace* ſhould begin on your part alſo; But he begins with you; and ſhall he be rejected? The Prophet well expreſſeth this, *Iſa.* 30. 15. *Thus ſaith the Lord God, the holy One of Iſrael, in returning and reſt ſhall ye be ſaved, in quietneſs and confidence ſhall be your ſtrength, and you would not.* The *Love* and Condeſcention that is in theſe words, on the *one hand*, on the part of God, and the *folly* and ingratitude mentioned in them on the other hand, is inexpreſſible. They are fearful words; *But you would not.* Remember this againſt another day. As our Saviour ſayes in the like manner to the *Jews*; *You will not come unto me, that ye may have life.* Whatever is pretended, it is *will* and *ſtubborneſs* that lye at the bottom of this refuſal.

Wherefore, that either *You may obtain Advantage* by it, or that the way of the Lord may be prepared for the Glorifying of himſelf upon you, I ſhall leave this word before all them that hear, or read it, as the *Teſtimony* which God requires to be given unto his Grace. There are *terms of peace with God* provided for you, and tendred unto you; It is yet *called to day*, harden not your hearts, like them of old, who could not *enter into the Reſt of God*, by reaſon of unbelief, *Heb.* 3. 19. *Some* of you, it may be, are *old in ſins*, and unacquainted with God; *ſome* of you, it may be, have been great ſinners, ſcandalous ſinners; and *ſome* of you, it may be, have reaſon to apprehend your ſelves neer the Grave, and ſo alſo to Hell; *ſome* of you, it may be, have your Conſciences diſquieted and galled; and it may be *ſome* of you are under ſome outward troubles, and Perplexities, that cauſe you a little to look about you; and *ſome* of you, it may be, are in the madneſs of your natural ſtrength and luſts; *your breaſts are full of milk, and your bones of marrow*, and your hearts of ſin, pride and contempt of the wayes of God; All is one; This word is *unto you all*; and I ſhall only mind you, That it is a *fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* You hear the voyce, or read the words of a *poor worm*, but the Meſſage is the *Meſſage*, and the Word is the *Word* of him who

who ſhaketh Heaven and Earth. Conſider then well what you have to do; and what anſwer you will return unto him who will not be mocked.

But you will ſay; Why, what great matter is there that you have in hand? why is it urged with ſo much *earneſtneſs?* We have heard the ſame words *an hundred times over.* The laſt Lords day, *ſuch a one*, or *ſuch a one* preached to the ſame purpoſe; And what need it be inſiſted on now again, with ſo much importunity?

But is it ſo indeed; that you have thus frequently been dealt withall, and do yet continue in an Eſtate of *irreconciliation*; *my heart is pained for you*, to think of your wofull and almoſt remedileſs condition. If he that *being often reproved, and yet ſtiffeneth his neck, ſhall periſh ſuddenly, and that without remedy, Prov.* 29. 1. how much more will he do ſo, who being often *invited unto Peace with God*, yet *hardeneth his heart*, and refuſeth to treat with him? Methinks I hear his voyce concerning you; *Thoſe mine enemies, they ſhall not taſte of the Supper that I have prepared.* Be it then that the word in hand is a *common word* unto you, you ſet no value upon it; then take your way and courſe in ſin; *ſtumble*, fall, and periſh; It is not ſo ſlight a matter to poor *convinced ſinners*, that tremble at the Word of God. Theſe will *prize it*, and improve it. We ſhall follow then that *counſel*, Prov. 31. 6. *Give ſtrong drink unto him that is ready to periſh, and wine to thoſe that be of an heavy heart.* We ſhall tender this *New Wine of the Goſpel* to poor ſad hearted, conſcience diſtreſſed ſinners; ſinners that are ready to periſh; to them it will be pleaſant, they will *drink of it*, and *forget their poverty*, and remember their miſery no more. It ſhall take away all their ſorrow and ſadneſs; when you ſhall be *drunk with the fruit of your luſts*, and ſpue, and lie down and not riſe again.

But now if any of you ſhall begin to ſay in your hearts, that *you would willingly treat with God*; Oh that the day were come wherein we might approach unto him! let him ſpeak what he pleaſeth, and propoſe *what terms* he pleaſeth, we are ready to hear. Then conſider,

Secondly, That *the Terms* provided for you, and propoſed unto you, are *equal, holy, righteous*, yea *pleaſant*, and *eaſie.*

This being another General Head of our work in hand, before I proceed to the further explication and confirmation of it, I ſhall *educe* one or two *Obſervations* from what hath been delivered on the firſt. As,

1. See here on what *foundation* we preach the Goſpel. Many diſputes there are, whether *Chriſt died for all individuals of Mankinde or no*; if we ſay No, but only for the *Elect* who are *ſome of all ſorts*; ſome then tell us, we cannot invite all men promiſcuouſly to believe. But why ſo; we invite not men, as *all men*; no man, as *one of all men*, but all men *as Sinners*: And we know that *Chriſt died for Sinners*. But is this the firſt thing, that we are in the diſpenſation of the *Goſpel* to propoſe to the Soul of a ſinner, under the *Law*; That *Chriſt dyed for him in particular?* Is that the *beginning of our Meſſage* unto him? were not this a ready way to induce him to conclude, Let me then continue in ſin that Grace may abound; No; but this is in *order of Nature* our firſt work; even that which we have had in hand. This is the beginning of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. This is the *voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord.* There is a *way of Reconciliation provided.* God is in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf. There is a way of acceptance; there is Forgiveneſs with him to be obtained. At this *Threſhold of the Lords houſe*, doth the greateſt part of men to whom the Goſpel is preached fall and periſh, never looking in to ſee the *Treaſures* that are in the houſe it ſelf, never coming into any ſuch ſtate and condition, wherein they have any ground or bottom to enquire, *whether Chriſt dyed for them in particular or no.* They believe not *this report*, nor take any ſerious notice of it. This was the Miniſtry of the *Baptiſt*, and they who received it not, rejected the *counſel of God concerning their ſalvation*, *Luke* 7. 10. And ſo periſhed in their ſins. This is the ſumme of the bleſſed *invitation* given by Wiſdom, *Prov.* 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. And here men ſtumble, fall, and periſh, Prov. 1. 29, 30.

2. You that have found grace and favour to *accept of theſe terms*, and thereby to obtain peace with God; Learn to live in an holy Admiration of his *condeſcenſion* and love therein. That he would *provide* ſuch terms; That he would *reveal* them unto you; that he would *enable* you to receive them. Unſpeakable Love and Grace lyes in it all. Many have not theſe terms revealed unto them; few find favour to accept of them; and of whom is it that you have obtained this peculiar mercy?

Do you aright conſider the Nature of this matter? The Scripture propoſeth it as an object of eternal admiration, *So God loved the World*; *herein is love*, not that we loved God, but he loved us firſt. Live in this Admiration, and do your utmoſt in your ſeveral capacities to prevail with your Friends, Relations, Acquaintance, to hearken after this great treaty of peace with God, whoſe terms we ſhall nextly conſider, as before in *generall* they were expreſſed.

Terms of Peace with God, Equal and Holy.

2. The terms provided for you, and propoſed unto you, are *equal*, *holy*, *righteous*, yea *pleaſant* and *eaſie*, *Hoſ.* 2. 18, 19. They are not ſuch, as a *curſed guilty ſinner* might juſtly expect, but ſuch as are meet for an infinitely *Good* and *Gracious God* to propoſe; not ſuited to the *Wiſdom of man*, but full of the wiſdom of God, 2 *Cor.* 2. 6, 7. The poor *convinced wretch*, thinking of dealing with God, *Micah* 6. 6, 7. rolls in his mind what terms he is like to meet withall; and fixes on the moſt *dreadfull*, *difficult*, and impoſſible that can be imagined. If, ſaith he, any thing be done with this Great and moſt high God, it muſt be by *Rivers*, *Thouſands*, and *ten Thouſands*, *Children*, *firſt born*; whatever is *dreadfull* and terrible to Nature, whatever is *impoſſible* for me to perform, that is it which he *looks for*. But the matter is quite otherwiſe. The terms are wholly of *another* nature; it is a way of *meer mercy*, a way of free forgiveneſs. The Apoſtle lays it down, *Rom.* 3. 23, 24, 25. it is a way of *propitiation*, of *pardon*, of *forgiveneſs* in the blood of Chriſt; the Terms are the *Acceptance of the forgiveneſs* that we have deſcribed. Who would not think now that the *whole world* would run in to be made partakers of theſe terms, willingly accepting of them. But it proves for the moſt part quite otherwiſe. Men *like not this way* of all others. It had been ſomething, ſays *Naaman*, if the *Prophet* had come and done ſo and ſo; but this, *Go*, *waſh and be clean*, I do not like it, I am but deluded. Men think within themſelves,

ſelves, that had it been *ſome great thing* that was required of them that they might be ſaved, they would with all ſpeed addreſs themſelves thereunto; but to come *to God by Chriſt*, to be freely forgiven without more ado, they like it not. Some *rigid auſtere penances*, ſome *compenſatory obedience*, ſome *ſatisfactory mortification*, or Purgatory, had been a more likely way. This of *meer pardon* in and by the Croſs, it is but *folly*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 18. 20. I had rather, ſaith the *few*, have *it as it were by the works of the Law*, Rom. 9. 32. and *Chap.* 10. 3. This way of Grace and Forgiveneſs, I like not. So *ſay* others alſo. So practice others every day; either this way is wholly *rejected*, or it is mended by ſome additions; which with God, is all one with the rejection of it.

Here multitudes of ſouls deceive themſelves and periſh. I know not whether be more difficult, to perſwade an *unconvinced perſon* to think of *any terms*, or a *convinced perſon* to *accept of theſe*. Let men ſay what they will, and pretend what they pleaſe; yet *practically* they *like not this way* of Forgiveneſs. I ſhall therefore offer ſome ſubſervient Conſiderations, tending to the furtherance of your Souls, in the Acceptance of the Terms propoſed.

1. This is the way, theſe are Terms of *Gods own chooſing*; He *found* out this way, he *eſtabliſhed* it himſelf. He did it when all was loſt, and undone: He did it not upon our deſire, requeſt or propoſal, but meerly of his *own Accord*, and why ſhould we contend with him about it? If God will have us ſaved in a *way of meer mercy* and forgiveneſs; If his Wiſdom and Soveraignty be in it, ſhall we oppoſe him, and ſay we like it not? Yet this is the language of unbelief, *Rom.* 10. 3, 4. Many poor Creatures have diſputed it with God, untill at length being over-powered as it were by the Spirit, have ſaid, If it muſt be ſo, and God will ſave us by *Mercy and Grace*, let it be ſo, we yield our ſelves to his will; and yet throughout their diſputes dreamed of nothing but that their own *unworthineſs* only kept them from cloſing with the Promiſe of the Goſpel.

Of this nature was that *way of Sathan* whereby he deceived our *firſt Parents* of their Intereſt in the *Covenant of works*; The *terms* of it, ſaith he, as apprehended by you, are unequal.

qual. *Yea, hath God ſaid ye ſhall eat of every Tree of the Garden, but of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, ye ſhall not eat, leſt ye dye*; come, you *ſhall not dye, for God doth know, in the day you eat thereof your eyes ſhall be opened.* There is no proportion between the *diſobedience* and the *threatning*. The *Iſſue* cannot be ſuch as is feared: And by theſe means he ruined them. Thus alſo he proceeds to deprive Souls of their *Intereſt* in the Covenant of Grace, whereunto they are invited. The *Terms* of it are *unequal*, how can any man believe them? There is no *proportion* between the *Obedience* and the *Promiſe*. To have pardon, forgiveneſs, life, and bleſſed Eternity on *believing*, who can reſt in it? And here lyes a conſpiracy between *Sathan* and *unbelief*, againſt the Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Love, Grace and Soveraignty of God. The *poyſon* of this deceit lyes in this, that neither the Righteouſneſs, nor the Mercy of God is of that *infiniteneſs*, as indeed they are. The Apoſtle to remove this fond imagination, calls us to the pleaſure of God, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27. *It pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching*, that is by the Goſpel preached, which they eſteemed fooliſhneſs, *to ſave Believers*. He ſuffered men indeed to *make tryal* of other wayes; and when their *inſufficiency* for the Ends men propoſed to themſelves was *ſufficiently* manifeſted, it pleaſed him to reveal his way. And what are we, that we ſhould contend about it with him? This Rejection of the *way of perſonal Righteouſneſs*, and chooſing the way of Grace and Forgiveneſs, God aſſerts, *Jerem.* 31. 31, 32, 33, 34. *Behold, the dayes come, ſaith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the houſe of* Iſrael *and the houſe of* Judah. *Not according to the Covenant which I made with their fathers*: (in which Adminiſtration of the Covenant as far as it had reſpect unto Typical mercies, *much* depended on their perſonal obedience,) *But this ſhall be the covenant that I will make with the houſe of* Iſrael, *after theſe dayes, ſaith the Lord,* —— *I will put my Laws*, &c. *and I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their ſins no more.* Let then this way ſtand, and the way of mans Wiſdom and ſelf Righteouſneſs periſh for ever.

2. This *is the way that above all others tends directly and immediately to the Glory of God.* God hath managed and ordered all things in this *way of forgiveneſs*, ſo as *no fleſh ſhould glory.*

glory in his preſence, but that he that glorieth ſhould glory in the Lord, 1 Cor. 1. 29. 31. *Where then is boaſting? it is excluded; by what Law? by the Law of Works; nay, but by the Law of Faith*, Rom. 3. 27. It might be eaſily manifeſted, that God hath ſo *laid the deſign* of ſaving Sinners by *Forgiveneſs according to the Law of Faith*, that it is utterly impoſſible that any Soul ſhould on any account whatever have the leaſt Ground of *Glorying* or *boaſting* in it ſelf, either abſolutely, or in compariſon with them that periſh. If *Abraham*, ſaith the ſame Apoſtle, *were juſtified by works, he had whereof to glory, but not before God*, Chap. 4. 2. The *Obedience of works* would have been ſo infinitely *diſproportionate* to the Reward, which was God himſelf, that there had been no glorying before God; but therein his Goodneſs and Grace muſt be acknowledged; yet in *compariſon with others* who yielded not the *Obedience required*, he would *have had wherein to glory*; But now this alſo is caſt off by the *way of forgiveneſs*, and no pretence is left for any to claim the leaſt ſhare in the *Glory* of it but God alone; and herein lyes the *excellency of Faith*, that it *gives glory unto God*, Rom. 4. 20. the denyal whereof under various pretences is the iſſue of *proud unbelief*. And this is that which God will bring all unto, or they ſhall periſh; Namely, that *ſhame be ours*, and the *whole Glory* of our ſalvation be his alone. So he expreſſeth his deſign, *Iſa.* 45. 22, 23, 24, 25. *v.* 22. he propoſeth himſelf as the *only relief* for Sinners; *Look unto me* (ſaith he) *and be ſaved, all ye ends of the Earth*; But what if men take ſome other courſe, and *look well to themſelves*, and ſo decline this way of meer Mercy and Grace? why ſaith he, *v.* 23. *I have ſworn by my ſelf, the Word is gone out of my mouth in Righteouſneſs, and ſhall not return, that unto me, every Knee ſhall bow, and every Tongue ſhall ſwear*. Look you unto that; but I have *ſworn* that you ſhall either do ſo, or anſwer your diſobedience at the day of Judgement; whereunto *Paul* applyes thoſe words, *Rom.* 14. 11. what do the Saints hereupon? *v.* 24, 25. *Surely ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I Righteouſneſs and ſtrength. In the Lord ſhall all the ſeed of Iſrael be juſtified, and ſhall glory*. They bring their hearts to accept of *all Righteouſneſs* from him, and to give *all Glory* unto him.

God at firſt placed Man in a bleſſed State and Condition, in

in ſuch a dependance on himſelf, as that he might have *wrought out* his Eternal happineſs with a great Reputation of Glory unto himſelf. *Man being* in this *honour*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *abode not*. God now fixes *on another way*, as I ſaid, wherein all *the Glory* ſhall be his own, as the Apoſtle at large ſets it forth, *Rom.* 3. 23, 24, 25, 26. Now neither the way from which *Adam* fell, nor that wherein ſome of the *Angels* continued, which for the ſubſtance were the ſame, is to be *compared* with this of *Forgiveneſs*, as to the bringing Glory unto God. I hate *curioſities* and *conjectures* in the things of God: Yet upon the account of the interpoſition of the *blood of Chriſt*, I think I may boldly ſay, there comes more glory to God, by ſaving *one ſinner* in this *way of Forgiveneſs*, than in giving the reward of bleſſedneſs to all the Angels in Heaven; So ſeems it to appear from that ſolemn Repreſentation, we have of the Aſcription of Glory to God by the whole Creation, *Revel.* 5. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. All centers in the bringing forth Forgiveneſs by the *blood of the Lamb*.

I inſiſt the more on this, becauſe it lyes ſo directly againſt that curſed Principle of *Unbelief*, which reigns in the hearts of the *moſt*, and often *diſquiets* the *beſt*. That a poor ungodly ſinner, going to God with the guilt of all his ſins upon him, to receive Forgiveneſs at his hand, doth bring more Glory unto him, than the *obedience of an Angel*, men are not over-ready to think, nor can be prepared for it, but by it ſelf. And the *formal nature* of that Unbelief which worketh in Convinced Sinners, lyes in a refuſal to give unto God the whole glory of Salvation. There are many *hurtfull Controverſies* in Religion that are managed in the World with great noyſe and clamour; but this is the *greateſt* and moſt pernicious of them all, and it is for the moſt part ſilently tranſacted in the ſouls of men; although under various forms and pretences. It hath alſo broken forth in *Writings* and Diſputations, that is, *Whether God or Man ſhall have the Glory of Salvation*; or whether it ſhall wholly be aſcribed unto God, or that man alſo on one account or other, may come in for a ſhare. Now if this be the ſtate and condition with any of you, that you will rather *periſh*, than God ſhould have his Glory, what ſhall we ſay, but *Go ye curſed ſouls*, periſh for ever, without the leaſt

leaſt compaſſion from God, or any that love him, Angels or Men.

If you ſhall ſay, for your parts you are contented with this courſe, let *God have the glory*, ſo you may be *forgiven and ſaved*; There is yet juſt cauſe to ſuſpect, leſt this be *a ſelfiſh contempt* of God. It is a *great thing to give glory unto God by believing*, in a due manner. Such ſlight returns ſeem not to have the leaſt relation unto it. Take heed that inſtead of *believing*, you be not found *mockers*, and ſo your bands be made ſtrong.

But a *poor convinced Sinner* may here finde encouragement; Thou wouldſt willingly come to Acceptance with God, and ſo attain Salvation; *Oh my ſoul longeth for it*; wouldſt thou willingly take that courſe for the obtaining thoſe ends which will bring moſt Glory unto God? *Surely it is meet and moſt equal that I ſhould do ſo*; What now if one ſhould come and tell thee from the Lord of a *way*, whereby thou poor, ſinfull, ſelf-condemned creature, mightſt bring as much Glory unto God, as any Angel in Heaven is able to doe? *Oh, if I might bring the leaſt glory unto God, I ſhould rejoyce in it.* Behold then the way which himſelf hath fixed on for the exaltation of his Glory: Even, that thou ſhouldſt come to him *meerly upon the account of Grace* in the blood of Chriſt, for pardon and forgiveneſs, and the Lord ſtrengthen thee to give up thy ſelf thereunto.

3. Conſider, *That if this way of ſalvation be refuſed, there is no other way for you.* We do not propoſe this *way of forgiveneſs* as the *beſt* and *moſt pleaſant*, but as the *only* way. There is *no other Name* given but that of Chriſt; no *other way* but this of Forgiveneſs. Here lies your choice; take this path, or periſh for ever. It is a ſhame indeed unto our *curſed nature* that there ſhould be any need to uſe this Argument, that we will neither ſubmit to *Gods Soveraignty*, nor *delight in his Glory*. But ſeeing it muſt be uſed, let it be ſo. I intend neither to *flatter men*, nor to *frighten* them; but to tell them the truth as it is. If you continue in your *preſent ſtate* and condition, if you reſt on *what you do*, or what *you hope to do*, if you ſupport your ſelves with general hopes of mercy, mixed with your own endeavours and obedience, if you come not up

up to a *through Goſpel-cloſure* with this way of God, if you make it not your *All*, giving Glory to God therein; periſh you will, and muſt, and that to Eternity. There remains *no more ſacrifice* for your ſins, nor *way of eſcape* for your Souls. You have not then only the *excellency* of this way to *invite* you, but the abſolute indiſpenſable *neceſſity* of this way to *enforce* you. And now let me adde, that I am glad this Word is ſpoken, is written unto you. You and I muſt one day be accountable for this diſcourſe. That word that hath already been ſpoken, if neglected, will prove a ſore Teſtimony againſt you. It will not fare with you, as with other men who have not heard the Joyfull ſound. All theſe words that ſhall be found *conſonant to the Goſpel*, if they are not turned to *Grace* in your hearts here, will turn into *Torment* unto your Souls hereafter. Chooſe not *any other way*, it will be in vain for you; it will not profit you; and take heed leſt you ſuppoſe you *Embrace this way*, when indeed you do not, about which I have given Caution before.

4. *This way is free and open for and unto ſinners.* He that fled to the *City of Refuge*, might well have many perplexed thoughts, whether he ſhould finde the *Gates* of it opened unto him or no, and whether the Avenger of blood might not overtake and ſlay him, whileſt he was calling for entrance. Or if the Gates were alwayes open, yet ſome crimes excluded men thence. *Numb.* 35. 24. It is not ſo here. *Acts.* 13. 38, 39.

This is the *voyce of God even the Father*; come ſaith he to the Marriage, for all things are prepared, no fear of want of entertainment, *Matth.* 22. 4. Whence the Preachers of the Goſpel are ſaid in *his ſtead* to beſeech men to be reconciled, 2 *Cor.* 5. 18. And

It is the *voyce of the Son*; *Whoſoever*, ſaith he, *cometh to God by me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, *John* 6. 37. Who ere he be *that comes* ſhall aſſuredly find entertainment; the ſame is his call and invitation in other places, as *Matth.* 11. 28. *John* 7. 37. and

This is the *voyce of the Spirit*, and of the Church, and of all Believers, *Revel.* 22. 17. *The Spirit and the Bride ſay, Come; and let him that heareth ſay, Come; and let him that is athirſt*

come, and whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely; All center in this, that ſinners may *come freely* to the Grace of the Goſpel. And

It is the *known voyce of the Goſpel* it ſelf, as *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2, 3. *Prov.* 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. And it is the voyce of all the Saints in Heaven and Earth, who have been made partakers of Forgiveneſs, they all teſtifie, that they received it *freely*.

Some indeed endeavour to abuſe this *concurrent Teſtimony* of God and Man. What is ſpoken of the *freedom of the Grace of God*, they would wreſt to the *power of the Will of man*: But the riches and *freedom of Gods mercy* do not in the leaſt enterfere with the *efficacy of his Grace*. Though he *proclaim pardon* in the blood of Chriſt indefinitely, according to the fulneſs and excellency of it, yet he *giveth out his quickening Grace* to enable men to receive it, as he pleaſeth, for he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy: But this lyes in the thing it ſelf, the *way is open* and prepared, and it is not becauſe men *cannot enter*, but becauſe they *will not*, that they do not enter. As our *Saviour Chriſt* tells the *Phariſees*, *Ye therefore hear not Gods Word, becauſe ye are not of God.* Joh. 8. 47. and Joh. 6. 44. So he doth, *Ye will not come unto me that you may have life*, Joh. 5. 40. In the neglect, and inadvertency of the moſt *excuſable*, there is a *poſitive Act* of their Will put forth in the refuſing of Chriſt and Grace by him. And this is done by men under the preaching of the Goſpel every day. There is nothing that at the laſt day will tend more immediately to the advancement of the *Glory of God*, in the inexcuſableneſs of them who obey not the Goſpel, than this, that *Terms of Peace* in the bleſſed way of Forgiveneſs were *freely* tendred unto them. Some that *hear* or *read* this Word, may perhaps have lived long under the diſpenſation of the Word of Grace, and yet it may be have never once *ſeriouſly pondered* on this way of comeing to God by Forgiveneſs through the blood of Chriſt; but think, that going to Heaven is a *thing of courſe*, that men need not much trouble themſelves about; do they know what they have done? hitherto all their dayes they have *poſitively refuſed* the ſalvation, that hath been freely tendred unto them in Jeſus Chriſt. Not they, they'l ſay, they never had *ſuch a thought*, nor would for all this World. But be it known unto you,

you, in as much as you have not *effectually received* him, you have *refuſed him*, and whether your day and ſeaſon be paſt or no, the Lord only knows.

5. *This Way is ſafe.* No ſoul ever miſcarried in it. There is none in *Heaven* but will ſay it is *a ſafe way*; There is none in *Hell* can ſay otherwiſe. It is ſafe to all that *venture* on it, ſo as to *enter* into it. In the *old way* we were to preſerve *our ſelves and the way*. This preſerves it ſelf and us; This will be made evident by the enſuing conſiderations.

1. This is the *Way which in the Wiſdom, Care, and Love of God in Chriſt, was provided in the room of another, removed and taken out of the way for this cauſe and reaſon, becauſe it was not ſafe*, nor could bring us unto God, *Heb.* 8. 7, 8. *For if the Firſt Covenant had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought for the Second*; *but finding fault with them*, he ſaith. And,

1. He tells us, that the *firſt Covenant was not faultleſs*, for if it had, there would have been no need of a *Second*. The Commandment indeed, which was the *matter* of that Covenant, the ſame Apoſtle informs us to be *holy*, *juſt*, and *good*, *Rom.* 7. 12. But it was *faulty* as to all ends of a Covenant, conſidering our ſtate and condition as ſinners; it could not bring us unto God. So he acqaints us *Rom.* 8. 3. *It was made weak through the fleſh*; that is, by the entrance of ſin, and ſo became *unuſefull* as to the ſaving of ſouls. Be it ſo then; through our ſin and default this good and holy Law, this Covenant was made *unprofitable* unto us; But what was that unto God? was he bound to deſert his *own Inſtitution* and Appointment, becauſe through our *own default* it ceaſed to be profitable unto us? Not at all; He might righteouſly have tyed us all unto the terms of that Covenant, to ſtand or fall by them unto Eternity. But he would not do ſo. But

Secondly, In his Love and Grace, he *findes fault with it*, v. 8. not in its *ſelf* and *abſolutely*, but only *ſo farre* as that he would provide *another way*, which ſhould ſupply all its defects and wants in reference to the end aimed at. What way that is, the Apoſtle declares in the following Verſes to the end of that Chapter. The ſumme is, *v.* 12. *I will be mercifull to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and their Iniquities will I remember no more.* It is the way of pardon and forgiveneſs.

This is ſubſtituted in the room of that *inſufficient way* that was removed.

Let us conſider then, whether the infinitely Wiſe and Holy God, purſuing his purpoſe of *bringing ſouls unto himſelf*, laying aſide one way of his own appointment as *uſeleſs*, and infirm, becauſe of the coming in of ſin, againſt which there was *no releif* found in it, and ſubſtituting another way in the room of it; would not provide ſuch an one, as ſhould be *abſolutely free* from the faults and inconveniencies which he charged upon that, which he did remove. That which alone rendred the former way *faulty* was *ſin*; it could do any thing but *ſave a ſinner*; this then was to be, and is principally provided againſt in *this way of Forgiveneſs*. And we ſee here, how clearly God hath *ſevered*, yea and in this matter *oppoſed* theſe two things; (1) Namely, the *way of perſonal Righteouſneſs*, and the *way of forgiveneſs*. He finds *fault* with the firſt; what then doth he do? what courſe doth he take? doth he *mend* it, *take* from it what ſeems to be redundant, *mitigate* its ſeverity, and *ſupply* it where it was wanting, by Forgiveneſs, and ſo ſet it up anew? This indeed is the *way* that many proceed in in their *notions*, and the moſt in their *practice*. But this is not the way of God. He takes the *one utterly away*, and eſtabliſhes the other in its place. And mens endeavours to *mix them* will be found of *little uſe* to them at the laſt. I can have no great expectation from that which God pronounced *faulty*.

(2.) The unchangeable Principles and Foundations that this Way is built upon, render it ſecure and ſafe for ſinners; for,

1. It is founded on the *Purpoſe* of God, *Gal.* 3. 8. *The Scripture foreſeeing that God would juſtifie the Heathen through Faith.* God *would do ſo*, he had *purpoſed* and determined to proceed this way; and all the *Purpoſes* of God are attended with *immutability*; and

2. His *Promiſe* alſo is engaged in it, and that given out in the way of a *Covenant*, as hath been already declared; and

3. This Promiſe is confirmed by an *Oath*; and it may be obſerved, that God doth not in any thing *interpoſe with an Oath*, but what relates to this way of coming to himſelf by *For-*

Forgiveneſs. For the *Oath* of God wherever it is uſed, reſpecteth either *Chriſt Typically*, or perſonally, or the Covenant eſtabliſhed in him; for,

4. This *Way* is confirmed and ratified in *his Blood*; from whence the Apoſtle at large evinceth its abſolute ſecurity and *ſafety*, *Heb.* 9. Whatever *ſoul* then on the invitation under conſideration, ſhall give up himſelf to come to God, by the *way* propoſed; he ſhall aſſuredly find *abſolute peace, and ſecurity* in it. Neither our own weakneſs or folly from within, nor the oppoſition of any of all our Enemies from *without*, ſhall be able to turn us out of *this Way*. See *Iſa.* 35. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. 9, 10.

3. In the other way, *every individual perſon ſtands upon his own bottom*, and muſt do ſo, to the laſt, and utmoſt of his continuance in this World. You are deſirous to go unto God, to obtain his favour, and come to an enjoyment of him. What will you do? what courſe will you fix upon, for the obtaining of theſe Ends? if you were ſo *holy*, ſo *perfect*, ſo *righteous*, ſo free from *ſin* as you could deſire, you ſhould have ſome boldneſs in going unto God; why if this be the way you fix upon, take this along with you: You ſtand upon your *own perſonal Account* all your dayes. And if you fail in the *leaſt* you are gone for ever. For *whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, Jam. 2. 10. And what peace can you poſſibly obtain, were you *as holy* as ever you aimed or deſired to be, whileſt this is your Condition? But in this *way of Forgiveneſs*, we all ſtand upon the *Account of one common Mediator* in whom *we are compleat*. Col. 3. 10. And a want of a due improvement of this Truth, is a great principle of *diſconſolation* to many Souls. Suppoſe a man look upon himſelf as looſed from the *Covenant of Works*, wherein exact and perfect Righteouſneſs is rigidly required; and to be called unto Goſpel Evangelical Obedience to be performed in the room thereof, in ſincerity and integrity; yet if he be not cleared in this alſo, that he ſtands not in this way *purely on his own account*, he will never be able to make his Comforts hold out to the end of his Journey. There will be found in the *beſt of men* ſo many particular failings, as will ſeem in difficult ſeaſons to *impeach* their *integrity*; And ſo ma-

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ny queſtionings will after ariſe, through the *darkneſs of their minds*, and Power of their Temptations, as will give but little reſt unto their Souls. Here lyes the great ſecurity of *this way*; We abide in it on the account of the *faithfulneſs and Ability* of our Common Mediator Jeſus Chriſt.

And this is another Conſideration, ſtrengthening our *invitation* to a cloſure with the way of coming unto God, under propoſal. There is nothing wanting that is needfull to give *infallible Security* to any ſoul that ſhall venture himſelf into it and upon it. There are *Terms of peace* propoſed, as you have heard. Theſe terms are *excellent*, and holy, and choſen of God, *tending to the intereſt of his Glory*, *free*, *ſafe*, and ſecure unto ſinners. What hath any ſoul in the World to object againſt them? or wherein do men repoſe their Truſt and Confidence in the *neglect* of this ſo great Salvation? Is it in their *Luſts*, and ſins, that they will yield them as much *ſatisfaction* and contentment as they ſhall need to deſire? Alas, they will ruin them, and bring forth nothing but death. Is it in the *World?* it will deceive them; *the figure of it paſſeth away*. Is it in their Duties, and Righteouſneſs? they will not relieve them; for did they *follow the Law of righteouſneſs*, *they could not obtain the Righteouſneſs of the Law*. Is it in the continuance of their lives? Alas, it is but a ſhadow, *a vapour that appeareth for a little while*. Is it in a future Amendment and Repentance? Hell is full of ſouls periſhing under ſuch Reſolutions. Only this *way of pardon remains*, and yet of all others is moſt deſpiſed. But yet I have one conſideration more to adde before I further enforce the Exhortation.

6. Conſider, that this is the *only Way and means to enable you unto obedience*, *and to render what you do therein acceptable unto God*. It may be that ſome of you are under the *power of Convictions*, and have made Engagements unto God, to *live unto him*, to keep your ſelves from ſin, and to follow after holineſs. It may be you have done ſo in Afflictions, dangers, ſickneſſes, or upon the receipt of mercyes; but yet you find that you cannot come unto *ſtability* or conſtancy in your courſe; you *break with God* and your own Souls, which fills you with new *diſquietments*, or elſe hardens you, and makes you ſecure and negligent; ſo that you return unto your

your *purpoſes* no oftner, than your *Convictions* or Afflictions befall you anew. This condition is ruinous and pernitious, which nothing can deliver you from, but *this cloſing with forgiveneſs*. For,

1. All that you do without this, however it may *pleaſe* your minds or *eaſe* your Conſciences, is not at all *accepted* with God. Unleſs this foundation be laid, all that you do is loſt. All your Prayers, all your Duties, all your amendments are an *abomination* unto the Lord. Untill *peace* is made with him, they are but the Acts of Enemies, which he diſpiſeth and abhorreth. You run it may be earneſtly, but you *run out of the way*: you *ſtrive*, but not *lawfully*, and ſhall never receive the Crown. True *Goſpel-Obedience* is the fruit of the faith of *Forgiveneſs*. Whatever you do without it, is but a building without a foundation, a *Caſtle* in the air. You may ſee the order of Goſpel Obedience, *Eph.* 2. 7. 8, 9, 10. The foundation muſt be laid in *Grace*; *Riches of Grace* by Chriſt, in the free pardon, and forgiveneſs of ſin. From hence muſt the *works of obedience* proceed, if you would have them to be of Gods appointment, or find acceptance with him. Without this God will ſay of all your Services, Worſhip, Obedience, as he did to the *Iſraelites* of old; *Amos* 5. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. *I deſpiſe all*, *reject it all*; it is not to him, nor to his Glory. Now if you are under *convictions* of any ſort, there is nothing you more value, nothing you more place your confidence in, than your Duties; your Repentance, your Amendment, what you do, and what in good time you will be. Is it nothing unto you to loſe all your hopes, and all your Expectations which you have from hence? To have no other *Reception with God*, than if all this while you had been wallowing in your ſins and luſts? Yet thus it is with you, if you have not begun with God on his own Terms, if you have not *received the Atonement in the Blood of his Son*; if you are not made partakers of Forgiveneſs, if your perſons are not pardoned, all your Duties are accurſed.

2. This alone will give you ſuch *Motives and Encouragements unto Obedience*, as will give you Life, Alacrity, and Delight in it. You perform *Duties*, abſtain from *ſins*, but with heavineſs, fear, and in bondage. Could you do as well *without*:

out them, as with them, would Conſcience be quiet, and hope of Eternity hold out, you would omit them for ever. This makes all your Obedience burdenſome, and you cry out in your thoughts with him in the Prophet, *Behold what a wearineſs it is!* the ſervice of God is the only drudgery of your lives, which you *dare* not omit, and delight not to perform. From this wretched and curſed frame, there is nothing can deliver you, but this cloſing with *forgiveneſs*. This will give you ſuch motives, ſuch encouragements, as will greatly *influence* your hearts and ſouls. It will give you freedom, liberty, delight, and chearfulneſs in all duties of Goſpel Obedience. You will find a *conſtraining power* in the love of Chriſt therein; a freedom from bondage, when the Son truely hath made you free. Faith and love will work *genuinely* and naturally in your ſpirits; and that which was *your greateſt burden*, will become your *chiefeſt joy*: 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. Thoughts of the Love of God, of the Blood of Chriſt, or the Covenant of Grace, and ſence of pardon in them, will *enlarge* your hearts and *ſweeten* all your duties. You will find a *new life*, a new pleaſure, a new ſatisfaction, in all that you do. Have you yet ever underſtood that of the Wiſeman, *Prov.* 3. 17. *The wayes, of Wiſdom are pleaſantneſs, and her paths are peace?* Have the wayes of Holineſs, of Obedience, of Duties been ſo unto you? Whatever you pretend, they are not, they cannot be ſo, whilſt you are *ſtrangers* unto that which alone can render them ſo unto you. I ſpeak unto them that are *under the Law*; Would you be free from that *bondage*, that *galling yoke* in duties of Obedience? Would you have all that you do towards God, a delight and pleaſantneſs unto you? This, and this alone will effect it for you.

3. *This will place all your Obedience upon a ſure foot of account in your own Souls and Conſciences*; even the ſame that is fixed on in the Goſpel. For the preſent all that you do, is indeed but to *compound with God* for your ſin; you hope by what you do *for him*, and *to him*, to buy off what you have done *againſt him*; that you may not fall into the hands of his Wrath and Vengeance. This makes all you do to be *irkſom*. As a man that labours all his dayes, to *pay an old debt*, and brings in nothing to lay up for himſelf, how tedious and *wearineſs* is his work and labour to him. It is odds but that at one time or other, he will *give over*, and run away from his *Creditor*. So it is in this caſe, men who have *ſecret reſerves of recompenſing God* by their Obedience, every day find their *debt* growing upon them; and have every day leſs hopes of making a ſatisfactory payment. This makes them *weary*, and for the moſt part they *faint* under their diſcouragements, and at length they fly wholly from God. This way alone will ſtate things otherwiſe in your *Conſciences*; it will give you to ſee, that all your *debts* are paid by Chriſt, and freely forgiven unto you by God. So that what you do is of *Gratitude* or thankfulneſs, hath an influence into Eternity, leads to the *Glory* of God, the *honour* of Chriſt in the Goſpel, and your own comfortable *account* at the laſt day. This encourageth the ſoul to labour, to Trade, to endeavour; all things now looking *forward*, and unto his advantage.

4. Find you not in your ſelves an *impotency, a diſability* unto the dutyes of *Obedience*, as to their performance unto God in an acceptable manner? it may be you are not ſo ſenſible hereof as you ought to be. For reſpecting *only* or *principally* the outward part and performance of duties, you have not Experience of your own *Weakneſs*. How to enliven and fill up Duties with *Faith*, *Love*, and *Delight*, you know not; and are therefore unacquainted with your own inſufficiency in this matter; yet if you have any Light, any Convictions, (and to ſuch I ſpeak at preſent) you cannot but perceive and underſtand, that you are not *able in your Obedience* to anſwer what you aim at; you have not ſtrength or power for it. Now it is this *faith of Forgiveneſs alone* that will furniſh you with the Ability, whereof you ſtand in need. *Pardon comes not to the Soul alone*; or rather Chriſt comes not to the Soul with pardon only. It is that which he opens the door, and enters by; but he comes with a Spirit of life and Power. And as *without him we can do nothing*, ſo through his *enabling us we may do all things*. Receiving of Goſpel Fogiveneſs engageth all the *grace* of the Goſpel unto our aſſiſtance.

This is the *ſumme* of what hath been ſpoken, the *obedience* that you perform under your convictions is *burdenſome* and unpleaſant unto you; it is altogether *unacceptable* to God.

You loſe all you do, and all that you hope to do hereafter, if the foundation be not laid in the receiving of pardon in the blood of Chriſt. It is high time to *caſt down* all that vain and *Imaginary fabrick* which you have been erecting, and to go about the laying of a new Foundation, which you may ſafely and chearfully build upon; a building that will abide for ever.

Certainty of the final Ruine of them who believe not.

Again, It is *ſuch a way*, ſo excellent, ſo precious, ſo neer the heart of God, ſo *relating to the blood of Chriſt*, that the *neglect of it* will aſſuredly be ſorely *revenged* of the Lord. Let not men think that they ſhall deſpiſe the *Wiſdom* and *Love of the Father*, the *blood of the Son*, and the *Promiſes of the Goſpel*, at an eaſie rate. Let us in a very few words take a view of what the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaks to this purpoſe. There are *Three wayes* whereby the *Vengeance* due to the neglect of cloſing with forgiveneſs or Goſpel Grace is expreſſed.

1. That is done *Poſitively: He that believeth not ſhall be DAMNED*, Mark. 16.16. That's a *hard word*; many men cannot endure to hear of it. They would not have it named by their good wills, and are ready to fly in the face of him from whoſe mouth it proceeds. But let not men deceive themſelves, this is the *ſofteſt word*, that Mercy, and Love it ſelf, that Chriſt, that the Goſpel ſpeaks to deſpiſers of forigveneſs. It is *Chriſt* who is this *legal terrifying Preacher*; it is he that cryes out, *If you believe not, you ſhall be Damned*; and will come himſelf *in flaming fire to take vengeance of them that obey not the Goſpel*, 2 *Theſſ.* 2.8. This is the end of the diſobedient; if God, if Chriſt, if the Goſpel may be believed.

2. *Comparatively* in reference unto the Vengeance due to the *breach of the Law*, 2 *Cor.* 2.16. *We are in* the preaching of forgiveneſs by Chriſt, unto them that *periſh*, *a ſavour of death unto death*, a deep death, a ſore Condemnation, ſo *Heb.* 10. 29. *Of how much ſorer puniſhment ſuppoſe ye he ſhall be thought worthy.* Sorer than ever was threatned by the Law, or inflicted for the breach of it; not as to the *kind* of puniſhment, but as to the *degrees* of it; Hence ariſeth the addition of *many ſtripes*.

3. By the way of *Admiration* at the *unexpreſſibleneſs*, and unavoidableneſs of the puniſhment due unto ſuch ſinners. *Heb.*

Heb. 2. 3. *How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?* Surely there is no way for men to eſcape, they ſhall unavoidably periſh who neglect *ſo great ſalvation*. So the Holy Ghoſt ſayes, 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. *What ſhall be the end of them that obey not the Goſpel?* What underſtanding can reach to an apprehenſion of their miſerable and wofull condition? *None can*, ſaith the Holy Ghoſt; nor can it be ſpoken to their capacity; ah what ſhall their end be? There remains nothing, but a *certain fearfull looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation that ſhall conſume the Adverſaries*, Heb. 10. 27. A certain fearfull expectation of *aſtoniſhable things* that cannot be comprehended.

Exhortation to Believing enforced.

And theſe are the *Enforcements* of the *Exhortation* in hand, which I ſhall inſiſt upon. On theſe foundations, on the conſideration of theſe Principles, let us now a little conferre together, with the words of Truth and Sobriety. I ſpeak to ſuch poor ſouls, as having *deceived themſelves*, or neglected utterly their Eternal Condition, are not as yet really, and in Truth made partakers of this *forgiveneſs*. Your *preſent ſtate* is ſad, and deplorable. There is nothing but the wofull uncertainty of a *dying life* between you and Eternal ruine. That *perſwaſion* you have of forgiveneſs, is Good for nothing but to harden you, and deſtroy you. It is not the Forgiveneſs that is with God. Nor have you taken it up on Goſpel grounds or Evidences. You have *ſtollen painted beads*, and take your ſelves to be lawfull poſſeſſors of Pearls and Jewels. As you are then any way concerned in your own *Eternal Condition*, which you are entring into, (and how ſoon you ſhall be ingaged in it you know not) prevail with your ſelves to attend a little unto the *Exhortation* that lyes before you; it is your *own buſineſs* that you are entreated to have regard unto.

1. Conſider ſeriouſly what it is *you bottom your hopes and expectation upon as to Eternity*. Great men and in other things *wiſe*, are here very apt to deceive themſelves. They ſuppoſe they *think* and *believe* much otherwiſe, than indeed they think and believe, as their *cry* at the laſt day will manifeſt. Put your ſouls a little unto it. Do you at all *ſeriouſly think* of theſe things? Or are you ſo under the power of your Luſts, Ignorance, and Darkneſs, that you neglect and deſpiſe them?

Or do you riſe up and lye down, and *perform ſome duties*, or neglect them with a great Coldneſs, Remiſneſs, and Indifferency of Spirit, like *Gallio* not much caring for theſe things? Or do you relieve your ſelves with *hopes of future amendment*, purpoſing that if you live, you will be other perſons than you are, when ſuch and ſuch things are brought about and accompliſhed? Or do you not *hope well in General* upon the account of what you have done, and will doe? If any of theſe expreſs *your condition*, it is unſpeakably miſerable. You lye down and riſe up under the *wrath of the Great God*, who will prevail at laſt upon you, and there ſhall be none to deliver. If you ſhall ſay, *Nay*, This is not our ſtate; we rely on *Mercy and Forgiveneſs*; then let me in the fear of the Great God entreat a few things, yet further of you.

1. That you would ſeriouſly conſider, whether the forgiveneſs you reſt on, and hope in, be that *Goſpel Forgiveneſs* which we have before deſcribed? or is it only a General Apprehenſion of *Impunity*, though you are Sinners; That God is *mercifull*, and you hope in him, that you ſhall eſcape the Vengeance of Hell-fire? If it be thus with you, *forgiveneſs it ſelf* will not relieve you. This is that of the preſumptuous man, *Deut.* 29. 19. *Goſpel-pardon* is a thing of another nature; It hath its *ſpring* in the Gracious heart of the Father, is *made out* by a Soveraign Act of his Will; rendred *conſiſtent* with the Glory of his Juſtice and Holineſs by the *blood of Chriſt*, by which it is purchaſed in a Covenant of Grace, as hath been ſhewed; If you ſhall ſay, Yea, *this is the forgiveneſs* we rely upon, it is that which you have deſcribed. Then I deſire further that you would

1. Examine your own hearts, *how you came to have an intereſt in this Forgiveneſs*, to cloſe with it, and to have a right unto it. A man may deceive himſelf as effectually by ſuppoſing that *True Riches* are his, when they are not, as by ſuppoſing his *falſe and counterfeit ware* to be good and currant; how then come you to be *intereſted* in this Goſpel-forgiveneſs? If it hath *befallen you* you know not how, if a lifeleſs, barren, *inoperative perſwaſion* of it hath crept upon your minds; be not miſtaken, God will come and *require his forgiveneſs* at your hands, and it ſhall appear that you have had no part, nor portion

portion in it. If you ſhall ſay, *Nay*, but we were *convinced of ſin*, and rendred exceeding unquiet in our Conſciences, and on that account looked out after *Forgiveneſs*, which hath given us Reſt. Then I deſire,

2. That you would diligently conſider, *to what ends and purpoſes you have received, and do make uſe of this Goſpel-forgiveneſs*. Hath it been to *make up what was wanting*, and to piece up a peace in your own Conſciences? that whereas you could not *anſwer your Convictions* with your *duyes*, you would ſeek for relief from Forgiveneſs. This, and *innumerable other wayes* there are, whereby men may *loſe their ſouls* when they think all is well with them, even on the account of Pardon and Mercy. Whence is that caution of the Apoſtle, *Looking diligently leſt any one ſhould ſeem to fail, or come ſhort of the Grace of God*, Heb. 12. 15. men miſs it and *come ſhort* of it, when they pretend themſelves to be in the purſuit of it; yea to have *overtaken* and poſſeſſed it. Now if any of theſe ſhould prove to be your Condition, I deſire

3. That you would conſider ſeriouſly, *whether it be not high time for you to look out for a way of deliverance, and eſcape, that you may ſave your ſelves from this evil World, and fly from the wrath to come*. The *Judge* ſtands at the door. Before he deal with you *as a Judge*, he knocks with a tender of mercy. Who knows, but that this may be the laſt time of his dealing thus with you. Be you *old* or *young*, you have but your ſeaſon, but your *day*; it may perhaps be *night* with you, when it is *day* with the reſt of the World. Your *Sun* may go down at *Noon*; and God may ſwear that *you ſhall not enter into his Reſt*. If you are then reſolved to continue in your preſent condition, I have no more to ſay unto you. *I am pure from your blood*, in that I have declared unto you the counſel of God in this thing, and ſo I muſt leave you to a naked Tryal between the *Great God* and *your Souls* at the laſt day; poor Creatures, I even tremble to think, how he *will tear you in pieces*, when there ſhall be none to deliver. Methinks I ſee your poor *deſtitute forlorn ſouls*, forſaken of luſts, ſins, world, friends, Angels, Men, *Trembling* before the Throne of God, full of horror, and fearfull expectation of the dreadful ſentence. Oh that *I could mourn over you*, whileſt you are *joyned to all the living*; whileſt

whileſt there is yet hope, oh that in this your day, you knew the things of your peace.

But now if you ſhall ſay, *Nay*, but we will *ſeek the Lord whileſt he may be found*, we will draw nigh unto him before he cauſe darkneſs; then conſider I pray,

4. What *Joſhua* told the *children of Iſrael*, when they put themſelves upon ſuch a Reſolution, and cryed out, *We will ſerve the Lord our God, chap. 24. v. 19. Ye cannot ſerve the Lord, for he is an holy God, a jealous God, he will not forgive your tranſgreſſions, nor your ſins.* Go to him upon your *own Account*, and in your own ſtrength, with your own beſt endeavours and dutyes, you will find him *too great*, and *too holy* for you to deal with-all. You will obtain neither Acceptance of your perſons, nor Pardon of your ſins. But you will ſay, this is *heavy tydings*. If you ſit ſtill you periſh, and if you riſe to be *doing*, it will not be *better*; is there no hope left for our Souls? muſt we pine away under our ſins and the wrath of God for ever? God forbid. There are yet other *directions* remaining to guide you out of theſe entanglements. Wherefore,

5. Ponder ſeriouſly on what *hath been ſpoken of this way of approaching unto God*. Conſider it in its own *nature*, as to all the ends and purpoſes for which it is propoſed of God: Conſider whether you *Approve* of it or no; do you judge it a way ſuited and fitted *to bring glory unto God?* doth it anſwer all the wants and diſtreſſes of your ſouls? Do you think it excellent, ſafe, and *Glorious* unto them who are entred unto it? or have you any thing to *object* againſt it? Return your Anſwer to him in whoſe Name, and by whoſe appointment theſe words are ſpoken unto you. If you ſhall ſay, we are convinced that this *way of forgiveneſs* is the *only way* for the relief and deliverance of our Souls; Then,

6. *Abhorr your ſelves for all your blindneſs and obſtinacy* whereby you have hitherto *deſpiſed the love of God*, the *blood* of Chriſt, and the Tenders of *Pardon* in the Goſpel. Be abaſed and humbled to the duſt, in a ſence of your vileneſs, Polluti-ons, and Abominations; which things are every day ſpoken unto, and need not here be repeated. And,

7. Labour to *exerciſe your hearts greatly with thoughts of that abundant Grace that is manifeſted in this way of ſinners coming*

ing unto God; as alſo of the *Excellency* of the Goſpel wherein it is unfolded. Conſider the *Eternal Love* of the Father, which is the Fountain and Spring of this whole diſpenſation; the inexpreſſible *Love of the Son*, in eſtabliſhing and confirming it, in removing all hindrances and obſtructions by his own blood, bringing forth unto beauty and Glory this Redemption or Forgiveneſs of ſin, as the price of it. And let the *Glory of the Goſpel* which *alone makes this diſcovery of Forgiveneſs* in God, dwell in your hearts. Let your minds be exerciſed about theſe things. You will find *effects* from them, above all that hath as yet been brought forth in your ſouls. What for the moſt part have you hitherto been *converſant* about? when you have riſen above the turmoyling of luſts and corruptions in your hearts, the entanglements of your Callings, buſineſs and affairs, what have you been able to raiſe your hearts unto? *perplexing fears* about your Condition, *General hopes* without ſavour or reliſh, yielding you no refreſhment, *Legal Commands*, *Bondage-duties*, *diſtratted Conſciences*, *broken Purpoſes* and Pro-miſes which you have been toſſed up and down withall, with-out any certain reſt. And what *Effects* have theſe thoughts produced? have they made you *more holy*, and more *humble*? have they given you *delight in God*, and ſtrength unto new obedience? Not at all. Where you *were*, there you ſtill *are* without the leaſt progreſs. But now bring your Souls unto theſe *Springs*; and try the Lord if from that day you be not bleſſed with ſpiritual ſtores.

8. If the Lord be pleaſed to carry on your ſouls thus far, then *ſtirr up your ſelves*, *to chooſe and cloſe with the way of for-giveneſs* that hath been revealed. Chooſe it *only*, chooſe it in *compariſon* with, and *oppoſition* unto all others. Say you will be for Chriſt, and not for another, and be ſo accordingly. Here venture, here repoſe, here reſt your Souls. It is a way of *peace*, *ſafety*, *Holineſs*, beauty, ſtrength, power, liberty, and glory; you have the Nature, the Name, the Love, the Purpo-ſes, the Promiſes, the Covenant, the Oath *of God*; the Love, Life, Death, or Blood, the Mediation, or Oblation and Inter-ceſſion of *Jeſus Chriſt*. The Power and Efficacy of *the Spirit*, and *Goſpel Grace* by him adminiſtred, to give you *Aſſurance* of the *excellency*, the *oneneſs*, the *ſafety* of the Way, whereunto you are engaging.

If

If now the Lord ſhall be pleaſed to perſwade your hearts, and ſouls, to enter upon the *path marked out before you*, and ſhall carry you on through the *various exerciſes of it*, unto this cloſure of Faith, God will have the Glory, the Goſpel will be Exalted, and your own ſouls ſhall reap the Eternal benefit of this Exhortation.

But now if notwithſtanding *all that hath been ſpoken*, all the *Invitations* you have had, and *Incouragements* that have been held out unto you, you ſhall continue to deſpiſe this *ſo great ſalvation*, you will *live and dye* in the ſtate and condition wherein you are; why then as the *Prophet* ſaid to the *Wife of Jeroboam*, Come neer, for I am ſent unto you with *heavy Tydings*. I ſay then,

9. If you reſolve to *continue in the neglect of this Salvation, and ſhall do ſo accordingly*, Then *Curſed* be you of the Lord, with all the Curſes that are written in the *Law*, and all the Curſes that are denounced againſt Deſpiſers of the *Goſpel*. Yea, be you *Anathema Maranatha*; *Curſed* in this World alwayes, untill the coming of the Lord, and when the Lord comes, be ye *curſed* from his preſence into Everlaſting deſtruction. Yea, *Curſe* them all ye holy Angels of God, as the obſtinate Enemies of your King and Head the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. *Curſe* them all ye Churches of Chriſt, as deſpiſers of that Love and *Mercy* which is your portion, your Life, your Inheritance; Let all the Saints of God, all that love the Lord, *curſe* them, and rejoyce to ſee the Lord coming forth mightily, and prevailing againſt them to their everlaſting ruine. Why ſhould any one have a *thought of compaſſion* towards them, who *deſpiſe the Compaſſion of God?* or of mercy towards them who trample on the blood of Chriſt? Whileſt there is yet hope, we deſire to have continual ſorrow for you; and to *travail in ſoul* for your converſion to God; but if you be hardened in your way, ſhall we joyn with you againſt him? ſhall we preferre you above his Glory? ſhall we deſire your ſalvation with the deſpoyling God of his honour? Nay, God forbid, We hope to *rejoyce* in ſeeing all *that vengeance and indignation*, that is in the right hand of God, poured out unto Eternity upon your Souls: *Prov.* 1. 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.

Rules

Rules to be obſerved by them who would come to ſtability in Obedience. The firſt Rule. Chriſt the only infallible Judge of our ſpiritual condition. How he judgeth, by his Word and Spirit.

That which remaineth to be further carried on, upon the Principles laid down, is to perſwade with Souls more or leſs intangled in the *depths* of ſin, to *cloſe with this Fogiveneſs by Believing*, unto their Peace and Conſolation. And becauſe ſuch perſons are full of *pleas* and *objections* againſt themſelves, I ſhall chiefly in what I have to ſay, endeavour to *obviate* theſe Objections, ſo to encourage them unto believing, and bring them unto ſettlement. And herein whatever I have to offer, flowes naturally from the *Doctrine* at large laid down and aſſerted. Yet I ſhall not in all particulars apply my ſelf thereunto, but *in General* fix on thoſe things that may tend to the Eſtabliſhment and Conſolation of both *diſtreſſed* and *doubting* Souls. And I ſhall do what I purpoſe theſe two wayes.

Firſt, I ſhall lay down ſuch *General Rules* as are neceſſary to be obſerved by all thoſe who intend to come to Goſpel-peace and Comfort. And then, Secondly, ſhall conſider ſome ſuch *Objections* as ſeem to be moſt comprehenſive of thoſe ſpecial reaſonings wherewith *diſtreſſed perſons* do uſually intangle themſelves.

I ſhall begin with *General Rules*, which through the Grace of Chriſt, and Supplyes of his Spirit, may be of uſe unto Believers in the condition under conſideration.

RULE I.

Be not Judges of your own Condition, but let Chriſt judge. You are invited to take the comfort of this Goſpel Truth, That there is *Forgiveneſs with God*. You ſay not for you; ſo ſaid *Jacob*; *My way is hid from the Lord*, Iſa. 40. 27. and *Sion* ſaid ſo too, *chap.* 49. 14. *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*. But did they make a *right Judgement* of themſelves? We find in thoſe places that God was otherwiſe minded. This *falſe Judgement* made by Souls in their entanglements, of their own Condition, is oft-times a

Chriſt the only Judge of our ſpiritual condition.

most unconquerable hinderance unto the bettering of it. They fill themselves with thoughts of their own about it, and on them they dwell, instead of looking out after a Remedy. *Misgiving thoughts* of their distempers, are commonly a great part of some mens sickness. *Many diseases* are apt to cloud the thoughts, and to cause misapprehensions concerning their own nature and danger. And these *delusions* are a real part of the persons sickness. *Nature* is no less impaired and weakned by them, the Efficacy of *Remedies* no less obstructed, than by any other real distemper. In such cases we perswade men to acquiesce in the Judgment of their *skilfull Physician*, not alwayes to be wasting themselves in and by their own tainted imaginations, and so despond upon their own mistakes; but to rest in what is informed them by him, who is acquainted with the causes and tendency of their *indisposition* better than themselves. It is oft-times one part of the *Souls depths*, to have false apprehensions of its Condition. *Sin is a madness*, *Eccles.* 9. 3. so far as any one is under the power of it, he is under the power of *madness*. *Madness* doth not sooner, nor more effectually discover it self in any way or thing, than in possessing them in whom it is, with *strange conceits* and apprehensions of themselves. So doth this *madness of sin*, according unto its degrees, and prevalency. Hence some cry *Peace, peace*, when *sudden destruction is at hand*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 3. It is that *madness*, under whose power they are, which gives them such groundless Imaginations of themselves and their own Condition. And some say they *are lost* for ever, when God is with them.

Do you then your *duty*, and let Christ Judge of your *state*. Your *Concernment* is too great, to make it a reasonable demand, to commit the Judgment of your condition to any other. When *Eternal welfare* or *woe* are at the stake, for a man to renounce his own thoughts, to give up himself implicitly, to the Judgment of men *fallible* and *lyars* like himself, is stupidity; But there is no danger of being deceived by the sentence of Christ. The truth is, whether we will or no, he will *Judge*; and according as *he determines* so shall things be found at the last day, *Joh.* 5. 22. *The Father judgeth no man*, (that is, immediately and in his own Person) *but hath committed*

mitted all Judgment unto the Son. All Judgment that respects Eternity, whether it be to be passed in this World or in that to come, is committed unto him. Accordingly in that place *he judgeth* both of Things and Persons. *Things* he determines upon, *v.* 24. *He that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.* Let men say what they please, *This sentence* shall stand; *Faith and eternall life are inseparably conjoyned.* And so of Persons, *v.* 38. *You have not*, (saith he to the *Pharisees*, who were much otherwise minded) *the Word of God abiding in you.*

Take not then the *Office* and Prerogative of Christ out of his hand, by making a Judgment upon your own *Readsonings*, and Conclusions, and Deductions of your state and Condition. You will find that he often-times both on the one hand, and on the other, determines *quite contrary* to what men *judge of themselves*; As also to what *others judge of them.* Some he judgeth to be in an *evil condition*, who are very confident that it is *well* with them, and who please themselves in the thoughts of *many* to the same purpose. And he judgeth the state of some to be *Good*, who are *diffident* in themselves, and it may be *despised* by others. We may single out *an Example* or two in each kind.

1. *Laodicea*'s Judgement of her self, and her spiritual state we have, *Revel.* 3. 17. *I am rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing.* A fair state it seems, a blessed Condition. She *wants nothing* that may contribute to her rest, peace and reputation; she is *Orthodox*, and *Numerous*, and *Flourishing*; makes a fair profession, and all is well within. So *she believes*, so she reports of her self; wherein there is a secret *reflection* also upon others whom she despiseth. Let them shift as they list, I am thus as I say. But was it so with her indeed? was that her *true Condition* whereof she was so perswaded, as to profess it unto all? Let *Jesus Christ* be heard to speak in this cause, let him come and *judge*? I will do so, saith he, *v.* 14. *Thus saith the Amen, the faithfull and true Witness.* Coming to give sentence in a case of this importance, he gives himself *this Title* that we may know his Word is to be *acquiesced in.* Every man, saith he, is a Lyar; their Testi-

mony is of no vaule, let them pronounce what they will of themselves, or of one another; *I am the Amen*, and I will see whose Word shall stand, mine or theirs. What then saith he of *Laodicea? Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* O wofull and sad disappointment! O dreadfull surprizall! Ah how many *Laodicean Churches* have we in the World? How many *Professors* are *members of these Churches?* Not to mention the generality of men that live under the means of Grace, all which have *Good hopes* of their Eternal Condition whilest they are despised and abhorred by the *only Judge*. Among *Professors* themselves, it is dreadfull to think how many will be found *light* when they come to be *weighed* in this ballance.

2. Again, he *judgeth some to be in a good condition*, be they themselves never so *diffident*; *Revel.* 2. 9. saith he to the Church of *Smyrna*; *I know thy poverty*; *Smyrna* was complaining that she was a poor *contemptible Congregation*, not fit for him to take any notice of. Well, saith he, fear not; I know *thy poverty* whereof thou complainest; but thou art *Rich*; That is *my Judgment*, Testimony, and Sentence concerning thee and thy condition. Such will be his *Judgment* at the last day, when both those, on the one hand, and the other, shall be surprized with his sentence; the one with *Joy*, at the riches of his Grace; The other with terror at the severity of *his Justice*, *Matth.* 25. 37, 38, 39. and 44, 45. This case is directly stated in *both the places* mentioned in the entrance of this discourse; as in *that* for instance, *Isa.* 49. 14. *Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me.* That is *Zions judgment* of her self, and her state and condition; a sad report and conclusion. But doth *Christ* agree with *Zion* in this sentence? The next verse gives us his Resolution of this matter; *Can*, saith he, *a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her womb; Yea they may forget, yet will not I forget thee.* The state of things in Truth, is as much otherwise as can possibly be thought or imagined.

To what purpose is it for men to be *passing a Judgment* upon themselves, when there is no manner of certainty in their determinations; and when their proceeding thereon will probably lead them to further entanglements, if not to eternal ruin. The *Judging of souls* as to their spiritual state and condition is the work of Jesus Christ; especially as to the End now under Enquiry. Men *may*, men *do take* many wayes to make a Judgment of themselves. Some do it on *slight and trivial conjectures*; some on *bold and wicked presumptions*; some on desperate *Atheistical notions*; as *Deut.* 29. 17. some with more sobriety and sence of Eternity, lay *down principles* it may be good and true in themselves; from them they *draw conclusions*, arguing from one thing unto another; and in the end oft-times either *deceive themselves*, or sit down no less in the dark, than they were at the entrance of their self-debate and Examination. A mans *judgment* upon his own reasonings is *seldom true*, more *seldom permanent*. I speak not of *self examination*, with a due *discussion* of Graces and actions, but of the *final sentence as to state and condition*, wherein the soul is to acquiesce. This belongs unto Christ.

Now there are *Two wayes* whereby the Lord Jesus Christ gives forth his *decretory sentence* in this matter.

1. *By his Word.* He determines in the *Word of the Gospel* of the state and condition of all men *indefinitely*. Each *Individual* coming to that Word, receives his own sentence and doom. He told the *Jews* that *Moses* accused them, *John* 5. 45. His *Law accused* and condemned the transgressors of it. And so doth he *acquit every one* that is discharged, by the Word of the Gospel. And our *self-judging*, is but our *receiving by faith* his sentence in the Word. His process herein we have recorded, *Job* 33. 22, 23. *His soul* (that is of the sinner) *draweth near to the grave, and his life to the destroyers*; This seems to be his state; it is so indeed; he is at the very brink of the grave and hell. What then; why *if there be with him* or stand over him, מַלְאָךְ מֵלִיץ the *Angel interpreting*, or the Angel of the Covenant, who alone is אֶחָד מִנִּי־אֶלֶף the *one of a thousand*; what shall he do? *He shall shew unto him his uprightness.* He shall give unto him a right determination of his interest in God, and of the state and frame of his heart towards God; whereupon God shall speak peace unto his Soul, and deliver him from his entanglements, *v.* 24. Jesus Christ hath in the *Word of the Gospel* stated the condition of every man. He tells us, that sinners, of what sort soever they are,

are, that believe, are accepted with him, and shall receive forgiveness from God, that *none shall* be *refused* or cast off that *come unto God* by him. The Soul of whom we are treating is now upon the work of *coming unto God* for forgiveness by Jesus Christ. Many and weighty Objections it hath in and against its self, why it should not come, why it shall not be *accepted*. Our *Lord Jesus* the Wisdom of God *foresaw* all these Objections; he *foreknew* what could be said in the case, and yet he hath *determined* the matter, as hath been declared. In General, mens arguings against themselves arise from *Sin* and the *Law*. Christ knowes what is in them both. He tryed them to the uttermost, as to their *penalties*; and yet he hath so *determined* as we have shewed. Their *particular Objections*, are from particular considerations of sin; their Greatness, their Number, their Aggravations. Christ knows all these also; And yet *stands to his firmer determination*. Upon the whole matter then, it is meet his Word should stand. I know when a Soul brings it self to be *judged* by the Word of the Gospel, it doth not alwayes in a like manner *receive* and rest in the sentence given. But when Christ is pleased to *speak the word with power* to men, they shall *hear the voyce of the Son of God*, and be concluded by it. Let the soul then that is rising *out of depths*, and pressing towards a sence of forgiveness, lay it self down before the *Word of Christ* in the Gospel. Let him attend to what he speaks; and if for a while it hath not power upon him to quiet his heart, let him *wait* a season, and *light* shall arise unto him out of *darkness*. Christ will give in his sentence into his Conscience with that power and efficacy, as he shall finde rest and peace in it.

2. *Christ also judgeth by his spirit*; not only in making this sentence of the Gospel to be received effectually in the Soul, but in and by *peculiar Actings* of his upon the heart and soul of a Believer: 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *We have received the Spirit of God, that we may know the things that are freely given us of God.* The Spirit of Christ acquaints the Soul, that this and that *Grace* is from him, that this or that *duty* was performed in his strength. He brings to mind, what at *such* and *such* times was wrought in men by himself, to give them supportment and relief in the times of *depths* and darkness. And when it hath been clearly discovered unto the soul at any time by the Holy Ghost, that any thing *wrought* in it, or *done* by it hath been truely *saving*; The Comfort of it will abide in the midst of many shakings and Temptations.

2. He also by his Spirit *bears witness with our Spirits*, as to our state and condition. Of this I have spoken largely elsewhere, and therefore shall now pass it by.

This then is our *first General Rule* and Direction. *Self-determinations* concerning mens spiritual state and condition, because their minds are usually influenced by their distempers, are seldom *right* and according to Rule. *Mistakes* in such determinations are exceedingly prejudicial to a Soul seeking out after relief, and sence of Forgiveness; let Christ then be the *Judge* in this Case by his Word and Spirit, as hath been directed.

RULE II.

Self-condemnation and abhorrency for sin consistent with Gospel Justification and Peace. The nature of Gospel Assurance; what is consistent with it. What are the Effects of it.

Self-condemnation consistent with Gospel Justification and Peace.

Self Condemnation and Abhorrency do very well consist with Gospel Justification and Peace. Some men have *no peace*, because they have that, without which it is impossible they *should have peace*. Because they cannot *but condemn themselves*, they cannot entertain a sence, that God doth *acquit them*. But this is the *mystery* of the Gospel, which unbelief is a stranger unto; Nothing but *faith* can give a real *subsistence* unto these things, in the same Soul, at the same time. It is easie to learn the *notion* of it, but it is not easie to experience the *power* of it. For a man to have a sight of that *within him*, which would *condemn* him for which he is *troubled*, and at the same time to have a discovery of that *without him*, which will *justifie* him, and to *rejoyce* therein, is that which he is not lead unto, but by *Faith in the mystery of the Gospel*. We are now under a *Law for Justification*, which excludes all *boasting*, *Rom.* 3. 27. So that though we have *joy* enough in another, yet we may have, we alwayes have *sufficient cause* of *humiliation* in our selves. The Gospel will teach a man to *feel sin*, and *believe*

Righte-

Righteousnes at the same time. Faith will carry *Heaven* in one hand, and *Hell* in the other; shewing the *one deserved*, the *other purchased*. A man may see enough of his *own sin* and folly to bring *Gehennam è Cœlo*, a Hell of wrath out of Heaven; and yet see Christ bring *Cœlum ex inferno*, a Heaven of blessednes out of an Hell of punishment. And these must needs produce very *divers*, yea *contrary* effects and operations in the Soul. And he who knowes not how to assign them their *proper duties*, and seasons, must needs be perplexed. The work of *self-condemnation* then, which men in these depths cannot but abound with, is in the disposition of the *Covenant of Grace*, no way inconsistent with, nor unsuited unto *Justification*, and the enjoyment of *Peace* in the sence of it. There may be a *deep sence* of sin on other considerations besides *Hell*. *David* was never more *humbled for sin*, than when *Nathan* told him *it was forgiven*. And there may be a *view of* Hell as *deserved*, which yet the Soul may know it self freed from, as to the *issue*.

To evidence our intendment in this discourse, I shall briefly consider what we intend by *Gospel Assurance of forgiveness*, that the Soul may not be *solicitous* and perplexed, about the *utter want* of that, which perhaps it is already in some enjoyment of.

Gospel Assurance, wherein it consisteth.

Some men seem to place *Gospel Assurance* in an *high unassaulted Confidence* of Acceptance with God. They think it is in none but such, as if a man should go to them, and ask them, Are *you certain you shall be saved*, have boldness, and confidence, and ostentation to answer presently, *Yea they are certain* they shall be saved. But as the blessed *Truth of Assurance* hath been reproached in the World *under such a notion* of it, so such *expressions* become not them who know what it is to have to do with the Holy God who is a *consuming fire*. Hence some conclude, that there are *very few* Believers who have any *Assurance*, because they have not this *confidence*, or are more free to mention the *opposition* they meet with, than the *supportment* they enjoy. And thus is it rendred a matter *not greatly to be desired*, because it is so rarely to be obtained; *most of the Saints* serving God, and going to Heaven well enough without it; But the matter is otherwise. The *importance* of it not only as it is our *life of comfort* and joy, but also as it is the principal means

means of the *flourishing of our Life of Holiness*, hath been declared before; and might be further manifested, were that our present business; Yea and in *times of tryall*, which are the proper seasons for the Effectual working and manifestation *of Assurance*, it will and doth appear, that *many*, yea that *most* of the Saints of God, are made partakers of this Grace and Priviledge.

I shall then in the pursuit of *the Rule* laid down, do these two things. (1.) Shew what things they are which are not only *consistent* with *Assurance*, but are even *necessary concomitants* of it, which yet if not duely weighed and considered, may seem so far to impeach a mans *comfortable perswasion* of his condition before God, as to leave him *beneath the Assurance* sought after. And,

2. I shall speak somewhat of *its nature*: Especially as manifesting its self by its Effects.

Sence of sin consistent with Assurance.

1. *A deep sense of the evil of sin, of the guilt of mans own sin, is no way inconsistent with Gospel assurance of Acceptance with God through Christ, and of Forgiveness in him.* By a *sense of the guilt of sin*; I understand two things. (1.) A clear *conviction of sin* by the Holy Ghost, saying unto the Soul, *Thou art the man*; and (2.) A *sense of the displeasure of God*, or the wrath due to sin, according to the sentence of the Law. Both these *David* expresseth in that complaint, *Psal.* 31. 10. *My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing, my strength faileth because of mine Iniquity, and my bones are consumed.* His Iniquity was before him, and a sense of it pressed him sore. But yet notwithstanding all this, he had a comfortable perswasion that God was his God in Covenant, *v.* 14. *I trusted in thee O Lord, I said, thou art my God.* And the tenor of the Covenant, wherein *alone* God is the God of any person is, that he *will be mercifull unto their sin and iniquity*. To whom he is a God, he is so according to the Tenor of that Covenant; so that here these two are conjoyned. Saith he, Lord, I am pressed with the sense of the guilt of mine Iniquities, and thou art my God who forgivest them. And the ground hereof is, that God by the Gospel hath *divided the work of the Law*, and taken *part* of it out of its hand. Its whole work and duty is

to *condemn the sin* and *the sinner*. The sinner is freed by the Gospel, but its right lyes against the sin still, that it condemns, and that justly. Now though the *sinner himself* be freed, yet finding his *sin layd hold of* and condemned, it fills him with a *deep sense of its guilt*, and of the displeasure of God against it; which yet hinders not, but that at the same time, he may have such an *insight* as faith gives into his *personal interest* in a Gospel acquitment. A man then may have a *deep sence* of sin all his dayes, walk under the sence of it continually, abhor himself for his ingratitude, unbelief, and rebellion against God, without any *impeachment* of his Assurance.

Sorrow for sin consistent with Assurance.

2. *Deep sorrow for sin is consistent with Assurance of forgiveness.* Yea it is a great means of *preservation of it*. Godly sorrow, mourning, humiliation, contriteness of spirit, are no less *Gospel Graces*, and fruits of the Holy Ghost, than faith it self; and so are *consistent* with the highest *flourishings* of faith whatever. It is the work of *Heaven* it self, and not of the *Assurance* of it, to *wipe all tears* from our eyes. Yea *these Graces* have the most eminent Promises annexed to them, as *Isa.* 57. 15. *chap.* 66. 2. with blessedness it self, *Matth.* 5. 4. yea they are themselves the *matter* of many Gracious Gospel Promises, *Zech.* 12. 10. so that they are *assuredly consistent* with any other Grace or Priviledge that we may be made partakers of; or are promised unto us. Some finding the weight and burden of their sins, and being called to *mourning and humiliation* on that account, are so taken up with it, as to lose the *sence of Forgiveness*, which rightly improved, would *promote* their sorrow, as their sorrow seems directly to *sweeten* their sence of forgiveness. *Sorrow* absolutely *exclusive* of the faith of forgiveness, is *legal*, and tendeth unto death. *Assurance* absolutely *exclusive* of Godly sorrow is presumption, and not a *perswasion from him that calleth us*. But *Gospel Sorrow*, and *Gospel Assurance* may well dwell in the same breast at the same time. Indeed as in all worldly Joyes there is a *secret wound*; So in all Godly sorrow and mourning *considered in its self*, there is a *secret Joy* and refreshment; Hence it doth not *wither* and dry up, but rather enlarge, open, and sweeten the heart. I am perswaded that generally they *mourn most*, who have *most Assurance*. And all

all True *Gospel mourners*, will be found to have the *root of Assurance* so grafted in them, that in its proper season (a time of trouble) it will undoubtedly flourish.

Sense of the power of sin consistent with Assurance.

3. *A deep sense of the indwelling power of sin, is consistent with Gospel Assurance.* Sense of indwelling sin will cause manifold perplexities in the Soul. Trouble, disquietments, sorrow, and *anguish of heart*, expressing themselves in sighs, mourning, groaning for deliverance, alwayes attend it. To what purpose do you speak to a Soul highly sensible of the *restless power of indwelling sin* concerning Assurance? Alas, saith he, I am ready to perish every moment, my *lusts* are strong, active, restless, yea *outragious*; they give me no rest, no liberty, and but little success do I obtain. *Assurance* is for Conquerours; for them that live at rest and peace. I lie groveling on the ground all my dayes, and must needs be uncertain what will be the issue. But when such an one hath done all he can, he will not be able to make more *wofull* complaints of this matter than *Paul* hath done before him, *Rom.* 7. and yet he closeth the discourse of it with as high an *expression of assurance* as any person needs to seek after, *v. last*, and *chap.* 8. 1. It is not *Assurance*, but *Enjoyment* that excludes this sense and trouble. But if men will think they can have *no Assurance*, because they have that, without which it is impossible they should have any, it is hard to give them relief. A little *Cruse of Salt* of the Gospel cast into these *bitter waters* will make them sweet and wholsom. Sense of the guilt of sin may consist with faith of its pardon and forgiveness in the blood of Christ. Godly sorrow may dwell in the same heart at the same time, with Joy in the Holy Ghost; and groaning after deliverance from the *power of sin*, with a Gracious perswasion that sin shall not *have dominion over us, because we are not under the Law but Grace.*

Fears and Temptations consistent with Assurance.

4. *Doubtings, Fears, Temptations, if not ordinarily prevailing are consistent with Gospel Assurance.* Though the Devils power be *limited* in reference unto the Saints, yet his hands are not *tyed*. Though he cannot *prevail* against them, yet he can *assault* them. And although there be not an *evil heart of unbelief* in Believers, yet there will still be *unbelief* in their hearts.

Such an evidence, conviction, and perswasion of Acceptance with God as are *exclusive* of all contrary reasonings, that suffer the Soul to hear nothing of *objections*, that free and quiet it from *all assaults*, are neither mentioned in the Scripture, nor consistent with that state wherein we walk before God, nor possible on the account of Sathans will and ability to tempt, or of our own remaining unbelief. *Assurance encourageth* us in our Combate, it *delivereth* us not from it. We may have *peace with God*, when we have none from the *assaults* of Sathan.

Now unless a man do duly consider the *tenor of the Covenant* wherein we walk with God, and the *nature* of that Gospel Obedience which he requires at *our* hands, with the state and Condition which is our Lot and portion whilest we live in this World, the *daily sense* of these things, with the trouble that must be undergone on their account, may keep him in the dark unto himself, and hinder him from that *establishment in believing* which otherwise he might attain unto. On this account some as *holy persons* as any in this World, being wholly taken up with the consideration of these *home-bred* perplexities, and not clearly acquainted with the way and tenor of assuring their souls before God according to the Rule of the Covenant of Grace, have passed away their dayes in *a bondage frame of spirit*, and unacquaintance with that *strong consolation* which God is abundantly willing that all the Heirs of promise should receive.

The Nature and Effects of Gospel Assurance.

5. *Evangelical Assurance is not a thing that consisteth in any point, and so incapable of variation.* It may be higher or lower, greater or less, obscure or attended with more Evidence. It is not *quite lost*; when it is not *quite at its highest*. God sometimes marvellously raiseth the Souls of his Saints with some close and neer approaches unto them; gives them a *sense* of his Eternal Love; *a taste* of the embraces of his Son, and the inhabitation of the Spirit, without the least *intervening disturbance*, then *this* is their Assurance. But this life is not a season to be alwayes *taking wages* in; our *work* is not yet done, we are not always to *abide in this Mount*; we must *down again* into the battel, fight again, cry again, complain again; Shall the Soul be thought now to have *lost its assurance*? Not at

at all; it had before *assurance* with Joy, Triumph, and Exultation; it hath it now, or may have, with *wrestling*, cryes, tears, and supplications. And a mans *Assurance* may be as *Good*, as *true*, when he *lyes on the earth* with a sense of sin, as when he is *carried up to the third Heaven* with a sense of Love, and foretaste of Glory. In brief, this Assurance of Salvation is such a Gracious Evangelical perswasion of Acceptance with God in Christ, and of an interest in the promises of preservation unto the End, wrought in Believers by the Holy Ghost, in and through the exercise of Faith, as for the most part produceth these Effects following.

Effects of Gospel Assurance in Believers.

1. It *gives delight in obedience*, and draws out Love in the duties *that unto God we do perform*. So much Assurance of a *Comfortable Issue* of their Obedience, of a blessed End of their labours and duties, of their purifying their hearts, and pressing after *universal Renovation* of mind and life, as may make them *Chearfull* in them, as may give Love and Delight in the pursuit of what they are engaged in, is *needfull* for the Saints, and they do not often go without it; and where this is, there is Gospel Assurance. To *run as men uncertain*, to fight as those that beat the Air, to travel as not any way perswaded of a comfortable entertainment or refreshment at the Journeys End, is a state and condition that God doth not *frequently* leave his people unto. And when he doth, it is a season wherein he receives very little of Glory from them, and they very little increase of grace in themselves. Many things, as hath been shewed, do interpose, many doubts arise and intangling perplexities, but still there is a *comfortable perswasion* kept alive, that there is a *Rest* provided, which makes them *willing* unto, and *chearfull* in their most difficult duties. This prevaileth in them, that their *labour in the Lord*, their watchings, praying, suffering, alms, mortification, fighting against temptation, crucifying the flesh with the lusts thereof, shall *not be in vain*. This gives them such a delight in their most difficult duties, as men have in a *hard Journey* towards a desirable home, or a place of Rest.

2. *It casts out fear, tormenting fear, such as fills the soul with perplexing uncertainties, hard thoughts of God, and dreadfull ap-*

apprehensions of wrath to come: There are three things spoken concerning *that fear*, which is consistent with the *Assurance of forgiveness*. First, With respect unto its *principle*, it is from a *spirit of bondage*, Rom. 18. 15. *We have not again received the spirit of bondage unto fear:* It is not such a fear as makes an occasional *incursion* upon the mind or soul; such as is excited and occasioned by *incident darkness* and Temptation, such as the *best*, and persons of the highest assurance are liable and obnoxious unto; but it is such as hath a compleat abiding *principle* in the Soul, even a *spirit of bondage*, a prevailing frame constantly inclining it to fear, or dreadful apprehensions of God and its own condition. Secondly, That it *tends to bondage*, it brings the soul into bondage, *Heb.* 2. 14, 15. *He dyed to deliver them who by fear of death were in bondage all their dayes.* Fear of death as penal, as it lyes in the Curse, which is that fear that proceeds from a *spirit of bondage*, brings the persons in whom it is into bondage; that is, it adds wearines, trouble, and anxiety of mind unto *fear*, and puts them upon all wayes and means imaginable, unduly and disorderly to seek for a remedy or relief. Thirdly, It hath *torment*; *fear hath torment*, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18. It gives no rest, no quietness unto the mind; now this is so cast out by Gospel Assurance of forgiveness, that though it may *assault the soul*, it shall not *possess* it; though it make *incursions* upon it, it shall not *dwell*, abide and prevail in it.

3. *It gives the soul an hope and expectation of the Glory that shall be revealed*, and secretly stirs it up and enlivens it unto a supportment in sufferings, tryals and Temptations. This is the *hope which makes not ashamed*, Rom. 5. 5. and that, because it will never expose the soul unto *disappointment*. Where ever there is the *root of Assurance*, there will be this *fruit of hope*. The proper object of it, is things absent, invisible, eternal; the promised reward in all the notions, respects and concernments of it. This *hope* goes out unto, in distresses, temptations, failings; and under a sense of the guilt and power of sin. Hence ariseth a spring of *secret relief* in the soul, something that calms the heart, and quiets the spirit in the midst of many a storm. Now, as where ever *Assurance* is, there will be this *hope*; so, where ever this *secret relieving hope is*, it grows on no other root,

root, but a *living perswasion* of a personal interest in the things hoped for.

4. As it will do many other things; so that I may give one comprehensive instance, *it will carry them out in whom it is, to dye for Christ*. Death unto men who saw not one step beyond it, was esteemed of all things *most terrible*. The *way* and *means* of its approach add unto its terrour. But this is nothing in comparison of what it is unto them who look through it as a passage into ensuing Eternity. For a man then to *chuse death* rather than life, in the most terrible manner of its approach, expecting an eternity to ensue, it argues a comfortable perswasion of a Good State and Condition after death. Now I am perswaded that there are *hundreds*, who upon Gospel saving accounts would *embrace a stake* for the *Testimony of Jesus*, who yet know not at all that they have the *Assurance* we speak of, and yet nothing else would enable them thereunto. But these things being *besides* the main of my Intendment, I shall pursue them no further, only the *Rule* is of use. Let the soul be sure to be well acquainted with *the nature* of that which it seeks after, and confesseth a sense of the want of.

RULE III.

Continuance in waiting necessary unto Peace and Consolation. The fourth Rule. Remove the Hinderances of Believing by a searching out of sin. Rules and Directions for that Duty.

Waiting necessary to obtain Peace.

Whatever your Condition be, and your Apprehension of it; yet continue waiting for a better issue, and give not over through weariness or impatience. This Rule contains the summ of the *Great Example* given us in this *Psalm*. Forgiveness in God being discovered, though no sence of a *particular interest* therein as yet obtained; that which the soul applies it self unto, is *diligent*, *carefull*, *constant*, *persevering waiting*; which is variously expressed in the 5, and 6, verses. The Holy Ghost tells us, that *light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*, *Psal.* 97. 11. Light and Gladness are the things now enquired after. Deliverance from darkness, misapprehensions of God, hard and misgiving thoughts of his own condition, is that which

which a ſoul in its depths reacheth towards. Now ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, Theſe things *are ſown for the Righteous*. Doth the *Huſbandman* after he caſts his ſeed into the Earth, immediately the *next day*, the *next week*, expect that it will be harveſt? doth he think to *reap* ſo ſoon as he hath ſown? or doth he immediately ſay, I have laboured in vain, here is no return, I will *pull up the hedge* of this field and lay it waſte? or I ſee a little *graſs in the blade*, but no corn, I will give it to the beaſts to devour it? No, *his God*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *inſtructs him unto diſcretion* and teacheth him; namely, what he muſt do, and how he muſt *look* for things in their ſeaſon. And ſhall not we be inſtructed by him? behold *the Huſbandman*, ſaith *James*, *waiteth for the precious fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience for it, untill he receive the early and the latter rain*, *Jam.* 5. 7. And is *Light ſown for them* that are in darkneſs, and ſhall they *ſtifle the ſeed* under the clods, or ſpoil the *tender blade* that is ſpringing up, or refuſe to *wait* for the watering and dews of the Spirit, that may bring it forth to perfection? *Waiting* is the only way to Eſtabliſhment and Aſſurance; we cannot *ſpeed* by our haſte; yea nothing puts the end ſo far away, as making too much haſte and ſpeed in our Journey. The ground hereof is, that a ſenſe of a *ſpecial intereſt* in forgiveneſs and acceptance, is given into the ſoul by a meer act of Soveraignty. It is not, it will not be obtained by or upon any rational concluſions or deductions that we can make: All that we can do is but to apply our ſelves to the removal of hinderances. For the *Peace* and *Reſt* ſought for, come from meer Prerogative. *When he giveth quietneſs, who can give trouble? and when he hideth his face, who can behold him? Job* 34. 29. Now what is the way to receive that which comes from meer *Soveraignty* and prerogative? doth not the nature of the thing require *humble waiting?* If then either *Impatience* caſt the ſoul into *frowardneſs*, or *wearineſs* make it *ſlothfull*, which are the two wayes whereby *waiting* is ruined; Let not ſuch an one expect any *comfortable iſſue* of his contending for deliverance out of his depths. And let not any think to make out their difficulties any other way: their *own Reaſonings* will not bring them to any eſtabliſhing concluſions; for they may lay *down propoſitions*, and have no conſiderable objections to lye againſt either of

of them, and yet be far enough from that ſweet conſolation, joy and aſſurance which is the product of the concluſion, when God is not pleaſed to give it in; yea a man may ſometimes gather up conſolation to himſelf upon ſuch terms, but it will not abide. So did *David*, *Pſal.*30.6,7. He thus argues with himſelf, *He whoſe mountain is made ſtrong*, to whom God is a defence, *he ſhall never be moved nor be ſhaken*; but *I am thus ſettled of God*, therefore I ſhall not be moved; and therein he rejoyceth. It is an expreſſion of *Exultation* that he uſeth; but what is the Iſſue of it? in the midſt of theſe pleaſing thoughts of his, God *hides his face*, and *he is troubled*; he cannot any longer draw out the ſweetneſs of the concluſion mentioned. It was in him before from the ſhines of Gods countenance, and not from any arguings of his own.

No diſappointment then; *no tediouſneſs* or wearineſs ſhould make the ſoul leave *waiting* on God, if it intend to attain conſolation and eſtabliſhment. So dealeth the Church, *Lam.*3.21. *This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope:* What is that ſhe calls to mind? *This, that it is of the Lords mercy that we are not conſumed, becauſe his compaſſions fail not, verſ.* 22. I will yet hope, I will yet continue in my expectation upon the account of never-failing compaſſion; of *endleſs mercies* in him, whatever my preſent condition be. And thence ſhe makes a bleſſed concluſion, *verſ.*26. *It is good that a man ſhould both hope, and quietly wait for the ſalvation of the Lord.* And this is *our third Rule*. It is good to hope and wait, whatever our preſent condition be, and not to give over, if we would not be ſure to fail: whereunto I ſpeak no more, becauſe *the cloſe of this Pſalm* inſiſts wholly on this duty, which muſt be further ſpoken unto.

RULE IV.

Search of Sin neceſſary to Conſolation.

Seeing in the courſe of our believing and obedience, that which is chiefly incumbent on us, for our coming up to eſtabliſhment and conſolation, is ſpiritual diligence in the removal of the hinderances thereof: *Let the ſoul that would attain thereunto, make through work in the ſearch of ſin, even to the ſins of youth*; that all ſcores on that account may clearly be wiped

out. If there be *much rubbiſh* left in the foundation of the building, no wonder if it alwayes ſhake and totter. Mens leaving of any ſin *unſearched to the bottom*, will poyſon all their conſolation. *David* knew this, when in dealing with God in his diſtreſſes, he prayes that he would not *remember the ſins and tranſgreſſions of his youth*, *Pſal.* 5. 7. *Youth* is oftentimes a time of great vanity and unmindfulneſs of God; many ſtains and ſpots are therein uſually brought upon the conſciences of men. *Childhood and youth are vanity*, *Eccleſ.* 11. 10. Not becauſe they *ſoon paſs* away, but becauſe they are uſually ſpent in vanity, as the following advice (of *chap.* 12. 1.) to remember God in *thoſe dayes*, doth manifeſt. The way of many is to *wear ſuch things out of mind*, and not to walk in a ſenſe of their folly and madneſs, never to make *through work* with God about them. I ſpeak of the Saints themſelves; for with others that live under the Means of Grace, whom God intends any way to make *uſefull* and *induſtrious* in their Generation, this is the uſual courſe; by *convictions*, reſtraining Grace, Afflictions, Love of Employment and Repute, God gives them *another heart* than they had for a ſeaſon. Another heart, but not a New heart. Hence *another courſe of life*, another profeſſion, other actions than formerly do flow; with this change they do content themſelves; they look on *what is paſt* perhaps with delight, or as things fit enough for thoſe daies, but not for thoſe they have attained unto; here they *reſt*, and therefore never come to *reſt*.

But I ſpeak of the *Saints* themſelves, who make not ſuch through, full, cloſe work in this kind as they ought. An after-reckoning may come in on this hand to their own diſturbance, and an inconquerable hinderance of their peace and ſettlement be brought in, on this account. So was it with *Job*, *chap.* 13. 26. *He makes me poſſeſs the ſins of my youth.* God filled his heart, his thoughts, his mind with theſe ſins; made them abide with him, ſo that *he poſſeſſed* them; they were alwayes preſent with him. He made the *ſins* of his youth the *ſufferings* of his age. And it is a ſad thing, as one ſpeaks, *when young ſins and old bones meet together*; as *Zophar*, *chap.* 20. 11. *His bones are filled with the ſins of his youth.* The joyous frame of ſome mens *Youth*, makes

makes way for ſad work in their *Age*. Take heed *young ones*, you are doing that which will abide with you to *Age*, if not to Eternity. This poſſeſſing of the ſins of youth, *Job* calls, the *writing of bitter things againſt him*. As indeed it is impoſſible but that ſin ſhould be *bitter* one time or other. God calls it a *root that beareth Gall and Wormwood*, Deut. 29. 18. *A root of bitterneſs ſpringing up into defilement*, Heb. 12. 15. This then is to be ſearched out to the bottom. *Iſrael* will not have ſucceſs nor peace whilſt there is an *Achan* in the Camp. Neither ſucceſs in Temptation, nor conſolation in Believing is to be expected, whilſt any *Achan*, any ſin unreckoned for, lyes in the conſcience.

Now for them who would ſeriouſly accompliſh a diligent ſearch in this matter, which is of ſuch importance unto them, let them take theſe two Directions.

1. Let them go over the conſideration of thoſe ſins, and others of the like nature, which may be reduced unto *the ſame General heads with them which we laid down before*, *as the ſins which generally caſt men into depths and intanglements*. And if they find they have contracted the guilt of any of them, let them not think ſtrange that they are yet *bewildred* in their condition, and do come ſhort of a refreſhing ſenſe of peace with God, or an intereſt in forgiveneſs. Rather let them admire the riches of Patience, Grace and forbearance, that they are not caſt utterly out of all hopes of a recovery. This will ſpeed an end unto their trouble, according to the direction given.

2. Let them *caſt the courſe of their times under ſuch heads and ſeaſons*, *as may give them the more clear and diſtinct view and apprehenſion of the paſſages in them between God and their ſouls*, *which may have been provoking unto him*. As,

Firſt, For the *ſtate of their inward man*, let them conſider,

Firſt, The unregenerate *part of their lives*, that which was confeſſedly ſo, before they had any real work of God upon their hearts, and therein enquire after two things.

1. If there were then any *great and ſignal eruptions of ſins againſt God*; for of ſuch God requires that a deep ſenſe be kept on our ſouls all our dayes. How often do we find *Paul* calling over the ſins of his life and wayes before his converſion. I was,

ſaith he, *injurious*, and a *blaſphemer*. Such reflexions ought perſons to have on any great provoking occaſions of ſin, that may keep them humble, and neceſſitate them conſtantly to look for a freſh ſenſe of pardon through the blood of Chriſt. If ſuch ſins lye neglected, and not conſidered according to their importance, they will weaken the ſoul in its comforts whilſt it lives in this world.

2. If there were any ſignal *intimations made of the Good will* and Love of God to the ſoul, which it broke off from through the power of its corruption and temptation, they require a due humbling conſideration all our dayes; but this hath been before ſpoken unto.

Secondly, In that part of our lives, which upon the call of God we have given up unto him. There are two ſorts of ſins that do effectually impeach our future peace and comfort, which ought therefore to be frequently renewed and *iſſued* in the blood of Chriſt. Firſt, Such as by reaſon of any *aggravating circumſtances* have been accompanied with ſome *eſpecial unkindneſs* towards God. Such are ſins after warnings, communications of a ſenſe of Love, after particular ingagements againſt them, relapſes, omiſſions of great opportunities and advantages for the furtherance of the Glory of God in the world. Theſe kinds of ſins have much unkindneſs attending them, and will be ſearched out if *we* cover them. 2. Sins attended with *ſcandal* towards fewer, or more, or any one ſingle perſon who is or may be concerned in us: The aggravations of theſe kind of ſins are commonly known.

Thirdly, The various outward ſtates and conditions which we have paſſed through, as of *Proſperity* and *Afflictions*, ſhould in like manner fall under this ſearch and conſideration. It is but ſeldom that we *fill up our duty*, or anſwer the mind of God in any diſpenſation of Providence. And if our neglect herein be not managed aright, they will undoubtedly hinder and interrupt our peace.

RULE

RULE V.

The fifth Rule. Diſtinction between Unbelief and Jealouſie. The ſixth Rule. Diſtinction between Faith and Spiritual Senſe.

Learn to diſtinguiſh between Unbelief and Jealouſie. There is a twofold *Unbelief*. (1.) That which is *univerſal* and privative, ſuch as is in all *unregenerate perſons*; they have no Faith at all, that is, they are dead men and have no principles of ſpiritual life. This I ſpeak not of, it is eaſily diſtinguiſhed from *any Grace*, being the utter enemy and privation as it were of them all. (2.) There is an Unbelief *partial and negative*, conſiſting in a ſtaggering at, or *Queſtioning* of the promiſes. This is diſpleaſing to God, a ſin which is attended with unknown Aggravations, though men uſually indulge it in themſelves. It is well expreſſed, *Pſal.* 78. 19, 20. God had promiſed his preſence to the people in the Wilderneſs to feed, ſuſtain, and preſerve them. How did they entertain theſe promiſes of God? *Can he*, ſay they, *give bread? can he give fleſh unto his people? verſ.* 20. What great ſin, crime, or offence is in this enquiry? Why verſ. 19. this is called *ſpeaking againſt God*; *They ſpake againſt God*; *they ſaid, Can he furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs?* Unbelief in queſtioning of the promiſes is a *ſpeaking againſt God*, a *limiting* of the Holy One of *Iſrael*, as it is called, *verſ.* 41. An aſſigning of bounds to his Goodneſs, Power, Kindneſs and Grace, according to what we find in our ſelves, which he abhorrs. By this *Unbelief* we make God like our ſelves; that is, our *limiting of him*, expecting no more from him, than either we can do, or ſee how it may be done. This you will ſay was a great ſin in the *Iſraelites*, becauſe they had no reaſon to doubt or *Queſtion* the promiſes of God. It is well we think ſo now; But when they were ſo *many thouſand families*, that had not one *bit of bread*, nor drop of water aforehand for themſelves and their little ones, there is no doubt but they thought themſelves to have as good reaſon to *queſtion* the promiſes, as any one of you can think that you have. We are ready to ſuppoſe that we have all the reaſons in the world; every one ſuppoſeth he hath thoſe that are more cogent than any other hath, to

Unbelief and Jealouſie diſtinguiſhed.

queſtion

question the promises of Grace, Pardon, and Forgiveness; and therefore the *questioning of them* is not their sin, but their duty. But pretend what we will, this is *speaking against God, limiting of him*, and that which is our keeping off from *stedfastness* and Comfort.

But now there may be a *Jealousie* in a *Gracious heart* concerning the *love of Christ*, which is acceptable unto him, at least which he is *tender* towards, that may be mistaken for this *questioning of the promises* by Unbelief, and so help to keep the soul in darkness and disconsolation, this the *Spouse* expresseth in her self, *Cant.* 8. 6. *Love is strong as death, jealousie is hard as the Grave, the Coals thereof are Coals of fire which hath a most vehement flame.* Love is the foundation. The root; but yet it bears that fruit which is *bitter* although it be wholsom; that which fills the soul with great perplexities, and makes it cry out for a nearer and more secure admission into the presence of Christ. *Set me*, saith the Spouse, *as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine Arms, for Jealousie is cruel as the Grave.* I cannot bear this distance from thee, these fears of my being disregarded by thee. *Set me as a seal on thy heart.*

Now this *spiritual jealousie* is the solicitousness of the mind of a Believer who hath a sincere love for Christ, about the heart, affection, and good will of Christ towards it, arising from a consciousness of its own unworthiness to be beloved by him, or accepted with him. All *causeless jealousie* ariseth from a secret sence and conviction of unworthiness in the person in whom it is, and an high esteem of him that is the object of it; or concerning whose love and affection any one is *Jealous*. So it is with this *spiritual Jealousie*; the root of it is *Love*, sincere love, that cannot be *quenched by waters*, nor drowned by floods, *v.* 7. which nothing can utterly prevail against, or overcome. This gives the soul *high thoughts* of the glorious Excellencies of Christ, fills it with admiration of him; these are mixed with a *due sense of its own baseness*, vileness and unworthiness to be owned by him, or accepted with him. Now if these thoughts on the one hand and on the other be not directed, guided, and managed aright by faith, which alone can shew the soul, how the Glory of Christ consisteth principally in this, that he being so excellent and glorious, is pleased to *love us* with love unexpressible who are vile and sinful; *Questionings* about the love of Christ, and those attended with much anxiety and trouble of mind, will arise. Now this frame may sometimes be taken for a *questioning of the promises of God*, and that to be a *defect* in faith which is an *excess* of love; or at most such an irregular acting of it, as the Lord Christ will be very tender towards, and which is consistent with peace and a due sense of the forgiveness of sins. Mistake not then these one for another, lest much *causeless unquietness* ensue in the Judgement which you are to make of your selves.

But you will say, how shall we distinguish between *these two*, so as not *causelessly to be disquieted* and perplexed; I answer briefly,

Different effects of Unbelief and Jealousie.

1. *Unbelief* working in and by the *questioning of the promises* of God, is a weakning, *disheartning*, dispiriting thing. It takes off the edge of the soul from spiritual duties, and weakens it both as unto delight and strength. The more any one *questions the promises of God*; the less life, power, joy and delight in obedience he hath. For *faith* is the spring and root of all other Graces; and according as that thriveth or goeth backwards so do they all. Men think sometimes, that their uncertainty of the love of God and of acceptance with him by the forgiveness of sin, doth put them upon the performance of many duties, and they can have no rest or peace in the omission of them. It may be it is so; Yea this is the state and Condition with many. But *what* are these duties? and *how* are they performed? And what is their acceptance with God? The *duties* themselves are legal, which *denomination* ariseth not from the Nature, Substance or Matter of them, for they may be the same that are required and injoyned in the Gospel, but from the *principle* from whence they proceed, and the *End* to which they are used. Now these in this case are both *legal*, their principle is *legal fear*, and their end is *legal Righteousness*, the whole attendance unto them a seeking *of righteousness as it were by the works of the Law*: and how are they performed? Plainly, with a bondage frame of Spirit; without Love, Joy, Liberty, or Delight; To quiet conscience, to pacifie God, are the things in them aimed at; all in opposition to the Blood and Righte-

Righteousnes of Christ. And are they accepted with God? Let them be *multiplyed* never so much, he every where testifieth that they are *abhorred* by him. This then *Unbelief* mixed with convictions will do. It is the proper way of venting and exercising it self where the soul is brought under the power of *conviction*. But as unto *Gospel Obedience* in all the duties of it, to be carryed on in communion with God by Christ, and delight in him, all *questioning of the promises* weakens and discourageth the soul, and makes them all wearisome and burdensome unto it.

But the *Jealousie* that is exercised about the *Person* and *Love* of *Christ* unto the soul, is quite of another nature, and produceth other effects. It *cheers*, *enlivens*, and enlargeth the soul, stirs up to activity, earnestnes, and industry in its enquiries and desires after Christ. *Jealousie*, saith the Spouse, is *hard as the grave*, therefore *set me as a Seal upon thy heart, as a Seal upon thy arm*. It makes the soul restlesly pant after neerer more sensible and more assured *Communion* with Christ; It stirs up vigorous and active *Spirits* in all duties. Every *doubt* and fear that it ingenerates concerning the love of Christ, stirs up the soul unto more earnestnes after him, delight in him, and sedulous watching against every thing that may keep it at a distance from him, or occasion him to hide, withdraw, or absent himself from it.

2. *Unbelief that works by questioning of the promises*, is universally *selfish*; it begins and ends in self. *Self-love* in desires after freedom from guilt, danger and punishment, are the life and soul of it. May this end be attained, it hath no delight in God. Nor doth it care what way it be attained so it may be attained. May such persons have any perswasions that they shall be *freed from death and hell*, be it by the *works of the Law*, or by the observance of any *inventions of their own*, whether any Glory ariseth unto God from his Grace and Faithfulnes or no, they are not solicitous.

The *Jealousie* we speak of hath the *Person of Christ* and his *Excellency* for its constant object. These it fills the mind with in many and various thoughts, still representing him more and more *amiable and more desirable* unto the soul. So doth the Spouse upon the like occasion, as you may see at large, *Cant.* 5. 9,

5. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Being at some loss for his *presence*, for he had withdrawn himself, not finding *her wonted communion* and entercourse with him, fearing that upon her provocation she might forfeit her Interest in his Love, she falls upon the Consideration of all his *Excellencies*, and thereby the more enflames her self unto desires after his company and enjoyment. And these *divers* things may be thus *distinguished* and discerned.

RULE VI.

Differences between faith and spiritual sense.

Learn to distinguish between faith and spiritual sense. This *Rule* the Apostle gives us. 2 Cor. 5. 7. *We walk by faith and not by sight.* It is the *sight of Glory* that is especially here intended. But *faith* and *sense* in any kind are clearly distinguished. That may be *believed*, which is not *felt*. Yea, It is the Will and Command of God, that *faith* should stand and do its work, where all *sense* fails, *Esa*, 50. 10. And it is with *spiritual sense* in this matter, as it is with *natural*. *Thomas* would not believe, unless he *saw* the object of his faith with his *Eyes*, or *felt* it with his hand: but saith our Saviour, *blessed are they who beleive, and have not seen*; who *believe* upon the *testimony of God*, without the help of their own *sense* or reason. And, if we will believe no more of God, of his Love, of Grace, of our acceptance with him, than we have a *spiritual affecting sense of*, we shall be many times at a loss. Sensible impressions from Gods Love, are great *springs of Joy*, but they are not absolutely necessary unto *peace*; nor unto an evidence that we do believe.

We will deal thus with the *vilest person* living. We will believe him whilest we have the certainty of our sense to secure us. And if we *deal* so with God what is there in our so doing, praise worthy? the Prophet tells us, what it is to *believe*, in respect of *providence*, Hab. 3. 17. When there is nothing left outward and visible to support us, then to *rest quietly on God*, that is to believe. So *Psal.* 73. 26. And the Apostle in the Example of *Abraham*, shews us what it is to believe with respect unto a *special promise*, Rom. 4. 18. *Against hope, he believed in hope.* When he saw not any outward *ordi-*

nary means for the accomplishment of the promise, when innumerable objections arose against any *such hope* as might have respect unto *such means*, yet he resolved all his thoughts into the *faithfulness of God* in the promise, and therein raised a new hope in its accomplishment; so *in hope believing against hope.*

To clear this matter you must observe what I intend by this *spiritual sense*, which you must learn to distinguish faith from; and to know that *true faith* interesting the soul in *forgiveness* may be without it, that so you may not conclude unto a real *want of pardon*, from the *want of the refreshing sense* of it.

Grace in general may be referred unto two heads. (1) Our *Acceptation* with God through Christ; the same upon the matter with the *forgiveness* of sin that we are treating of. And (2) Grace of *Sanctification* from God in Christ: Of *each* of these there is a *spiritual sense*, or Experience to be obtained; in *both* distinguished from faith that gives us a real Interest in *forgiveness*.

Spiritual sense wherein it consists.

Of the first, or the *spiritual sense* that we have of *Acceptance* with God there are sundry *parts* or degrees; As first, hereunto belongs *peace with God*, Rom. 5. 1. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.* This peace is the Rest and composure of the soul emerging out of *troubles*, upon the account of the Reconciliation and friendship made for it by the blood of Christ. And it hath, as *all peace* hath, two parts; First, a *freedom from war*, trouble, and distress; and Secondly, *Rest, Satisfaction* and *Contentment* in the condition attained. And this, at least the second part of it, belongs unto the *spiritual sense* that we enquire after. Again there is in it *Joy in the Holy Ghost*, called *joy unspeakable*, and *full of Glory*, 1 Pet 1.8. as also *glorying in the Lord*, upon the account of his grace, *Esa.* 45.26. with many the like *Effects*, proceeding from a *shedding abroad of the Love of God* in our hearts, Rom. 5.5.

Yea, you say these are the things *you aim at*; these are the things you would attain, and be filled withall. It is *this Peace, this Joy, this glorying in the Lord* that you would alwaies be in the possession of; I say you do well to *desire them*, to seek and labour after them: They are *purchased by Christ* for Believers; but you will do well to consider under what *notion* you do desire them. If you look on these things as belonging to the *Essence of faith*, without which you can have no real *interest in forgiveness* or acceptance with God, you greatly *deceive your own souls*, and put your selves out of the way of obtaining of them. These things are not *believing*, nor *adequate effects* of it; so as immediately to be produced wherever faith is: But they are *such consequents* of it, as may, or may not ensue upon it, according to the Will of God. Faith is a *seed* that contains them *virtually*; and out of which they may be in due time *educed* by the working of the *Word* and *Spirit*. And the way for any soul to be made partaker of them, is to *wait* on the Soveraignty of God's Grace who *createth peace* in the exercise of faith upon the promises. He then that would place *believing* in these things, and will not be perswaded that he doth believe, untill he is possessed of them; he doth both lose the benefit, advantage and comfort of what he hath, and neglecting the due acting of faith, puts himself out of the way of attaining what he aimeth at.

These things therefore are not needfull to give you *a real, saving interest in forgiveness*, as it is tendred in the promise of the Gospel by the blood of Christ. And it may be it is not the Will of God, that ever you should be *entrusted* with them. It may be, it would not be for your *good* and advantage so to be. Some servants that are *ill husbands*, must have their *wages* kept for them to the years end, or it will do them no good. It may be some would be such *spendthrifts* of satisfying peace and joy, and be so diverted by them from attending unto some necessary duties, as of *humiliation, mortification*, and *self-abasement*, without which their souls cannot live, that it would not be much to their advantage to be entrusted with them. It is from the *same Care* and Love, that *Peace* and *Joy* are detained from some Believers, and granted unto others.

You are therefore to *receive forgiveness* by a pure act of believing, in the way and manner before at large described. And do not think that it is not in you, unless you have constantly a *spiritual sense* of it in your hearts. See in the *mean time* that your Faith bringeth forth *Obedience*, and God in due time will cause it to bring forth *Peace*.

The like may be said concerning the other *head of Grace*;

though it be not so direct unto our purpose, yet tending also to the relief of the soul in its *depths*. This is the Grace that we have *from God in Christ* for our *sanctification*: When the soul cannot find this in himself, when he hath not a spiritual sense and experienceof its in-being and power, when it cannot evidently distinguish it from that which is not right or genuine; It is filled with fears and perplexities, and thinks it is yet in its sin. He is so indeed who hath *no Grace* in him; but not he alwaies who can *finde none in him*: But these are *different* things. A man may have Grace, and yet not have it at some times *much acting*; he may have Grace for *life*, when he hath it not for *fruitfulness* and comfort, though it be his duty so to have it, *Rev.* 3. 2. 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. And a man may have *Grace acting* in him, and yet not *know*, not be *sensible* that he hath *acting Grace*. We see persons frequently under great temptations of apprehension that they have *no Grace* at all, and yet at the same time to the clearest conviction of all who are able to discern spiritual things, sweetly and genuinely to *act Faith*, Love, Submission unto God, and that in an high and eminent manner, *Psa.*88. *Heman* complains that *he was free among the dead*; a man of no strength, *vers.*4,5. as one that had *no spiritual life*, no Grace. This afflicted his mind, and almost *distracted* him, *vers.* 15. and yet there can be no greater expressions of *Faith and Love* to God, than are mixed with his complaints.

These things I say then, are not to be judged of by *spiritual sense*, but we are to live *by faith* about them. And no soul ought to conclude, that because it hath not the *one*, it hath not the *other*; that because it hath not *Joy* and *Peace*, it hath no interest in *pardon* and *forgiveness*.

RULE VII.

The seventh Rule. Mix not foundation and building work together. The eighth; spend not time in heartless complaints, &c.

Mix not too much foundation and building work together. Our foundation in dealing with God is Christ alone, meer Grace and Pardon in him.

Our

Foundation and Spiritual Building distinguished.

Our *Building* is in and by *Holiness* and *Obedience*, as the fruits of that faith by which we have received the *Attonement*. And great mistakes there are in this matter which bring great *intanglements* on the souls of men. Some are all their dayes laying of the *foundation*, and are never able to build upon it unto any *comfort* to themselves, or usefulness unto others. And the *Reason* is, because they will be mixing with the foundation; *stones* that are fit only for the following *building*. They will be bringing their *Obedience*, duties, mortification of sin, and the like, unto the foundation. These are *precious stones* to *build* with, but unmeet to be first laid to bear upon them the *whole weight* of the building. The *foundation* is to be laid, as was said, in *meer Grace*, Mercy, Pardon in the blood of Christ. This the soul is to accept of, and to rest in meerly as it is Grace, without the consideration of any thing in its self, but that it is sinful and obnoxious unto ruine: This it finds a *difficulty* in, and would gladly have something of its own to mix with it: It cannot tell how to fix these foundation stones without some *cement* of its own endeavours and duty. And because these things will not mix, they spend a *fruitless labour* about it all their daies. But if the foundation be of Grace, it is not at all of works; for otherwise grace is no more grace. If any thing of our own be *mixed with Grace* in this matter, it utterly destroys the nature of Grace; which if it be not *alone*, it is not at *all*. But doth not this tend to licentiousness? doth not this render Obedience, Holiness, Duties, Mortification of sin, and good works, *needless?* God forbid; yea this is the only way to *order them aright* unto the glory of God. Have we nothing to do but to *lay the foundation?* yes, all our daies we are to *build* upon it, when it is surely and firmly laid. And these are the means and waies of our Edification. This then is the soul to do who would come to peace and settlement. Let it let go all former endeavours if it have been engaged unto any of that kind. And let it alone receive, admit of, and adhere to *meer Grace*, mercy and pardon, with a full sense that in its self it hath nothing for which it should have an interest in them, but that all is of *meer Grace* through Jesus Christ. *Other foundation can no man lay*. Depart not hence until this work be well over. Surcease not an earnest endeavour with your own hearts to *acquiesce in*

this.

this Righteouſneſs of God, and to bring your ſouls unto a comfortable perſwaſion that God for *Chriſt his ſake hath freely forgiven you all your ſins*. Stir not hence untill this be effected. If you have been engaged in another way, that is, to ſeek for an intereſt in the Pardon of ſin by ſome *endeavours of your own*, it is not unlikely but that you are filled with the fruit of your own doings; that is, that you go on with all kind of uncertainties, and without any kind of conſtant peace. Return then again hither; bring this *foundation work* to a bleſſed iſſue in the blood of Chriſt, and when that is done, up and be doing.

You know how fatal and ruinous it is for ſouls to *abuſe the Grace of God*, and the Apprehenſion of the pardon of ſins in the courſe of their obedience, to countenance themſelves in ſin, or the negligence of any duty; this is to turn *the Grace of God into wantonneſs*, as we have elſewhere at large declared. And it is no leſs *pernicious* to bring the duties of our obedience, any reſerves for them, any hopes about them, into the *matter of pardon and forgiveneſs*, as we are to receive them from God. But theſe things, as they are diſtinct in themſelves; ſo they muſt be diſtinctly managed in the ſoul; and the *confounding* of them, is that which diſturbs the *Peace*, and weakens the *Obedience* of many. In a confuſed manner they labour to keep up a life of *Grace* and *Duty*, which will be in their places *conjoyned*, but not *mixed* or compounded.

Firſt, To take up *Mercy*, *Pardon* and Forgiveneſs abſolutely on the account of Chriſt, and then to yield *all obedience* in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and for the Love of Chriſt, is the life of a Believer, *Epheſ.* 2. 8, 9, 10.

RULE VIII.

Complaints fruitleſs and heartleſs to be avoided.

Take heed of ſpending time in complaints, when vigorous actings of Grace are your duty. Fruitleſs and heartleſs complaints, bemoanings of themſelves and their condition is the ſubſtance of the *profeſſion* that ſome make. If they can object againſt themſelves, and form *Complaints* out of their conditions, they ſuppoſe they have done their duty. I have known ſome who have ſpent a good part of their time *in going up and down from one to another with their objections and complaints*. Theſe things are

are contrary to the life of Faith. It is good indeed in our ſpiritual diſtreſſes to apply our ſelves unto them who are furniſhed with *the tongue of the learned*, to know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon unto him that is weary. But for perſons to fill their *minds* and *imaginations* with their own Objections and *Complaints*, not endeavouring to mix the words that are ſpoken for their relief and direction, with faith, but going on ſtill in their own way, this is of no uſe or advantage. And yet ſome, I fear, may pleaſe themſelves in ſuch courſe, as if it had ſomewhat of *Eminency* in Religion in it.

Others, it may be, drive the ſame trade in their *Thoughts*, although they make not outwardly ſuch *Complaints*. They are converſant for the moſt part with *heartleſs deſpondings*. And in ſome they are multiplied by their natural Conſtitutions or *Diſtempers*. Examples of this kind occur unto us every day. Now what is the *Advantage* of theſe things? what did *Sion* get when ſhe cryed, *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten me?* or *Jacob* when he ſaid, *My way is hid from the Lord, and my Judgment is paſſed over from my God?* Doubtleſs they did but prejudice themſelves. How doth *David* rouſe up himſelf when he found his mind inclinable unto ſuch a frame? For having ſaid, *Why doſt thou caſt me off, O God? why go I mourning becauſe of the oppreſſion of mine enemy?* He quickly rebukes and recollects himſelf, ſaying, *Why art thou caſt down O my Soul, and why art thou diſquieted within me? hope in God*, Pſal. 4. 2, 5.

We muſt ſay then unto ſuch heartleſs Complainers, as God did to *Joſhuah*, *Get you up, why lye you thus upon your faces?* Do you think to mend your condition by *wiſhing* it better, or *complaining* it is ſo bad? are your complaints of want of an Intereſt in forgiveneſs, a ſanctified means to obtain it? not at all! you will not deal ſo with your ſelves in things *natural* or *civil*. In ſuch things you will take an induſtrious courſe for a remedy, or for relief. In things of the ſmalleſt importance in this world, and unto this life, you will not content your ſelves with *wiſhing* and *complaining*. As though *induſtry* in the uſe of *natural means* for the attaining of *natural Ends*, were the Ordinance of God, and diligence in the uſe of *ſpiritual means* for the obtaining of *ſpiritual Ends* were not.

Do

Do not conſult your own hearts only. What is it that the *Scripture* calls for in your condition? Is it not *Induſtry* and *Activity* of ſpirit? And what doth the nature of the thing require? diſtreſs that is yet hoped to be conquered, evidently calls for *Induſtry* and diligence in the uſe of means for deliverance. If you are paſt hope, it avails not to complain. If you are not, why do you give up your ſelves to *deſpondencies?* Our Saviour tells us, that the *Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*, Mat. 11. 12. It is not of the *outward violence* of its *Enemies* ſeeking to deſtroy it, that our Saviour ſpeaks, but of that ſpiritual fervency and ardency of mind, that is in thoſe who intend to be partakers of it: For βιάζεται, *is taken by force*, Luke 16. 16. is no more but εὐαγγελίζεται, is *preached*, the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man preſſeth into it; preſſing into it, and *taking it by force*, are the ſame thing. There is then a *violence*, a reſtleſs activity and vigour of ſpirit to be uſed and exerciſed for an intereſt in this Kingdom. Apply this to your condition. Are you in depths and doubts, ſtaggering and uncertain, not knowing what is your condition, nor whether you have any intereſt in the forgiveneſs that is with God? Are you toſſed up and down *between hopes and fears*, want peace, conſolation and eſtabliſhment? why lye you upon your faces? get up, watch, pray, faſt, meditate, offer violence to your luſts and corruptions; fear not, ſtartle not at their *crying* or importunities to be ſpared; preſs unto the Throne of Grace by Prayers, Supplications, Importunities, reſtleſs requeſts: This is the way to take the Kingdom of Heaven. Theſe things are not *Peace*, they are not *Aſſurance*, but they are part of the *means that God hath appointed* for the attainment of them

What then is the peculiar *Inſtruction* that is proper for ſouls in this condition? that plainly of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Give all diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure.* Alas! ſaith the ſoul, I am at no certainty, but rather am afflicted and toſſed, and not comforted; my heart will come to no ſtability; I have no *Aſſurance*, know not whether I am choſen or called; yea fear that my latter end will be darkneſs and ſorrow. There is I confeſs *forgiveneſs with God*, but juſtly fear that I ſhall never be made partaker of it. What is the uſual courſe that is taken in

in ſuch complaints by them to whom they are made; Moſtly they have a *good opinion* of them that come with theſe complaints: They Judge them to be godly and holy, though much in the dark; if they knew them not before, yet upon theſe *complaints* they begin to be *well perſwaded* of them. Hereupon they are moved with *pity and compaſſion*, and troubled to ſee them in their perplexities; and ſet themſelves to *tender relief* unto them: They mind them of the *gracious promiſes* of the Goſpel; it may be fix upon ſome *one* or *more* of them in particular; which they explain unto them: Thence they minde them of the abundant Grace and *tender Love* of the Father, of the mercifull care of our *High Prieſt*, his readineſs and ability to ſave, his communications of ſuch favours unto them as they perceive not. By ſuch waies and means, by ſuch *Applications* do they ſeek to relieve them in the ſtate and condition wherein they are. But what is the iſſue? Doth not this Relief prove for the moſt part like the *morning cloud*, and as the early dew; a little *refreſhment* it may be it yields for a ſeaſon, but it is quickly again dryed up, and the ſoul left in its *heartleſs* withering condition.

You will ſay then, do you *condemn* this manner of proceeding with the ſouls of men in their doubts, fears and diſtreſſes? or would you have them *pine away* under the ſenſe of their condition, or abide in this uncertainty all their daies? I anſwer, no; I condemn not the way, I would not have any left comfortleſs in their depths. But yet I would give theſe two Cautions.

1. That *Spiritual Wiſdom* and prudence is greatly required in this matter, in the Adminiſtration of conſolation to diſtreſſed ſouls. If in any thing, the tongue of the *ſpiritually learned* is required herein; namely, in ſpeaking a *word in ſeaſon to them that are weary.* A promiſcuous drawing out of *Goſpel conſolations*, without a previous right Judgement concerning the true ſtate and condition of the ſouls applyed unto, is ſeldom *uſeful*, oft-times *pernicious.* And let men take care, how they commit their ſouls and conſciences unto ſuch who have *good words* in readineſs for all comers.

2. If Counſel and Conſolation of this kind be given, ſpecial and diſtinct from the Advice we are upon of *Watchfulneſs*, Diligence, Spiritual Violence in a way of duty; it is exceed-

ing dangerous, and will aſſuredly prove uſeleſs. For let us ſee what counſel the holy Ghoſt gives in this condition unto them who would make their *Calling and Election ſure*, who would be freed from their preſent fears and uncertainties, who complain of their darkneſs and dangers; why ſaith he, *giving all diligence add to your faith vertue*; and ſo on, *v.* 5. *For*, ſaith he, *if you do theſe things, an entrance ſhall be Adminiſtred unto you abundantly into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, v. 11. You who are now in the *Skirts* of it, who know not whether you belong unto it or no, you ſhall have an *Entrance* into the Kingdom of Chriſt, and all the Joy, comforts, conſolations and Glory of it, ſhall be richly adminiſtred unto you. This is the advice that the Holy Ghoſt gives in this caſe? And this is the bleſſed promiſe annexed unto the following of this advice. And this the former compaſſionate courſe of *Adminiſtring conſolation*, is not to be ſeparated from.

But you will it may be here ſay, *We are ſo dead and dull, ſo chained under the power of corruptions and temptations, that we are not able thus to put forth the fruit of a ſpiritual life in adding one Grace unto another.* But do you uſe *diligence*, Study, Endeavours, *all diligence*, diligence at all times, in all wayes by God appointed, all *manner of diligence* within and without, in private and publick, to this end and purpoſe? do you ſtudy, meditate, pray, watch, faſt, neglect no opportunity, keep your hearts, ſearch, try, examine your ſelves, fly Temptations, and occaſions of cooling, deadning, and ſtifling Grace? Do theſe things abound in you? *Alas, you cannot do thus, you are ſo weak, ſo indiſpoſed*; but alas *you will not*, you will not part with your *eaſe*, you will not *Crucifie your luſts*, you will not uſe *all diligence*; but muſt come to it, or be contented to ſpend all your dayes in *darkneſs*, and to lye down in ſorrow.

Thus do men frequently miſcarry; Is it any news for perſons to bewail the folly of their Nature and *Wayes* in the Morning and Evening, and yet ſcarce *ſtand upon their watch any part of the day*, or in any occaſion of the day? Is this giving *all diligence?* Is this working out our Salvation *with fear and trembling?* And may we not ſee Profeſſors, even *indulging to themſelves* in wayes of Vanity, folly, wrath, envy, ſloth and the like, and yet complain at what a loſs they are, how unquiet, how uncer-

uncertain? God forbid it ſhould be otherwiſe with you; or that we ſhould endeavour to ſpeak peace unto you in any ſuch a frame. To hear of a perſon, that he walks ſlothfully, careleſly, or indulgeth his corruptions, and to find him complaining that he is at a loſs whether he have any intereſt in Pardon or no, to give or tender Comfort to ſuch mourners without a due Admonition of their duty to *uſe diligence* in the uſe of means, for to help on their delivery out of the condition wherein they are, is to tender *poyſon* unto them.

To this then the ſoul muſt come that is in *depths*, if it intend to be delivered. *Heartleſs complaints*, with excuſes to keep it from *vigorous ſpiritual diligence* muſt be laid aſide; if not, ordinarily, *Peace*, *Reſt*, and ſtability will not be obtained. A great Example hereof we have in the Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. She is *drouſie* and indiſpoſed unto communion with Chriſt, whereunto ſhe is invited, *v.* 2. this puts her upon making excuſes from the unfitneſs of the time, and her preſent indiſpoſition and unpreparedneſs as to the duty whereunto ſhe was called, *v.* 3. Hereupon *Chriſt withdraws* his preſence from her, and leaves her at a loſs as to her former comforts, *v.* 6. what courſe doth ſhe now take? doth ſhe now *lye down again* in her former Slumber? doth ſhe make uſe of her former *excuſes* and pretences, why ſhe could not engage into the duties ſhe was called unto? no ſuch thing! but now with all Earneſtneſs, Diligence, Sedulity and Importunity, She engageth in all manner of duties, whereby ſhe may recover her former Comforts, as you may ſee in the Text. And this muſt be the courſe of others, who would obtain the ſame ſucceſs. Spiritual *peace* and *ſloth* will never dwell together in the ſame ſoul and Conſcience.

RULE IX.

The ninth Rule. Take heed of undue expreſſions concerning God and his wayes in diſtreſs.

Take heed in doubts, diſtreſſes, and perplexities of hard thoughts of God; haſty unweighed expreſſions concerning him or his wayes, with or of ſecret reſolves, that it were as good give over waiting as Haſty Expreſſions concerning God to be avoided.

continue in the state wherein you are, seeing your Condition is remediless.

On *three occasions* are such *thoughts* and *resolves* apt to befall the minds of men, which sometimes break forth into *unwarrantable Expressions* concerning God himself and his wayes.

1. In *deep perplexities* of mind, by reason of some pressing *terrour* from the Lord.

2. On the *long wearisome continuance* of some *tempting* distress, and hereof we have many examples, some whereof shall be mentioned.

3. In *spiritual disappointments* through the strength of Lust or Temptation. When a person hath it may be recovered himself through *Grace*, from a perplexing sense of the guilt of some sin, or it may be from a course shorter or longer, lesser or greater of *backsliding* and negligent walking with God, and therein goes on *cheerfully* for a season in the course of his Obedience, if this person through the power of Temptation, Subtilty of Lusts, neglect of watchfulness, by one means or other, is surprised in the sins, or wayes that he had relinquished, or is turned aside from the vigour of that course wherein he was engaged, he may be exposed not only to great *despondencies*, but also be overtaken with *secret resolves* to give over contending, seeing it is to *no more purpose*, nay to *no purpose*, and that God regards him not at all.

Take an Instance or two in each kind.

The first we have in *Job* in the Extremity of his tryals and terrours from the Lord. See among other places, chap. 10. v. 3. *Is it*, saith he to God, *good for thee that thou shouldst oppress, that thou shouldst despise the work of thy hands?* Ah poor worms, with whom have we to do? who shall say unto a *King*, *Thou art wicked, and to Princes, Ye are ungodly?* and will ye speak so to him, who respecteth not the *persons of Princes*, nor regardeth them more than the poorest in the Earth? And see what *conclusions* from such thoughts as these he doth inferr, Chap. 14. 15, 16, 17. *Thou numbrest my steps, dost thou not watch over my sin? my transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sowest up my Iniquity.* He chargeth God to be his Enemy, one that *watched* for all opportunities and advantages against him, that seemed to be *glad* at his halting, and take care that none

none of his sins should *be missing* when he intended to deal with him. Had this indeed been *the Case* with him, he had perished unto Eternity, as elsewhere he acknowledged.

Of the *other*, we have an Instance in the Church, Lament. 3. 18. *I said my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.* *Present Grace* in spiritual strength, and *future expectation* of mercy are all gone. And what is got by this? secret hard thoughts of God himself are hereby ingenerated; as v. 8. *When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my Prayers*; v. 44. *Thou hast covered thy self with a Cloud that our Prayers should not pass through.* These things are *grievous* unto *God* to bear, and no way *useful* to the soul in its Condition. Yea they more and more unfit it for every *duty* that may lye in a tendency to its relief and deliverance.

So was it with *Jonah*, Chap. 2. 4. *I said I am cast out of thy sight*; all is lost and gone with me, as *good give over* as Contend, I do but labour in vain; perish I must as *one* cast out of the sight of God. The like complaints fell also from *Heman* in his distress, *Psal.* 88.

The *General* who heard one of his Souldiers cry out upon a fresh *onset* of the Enemy, *Now we are undone*, *Now we are ruined*, call'd him *Traytor*, and told him it was not so, whilest *he could weild his Sword*. It is not for every *private Souldier* on every danger, to make a Judgement of the battel. That is the work of the *General*. Jesus Christ is the *Captain of our Salvation*, he hath undertaken the leading and conduct of our souls through all our difficulties. Our *Duty* is to fight and contend; his *Work* is to take care of the *Event*; and to him it is to be committed.

That then you make a due use of this Rule, keep alwaies in your minds these two Considerations.

1. *That it is not for you to take the Judgement of Christ out of his hand*, and to be passing sentence upon your own souls. Judgement as to the *state and condition* of men is committed unto Christ, and to him it is to be left. This we were directed unto in our *first Rule*, and it is of special use in the case under consideration. *Self-judging* in reference unto *sin*, and the demerit of it, is our duty. The judging of our *state* and *condition* Judgement of mens states in the hand of Christ alone.

dition in Relation unto the Remedy provided, is the *Office* and Work of Jesus Christ, with whom it is to be left.

2. Consider, that *hard thoughts of what God will do with you, and harsh desponding sentences pronounced against your selves, will unsensibly alienate your hearts from God.* It may be when mens *perplexities* are at the height, and the most sad Expressions are as it were wrested from them, they yet think they must *Justifie God*, and that they do so accordingly. But yet such *thoughts* as those mentioned, are very apt to infect the mind with other inclinations. For after a while they will prevail with the soul to look on God as *an Enemy*, as one that hath no *delight* in it; and what will be the consequent thereof is easily discernable. None will continue to *love* long, where they expect no returns. Suffer not then *your minds* to be tainted with such thoughts; and let not God be dishonoured by any such expressions as reflect on that infinite Grace and compassion which he is exercising towards you.

RULE X.

The tenth Rule. Duly improve the least Appearances of God in a way of Grace or Pardon.

The least Appearances of Grace to be improved.

If you would come to stability, and a comforting perswasion of an *Interest in forgiveness* by the Blood of Christ, *improve the least Appearances of him unto your souls, and the least Intimations of his Love in Pardon, that are made unto you in the way of God.* The *Spouse* takes notice of her *Husband*, and rejoyceth in him, when he stands *behind the wall*, when he doth but *look forth at the window, and shew himself at the lattice*, when she could have no clear sight of him, *Cant.* 2. 9. She lays hold on the least *Appearance* of him to support her heart withall, and to stir up her Affections towards him. Men in *dangers* do not sit still to wait untill something presents it self unto them that will give *assured deliverance*; but they close with that which first presents it self unto them, that is of the same *kind and nature* with what they look after. And thus God doth in many places express such supportments as give the soul little more than *a possibility of attaining the End* aimed at. As *Zeph.* 2. 3. *It may be ye shall be hid*

hid in the day of the Lords Anger. And *Joel* 2. 14. *Who knoweth but he will return and leave a blessing?* It *may be* we shall be hid; it *may be* we shall have a blessing. And this was the best ground that *Jonathan* had for the great undertaking against the Enemies of God, 1 *Sam.* 14. 6. *It may be God will go along with us.* And to what end doth God at any time make these seemingly *dubious intimations* of Grace and Mercy? is it that we should by the difficulty included in them, be *discouraged* and kept from him? not at all; he speaks nothing to *deterr sinners*, especially *distressed sinners*, from trusting in him. But his End is that we should close with, and lay hold upon, and *improve* the least *Appearances of Grace*, which this kind of expressions do give unto us. When men are in a voyage at Sea, and meet with a Storm or a Tempest which abides upon them, and they fear will at last prevail against them; if they make so far a *discovery of Land*, as that they can say, *it may be there is Land*; it may be it is such a place where there is a safe harbour, none can positively say, *it is not*; there lyes no demonstration against it; in this condition, especially if there be *no other way* of escape, delivery or safety proposed to them, this is enough to make them to follow on that discovery, and with all diligence to steer their course that way, untill they have made a tryal of it unto the utmost. The soul of which we speak is *afflicted* and *tossed*, and not *comforted*. There is in the *Intimation of Grace* and *Pardon* intended, a remote discovery made of some relief. This *may be* Christ, it *may be* Forgiveness. This it is convinced of; it cannot deny but at such or such a time, under such Ordinances, or in such Duties, it was perswaded that yet there *might be Mercy* and Pardon for it. This is enough to carry it to steer its course constantly that way; to press forward unto that harbour which will give it rest. How little was it that *David* had to bring his soul unto a composure in his great distress, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25, 26. *If*, saith he, *I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me the Ark, and the place of his habitation; but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do unto me as seemeth good unto him.* He hath nothing but Soveraign Grace to rest upon, and that he gives himself up unto.

Faith is indeed the *souls Venture for Eternity*. Something it is to

to *venture* on, as to its eternal condition. It must either adhere unto *its self*, or its own vain hopes of a Righteousness of its own; or it must give over *all expectation* and lye down in darkness; or it must shut out all dreadfull *Apprehensions of Eternity*, by the power and activity of its lusts and carnal Affections; or it must, whatever its discouragements be, cast it self *upon Pardon* in the blood of Jesus Christ. Now if all the former waies be *detestable* and *pernicious*, if the best of them be a direct opposition unto the Gospel, what hath the soul that enquires after these things to do, but to adhere unto the last, and to improve every encouragement, even the least to that purpose.

As a close unto these *General Rules*, I shall only add this last direction: Consider in particular where the stress and hinderance lyes, that keeps you off from *Peace* through an establishment persuasion of an interest in Evangelical Pardon. Do not alwaies *fluctuate* up and down in *generals* and uncertainties; but drive things unto a *particular issue*, that it may be tryed whether it be of sufficient efficacy to keep you in your present entanglements and despondencies. Search out *your wound*, that it may be tryed whether it be curable or no.

Now in this case we cannot expect that persons should suggest their own *particular concerns*, that so they might be considered and be brought unto the Rule; but we must our selves reduce such distresses, as may, or do in this matter befall the minds of men, unto some *General heads*, and give a Judgment concerning them according to the Word of Truth. Indeed *particular cases* as varied by circumstances are endless; nor can they be spoken unto in *this way of Instruction* and Direction, but they must be left unto occasional considerations of them, as they are represented unto them who are entrusted to dispense the mysteries of God. Besides, many have laboured already in *this matter*, and their endeavours are in, and of general use. Although it must be said, as was before observed, that *special cases* are so varied by their *Circumstances*, that it is very rare that any *Resolutions* of them are every way adequate, and suited unto the Apprehensions of them that are exercised with them. I shall therefore call things unto some *general heads* whereunto most of the *Objections* that *distressed sinners* make against their own peace, may be reduced; and leave the Light of them to be applied in particular unto the relief of the souls of men, as God shall be pleased to make *them effectual*.

Second General Head of the Application of the Truth insisted on. Grounds of Spiritual Disquietments considered. The first; Afflictions. Waies and means of the Aggravation of Afflictions. Rules about them.

That which now lyeth before us, is the *second part* of the second *General Use* educed from the Truth insisted on. Our aim is to lead on souls *towards peace with God*, through a gracious perswasion of their Interest in that *forgiveness* which is with him. And it consists, as was declared, in a Consideration of some of those *disquietments* which befall the minds of men, and keep them off from *Establishment* in this matter.

Afflictions a cause of spiritual disquietments.

And first, such disquietments and objections against the peace of the soul, and its acceptance with God, will arise from *Afflictions*; they have done so of old, they do so in many at this day. *Afflictions*, I say, greatned unto the mind from their *Nature*, or by their Concomitants do oft-times variously affect it, and sometimes prevail to darken it so far as to ingenerate thoughts, that they are *all messengers of wrath*, all tokens of displeasure, and so consequently evidences that we are *not pardoned* or accepted with God.

Now this is a time of *great Afflictions* unto many, and those some of them *such* as have innumerable *aggravating circumstances* accompanying of them. Some have come with a *dreadfull surprizal* in things not looked for; such as falls not out in the providence of God in many Generations. Such is the condition of them who are reduced to the utmost extremity by *the late consuming fire*; some have had their *whole families*, all their posterity taken from them; in *a few dayes* they have been suddenly bereaved, as in the *Plague*. Some in their own persons, or in their Relations, have had sore, long and grievous tryals from *Oppressions* and *Persecutions*; and these things have *various effects* on the minds of men. Some we find crying with that wicked King, *This evil is of the Lord, why should we wait any longer for him?* and give up themselves to seek relief from

their own luſts. Some bear up under their troubles with a *natural ſtoutneſs of ſpirit*; ſome have received a *ſanctified uſe* and improvement of their trials, with joy in the Lord. But *many* we find to *go heavily* under their burdens, having their minds darkned with many miſapprehenſions of the Love of God, and of their own *perſonal intereſt* in his Grace. It is not therefore unſeaſonable to ſpeak a little to this Head of trouble in our entrance. Outward troubles, I ſay, are oftentimes *occaſions*, if not the *cauſes* of great inward diſtreſſes. You know how the Saints of old expreſſed their ſenſe of them, and conflicts with them. The complaints of *David* are familiar to all who attend unto any communion with God in theſe things; ſo are thoſe of *Job*, *Heman*, *Jonah*, *Jeremiah*, and others; neither do they complain only of their troubles, but of the ſenſe which they had of *Gods diſpleaſure* in and under them, and of his *hiding of his face* from them whileſt they were ſo exerciſed.

It is not otherwiſe at preſent, as is known unto ſuch as converſe with many, who are either *ſurprized* with unexpected troubles, or *worn* out with tryals and diſappointments of an expected end. They conſider themſelves both *abſolutely*, and with reſpect unto *others*, and on both accounts are filled with *dark thoughts* and deſpondencies. Saith one, I am *rolled* from one trial unto another; the clouds with me return ſtill after the rain. All the *billows and water-ſpouts of God* go over me. In my *perſon*, it may be, preſſed with ſickneſs, pains, troubles; in my *Relations*, with their ſins, miſcarriages, or death; in my *outward ſtate*, in wants, loſſes, diſ-reputation, I am even as a withered branch. Surely if God had any *eſpecial regard* unto my ſoul, it would not be thus with me; or ſome *timely end* would have been put unto theſe diſpenſations. On the other hand, they take a view of *ſome other* Profeſſors; they ſee that their Tables are ſpread day by day; that the *Candle of the Lord* ſhines continually on their Tabernacle, and that in all things they have their hearts deſire, Setting aſide the *common attendencies of humane nature*, and nothing befalls them grievous in the world. Thus it is with them. And ſurely had I an intereſt in his Grace, in Pardon, the *God of Iſrael* would not thus purſue a *Flea in the Mountains*, nor ſet himſelf in battel array againſt

againſt a leaf driven to and fro with the wind; he would ſpare me a little, and let me alone for a moment; but as things are with me, I fear *my way is hidden from the Lord*, and my Judgement is paſſed over from my God. Theſe kind of thoughts do perplex the minds of men, and keep them off from partaking of that *ſtrong conſolation* which God is abundantly willing they ſhould receive, by a comfortable perſwaſion of a bleſſed Intereſt in that forgiveneſs that is with him.

And this was the very caſe of *David*; or at leaſt theſe *outward Troubles* were a ſpecial part of thoſe *depths*, out of which he cryed for relief, by a ſenſe of Pardon, Grace and Redemption with God.

I anſwer to theſe Complaints; Firſt, That there are ſo many *excellent things* ſpoken concerning *Afflictions*; their Neceſſity, their Uſefulneſs, and the like; ſuch bleſſed ends are aſſigned unto them, and in many have been compaſſed and fulfilled by them, that a man unacquainted with the exerciſe wherewith they are attended, would think it impoſſible that any one ſhould be ſhaken in mind, as to the Love and favour of God on their account. But as the Apoſtle tells us, that *no Afflictions are joyous at preſent, but grievous*; ſo he who made in the cloſe of his tryals that ſolemn profeſſion, *That it was good for him that he had been afflicted*, yet we know, as hath been declared, how he was diſtreſſed under them. There are therefore ſundry *Accidental things* which accompany *great Afflictions* that ſeem to exempt them from the common Rule, and the promiſe of Love and Grace: As,

Means of the Aggravation of Affliction.

1. The *Remembrance of paſt and buryed miſcarriages and ſins*, lyes in the boſom of many Afflictions: It was ſo with *Job*; *Thou makeſt me*, ſaith he, *to poſſeſs the ſins of my youth*. See his *plea* to that purpoſe, *chap.* 13. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. In the midſt of his troubles and diſtreſſes, God revived upon his ſpirit a ſenſe of former ſins, even the ſins of his youth, and made him to *poſſeſs them*? he filled his ſoul and mind with thoughts of them, and anxiety about them. This made him fear leſt *God was his enemy*, and would continue to deal with him in all ſeverity. So was it with *Joſephs* Brethren in their diſtreſſes, *Gen.* 42. 21. *They ſaid one to another*, *We are verily guilty concerning*

cerning our Brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us. And *verſ.* 22. *Behold his blood is required.* Their diſtreſs revives a deep perplexing ſenſe of the guilt of ſin many years paſt before, and that under all its *aggravating circumſtances* which ſpoiled them of all their reliefs and comforts, filling them with Confuſion and Trouble, though abſolutely innocent as to what was come on them. And the like appeared in the *Widdow of Zarepth*a, with whom *Elijah* ſojourned during the famine. Upon the death of her Son, which it ſeems was ſomewhat extraordinary, ſhe cryed out unto the Prophet, *What have I to do with thee thou man of God? Art thou come to call my ſins to remembrance, and to ſlay my Son?* 1 King. 17. 18. It ſeems ſome *great ſin* ſhe had formerly contracted the guilt of, and now upon her ſore Affliction in the death of her only child, the Remembrance of it was recalled and revived upon her ſoul. Thus *deep calleth unto deep* at the noiſe of Gods water ſpouts, and then all his *waves and billows* go over a perſon, *Pſal.* 42. 7. The *deep* of *Afflictions* calleth up the *deep of the guilt of ſin*, and both in conjunction become as *billows and waves* paſſing over the ſoul. We ſee only the *out ſide* of mens afflictions, they uſually complain only of what doth appear. And an eaſie thing it is ſuppoſed to be, to apply relief and comfort unto thoſe that are diſtreſſed. The *Rule* in this matter is ſo *clear*, ſo often repeated and inculcated, the promiſes annexed unto this condition ſo *many* and precious, that every one hath in readineſs what to apply unto them who are ſo exerciſed. But oftentimes we know nothing of the *Gall and Wormwood* that is in mens Affliction; they keep that to themſelves, and their ſouls feed upon them in ſecret, *Lam.* 3. 12. God hath ſtirred up the Remembrance of ſome great ſin, or ſins, and they look upon their *Afflictions* as that wherein he is come or beginning to enter into Judgment with them. And is it any wonder if they be in darkneſs and filled with diſconſolation?

2. There is in *many afflictions* ſomething that ſeems *New*, and peculiar, wherewith the ſoul is ſurprized, and cannot readily reduce its condition unto what is taught about Afflictions in General. This perplexeth and entangleth it. It is not Affliction it is troubled withall, but ſome *one thing or other* in it that

that appears with an Eſpecial dread unto the ſoul, ſo that he queſtioneth whether ever it were ſo with any other or no, and is thereby deprived of the ſupportment which from former Examples it might receive. And indeed when God intendeth that which ſhall be a *deep Affliction*, he will put an *Edge* upon it in matter, or manner, or *circumſtances*, that ſhall make the ſoul feel its ſharpneſs. He will not take up with our *bounds and meaſures*, and with which we think we could be contented. But he will put the *impreſs of his own greatneſs* and terrour upon it, that *he* may be acknowledged and ſubmitted unto. Such was the State with *Naomi*; When from a full and plentiful condition, ſhe went into a ſtrange Countrey with an Huſband and two Sons, where they all dyed, leaving her deſtitute and poor; Hence in her account of Gods dealing with her, ſhe ſayes, *Call me not Naomi* (that is pleaſant) *but call me Mara*, (that is bitter) *for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out Full, and the Lord brought me again Empty; why then call ye me* Naomi, *ſince the Lord hath teſtified againſt me; and the Almighty hath afflicted me?* Ruth 1. 20, 21. So was it with *Job*, with the Widdow of *Zarepth*a; and with her at *Naim* who was burying her only Child. And ſtill in many Afflictions God is pleaſed to put in an entangling *ſpecialty*, which perplexeth the ſoul and darkens it in all its Reaſonings about the Love of God towards it, and its intereſt in Pardon and Grace.

3. In ſome; *Affections* are very ſtrong and Importunate as fixed on lawful things; whereby their Nature is made *ſenſible* and tender, and apt to receive very *deep impreſſions* from urgent Afflictions; Now although this in it ſelf be a *good natural frame*, and helps to preſerve the ſoul from that *ſtout hardneſs* which God abhorrs, yet if it be not watched over, it is apt to *perplex* the ſoul with many intangling Temptations. The Apoſtle intimates a *double evil* that we are obnoxious unto under tryals and Afflictions, Heb. 12. 5. *My Son deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.* Men may either through a *natural ſtoutneſs deſpiſe* and contemn their ſufferings, and be obſtinate under them, or *faint* and deſpond, and ſo come ſhort of the end which God aims at for them, to be attained in a way of duty. Now

though

From these and the like Reasons, I say, it is, that whereas *Afflictions in general* are so testified unto, to be such pledges and tokens of Gods Love and Care to be designed unto *blessed ends*, as conformity unto Christ, and a participation of the Holiness of God; yet by reason of these *Circumstances*, they often prove means of casting the soul into *depths*, and of hindering it from a refreshing interest in the forgiveness that is with God. That this may prove no real or abiding ground of inward spiritual trouble unto the soul, the following *Rules and Directions* may be observed.

Rules to be observed concerning Afflictions.

1. *Not only Afflictions in general, but great and manifold Afflictions, and those attended with all sorts of aggravating circumstances, are always consistent with the pardon of sin, after signal tokens and pledges of it, and of the Love of God therein*, Job 7. 17, 18. *What is man that thou shouldst magnifie him, and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him, and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment!* What were the considerations that cast him into this admiration of the Care and Love of God, is expressed, *v.* 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. There are no words of a more *dismal import* in the whole Book than those here expressed; yet when he recollected himself from his overwhelming distress, he acknowledgeth that all this proceeded from the Love and Care of God; yea his *fixing his heart* upon a man to *magnifie him*, to *set him up*, and do him good; For this end doth he *chasten* a man every morning, and try him every moment; and that with *such afflictions* as are for the present so far from being *joyous*, as that they give no Rest, but even weary the soul of life, as he expresseth their *Effects* on himself, *v.* 15, 16. And hence it is observed of this *Job*, that when *none in the Earth* was like to him in trouble, God gave him three Testimonies from Heaven, that there was *none in the Earth* like unto him in Grace. And although it may not be laid down as a *General Rule*, yet for the most part in the Providence of God, from the foundation of the world, those who have had *most of Afflictions*, have had most of Grace, and the most eminent Testimonies of Acceptance with God. *Christ Jesus* the Son of God, the *Head* of the Church, had all Afflictions ga-

though the frame spoken of, be not obnoxious unto the *first* extream, yet it is greatly to the *latter*, which if not watched against, is no less *pernitious* than the former. *Affections* in such persons being greatly moved they cloud and *darken* the mind, and fill it with strange Apprehensions concerning God and themselves. Every thing is presented unto them through a *Glass* composed of Fear, Dread, Terrour, Sorrow, and all sorts of disconsolations. This makes them *faint* and despond, unto very *sad apprehensions* of themselves and their Conditions.

4. *Afflictions* find some entangled with very *strong corruptions*, as Love of the World, or the pleasure of it, of Name or Reputation, of great contrivances for posterity, and the like; or it may be in things *carnal* or sensual. Now when these unexpectedly meet together, *great Afflictions* and *strong Corruptions*, it is not conceivable what a *combustion* they will make in the soul. As a *strong medicine* or potion meeting with a *strong or tough distemper* in the body; there is a violent contention in nature between them and about them, so that oftentimes the very life of the patient is endangered. So it is where a great tryal, a smart stroke of the hand of God, falls upon a person in the midst of *his pursuit of the Effects of some* corruptions; the soul *is amazed* even to distraction, and can scarce have any thought, but that God is come to *cut the person* off in the midst of his sin. Every *unmortified corruption* fills the very fear and expectation of Affliction, with horrour. And there is good Reason that so it should do; for although God should be *merciful unto mens Iniquities*, yet if he should come to take *Vengeance of their Inventions*, their condition would be dark and sorrowful.

5. *Satan* is never wanting in such Occasions to attempt the compassing of his Ends, upon persons that are exercised under the hand of God. In the time of *suffering* it was, that he fell upon *the Head of the Church*, turning it into the very *hour of the power of darkness*. And he will not omit any appearing opportunities of Advantage against his Members. And this is that which he principally in such seasons attacks them withall; namely, that *God regards them not*, that they are fallen under his Judgement and Severity, as those who have no share in Mercy, *Pardon* or *Forgiveness*.

From

gathered into *an head* in him; and yet the *Father alwaies loved him*, and was alwaies well pleased with him.

When God solemnly renewed his *Covenant with Abraham*, and he had prepared the Sacrifice whereby it was to be ratified and confirmed, God made a *smoaking Furnace* to pass between the pieces of the Sacrifice, *Gen.* 15. 17. It was to let him know that there was a *furnace of Affliction* attending the Covenant of Grace and Peace. And so he tells *Sion* that he chose her in the *furnace of Affliction*, Isa. 48. 10. that is, in *Ægyptian Affliction*, burning, flaming afflictions, fiery tryals, as *Peter* calls them, 1 *Pet.* 4.12. There can then no Argument be drawn from *Affliction*, from any Kind of it, from any *aggravating circumstance* wherewith it may be attended, that should any way discourage the soul in its comforting supporting perswasion of an *interest* in the Love of God and *forgiveness* thereby.

2. *No length or continuance of Afflictions ought to be any impeachment of our spiritual consolation.* Take for the confirmation hereof, the great Example of the Son of God. How long did his Afflictions continue? what end or issue was put to them? No longer did they abide than untill he cryed with a loud voice and gave up the Ghost. To the moment of his death; from his Manger to his Cross, his Afflictions still increased, and he ended his daies in the midst of them. Now he was *the Head of the Church*, and the great Representative of it; unto a *conformity* with whom we are predestinated. And if God will have it so with us, even in this particular, so as that we shall have *no rest*, *no peace* from our trials, untill we lye down in the Grave, that whatever condition we pass through, they shall be shut out of none, but only from *Immortality* and Glory, what have we herein to complain of?

3. *Where the Remembrance and perplexing sense of past sins is revived by present afflictions; separate them in your minds, and deal distinctly about them.* So long as you carry on the consideration of them *joyntly*, you will be rolled from one to another, and never obtain rest unto your souls. They will mutually *aggravate* each other. The *sharpness* of Affliction will add to the *bitterness* of the sense of sin; and the sense of sin will give an *edge* to Affliction, and cause it to pierce *deeply* into the soul, as we

we shewed in the former instances. Deal therefore *distinctly* about them, and in their proper order. So doth the *Psalmist* here. He had at present both upon him, and together they brought him into these depths concerning which he so cries out for deliverance from them; see *Psal.* 32. 3, 4, 5. And what course doth he take? he applies himself in the first place to his *sin*, and the guilt of it, and that distinctly and separately. And when he hath got a discharge of sin, which he waited so earnestly for, his faith quickly arose above his *outward trials*, as appears in his blessed close of all; *He shall redeem Israel out of all his trouble*; the whole *Israel* of God, and my self amongst them. This do then, single out the sin or sins that are *revived* in the sense of their guilt upon the conscience. Use all diligence to come to an *issue* about them in the blood of Christ. This God by your *Affliction* calls you unto. This is the *disease* whereof your trouble is but the *symptom*. This therefore in the Cure you seek after, is first and principally to be attended unto; when that is once removed, the other as to any prejudice unto your souls will depart of its self. The *root* being once digged up, you shall not long feed on the *bitter fruit* that it hath brougt forth; or if you do, the *Wormwood* shall be taken out of it, and it shall be very pleasant unto you, as well as wholesome. How this is to be done by an Application unto God for forgiveness, hath been at large declared. But if men will deal with *confused thoughts* about their sins and their troubles, their wound will be incurable, and their sorrow endless.

4. *Remember that a time of Affliction is a time of Temptation.* Satan, as we have shewed, will not be wanting unto any appearing Opportunity or Advantage of setting upon the soul. When *Pharaoh* heard that the people were intangled in the wilderness, he pursued them. And when *Satan* sees a soul intangled with it's distresses and troubles, he thinks it his time and hour to assault it. He seeks to *winnow*, and comes when the *Corn is under the flail*. Reckon therefore that when *trouble cometh*, the *Prince of the world* cometh also, that you may be provided for him. Now is the time to take the *shield of faith*, that we may be able to *quench his fiery darts*. If they be neglected, they will *enflame the soul*. Watch therefore, and pray that you enter not into Temptation; that Satan do not *represent God* falsly unto

you. He that durst represent *Job falsly* to the All-seeing God, will with much boldness represent God *falsly* unto us, who see and know so little. Be not then ignorant of his devices; but every way set your selves against his interposing between God and your souls, in a matter which he hath nothing to do withall. Let not this *make-bate* by any means inflame the difference.

5. *Learn to distinguish the Effect of natural distempers from spiritual distresses.* Some have sad, dark and tenacious thoughts fixed on their minds from their *natural distempers*. These will not be cured by *Reasonings*, nor utterly quelled by faith. Our design must be to *abate* their Efficacy and Consequents, by considering their Occasions. And if men cannot do this in themselves, it is highly incumbent on those who make Application of relief unto them, to be carefull to discern what is from such principles, whereof they are not to expect a speedy Cure. And,

6. *Take heed in times of peace and ease, that you lay not up, by your negligence or careless walking, sad provision for a day of darkness*, a time of Afflictions. It is *sin* that imbitters troubles; the sins of peace are revived in the time of distress. Fear of future Affliction, of impendent troubles, should make us carefull not to bring that into them which will make them *bitter* and sorrowfull.

7. *Labour to grow better under all your Afflictions, lest your Afflictions grow worse*; lest God mingle them with more darkness, bitterness and terrour. As *Joab* said unto *David*, if he ceased not his scandalous Lamentation on the death of *Absalom*, all the people would leave him, and he then should find himself in *a far worse condition* than that which he bemoaned, or any thing that *befell him from his youth*. The same may be said unto persons under their *Afflictions*. If they are not managed and improved in a due manner, that *which is worse* may, nay, in all probability will befall them. Wherever God takes this way, and engageth in *afflicting*, he doth commonly pursue his work untill he hath prevailed, and his design towards the afflicted party be accomplished. He will not cease to *thresh and break the bread-corn* untill it be meet for his use. Lay down then the weapons of thy warfare against him; give up your selves

selves to his Will; let go every thing about which he contends with you; follow after that which he calls you unto, and you will find light arising unto you in the midst of darkness. Hath he a *cup of Affliction* in one hand, lift up your eyes and you will see a *cup of Consolation* in another. And if all *Stars* withdraw their light, whilst you are in the way of God, assure your selves that the *Sun* is ready to rise.

8. According to the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace, a man may be sensible of *the respect of Affliction unto sin*; yea unto this or that sin in particular, and yet have a comfortable perswasion of the forgiveness of sin. Thus it was in general in Gods dealing with his people; *He forgave them, but he took vengeance on their inventions*. Psal. 99. 8. Whatever they suffered under the *vengeance* that fell upon their *Inventions*, (and that is as hard a word as is applyed any where unto Gods dealing with his people) yet at the same time he assured them of the pardon of their sin. So you know was the case of *David*. His greatest Trial and Affliction, and that which befell him on the account of a particular sin, and wherein God took *vengeance on his invention*, was ushered in with a *Word of Grace*, that God had done away, or pardoned his sins, and that he should not dye. This is expressed in the Tenor of the Covenant with the seed of Christ, *Psal.* 89. 31, 32, 33, 34.

Objections against believing from things internal. The person knows not whether he be Regenerate or no. State of Regeneration asserted. Difference of Saving and Common Grace. This difference discernable. Men may know themselves to be Regenerate. The Objection answered.

Another head of *Objections* and *Despondencies* ariseth from things *internal*, things that are required in the soul, that it may have an Interest in the forgiveness that is with God. Some whereof we shall speak unto; and these respect, first the *state* of the soul; and secondly, some *actings* in the soul.

Objections against Believing, from the State of the Soul.

First, As to the *State*, say some, *unless a man be Regenerate*, and born again, he is not, he cannot be made partaker of Mercy and Pardon. Now all things here are in the dark unto us. For

first, we know not well what this *Regeneration* is, and it is variously disputed amongst men. Some would place it only in the outward signs of our *Initiation* unto Christ, and some otherwise expresseth it. Again, it is uncertain, whether those that *are Regenerate* do or may know that they are so; or whether this may be in any measure known unto *others* with whom they may treat about it. And if it may not be known we must be uncertain in this also. And then it may be for their parts, they neither know the *time when*, nor the *manner how* any such work was wrought in them; and yet without this, seeing it is wrought by means, and springs from certain causes, they can have no establishment in a not-failing perswasion of their Acceptance with God, by the pardon of their sins in the blood of Christ. This is the Head and summ of most of the Objections which perplexed souls do manage against themselves as to their state and condition. Hence indeed they draw forth reasonings with great variety according as they are suggested by their particular occasions and temptations. And many proofs taken from their sins, miscarriages and fears, do they enforce their *Objections* withall. My purpose is to lay down some *General Rules* and Principles, which may be applyed unto particular occasions and emergencies. And this shall be done in answer to the several parts of the General Objection mentioned before. I say then,

Two different estates whereunto all men belong.

First, It is most certain that there are *two Estates* and Conditions that divide all Mankind; and every one that lives in the world, doth compleatly and absolutely belong unto one of them. These are the state of Nature, and the state of Grace, of Sin, and of Righteousness by Christ; every man in the world belongs unto one of these states or conditions. This the *Scripture* so abounds in, that it seems to be the first principal thing that we are taught in it. It is as clear that there are two *different* states in *this world*, as that there are so in that to come. Yea, all our Faith and our Obedience depend on this Truth. And not only so, but the *Covenant of God*, the Mediation of Christ, and all the Promises and Threats of the Law and Gospel are built on this supposition. And this lays naked unto a spiritual eye that abounding Atheism that is in the world. Men are not

not only like *Nicodemus*, ignorant of these things, and wonder how they can be, but they scorn them, despise them, scoff at them. To make mention of being *regenerate* is exposed to reproach in the world. But whether men will or no, unto one of these conditions they must belong.

2. As these two estates differ *morally* in themselves, and *Physically* in the causes *constitutive* of that difference; so there is a *specifical* difference between the things that place men in the one condition and in the other. Whatever there is of Goodness, Virtue, Duty, Grace in an *Unregenerate person*, there is in him that is Regenerate somewhat of *another kind* that is not in the other at all. For the difference of these states themselves it is plain in Scripture. The one is a state of *Death*, the other of *Life*; the one of *Darkness*, the other of *Light*; the one of *Enmity* against God, the other of *Reconciliation* with him. And that the one state is constituted by that of Grace which is of a *peculiar kind*, and which is not in the other, I shall briefly declare.

Saving Grace specifically distinct from common Grace.

1. The *Grace of Regeneration* proceedeth from an *especial spring* and fountain, which emptieth much of its living waters into it, no one drop whereof falls on them that are not Regenerate. This is *Electing Love*; it is given out in the pursuit of the Decree of Election; God *hath chosen us that we should be holy*, Ephes. 1. 4. Our *Holiness*, whose only spring is our Regeneration, is an effect of our Election; That which God works in our souls, in the pursuit of his eternal purpose of Love and good will towards us. So again, saith the Apostle, 2 *Thes.* 2. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit.* God having designed us unto salvation as the End, hath also appointed the sanctification of the Spirit to be the *Means* to bring us orderly unto the attainment of that End. But the best of common Grace or Gifts that may be in men *Unregenerate*, are but products of the *Providence of God*, ordering all things in general unto his own Glory, and the good of them that shall be heirs of salvation. They are not fruits of *Electing Eternal Love*, nor designed means for the infallible attaining of Eternal Salvation.

Secondly, The Graces of those that are Regenerate have a manifold Respect or Relation to the Lord Christ that the common

mon Graces of others have not. I ſhall name one or two of theſe Reſpects: Firſt, They have an eſpecial *moral relation* to the Mediatory Acts of Chriſt in his Oblation and Interceſſion. Eſpecial Grace is an eſpecial part of the purchaſe of Chriſt by his death and blood-ſhedding. He made a double purchaſe of his Elect; of their *perſons* to be *his*; of *eſpecial* Grace to be *theirs*. *He gave himſelf for his Church, that he might ſanctifie and cleanſe it with the waſhing of water by the Word, that he might preſent it unto himſelf a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinckle, or any ſuch thing, but that it ſhould be holy and without blemiſh*, Epheſ. 5. 26, 27. The deſign of Chriſt in giving himſelf for his Church, was to procure for it that *Eſpecial Grace* whereby through the uſe of Means, it might be regenerate, ſanctified and purified. So *Titus* 2. 14. *He gave himſelf that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works*. Real purification in grace and Holineſs hath this Eſpecial Relation unto the Death of Chriſt, that he deſigned therein to procure it for them for whom he dyed. And in the purſuit of his Purchaſe or Acquiſition of it, his purpoſe was really to beſtow it upon them, or effectually to work it in them. Moreover it hath an *Eſpecial Relation* unto his *Interceſſion*; and that in a diſtinguiſhing manner from any other Gifts or common Graces that other men may receive. Giving us the Rule and *Pattern* of his Interceſſion, *Joh.* 17. He tells us, that he *ſo prayes not for the world*, but for his Elect; thoſe which the Father had given him, becauſe they were his, *v.* 9. And what is it that he prayes for them, in diſtinction from all other men whatever? Amongſt others this is one principal thing that he inſiſts on, *v.* 17. *Sanctifie them through thy Truth*. Their Sanctification and Holineſs is granted upon that Prayer and Interceſſion of Chriſt, which is peculiar unto them with an excluſion of all others; *I pray for them, I pray not for the world*. Now the common Grace of unregenerate perſons, whereby they are diſtinguiſhed from other men, whatever it be, it hath not this *Eſpecial Relation* to the *Oblation and Interceſſion* of Chriſt. Common Grace is not the procurement of Eſpecial Interceſſion.

Secondly, They have a *Real Relation* unto Chriſt as he is the *living Quickning Head* of the Church; for he is ſo, even the living

living ſpiritual fountain of the ſpiritual life of it, and of all vital Acts whatever. *Chriſt is our life*, and *our life is hid with him in God*, Col. 3. 2, 3. That Eternal Life which conſiſts in the Knowledge of the Father and the Son, *Joh.* 17. 3. is *in him* as the cauſe, head, ſpring and fountain of it. In him it is in its *fulneſs*, and from thence it is derived unto all that believe, *who receive from his fulneſs Grace for Grace*, Joh. 1. 16. All true ſaving ſanctifying Grace, all ſpiritual life, and every thing that belongs thereunto is derived directly from Chriſt as the *living Head* of his Church, and fountain of all ſpiritual life unto them. This the Apoſtle expreſſeth, *Epheſ.* 4. 15, 16. *Speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things, which is the Head even Chriſt; from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt ſupplieth, according to the effectual working in the meaſure of every part, maketh increaſe of the body unto the edifying of it ſelf in love*. To the ſame purpoſe he again expreſſeth the ſame matter, *Col.* 2. 19. All Grace in the whole body comes from the Head Chriſt Jeſus; and there is no growth or furtherance of it, but by his *Effectual working in every part* to bring it unto the meaſure deſigned unto it. Nothing then, no not the *leaſt* of this Grace can be obtained but by virtue of our *Union* unto Chriſt as our Head, becauſe it conſiſts in a vital effectual influence from him, and his *fulneſs*. And this kind of Relation unto Chriſt, all Grace that is, or may be in unregenerate men, is incapable of.

Thirdly, The *Grace of Regeneration*, and the fruits of it are adminiſtred in and by the Covenant. This is the promiſe of the Covenant, *That God will write his Law in our hearts, and put his fear in our inward parts*, that we ſhall not depart from him, *Jer.* 32. This is that Grace whereof we ſpeak, whatever it be, or of what kind ſoever. It is beſtowed on none but thoſe who are taken into *Covenant* with God; for unto them alone it is promiſed, and by *virtue* thereof is it wrought in and upon their ſouls. Now all *Unregenerate men* are ſtrangers from the Covenant, and are not made partakers of that Grace which is peculiarly and only promiſed thereby, and exhibited therein.

Fourthly, The leaſt ſpark of *ſaving Regenerating Grace* is wrought in the ſoul by the Holy Ghoſt, as given unto men to *dwell in them, and to abide with them*. He is the water given by

Jeſus

Jesus Christ unto Believers, which is in them *a well of water springing up to everlasting life*, Joh. 4. 14. First they receive the *water*, the *spring* it self that is the Holy Spirit; and from thence *living waters* do arise up in them; they are wrought, effected, produced by the Spirit, which is given unto them; Now although the common Gifts and Graces of men Unregenerate are effects of the power of the Holy Ghost wrought in them, and bestowed on them, as are all other works of Gods Providence; yet it doth not work in them, as received by them, to *dwell in them, and abide with them* as a Never-failing spring of spiritual life. For so our Saviour sayes expressly, that the *World*, or *Unbelievers do not know the Spirit*, nor can receive him, or have him abiding in them. All which, in a contradistinction unto all Unregenerate persons, are affirmed of all them that do believe.

Fifthly, The least of *saving Grace*, such as is peculiar unto them that are *Regenerate*, is *Spirit*, Joh. 3. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit*. Whatever it is that is *so born*, it is Spirit, it hath a *spiritual being*, and it is not *educible* by any means out of the principles of Nature. So it is said to be a *New Creature*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. Be it never so little or so great, however it may differ in *degrees* in one and in another, yet the *nature* of it is the same in all; *It is a New Creature*. As the least Worm of the Earth in the order of the *old Creation*, is no less a creature than the *Sun*, yea or the most glorious Angel in Heaven; so in the order of the *new Creation*, the *least spark* or dram of true grace that is from the sanctifying Spirit, is a *new Creature*, no less than the highest Faith or Love that ever were in the chiefest of the Apostles. Now that which is *Spirit*, and that which is *not Spirit*; that which hath a *new spiritual being*, and that which hath none, whatever appearance of agreement there may be among them, do yet differ *specifically* from one another. And thus it is with the saving Grace that is in a *Regenerate*, and those common Graces that are in others which are not so. So that as these are *divers States*, so they are eminently different and distinct the one from the other; and this answers the second thing laid down in the Objections, taken from the *Uncertainty of these States*, and of Regeneration it self, and the real difference of it from the contrary State, which is exclusive of an interest in forgiveness.

Thirdly,

Difference between the State of Grace and Nature discernable.

Thirdly, This is laid down in the Enquiry, *whether this State may be known unto him, who is really partaker of it*, or translated into it, or unto others that may be concerned therein; to which I say, the difference that is between these two States, and the *constitutive causes* of them, as it is *real*, so it is discernable; It may be known by themselves who are in those states, and others. It may be known who are born of God, and who are yet Children of the Devil; who are *quickned* by Christ, and who are yet *dead* in Trespasses and Sin: But here also Observe,

1. That, I do not say, This is *always known* to the persons themselves concerned in this distribution. Many cry *peace, peace*, when suddain destruction is at hand. These either think themselves *regenerate* when they are not, or else wilfully despise the consideration of what is required in them, that they may have peace, and so delude their own souls unto their ruine. And many that *are truely born of God*, yet know it not. They may for a season walk in darkness and have no light; Nor

2. That this is *always known to others*. It is not known unto *Unregenerate men* in respect of them that are so. For they know not really and substantially what it is to be so. *Natural men perceive not the things of God*; that is, *spiritually*, in their own light and nature, 2 *Cor.* 2. And as they cannot aright discern the things which put men into that condition, (for they are foolishness unto them,) so they cannot Judge aright of their *persons* in whom they are. And if they do at any time Judge aright notionally concerning any things or persons, yet they do not Judge so upon *right grounds*, nor with any Evidence in or unto themselves of what they do judge. Wherefore Generally they Judge amiss of such persons; And because they make profession of somewhat which they find not in themselves, they Judge them *Hypocrites*, and false pretenders unto what is not. For those things which evince their Union with Christ, and which evidence their being *born of God*, they savour them not, nor can receive them. Nor is this *always known* unto, or discerned *by them* that are Regenerate. They may sometime with *Peter* think a *Simon Magus* to be a true believer; or with *Eli* an *Hannah* to be a daughter of *Belial*. Many *Hypocrites* are so set forth with gifts, common Graces, Light and

profeſſion that they paſs amongſt all believers for ſuch as are *born of God*. And many poor Saints may be ſo diſguiſed under Darkneſs, Temptation, Sin, as to be looked on as ſtrangers from that family whereunto indeed they do belong. The Judgment of man may fail, but the Judgment of God is according unto Righteouſneſs; wherefore,

3. This is that we ſay; it *may be known in the Sedulous uſe of means appointed for that end, to a man's ſelf and others, which of the Conditions mentioned he doth belong unto*; that is, whether he be regenerate or no, ſo far as his or their concernment lies therein. This I ſay may be known and that *infallibly* and aſſuredly with reference unto any duty wherein from hence we are concerned. The diſcharge of ſome duties in our ſelves and towards others, depends on this knowledge, and therefore we may attain it, ſo far as it is neceſſary for the diſcharge of ſuch duties unto the Glory of God. Now becauſe it is not directly in our way, yet having been mentioned I ſhall briefly in our paſſage touch upon the latter, or what *duties* do depend upon our Judging of others to be regenerate, and the way or Principles whereby ſuch a Judgment may be made.

1. There are many duties incumbent on us to be performed with and *towards Profeſſors*; which without admitting a Judgement to be made of their State and Condition cannot be performed in faith. And in reference unto theſe duties alone it is that we are called to *Judge* the State of others. For we are not giving Countenance unto a raſh uncharitable cenſuring of mens ſpiritual conditions, nor unto *any Judging of any men*, any other than what our own duty towards them, doth indiſpenſably require. Thus if we are to *lay down our lives for the Brethren*, it is very meet we ſhould ſo far know them, ſo to be, as that we may hazard our lives in *faith* when we are called thereunto. We are alſo to Joyn with them in thoſe Ordinances wherein we make a Solemn profeſſion that we are *members of the ſame body* with them, that we have the ſame Head, the ſame Spirit, faith and love: We muſt love them becauſe they are *begotten of God*, Children of our heavenly Father; and therefore muſt on ſome good ground believe them ſo to be. In a word, the due performance of all principal mutual Goſpel Duties, to the Glory of God and our own Edification

cation, depends on this ſuppoſition, that we may have ſuch a ſatisfying perſwaſion concerning the ſpiritual condition of others, as that from thence we may take our ayme, in what we do.

2. For the grounds hereof, I ſhall mention one only; which all others do lean upon. This is preſſed, 1 Cor. 12. 12, 13. *As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, ſo is Chriſt. For by one Spirit we are all Baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* They are all united unto, and hold of one head. For as are the members of the body natural under one head, So is Chriſt myſtical, that is, all believers under Chriſt their head. And this *Union* they have by the *inhabitation* of the ſame quickning Spirit, which is in Chriſt their Head, and by him they are brought all into the ſame *ſpiritual* ſtate and frame; they are made *to drink into one and the ſame Spirit*; for this ſame Spirit produceth the ſame Effects in them all, the *ſame in kind* though differing in degrees, as the Apoſtle fully declares, *Epheſ.* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. And this Spirit is in them, and not in the world, *John* 16. And as this gives them a *naturalneſs* in their duties one towards another; or in mutual caring for, rejoycing and ſorrowing with one another, *as members one of another*, 1 Cor 12. 25, 26. So it reveals and diſcovers them to each other, ſo far as is neceſſary for the performance of the Duties mentioned, in ſuch a manner as becomes members of the ſame body. There is on this account a *ſpirituarally natural* Anſwering of one to another, as face anſwereth face in the Water. They can ſee and diſcern that in others whereof they have Experience in themſelves; they can taſte and reliſh that in others, which they feed upon in themſelves, and wherein the lives of their ſouls do conſiſt; the ſame Spirit of life being in them, they have the ſame ſpiritual taſte and Savour. And unleſs their pallats are diſtempered by Temptations or falſe opinions, or prejudices, they can in their Communion, taſte of that Spirit in each other, which they are all made to drink into. This gives them the ſame likeneſs and *Image* in the Inward man, the ſame heavenly light in their minds, the ſame affections; and being thus prepared and enabled to Judge and diſcern of the State of each other, in reference

ference unto their mutual duties, they have moreover the true Rule of the Word to Judge of all Spirits and Spiritual effects by. And this is the ground of all that *love without dissimulation* and real Communion that is among the Saints of God in this World. But here two Cautions must be allowed.

1. That *we would not Judge the State and Condition of any men in the world*, no further than we are called thereunto in a way of Duty; and we are so called only with reference unto the Duties that we are to perform towards them. What have we to do to Judge them that are without, that is any one that we have not a call to consider in reference unto *our own Duty*. Herein that great Rule takes place; *Judge not, that ye be not Judged*. Let us leave all men, the worst of men, unless where evident duty requires other actings, to the Judgement-seat of God. They are the Servants of another, and they stand or fall unto their own Master. There have been great miscarriages amongst us in this matter, some have been ready to condemn all that go not along with them in every *principle*, yea *opinion* or practice. And every day slight occasions and provocations, are made the grounds and reasons of severe censures. But nothing is more contrary to the conduct of the meek and holy Spirit of Christ. This is our Rule; are *we called to Act towards any as Saints*, as living Members of the Body of Christ, and that in such Duties as we cannot perform in faith, unless we are perswaded that so they are, then are we on the grounds and by the wayes before mentioned, to satisfie our selves in one another.

2. Do we endeavour mutually to discern the condition of one another, in reference unto such Ends; *Let us be sure to look unto, and pursue those ends* when we have attained our Satisfaction. What these ends are hath been shewed. It is that we may *love them without dissimulation*, as members of the same mystical body with us; that we may naturally take care of them, and for them; that we may delight sincerely in them, that we may minister unto their wants, Temporal and Spiritual; that we may watch over them with pity and compassion. These and the like are the *only ends* for which we are at any time called to the consideration of the spiritual condition of one another; if these be neglected the other is useless.

And

And here lyes a great aggravation of that neglect, in that such a way is made for the avoidance of it. Here lyes the *life or death of all Church Society*. All *Church Society* and Relation is built on this supposition, that the members of it are all Regenerate; some lay this *foundation in Baptism* only, professing that all that are baptized are Regenerate. Others require a farther Satisfaction in the real work it self. But all build on the same foundation; that all Church members are to be *Regenerate*. And to what end is this? Namely that they may all mutually perform *those duties* one towards another, which are incumbent mutually on Regenerate persons. If these are omitted, there is an End of all profitable use of Church Society. Churches without this are but meer husks and shells of Churches, Carkasses whithout souls. For as there is no *real Union* unto Christ without Faith, so there is no *real Union* among the members of any Church without Love, and that acting its self in all the Duties mentioned. Let not this Ordinance be in vain.

But we must return from this digression, to that which lies before us, which is concerning what a man may discern concerning *his own* being Regenerate or born again. I say then,

Believers may know themselves to be born of God.

Secondly, *Men may come to an assured Satisfactory perswasion that themselves are regenerate*, and that such, as is so far infallible, as that it will not deceive them, when it is brought unto the tryal. For there are many Duties whose performance in faith unto the glory of God, and the Edification of our own souls, doth depend on this Perswasion and Conviction. As,

1. *A due sense of our Relation unto God*, and an answerable comportment of our spirits and hearts towards him. He that is born again, *is born of God*. He is begotten of God by the immortal seed of the Word. Without a perswasion hereof how can a man on grounds of faith carry himself towards God *as his Father?* and how great a part of our Obedience towards him and communion with him depends hereon, we all know. If men fluctuate all their dayes in this matter, if they come to no *settlement* in it, no comfortable *perswasion* of it, they scarce ever act any genuine childlike acts of Love or Delight towards God, which exceedingly impeacheth their whole Obedience.

2. *Thank-*

2. *Thankfulness for Grace received* is one of the principal duties that is incumbent on Believers in this World. Now how can a man in faith bless God for that which he is utterly uncertain whether he have received it from him or no. I know some men run on in *a Road* in this matter. They will bless God in a *formal way*, for their Regeneration, Sanctification, Justification, and the like: But if you ask them whether *themselves are regenerate or no*, they will be ready to scoff at it, or at least to profess that they know no such thing. What is this but to *mock God*, and in a presumptuous manner to take his Name in vain: But if we will praise God, as we ought for his *Grace*, as we are guided and directed in the Scripture, as the nature of the matter requires, with such a frame of heart as may influence our whole Obedience, surely it cannot but be our duty to know the Grace that we have received.

3. Again the *main of our Spiritual watch, and diligence*, consisteth in the cherishing, improving, and increasing of the Grace that we have received; the strengthning of the *new Creature* that is wrought in us; Herein consists principally the Life of faith, and the exercise of that Spiritual Wisdom which faith furnisheth the soul withall. Now how can any man apply himself hereunto, whilest he is altogether uncertain whether he hath received any principle of *Living, Saving Grace*, or no? whereas therefore God requires our utmost Diligence, Watchfulness, and Care in this matter, it is certain that he requires also of us, and grants unto us, that which is the foundation of all these duties, which lyes in an Acquaintance with that state and condition whereunto we do belong. In brief, there is nothing we have to do in reference unto Eternity, but one way or other it hath a respect unto our light and convictions, as to our State and Condition in this World. And those who are negligent in the tryal and Examination thereof, do leave all things between God and their souls at absolute uncertainties, and dubious hazards; which is not to lead the Life of Faith.

We shall now upon these premises return unto that part of the Objection which is under consideration. Say some; *We know not whether we are regenerate or no, and are therefore altogether uncertain whether we have an interest in that forgiveness that is with God; nor dare we on that account admit of the consolation that is tendred on the Truth insisted on.*

Supposing what hath been spoken in general, I shall lay down the grounds of resolving this *perplexing doubt* in the ensuing Rules.

RULE I.

Rules whereby men may judge of their Condition in respect of Inherent Grace.

See that the perswasion and Assurance hereof which you look after and desire, be regular, and not such as is suited meerly unto your own Imaginations. Our second and third *General Rules* about the nature of all spiritual Assurance, and what is consistent therewithall, are here to be taken into consideration. If you look to have such an Evidence, Light into, and absolute conviction of this matter, as shall admit of no doubts, fears, questionings, just occasions and causes of new trials, teachings, and self-examinations, you will be greatly deceived. *Regeneration* induceth a *new* principle into the soul, but it doth not utterly expell the *old*; some would have Security, not Assurance. The principle of sin and unbelief will still *abide* in us, and still *work* in us. Their *abiding* and their *acting* must needs put the soul upon a severe enquiry whether they are not prevalent in it beyond what the condition of Regeneration will admit. The constant *conflicts* we must have with sin, will not suffer us to have alwaies so clear an Evidence of our condition as we would desire. Such a perswasion as is prevalent against strong objections to the contrary, keeping up the heart to a due performance of those duties in faith which belong unto the state of Regeneration, is the substance of what in this kind you are to look after.

RULE II.

If you are doubtfull concerning your state and condition, do not expect an extraordinary determination of it by an Immediate Testimony of the Spirit of God. I do grant that God doth sometimes by this means bring in peace and satisfaction unto the soul; he gives his own Spirit immediately *to bear witness with ours, that we are the children of God*, both upon the account of Regeneration

ration and Adoption. He doth ſo, but as far as we can obſerve in a way of *Soveraignty*, when and to whom he pleaſeth. Beſides, that men may content and ſatisfie themſelves with his ordinary Teachings, Conſolations and Communications of his Grace, he hath left the nature of that *peculiar Teſtimony* of the Spirit very dark and difficult to be found out, few agreeing wherein it doth conſiſt, or what is the nature of it: No one mans *Experience* is a Rule unto others. And an undue Apprehenſion of it, is a matter of great danger. Yet it is certain that humble ſouls in extraordinary caſes may have recourſe unto it with benefit and relief thereby. This then you may deſire, you may pray for, but not with ſuch a frame of ſpirit as to refuſe that other ſatisfaction which in the waies of Truth and Peace you may find. This is the putting of the *hand into the ſide of Chriſt*, but *bleſſed are they who believe*, and yet have not ſeen.

RULE III.

If you have at any time formerly received any eſpecial or Immediate pledge or Teſtimony of God given unto your ſouls as unto their Sincerity, and conſequently their Regeneration, labour to recover it, and to revive a ſenſe of it upon your Spirits now in your darkneſs and trouble. I am perſwaded there are but few Believers, but that God doth at one time or other, in one duty or other, entring into, or coming out of one temptation or another, give ſome ſingular Teſtimony unto their own ſouls and conſciences concerning their *Sincerity*, and his Acceptance of them. Sometimes he doth this in *a duty* wherein he hath enabled the ſoul to make ſo near an approach unto him, as that it hath been warmed, enlivened, ſweetned, ſatisfied with the preſence, the gracious preſence of God, and which God hath made unto him as a token of his uprightneſs. Sometimes, when a man is entring into any great *Temptation*, Trial, difficult or dangerous duty, that death it ſelf is feared in it, God comes in by one means or other, by a ſecret *intimation of his Love*, which he gives him to take along with him for his furniture and proviſion in his way, and thereby teſtifies to him his Sincerity. And this ſerves like the *food of Elijah* for forty dayes in a wilderneſs condition. Sometimes he is pleaſed to *ſhine* immediately into the ſoul in the

the midſt of its *darkneſs* and ſorrow wherewith it is ſurprized, as not looking for any ſuch expreſſion of kindneſs, and is thereby relieved againſt its own preſſing ſelf-condemnation. And ſometimes the Lord is pleaſed to give theſe tokens of Love unto the ſoul as its refreſhment, when it is coming off from the ſtorm of Temptations wherewith it hath been toſſed. And many other times and ſeaſons there are wherein God is pleaſed to give unto Believers ſome *Eſpecial Teſtimony* in their conſciences unto their own Integrity. But now theſe are all wrought by *a tranſient operation* of the Spirit exciting and enabling the heart unto a ſpiritual ſenſible apprehenſion and receiving of Gods expreſſing kindneſs towards it. Theſe things abide not in *their ſenſe*, and in their power which they have upon our *Affections*, but immediately paſs away. They are therefore to be treaſured up in the mind and judgment, to be improved and made uſe of by *Faith*, as occaſion ſhall require; but we are apt to loſe them. Moſt know no other uſe of them, but whileſt they feel them; yea, through ignorance in our duty to improve them, they prove like a ſudden light brought into a dark place, and again removed, which ſeems to increaſe and really aggravates our ſenſe of the darkneſs. The true *Uſe* of them is to lay them up, and ponder them in our hearts, that they may be ſupportments and Teſtimonies unto us in a time of need. Have you then, who are now in the dark as to your ſtate or condition, whether you are *Regenerate* or no, ever received any ſuch refreſhing and chearing Teſtimony from God given unto your *Integrity*, and your *Acceptance* with him thereupon; call it over again, and make uſe of it againſt thoſe diſcouragements which ariſe from your preſent darkneſs in this matter, and which keeps you off from ſharing in the conſolation tendred unto you in this Word of Grace.

RULE IV.

A due ſpiritual Conſideration of the Cauſes and Effects of Regeneration, is the ordinary way and means whereby the ſouls of Believers come to be ſatisfied concerning that work of God in them and upon them. The principle or cauſes of this work, are the Spirit and the Word. He that is *born again*, *is born of the*

Spirit, Joh. 3. 6. and of the Word; *Of his own Will begat he us by the word of his Truth*, Jam. 1. 18. *We are born again by the Word of God that abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23. Wherever then a man is *regenerate*, there hath been an effectual work of the Spirit, and of the Word upon his ſoul. This is to be enquired into, and after. Ordinarily it will diſcover it ſelf. Such impreſſions will be made in it upon the ſoul, ſuch a change will be wrought and produced in it, as will not eſcape a ſpiritual diligent ſearch and enquiry. And this is much of the duty of ſuch as are in the dark, and *uncertain* concerning the accompliſhment of *this work* in themſelves. Let them call to mind what have been the actings of the Spirit by the Word upon their ſouls. What *Light* thereby hath been communicated unto their minds; what *diſcoveries* of the Lord Chriſt and way of Salvation have been made to them; what *ſenſe* and deteſtation of ſin have been wrought in them; what *ſatisfaction* hath been given unto the ſoul, to chooſe, accept, and acquieſce in the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt; what Reſignation of the heart unto God according to the tenor of the Covenant of Grace, it hath been wrought unto; Call to mind what *Tranſactions* there have been between God and your ſouls about theſe things; how far they have been carryed on; whether you have broken off the *Treaty* with God, and refuſed his Terms; or if not, where the *ſtay* is between you; and what is the Reaſon ſince God hath graciouſly begun to deal thus with you, that you are not yet come to a through cloſe with him in the work and deſign of his Grace; the defect muſt of neceſſity lye on your parts. God doth nothing in vain: Had he not been willing to receive you, he would not have dealt with you ſo far as he hath done. There is nothing then remains to *firm* your condition but a reſolved Act of your own Wills in anſwering the mind and will of God. And by this ſearch may the ſoul come to ſatisfaction in this matter; or at leaſt find out and diſcover where the *ſtick* is whence their uncertainty doth ariſe, and what is wanting to compleat their deſire.

Again, this work may be diſcovered by its Effects. There is ſomething that is produced by it in the ſoul, which may alſo be conſidered either with reſpect unto its Being and Exiſtence, or unto its Actings and Operations; in the firſt regard it *is Spi-*

Spirit, Joh. 3. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit*, which is produced by the effectual operation of the Spirit of God, *it is Spirit*; A *new Creature*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. *He that is in Chriſt Jeſus*, who is born again, *is a new Creature*, a new life, a ſpiritual life, *Gal.* 2. 20. *Epheſ.* 2. 1. In brief, it is an habitual furniſhment of all the faculties of the ſoul, with new ſpiritual vital principles, enabling a perſon in all inſtances of Obedience, to lead a ſpiritual life unto God. This *principle* is by this work produced in the ſoul; and in reſpect of its *Actings*, it conſiſts in all the Gracious operations of the Mind, Will, Heart or Affections in the duties of Obedience which God hath required of us. This is that which gives life unto our duties (without which the beſt of our works are but *dead works*) and renders them acceptable unto the *Living God*. It is not my buſineſs at large to purſue and declare theſe things; I only *mention them*, that perſons who are kept back from a participation of the Conſolation tendred from the forgiveneſs that is with God, becauſe they cannot comfortably conclude that they are *born again*, as knowing that it is unto ſuch perſons alone unto whom theſe Conſolations do truly and really belong, may know how to make a right Judgment of themſelves. Let ſuch perſons then not fluctuate up and down in Generals and Uncertainties, with heartleſs complaints, which is the ruine of the peace of their ſouls; but let them really put things to the trial, by the examination of the Cauſes and Effects of the work they enquire after. It is by the uſe of ſuch means whereby God will be pleaſed to give them all the Aſſurance and Eſtabliſhment concerning their State and Condition which is needful for them, and which may give them incouragement in their courſe of obedience. But ſuppoſing all that hath been ſpoken; what if a man by the utmoſt ſearch and enquiry that he is able to make, cannot attain any ſatisfactory perſwaſion that indeed this great work of Gods Grace hath paſſed upon his ſoul; is this a ſufficient ground to keep him off from accepting of ſupportment and conſolation from this Truth, that there is forgiveneſs with God, which is the deſign of the Objection laid down before? I ſay therefore further, that

1. *Regeneration doth not in Order of time precede the ſouls intereſt in the forgiveneſs that is with God*, or its being made partaker

taker of the pardon of ſin; I ſay no more but that it doth not precede it in *order of time*, not determining which hath precedency in *order of nature*. That, I confeſs, which the method of the Goſpel leads unto, is that Abſolution, Acquitment, or the pardon of ſin, is the foundation of the communication of all ſaving Grace unto the ſoul, and ſo precedeth all Grace in the ſinner whatever. But becauſe this Abſolution or pardon of ſin is to be received by faith, whereby the ſoul is really made partaker of it, and all the benefits belonging thereunto; and that Faith alſo is the radical grace which we receive in our *Regeneration*; for it is by faith that our hearts are purified, as an Inſtrument in the hand of the great purifier, the Spirit of God; I place theſe two together, and ſhall not diſpute as to their *priority* in *Nature*; but in *Time* the one doth not precede the other.

2. It is hence evident, that an Aſſurance of being Regenerate, is no way previouſly neceſſary unto the believing of an intereſt in forgiveneſs; ſo that although a man have not the former, it is, or may be his duty to endeavour the latter. When convinced perſons cryed out, What ſhall we do to be ſaved! the anſwer was, Believe and you ſhall be ſo; Believe in Chriſt, and in the remiſſion of ſin by his blood, is the firſt thing that convinced ſinners are called unto. They are not directed firſt to ſecure their ſouls that *they are born again*, and then afterwards to believe. But they are firſt to believe that the Remiſſion of ſin is tendred unto them in the blood of Chriſt, and that by him they may be juſtified from all things from which they could not be juſtified by the Law. Nor upon this propoſition is it the duty of men to queſtion whether they have faith or no, but actually to believe. And faith in its operation will evidence it ſelf. See *Acts* 13. 38, 39. Suppoſe then that you do not know that you are Regenerate, that you are born of God; that you have no prevailing, refreſhing conſtant evidence or perſwaſion thereof; ſhould this hinder you? ſhould this diſcourage you from believing forgiveneſs, from cloſing with the promiſes, and thereby obtaining in your ſelves an intereſt in that forgiveneſs that is with God? Not at all; Nay, this ought exceedingly to excite and ſtir you up unto your duty herein. For,

1. Suppoſe that it is *otherwiſe*; that indeed you are yet in the

the ſtate of ſin, and are only brought under the power of Light and Conviction; this is the way for a tranſlation into an eſtate of ſpiritual life and Grace: If you will forbear the acting of faith upon, and for forgiveneſs, untill you are Regenerate, you may, and probably you will come ſhort both of Forgiveneſs and Regeneration alſo. Here lay your foundation, and then your building will go on. This will open the door unto you, and give you an entrance into the Kingdom of God. Chriſt is the *door*; do not think to climb up over the wall; enter by him, or you will be kept out.

2. Suppoſe that you are born again, but yet *know it not*, as is the condition of many. This is a way whereby you may receive an evidence thereof. It is good embracing of all ſigns, tokens and pledges of our ſpiritual condition; and it is ſo to improve them. But the beſt courſe is to follow the genuine natural actings of faith, which will lead us into the moſt ſetled apprehenſions concerning our Relation unto God, and acceptance with him. Believe firſt the forgiveneſs of ſin as the effect of meer grace and mercy in Chriſt. Let the faith hereof be nouriſhed and ſtrengthened in your ſouls. This will inſenſibly influence your hearts into a comforting Goſpel perſwaſion of your ſtate and condition towards God, which will be accompanied with aſſured reſt and peace.

To winde up this diſcourſe; remember, that that which hath been ſpoken with reference unto the ſtate of Regeneration in General, may be applyed unto every particular objection or cauſe of fear or diſcouragement that may be reduced to that head. Such are all Objections that ariſe from particular ſins, from Aggravations of ſin by their greatneſs or circumſtances, or relapſes into them. The way that the conſideration of theſe things prevail upon the mind unto fears, is by begetting an apprehenſion in men that they are not Regenerate; for if they were, they ſuppoſe they could not be ſo overtaken or entangled. The Rules therefore laid down are ſuited to the ſtreights of the ſouls of ſinners in all ſuch particular caſes.

Laſtly, There was ſomewhat in particular added in the cloſe of the Objection, which although it be not directly in our way, nor of any great importance in it ſelf, yet having been mentioned, it is not unmeet to remove it out of the way,

that

that it may not leave intanglement upon the minds of any. Now this is, that ſome *know not*, nor can give an account of the *Time of their converſion unto God*, and therefore cannot be ſatisfied that the ſaving work of his grace hath paſſed upon them. This is uſually and ordinarily ſpoken unto: And I ſhall therefore briefly give an account concerning it.

1. It hath been ſhewed that *in this matter*, there are many things whereon we may *regularly* found a Judgement concerning our ſelves; and it is great folly to wave them all, and put the iſſue of the matter upon one *circumſtance*. If a man have a tryal at Law wherein he hath many evidences ſpeaking for him, only one *circumſtance* is dubious and in queſtion; He will not caſt the weight of his Cauſe on that diſputed circumſtance, but will plead thoſe Evidences that are more clear, and teſtifie more fully in his behalf. I will not deny but that this matter of the *time of Converſion* is oft-times an important circumſtance; In the *Affirmative* when it is known it is of great uſe tending to ſtability and conſolation; but yet it is ſtill but a *circumſtance*, ſuch as that the being of the thing it ſelf doth not depend upon. He that is *alive* may know that he was *born*, though he know neither the place where, nor the time when he was ſo. And ſo may he that is *ſpiritually alive*, and hath ground of evidence that he is ſo, that he was *born again*, though he knew neither when, nor where, nor how. And this Caſe is uſual in perſons of quiet natural Tempers, who have had the advantage of education under means of Light and Grace. God oft-times in ſuch perſons begins and carries on the work of his Grace inſenſibly, ſo that they come to good growth and maturity before they know that they are alive. Such perſons come at length to be ſatisfied in ſaying with the blind man in the Goſpel, *How our eyes were opened we know not, only one thing we know, whereas we were blind by nature, now we ſee.*

2. Even in *this matter* alſo, we muſt, it may be, be content to live by faith, and to believe as well what God hath done *in us*, if it be the matter and ſubject of his Promiſes, as what he hath *done for us*, the ground whereof alſo is the *promiſe* and nothing elſe.

Objections

Objections from the preſent ſtate and Condition of the Soul: Weakneſs and imperfection of Duty. Oppoſition from Indwelling Sin.

3. There is another Head of Objections againſt the ſouls receiving Conſolation from an *intereſt in forgiveneſs* ariſing from the conſideration of its preſent ſtate and condition, as to *actual Holineſs*, Duties and ſins. Souls complain when in Darkneſs, and under Temptations that they cannot find that *Holineſs*, nor thoſe fruits of it in themſelves, which they ſuppoſe an intereſt in pardoning mercy will produce. Their hearts they find are *weak*, and all their *Duties* worthleſs. If they were weighed in the ballance they would be all found too light. In the beſt of them there is ſuch a mixture of *Self*, *Hypocriſie*, Unbelief, vain Glory, that they are even aſhamed and confounded with the Remembrance of them. Theſe things fill them with diſcouragements, ſo that they refuſe to be comforted, or to entertain any refreſhing perſwaſion from the Truth inſiſted on; but rather conclude that they are utter ſtrangers from that forgiveneſs that is with God, and ſo continue helpleſs in their *depths*. Objections from weakneſs in Duty, and the power of Sin.

According unto the *method* propoſed, and hitherto purſued I ſhall only lay down ſome ſuch *general Rules*, as may ſupport a ſoul under the deſpondencies, that are apt in ſuch a condition to befall it, that none of theſe things may weaken it in its endeavour to lay hold of forgiveneſs. And,

Firſt, This is the proper place to put in execution our ſeventh Rule, to take *heed of heartleſs complaints, when vigorous actings of Grace are expected at our hands.* If it be thus indeed, why lye you on your faces, why do you not riſe, and put out your ſelves to the utmoſt, giving all diligence to add one Grace to another, untill you find your ſelves in a better frame. Supposing then the putting of that *Rule* into practice, I add, that

1. *Known Holineſs, is apt to degenerate into ſelf righteouſneſs.* What God gives us on the account of *Sanctification*, we are ready enough to reckon on the ſcore of *Juſtification*. It is a hard thing to *feel* Grace, and to *believe* as if there were none. We have ſo much of the *Phariſee* in us by nature, that it is

ſome-

ſometimes well that our Good is hid from us. We are ready to take our Corn and Wine and beſtow them on other Lovers. Were there not in our hearts a *ſpiritually ſenſible* principle of corruption; and in our duties a diſcernable mixture of *ſelf*, it would be impoſſible we ſhould walk ſo *humbly*, as is required of them who hold communion with God in a Covenant of Grace and pardoning mercy. It is a good life, which is attended with a *faith* of Righteouſneſs, and a *ſenſe* of Corruption. Whileſt I know Chriſts Righteouſneſs, I ſhall the leſs care to know my own Holineſs. To *be holy* is neceſſary, to *know it* ſometimes a Temptation.

2. *Even Duties of Gods Appointment when turned into ſelf-righteouſneſs, are Gods great abhorrency*, Iſa. 66. 2, 3. What hath a good *Original* may be vitiated by a bad *End*.

3. Oftentimes *Holineſs in the heart is more known by the Oppoſition that is made there to it, than by its own prevalent working*; The Spirits Operation is known by the fleſh's oppoſition. We find a mans ſtrength by the burdens he carryes, and not the pace that he goes. *Oh, wretched man that I am who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death*, is a better evidence of Grace and Holineſs, than *God I thank thee I am not as other men*; a heart preſſed, grieved burdened, not by the *guilt* of *ſin* only, which reflects with trouble on an awakened conſcience, but by the cloſe adhering *power of Indwelling ſin*, tempting, ſeducing, ſoliciting, hindring, captivating, conceiving, reſtleſly diſquieting, may from thence have as clear an evidence of holineſs, as from a delightful fruit-bearing. What is it that is troubled and grieved in thee? What is it, that ſeems to be almoſt killed and deſtroyed; that cries out, complains, longs for deliverance? is it not the *new Creature?* is it not the principle of ſpiritual life, whereof thou art partaker? I ſpeak not of trouble and diſquietments for ſin committed, nor of fears and perturbations of mind, leſt ſin ſhould break forth to loſs, ſhame, ruine, diſhonour; nor of the contending of a convinced Conſcience leſt Damnation ſhould enſue; but of the ſtriving of the ſpirit againſt ſin, out of a hatred and a loathing of it, upon all the mixt Conſiderations of Love, Grace, Mercy, Fear, the beauty of Holineſs, Excellency of communion with God, that are propoſed in the Goſpel. If thou ſeemeſt to thy ſelf to be only *paſſive* in theſe things, to do nothing, but to endure the Aſſaults of ſin; Yet if thou art ſenſible, and ſtandeſt under the ſtroke of it, as under the ſtroke of an Enemy, there is the root of the matter. And as it is thus, as to the ſubſtance and *Being* of Holineſs, ſo it is alſo as to the *degrees* of it. Degrees of Holineſs are to be meaſured more by Oppoſition, than ſelf operation. He may have more Grace, than another; who brings not forth ſo much fruit as the other; becauſe he hath more oppoſition, more Temptation, *Iſa.* 41. 17. And ſenſe of the want of *all*, is a great ſign of *ſomewhat* in the ſoul.

2. As to what was alledged to the nothingneſs, the ſelfiſhneſs of Duty; I ſay,

It is certain *whileſt we are in the fleſh, our duties will taſte of the veſſel whence they proceed.* Weakneſs, defilements, treachery, hypocriſie will attend them. To this purpoſe whatever ſome pretend to the contrary, is the Complaint of the Church, *Iſa.* 64. 6. The *Chaffe* oftentimes is ſo mixed with the *Wheat* that Corn can ſcarce be diſcerned. And this know, that the more ſpiritual any man is, the more he ſees of his unſpiritualneſs in his ſpiritual Duties. An outſide performance will ſatisfie an outſide Chriſtian. *Job* abhorred himſelf moſt, when he knew himſelf beſt. The clearer diſcoveries we have had of God, the viler will every thing of ſelf appear. Nay further, duties and performances are oftentimes very *ill meaſured* by us; and thoſe ſeem to be *firſt*, which indeed are *laſt*, and thoſe to be laſt, which indeed are firſt. I do not doubt but a man when he hath had diſtractions to wreſtle withall, no outward advantage to further him, no extraordinary provocations of hope, fear or ſorrow on a natural account in his duty, may riſe from his knees with thoughts that he hath done nothing in his duty but provoked God; when there hath been more workings of Grace in contending with the deadneſs caſt on the ſoul by the condition that it is in, than when by a concurrence of moved natural affections, and outward provocations, a frame hath been raiſed, that hath to the party himſelf ſeemed to reach to Heaven; ſo that it may be this perplexity about duties, is nothing but what is common to the people of God, and which ought to be no obſtruction to peace and ſettlement.

2. As to the pretence of *Hypocriſie* you know what is uſually anſwered; it is *one thing* to do a thing in *hypocriſie*, another not to do it *without a mixture of hypocriſie*. Hypocriſie in its long extent is every thing that for matter or manner comes ſhort of ſincerity. Now our *ſincerity* is no more perfect than our other graces; ſo that in its meaſure it abides with us, and adheres to all we do: In like manner, it is one thing to do a thing for vain glory, and to be ſeen of men, another not to be able wholly to keep off the ſubtle inſinuations of ſelf and *vain glory*. He that doth a thing *in hypocriſie*, and *for vain glory*, is ſatisfied with ſome corrupt end obtained, though he be ſenſible that he ſought ſuch an end. He that doth a thing with *a mixture of hypocriſie*, that is with ſome breaches upon the degrees of his ſincerity, with ſome inſenſible advancements in performance on outward conſiderations, is not ſatisfied with *a ſelf-end* attained, and is diſſatisfied with the defect of his ſincerity. In a word, wouldſt thou yet be ſincere, and doſt endeavour ſo to be in private duties, and in publick performances; in praying, hearing, giving Alms, zealous actings for Gods glory, and the Love of the Saints, though theſe duties are not, it may be, ſometimes, done without ſenſible hypocriſie, I mean as traced to its moſt ſubtle inſinuations of ſelf and vain glory; yet are they not done in hypocriſie, nor do not denominate the perſons by whom they are performed Hypocrites; Yet I ſay of this, as of all that is ſpoken before; it is of uſe to relieve us under a troubled condition, of none to ſupport us or incourage us unto an abode in it.

3. Know *that God deſpiſeth not ſmall things*; he takes notice of the leaſt breathings of our hearts after him, when we our ſelves can ſee nor perceive no ſuch thing. He knows the mind of the Spirit in thoſe workings which are never formed to that height, that we can reflect upon them with our obſervation. Every thing that is of him, is noted in *his Book*, though not in ours. He took notice that when *Sarah* was acting *unbelief* towards him, yet that ſhe ſhewed reſpect and *regard* to her Huſband, calling him *Lord*, *Gen.* 18.12. 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. And even whilſt his people are ſinning, he can find ſomething in their hearts, words or waies that pleaſeth him, much more in their duties. He is a skilfull refiner that can find *much Gold* in that *Ore* where

where we ſee nothing but *Lead* or Clay. He remembers the duties which we forget, and forgets the ſins which we remember. He juſtifies our perſons though *ungodly*, and will alſo our duties, though not *perfectly godly*.

4. To give a little further ſupport in reference unto our wretched miſerable Duties, and to them that are in perplexities on that account, know that *Jeſus Chriſt takes out whatever is evil and unſavoury out of them, and makes them acceptable*. When an unskilfull ſervant gathers many herbs, flowers and weeds in a Garden, you gather them out that are *uſefull*, and caſt the reſt out of ſight. Chriſt deals ſo with our Performances. All the ingredients of *ſelf* that are in them on any account, he takes away, and adds Incenſe to what remains, and preſents it to God. *Exod.* 28.36. This is the cauſe that the Saints at the laſt day when they *meet their own duties* and performances, they know them not, they are ſo changed from what they were when they went out of their hand. *Lord when ſaw we thee naked or hungry*, ſo that God accepts *a little*, and Chriſt makes *our little* a great deal.

5. *Is this an Argument to keep thee from believing?* The Reaſon why thou art no more *Holy* is becauſe thou haſt no more faith. If thou haſt no holineſs, it is becauſe thou haſt no Faith; Holineſs is the purifying of the heart by faith; or our Obedience unto the Truth. And the reaſon why thou art no more in duty, is becauſe thou art no more in believing; the reaſon why thy duties are weak and imperfect, is becauſe thy faith is weak and imperfect. Haſt thou no holineſs, believe that thou maiſt have; haſt thou but a little, or that which is imperceptible, be *ſtedfaſt* in believing that thou maiſt abound in Obedience. Do not reſolve not to eat thy meat untill thou art ſtrong, when thou haſt no means of being ſtrong, but by eating thy bread, which ſtrengthens the heart of man.

Object. 4. The powerfull *tumultuating of indwelling ſin or corruption*, is another cauſe of the ſame kind of trouble and deſpondency. *They that are Chriſts have crucified the fleſh with the luſts thereof.* But we find, ſay ſome, ſeveral corruptions working effectually in our hearts, carrying us captive to the Law of ſin. They diſquiet with their power, as well as with their guilt. Had we been made partakers of the *Law of the*

Spirit of Life, we had ere this been more ſet free from the Law of ſin and death. Had ſin been *pardoned fully*, it would have been ſubdued more effectually.

There are three Conſiderations which make the actings of indwelling ſin to be ſo perplexing to the ſoul.

1. Becauſe they are *unexpected*. The ſoul looks not for them upon the firſt great conqueſt made of ſin, and univerſal engagement of the heart unto God. When it firſt ſayes, *I have ſworn, and am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy righteous Judgements*, commonly there is peace at leaſt for a ſeaſon from the diſturbing vigorous actings of ſin. There are many Reaſons why ſo it ſhould be. Old things are then paſſed away, all things are become new; and the ſoul under the power of that univerſal change, is utterly turned away from thoſe things that ſhould *foment*, ſtir up, provoke or cheriſh any luſt or temptation. Now when ſome of theſe Advantages are paſt, and ſin begins to ſtir and act again, the ſoul is *ſurprized*, and thinks the work that he hath paſſed through was not true and effectual, but *temporary* only. Yea he thinks perhaps that ſin hath *more ſtrength* then it had before, becauſe he is more *ſenſible* than he was before. As one that hath a dead arm or limb, whilſt it is *mortified* endures deep cuts and launcings, and feels them not; when ſpirits and ſenſe are brought into the place again, he *feels* the leaſt cut, and may think the inſtruments *ſharper* than they were before, when all the difference is, that he hath got a *quickneſs* of *ſenſe*, which before he had not. It may be ſo with a perſon in this caſe; he may think luſt more *powerfull* than it was before, becauſe he is more *ſenſible* than he was before. Yea ſin in the heart, is like a Snake or Serpent; you may pull out the ſting of it, and cut it into many pieces; though it can ſting mortally no more, nor move his whole body at once, yet it will move in all its parts, and make an appearance of *a greater motion* than formerly. So it is with luſt, when it hath received its deaths wound, and is cut in pieces, yet it moves in ſo many parts as it were in the ſoul, that it *amazes him* that hath to do with it; and thus coming *unexpectedly*, fills the ſpirit oftentimes with diſconſolation.

2. It hath alſo in its actings an *Univerſality*. This alſo ſurprizeth; there is *an univerſality* in the actings of ſin, even in Believers.

Believers. There is no *evil* that it will not move to; there is no *good* that it will not attempt to hinder; no duty that it will not defile. And the reaſon of this is, becauſe we are ſanctified but in part; not in any part *wholly*, though ſavingly and truly in every part. There is ſin remaining in every faculty, in all the Affections, and ſo may be acting in and towards any ſin that the nature of man is liable unto. *Degrees* of ſin there are that all Regenerate perſons are exempted from; but unto ſolicitations to all kinds of ſin they are expoſed, and this helps on the *Temptation*.

3. *It is endleſs and reſtleſs*; never quiet conquering nor conquered; it gives not over, but rebells being overcome, or aſſaults afreſh having prevailed. Oft-times after a victory obtained, and an oppoſition ſubdued, the ſoul is in expectation of Reſt and Peace from its enemies. But this holds not. It works and rebells again and again, and will do ſo whilſt we live in this world; ſo that no iſſue will be put to our conflict but by death. This is at large handled elſewhere, in a *Treatiſe lately publiſhed* on this peculiar ſubject.

Theſe and the like Conſiderations attending the *actings of indwelling ſin*, do oftentimes intangle the ſoul in making a Judgement of it ſelf, and leave it in the dark as to its ſtate and condition.

A few things ſhall be offered unto this Objection alſo.

1. The ſenſible powerfull actings of indwelling ſin, are not inconſiſtent with a ſtate of Grace, *Gal.* 5. 17. There are in the ſame perſon contrary principles, the fleſh and the ſpirit; *theſe are contrary*; And there are contrary actings from theſe principles; *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh*; and theſe actings are deſcribed to be greatly vigorous in other places. *Luſt wars againſt our ſouls*, Jam. 4. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 11. Now to *war* is not to make faint or gentle Oppoſition, to be ſlighted and contemned; but it is to go out with great ſtrength, to uſe craft, ſubtlety and force, ſo as to put the whole iſſue to a hazard. So theſe luſts *war*; ſuch are their *actings* in and againſt the ſoul. And therefore ſaith he Apoſtle, *You cannot do the things that you would*; ſee *Rom.* 7. 14, 15, 16, 17. In this conflict indeed the underſtanding is left unconquered; it *condemns* and diſapproves of the evil led unto; and the will is not ſub-

subdued; *it would not doe the evil* that is pressed upon it, and there is an *hatred* or aversation remaining in the Affections unto sin; but yet notwithstanding sin *rebells*, *fights*, *tumultuates*, and leads captive. This Objection then may receive this speedy Answer. Powerfull actings and workings, universal endless struglings of indwelling sin, seducing to all that is evil, putting it self forth to the disturbance and dissettlement of all that is good, is no sufficient ground to conclude a state of Alienation from God; see for this the other Treatise before mentioned at large.

2. *Your state is not at all to be measured by the opposition that sin makes to you*, but by the opposition you make to it; be that never so *great*, if this be good, be that never so *restless* and powerfull, if this be *sincere*, you may be disquieted, you can have no reason to despond.

I have mentioned these things only to give a *specimen* of the Objections which men usually raise up against an actual *closing* with the Truth insisted on to their consolation. And we have also given in upon them some Rules of Truth for their relief, not intending in them absolute satisfaction as to the whole of the cases mentioned, but only to remove the *darkness* raised by them so out of the way, as that it might not hinder any from mixing the Word with Faith that hath been dispensed from this blessed testimony, that *there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared.*

Verse 5, 6.

v. 5, 6. PRoceed we now to the second part of this Psalm, which contains the deportment of a sin-perplexed soul; when by Faith it hath discovered where its Rest doth lye, and from whom its relief is to be expected; even from the *forgiveness* which is with God, whereof we have spoken.

There are two things in general, as was before mentioned, that the soul in that condition applies it self unto; whereof the first respects *its self*, and the other the whole *Israel of God.*

That which respects its self, is the *description* of that frame of heart and spirit that he was brought into, upon faiths discovery of Forgiveness in God; with the duties that he applied himself unto, the grounds of it, and the manner of its performance, *v.* 5, 6.

I wait for the Lord, my Soul doth wait, and in his Word do I hope. v. 5, & 6. opened.

My Soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning.

Herein I say he discribes both his *frame* of spirit, and the *Duty* he applied himself to, both as to Matter and Manner.

I shall, as in the method hitherto observed, first consider the *reading of the Words*, then their *sense* and importance, with the *suitableness* of the things mentioned in them, to the condition of the soul under Consideration; all which will yield us a foundation of the *Observations* that are to be drawn from them.

The Words rendred strictly or word for word lye thus:

I have earnestly expected Jehovah; my soul hath expected, and in his Word have I tarryed, or waited.

My Soul to the Lord, more than, (or before) *the Watchmen in the morning; the Watchmen in the morning*; or unto the morning.

I have waited or expected; קִוִּיתִי from קָוָה to *expect*, to *hope*, to wait. *Verbum hoc est, magno animi desiderio, in aliquem intentum esse, & respicere ad eum, ex eo pendere.* The word denotes to be intent on any one with great desire; to behold or regard him, and to depend upon him; and it also expresseth the earnest inclination and intention of the *Will* and *Mind.*

Paul seems to have expressed this word to the full, *Rom.* 8. 19. by ἀποκαραδοκία; *an intent or earnest expectation*, expressing it self by putting forth the head, and looking round about with earnestness and diligence. And this is also signified expresly by this word; Psal. 69. 20. וָאֲקַוֶּה לָנוּד *and I looked for some to take pity; huc illuc anxiè circumspexi, siqui fortè me commiseraturus esset. I looked round about this way and that way* diligently and solicitously, to see if any would pity me or lament with me.

Thus,

Thus, *I have waited*, is as much as, *I have diligently with intention of soul, mind, will, and affections looked unto God, in earnest expectation of that from him that I stand in need of*, and which must come forth from the forgiveness that is with him.

2. I have, saith he, waited for, or expected *Jehovah*; he uses the same *Name* of God in his Expectation, that he first *fixed* on in his Application to him.

And it is not *this* or *that means*, not this or that Assistance, but it is *Jehovah* himself that he *expects* and *waits* for. It is *Jehovah* himself that must satisfie the Soul: his favour and loving *kindness*; and what flows from them; if he come not himself, if he gives not himself, nothing else will relieve.

3. *My soul* doth wait or expect; it is no *outward duty* that I am at, no *lip-labour*, no bodily work, no formal cold careless performance of a duty; no, my *soul doth wait*: it is *soul-work*, *heart-work* I am at; I wait, I wait with my whole soul.

4. *In his Word do I hope:* or wait. There is not any thing of difficulty in these words; the word used יִחַלְתִּי is from יָחַל *sunt qui quod affine sit verbo* חלל *velint anxietatem. & nisum includere, ut significet anxiè, seu enixè expectare, sustinere, & sperare*; It signifies to hope, expect, endure, and sustain, with care, solicitousness, and indeavours. Hence the 70 have rendred the word by ὑπέμεινεν, and the *Vul. Lat. Sustinui.* I have *sustained* and *waited* with patience.

And this *on the Word*; or he *sustained his soul* with the Word of promise that it should not utterly faint. Seeing he had made a discovery of *Grace and forgiveness*, though yet at a great distance; he had a sight of Land, though he was yet in a storm at Sea; and therefore incourageth himself, or his soul, that it doth not despond.

But yet all this that we have spoken reaches not the intenseness of the soul of the *Psalmist* in this his *Expectation of Jehovah*. The earnest engagement of his soul in this duty riseth up above what he can express. Therefore he proceeds, ver. 6. *My soul*, saith he, *for the Lord*, (that is, expects him, looks for him, waits for his coming to me in Love and with forgiveness) *more than the watchers for the morning, the watchers for the morning.*

These

These latter words are variously rendred, and variously expounded. The LXX. and *vulgar Latin* render them *from the Morning watch, untill night*. Others, *from those that keep the Morning watch unto those that keep the Evening watch*. More than the watchers in the Morning, more than the Watchers in the Morning.

The Words also are variously expounded. *Austin* would have it to signifie, the placing of our hopes on the Morning of *Christs resurrection, and continuing in them untill the night of our own death.*

Hierome who renders the Words, *from the morning watch to the morning watch*, expounds them of continuing our hopes and expectations from *the morning that we are called into the Lords Vineyard*, to *the morning when we shall receive our reward*, as much to the sense of the place as the former: and so *Chrysostome* interprets it of our whole life.

It cannot be denyed but that they were lead into these mistakes by the *Translation* of the 70. and that of the *Vulgar Latine*, who both of them have divided these Words, quite contrary to their proper dependance; and read them thus, *My soul expected the Lord. From the Morning watch to the Night watch, Let Israel trust in the Lord*; so making the words to belong to the following Exhortation unto others, which are plainly a part of the expression of his own duty.

The words then are a Comparison, and an Allusion unto *Watchmen*, and may be taken in one of these two senses.

1. *In things Civil*; As those who keep the *Watch of the Night*, do look, and long for, and expect the morning, when being dismissed from *their Guard* they may take that Sleep that they need and desire, which expresses a very earnest expectation, inquiry and desire: Or,

2. *In things Sacred*; With the *Chaldee* Paraphrast, which renders the words, *more than they that look for the morning watch, which they carefully observe, that they may offer the Morning Sacrifice*. In this sense, as saith he, the Warders and Watchers in the *Temple*, do look diligently after the Appearance of the Morning that they may with Joy offer the *Morning Sacrifice* in the appointed season; So, and with more diligence doth my Soul wait for Jehovah.

You ſee the reading of the words; and how far the ſenſe of them opens it ſelf unto us by that conſideration.

Let us then nextly ſee briefly the ſeveral parts of them, as they ſtand in Relation one to another. We have then,

1. The *Expreſſion of the Duty* wherein he was exerciſed, and that is *earneſt waiting for Jehovah.*

2. The *bottom and foundation* of that his waiting and expectation; that is the *Word* of God; the Word of promiſe, *he diligently hoped in the Word.*

3. The *Frame of his Spirit* in, and the manner of his performance of this Duty; Expreſſed,

1. In the words themſelves that he uſes, according as we opened them before.

2. In the *Emphatical reduplication* yea *triplication* of his expreſſion of it; I *wait* for God, my *ſoul waiteth* for God, my ſoul *for the Lord.*

3. In the *Compariſon* inſtituted between his diſcharge of his duty, and others performances of a *corporal Watch*, with the greateſt care and diligence; *more than they that watch for the morning*; So that we have,

1. *The duty* he performed; earneſt *Waiting* and Expectation.

2. The *Object* of his waiting; *Jehovah* himſelf.

3. His *Supportment* in that duty, the *Word of promiſe.*

4. The Manner of his performance of it.

1. With *Earneſtneſs* and diligence.

2. With *Perſeverance.*

Let us then now Conſider the Words, as they contain the frame and working of *a ſin-entangled Soul.*

Having been raiſed out of *his depths* by the diſcovery of *forgiveneſs* in God, as was before declared, yet not being immediately made partaker of that forgiveneſs, as to a comforting ſenſe of it, he gathers up his ſoul from wandring from God, and ſupports it from ſinking under his preſent condition.

It is, ſaith he, *Jehovah alone with whom is forgiveneſs that can relieve and do me good; his favour, his loving kindneſs, his communication of mercy and Grace from thence, is that which I ſtand in need of; on him therefore do I with all heedfulneſs attend; on him do I wait, my ſoul is filled with expectation from him; ſurely he*

he will come to me, he will come and refreſh me; though he ſeem as yet to be afar off, and to leave me in theſe depths, yet I have his word of promiſe to ſupport and ſtay my ſoul, on which I will lean untill I obtain the enjoyment of him, and his kindneſs which is better than life.

And this is the frame of *a ſin-entangled Soul*, who hath really by faith diſcovered forgiveneſs in God, but is not yet made partaker of a comforting refreſhing ſenſe of it. And we may repreſent it in the enſuing Obſervations.

Obſ. 1. *The firſt proper fruit of faiths diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God unto a ſin-diſtreſſed ſoul, is waiting in patience and Expectation.*

Obſ. 2. *The proper Object of a ſin-diſtreſſed ſoul's waiting and expecting, is God himſelf as reconciled in Chriſt*; I have waited for Jehovah.

Obſ. 3. *The Word of promiſe is the ſoul's great ſupportment in waiting for God*; in thy Word do I hope.

Obſ. 4. *Sin-diſtreſſed Souls wait for God with earneſt intention of mind, diligence, and expectation*; from the redoubling of the Expreſſion.

Obſ. 5. *Continuance in waiting untill God appears to the ſoul is neceſſary and prevailing*; Neceſſary as that without which we cannot attain aſſiſtance; and *prevailing* as that wherein we ſhall never fail.

Obſ. 6. *Eſtabliſhment in waiting where there is no preſent ſenſe of forgiveneſs, yet gives the ſoul much ſecret Reſt and Comfort*; This Obſervation ariſeth from the *influence* that *theſe Verſes* have into thoſe that follow. The *Pſalmiſt* having attained thus far, can now look about him, and begin to deal with others, and exhort them to an Expectation of Grace and mercy.

And thus though the ſoul be not abſolutely in the *haven of Conſolation* where it would be, yet it hath caſt out an *Anchor* that gives it Eſtabliſhment, and Security. Though it be yet *toſſed*, yet it is *ſecured* from Shipwrack, and is rather ſick than in danger: *A waiting Condition is a condition of Safety.*

Hence it is that he now turns himſelf to others, and upon the Experience of the diſcovery that he had made of forgiveneſs in God, and the Eſtabliſhment and conſolation he found in

Thus, *I have waited*, is as much as, *I have diligently with intention of soul, mind, will, and affections looked unto God, in earnest expectation of that from him that I stand in need of*; and which must come forth from the forgiveness that is with him.

2. I have, saith he, waited for, or expected *Jehovah*; he uses the same *Name* of God in his Expectation, that he first *fixed* on in his Application to him.

And it is not *this* or *that means*, not this or that Assistance, but it is *Jehovah* himself that he *expects* and *waits* for. It is *Jehovah* himself that must satisfie the Soul: his favour and loving *kindness*; and what flows from them; if he come not himself, if he gives not himself, nothing else will relieve.

3. *My soul* doth wait or expect; it is no *outward duty* that I am at, no *lip-labour*, no bodily work, no formal cold careless performance of a duty; no, my *soul doth wait*: it is *soul-work*, *heart-work* I am at; I wait, I wait with my whole soul.

4. *In his Word do I hope*: or wait. There is not any thing of difficulty in these words; the word used קִוִּיתִי is from יָחַל *sunt qui quod affine sit verbo* חִלַּל *velim anxietatem & nisum includere, ut significet anxiè, seu enixè expectare, sustinere, & sperare*; It signifies to hope, expect, endure, and sustain, with care, solicitousness, and indeavours. Hence the 70 have rendred the word by ὑπέμεινεν, and the *Vul. Lat. Sustinui*. I have *sustained* and *waited* with patience.

And this *on the Word*; or he *sustained his soul* with the Word of promise that it should not utterly faint. Seeing he had made a discovery of *Grace and forgiveness*, though yet at a great distance; he had a sight of Land, though he was yet in a storm at Sea; and therefore incourageth himself, or his soul, that it doth not despond.

But yet all this that we have spoken reaches not the intenseness of the soul of the *Psalmist* in this his *Expectation of Jehovah*. The earnest engagement of his soul in this duty riseth up above what he can express. Therefore he proceeds, ver. 6. *My soul*, saith he, *for the Lord*, (that is, expects him, looks for him, waits for his coming to me in Love and with forgiveness) *more than the watchers for the morning, the watchers for the morning*.

These

These latter words are variously rendred, and variously expounded. The LXX. and *vulgar Latin* render them *from the Morning watch, until night*. Others, *from those that keep the Morning watch unto those that keep the Evening watch*. More than the watchers in the Morning, more than the Watchers in the Morning.

The Words also are variously expounded. *Austin* would have it to signifie, the placing of our hopes on the Morning of *Christs resurrection, and continuing in them untill the night of our own death*.

Hierome who renders the Words, *from the morning watch to the morning watch*, expounds them of continuing our hopes and expectations from *the morning that we are called into the Lords Vineyard*, to *the morning when we shall receive our reward*, as much to the sense of the place as the former: and so *Chrysostome* interprets it of our whole life.

It cannot be denyed but that they were lead into these mistakes by the *Translation* of the 70. and that of the *Vulgar Latine*, who both of them have divided these Words, quite contrary to their proper dependance; and read them thus, *My soul expected the Lord. From the Morning watch to the Night watch, Let Israel trust in the Lord*; so making the words to belong to the following Exhortation unto others, which are plainly a part of the expression of his own duty.

The words then are a Comparison, and an Allusion unto *Watchmen*, and may be taken in one of these two senses.

1. *In things Civil*; As those who keep the *Watch of the Night*, do look, and long for, and expect the morning, when being dismissed from *their Guard* they may take that Sleep that they need and desire, which expresses a very earnest expectation, inquiry and desire: Or,

2. *In things Sacred*; With the *Chaldee* Parephrast, which renders the words, *more than they that look for the morning watch, which they carefully observe, that they may offer the Morning Sacrifice*. In this sense, as saith he, the Warders and Watchers in the *Temple*, do look diligently after the Appearance of the Morning that they may with Joy offer the *Morning Sacrifice* in the appointed season; So, and with more diligence doth my Soul wait for Jehovah.

You see the reading of the words; and how far the sense of them opens it self unto us by that consideration.

Let us then nextly see briefly the several parts of them, as they stand in Relation one to another. We have then,

1. The *Expression of the Duty* wherein he was exercised, and that is *earnest waiting for Jehovah.*

2. The *bottom and foundation* of that his waiting and expectation; that is the *Word* of God; the Word of promise, *he diligently hoped in the Word.*

3. The *Frame of his Spirit* in, and the manner of his performance of this Duty; Expressed,

1. In the words themselves that he uses, according as we opened them before.

2. In the *Emphatical redaplication* yea *triplication* of his expression of it; I *wait* for God, my *soul waiteth* for God, my soul *for the Lord.*

3. In the *Comparison* instituted between his discharge of his duty, and others performances of a *corporal Watch*, with the greatest care and diligence; *more than they that watch for the morning*; So that we have,

1. *The duty* he performed; earnest *Waiting* and Expectation.

2. The *Object* of his waiting; *Jehovah* himself.

3. His *Supportment* in that duty, the *Word of promise.*

4. The Manner of his performance of it.

1. With *Earnestness* and diligence.

2. With *Perseverance.*

Let us then now Consider the Words, as they contain the frame and working of *a sin-entangled soul.*

Having been railed out of *his depths* by the discovery of *forgiveness* in God, as was before declared, yet not being immediately made partaker of that forgiveness, as to a comforting sense of it, he gathers up his soul from wandring from God, and supports it from sinking under his present condition.

It is, saith he, *Jehovah alone with whom is forgiveness that can relieve and do me good; his favours, his loving kindness, his communication of mercy and Grace from thence, is that which I stand in need of; on him therefore do I with all heedfulness attend; on him do I wait, my soul is filled with expectation from him; surely he*

he will come to me, he will come and refresh me; though he seem as yet to be afar off, and to leave me in these depths, yet I have his word of promise to support and stay my soul, on which I will lean untill I obtain the enjoyment of him, and his kindness which is better than life.

And this is the frame of *a sin-entangled Soul*, who hath really by faith discovered forgiveness in God, but is not yet made partaker of a comforting refreshing sense of it. And we may represent it in the ensuing Observations.

Obs. 1. *The first proper fruit of faiths discovery of forgiveness in God unto a sin-distressed soul, is waiting in patience and Expectation.*

Obs. 2. *The proper Object of a sin-distressed soul's waiting and expecting, is God himself as reconciled in Christ*; I have waited for Jehovah.

Obs. 3. *The Word of promise is the soul's great supportment in waiting for God*; in thy Word do I hope.

Obs. 4. *Sin-distressed Souls wait for God with earnest intention of mind, diligence, and expectation*; from the redoubling of the Expression.

Obs. 5. *Continuance in waiting untill God appears to the soul is necessary and prevailing*; Necessary as that without which we cannot attain assistance; and *prevailing* as that wherein we shall never fail.

Obs. 6. *Establishment in waiting where there is no present sense of forgiveness, yet gives the soul much secret Rest and Comfort*; This Observation ariseth from the *influence* that *these Verses* have unto those that follow. The *Psalmist* having attained thus far, can now look about him, and begin to deal with others, and exhort them to an Expectation of Grace and mercy.

And thus though the soul be not absolutely in the *haven of Consolation* where it would be, yet it hath cast out an *Anchor* that gives it Establishment, and Security. Though it be yet *tossed*, yet it is *secured* from Shipwrack, and is rather sick than in danger: *A waiting Condition is a condition of Safety.*

Hence it is that he now turns himself to others, and upon the Experience of the discovery that he had made of forgiveness in God, and the Establishment and consolation he found in

waiting on him, he calls upon, and incourageth others to the same duty, *v.* 7, 8.

The *Propositions* laid down, I shall briefly pass through; still with respect unto the State and Condition of the Soul, represented in the *Psalm*. Many things that might justly be insisted on in the improvement of these Truths, have been anticipated in our former General Rules. To them we must therefore sometimes have *recourse*; because they must not be again repeated. On this account I say, we shall pass through them with all briefness possible; yet so as not wholly to omit any *directions* that are here tendred unto us, as to the guidance of the soul, whose condition and the working of whose faith is here described. This therefore in the first place is proposed.

The first proper fruit of faiths discovery of forgiveness in God unto a sin-distressed soul, is waiting in patience and expectation.

Waiting the first fruit of Faith in a way of Duty.

This the *Psalmist* openly and directly applies himself unto, and expresseth to have been as his *duty*, so his *practice*. And he doth it so *emphatically*, as was manifested in the opening of the words, that I know not that any duty is any where in the Scripture so recommended and lively represented unto us.

You must therefore for the right understanding of it, call to mind what hath been spoken concerning the *state of the soul* inquired into; its depths, intanglements, and sense of sin, with its Application unto God about those things; As also remember what hath been delivered about the *nature of forgiveness*, with the Revelation that is made of it unto the faith of Believers: And that this may be done, where the soul hath no refreshing sense of its own interest therein. It knows not that its *own sins are forgiven*, although it believes that there is forgiveness with God. Now the principal duty that is incumbent on such a soul, is that laid down in the proposition, namely, *patient waiting and expectation*.

Two things must be done in reference hereunto: First, The *nature of the duty* it self is to be declared: And secondly, The *necessity* and usefulness of its practice is to be evinced and demonstrated.

For the *Nature of it*, something hath been intimated giving light into it, in the opening of the words here used by the *Psal-*

Psalmist to express it by. But we may observe that these duties as required of us, do not consist in any *particular acting of the soul*, but in the whole spiritual frame and deportment of it in reference unto the End aimed at in and by them. And this *waiting*, as here and elsewhere commended unto us, and which is comprehensive of the especial duties of the soul in the case insisted on, and described, comprehends these three things. (1.) *Quietness* in Opposition to *haste*, and tumultuating of spirit. (2.) *Diligence* in Opposition to spiritual sloth, despondency and neglect of means. (3.) *Expectation* in Opposition to *despair*, distrust, and other proper immediate actings of unbelief.

Waiting on God wherein it consists.

1. *Quietness*. Hence this waiting it self is sometimes expressed by *silence*. To *wait* is to be silent, *Lam.* 3. 6. It is good both to hope, דוּמִם and to be *silent for the salvation of the Lord*; that is, to *wait quietly*, as we have rendred the word. And the same word we render sometimes *to rest*, as *Psal.* 37. 7. *Rest on the Lord*, דּוֹם לַיהוָה *be silent* unto him; where it is joyned with hoping or waiting, as that which belongs unto the nature of it; and so in sundry other places. And this God in an especial manner calleth souls unto *in straights and distresses*. *In quietness and confidence*, saith he, *shall be your strength*, Isa. 30. 15. And the effect of the Righteousness of God by Christ, is said to be *Quietness and Assurance for ever*, Isa. 32. 17. First *Quietness*, and then *Assurance*. Now this *silence* and quietness which accompanieth *waiting*, yea which is an *essential part* of it, is opposed first to *Haste*; and Haste is the souls *undue lifting up its self*, proceeding from a weariness of its condition, to press after an end of its troubles, not according to the conduct of the Spirit of God. Thus when God calleth his people to *waiting*, he expresseth the contrary acting unto this duty, by the *lifting up of the soul*; *Hab.* 2. 3, 4. *Though the vision tarry, wait for it; behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him, but the Just shall live by faith.* God hath given unto the soul a *vision of Peace*, through the discovery of that forgiveness which is with him; but he will have us wait for an actual participation of it unto rest and comfort. He that will not do so, but *lifts up his soul*, that is, in *making haste* beyond the Rule and Method of the Spirit of God in this matter, *his heart is not upright*

in

in him, nor will he know what it is *to live by faith*. This ruines and disappoints many a soul in its attempts for forgiveness. The Prophet speaking of this matter, tells us, that *He that believeth shall not, or will not make haste*, *Isa.* 28. 16. Which words the Apostle *twice* making use of, *Rom.* 9. 33. *chap.* 10. 11. in both places renders them, *Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*, or confounded. And that because this *Haste* turns men off from believing, and so disappoints their hopes, and leaves them unto *shame and confusion*. Men with a sense of the guilt of sin, having some discovery made to them of the Rest Ease and Peace which they may obtain to their souls by forgiveness, are ready to catch greedily at it, and to make *false*, unsound, undue applications of it unto themselves. They cannot bear the yoak that the Lord hath put upon them, but grow impatient under it, and cry with *Rachel*, *Give me children or I dye*. Any way they would obtain it. Now as the *first duty* of such a soul is to apply its self unto *waiting*; so the first entrance into waiting consists in this *Silence and Quietness* of heart and spirit. This is the souls endeavour to keep its self *humble*, satisfied with the *soveraign pleasure* of God in its condition, and refusing all wayes and means of Rest and Peace, but what it is guided and directed unto by the Word and Spirit.

2. As it is opposed unto *Haste*, so it is unto *tumultuating thoughts*, and vexatious disquietments; the soul is *silent*, *Psal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* He redoubles the expression, whereby he sets out his endeavour to *quiet* and *still* his soul in the Will of God. In the condition discoursed of, the soul is apt to have many *tumultuating thoughts*, or a multitude of perplexing thoughts of no use or advantage unto it. How they are to be watched against and rejected, was before declared in our *General Rules*. This *Quietness* in waiting will prevent them. And this is the first thing in the duty prescribed.

Secondly, *Diligence* in Opposition unto *spiritual sloth*, is included in it also. Diligence is the activity of the mind in the [illegible] use of means, for the pursuit of any end proposed. The [illegible] ed at by the soul, is a comforting refreshing interest in [illegible] iveness that is with God. For the attaining hereof, [illegible] ndry means instituted and blessed of God. A *neglect* of

of them through regardlesness or sloth, will certainly disappoint the soul from attaining that end. It is confessedly so in things *natural*. He that *soweth* not, must not think to *reap*; he that cloatheth not himself, will not be warm; nor he injoy health, who neglects the means of it. Men understand this as to their outward concerns. And although they have a due respect unto the blessing of God, yet they expect not to be rich without industry in their waies. It is so also in things *spiritual*. God hath appointed one thing to be the means of obtaining another; in the use of them doth he bless us, and from the use of them doth his Glory arise, because they are his own appointments. And this *diligence* wholly respecteth *practice*, or the regular use of means. A man is said to be *diligent in business*, to have a *deligent hand*; though it be an Affection of the mind, yet it simply respects practice and Operation. This diligence in his waiting *David* expresseth, *Psal.* 40. 1. קַוֹּה קִוִּיתִי. We render it, *I have waited patiently*, that is, *waiting I have waited*, that is *diligently*, earnestly in the use of means. So he describes this duty by an elegant similitude, *Psal.* 123. 2. *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their Masters; and as the eyes of a Maiden to the hand of her Mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God untill he have mercy on us.* Servants that wait on their Masters, *and look to their hands*, it is to expect an intimation of their minds as to what they would have them do, that they may address themselves unto it. So, saith he, do we wait for mercy; not in a *slothful neglect of duties*, but in a constant readiness to observe the Will of God in all his commands. An instance hereof we have in the *Spouse*, when she was in the condition here described, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2. She wanted the presence of her *Beloved*, which amounts to the same state which we have under consideration. For where the presence of Christ is not, there can be no *sense* of forgiveness. At first she seeks him *upon her bed*; *By night upon my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth, I sought him, but I found him not.* She seems herein to have gone no further than desires; for she was *in her bed*, where she could do no more; and the issue is, *she found him not*; but doth she so satisfie her self; and *lye still*, waiting untill he should come there unto her? no, she sayes, she will *rise now and go about the City, in the streets and in the broad waies, I will*

will seek him whom my soul loveth. She resolves to put her self into the use of all means, whereby one may be sought that is wanting. In the *City*, *Streets*, and *Fields*, she would enquire after him. And the blessed success she had herein is reported, *vers.* 4. *She found him, she held him, she would not let him goe.* This then belongs unto the *waiting* of the soul. Diligence in the use of means, whereby God is pleased ordinarily to communicate a sense of pardon and forgiveness, is a principal part of it. What *these means* are, is known. Prayer, Meditation, Reading, Hearing of the Word, Dispensation of the Sacraments, they are all appointed to this purpose; they are all means of communicating Love and Grace to the soul. Be not then heartless or *slothfull*; up and be doing; attend with diligence to the Word of Grace; be fervent in Prayer, assiduous in the use of all Ordinances of the Church, in one or other of them, at one time or other thou wilt meet with him whom thy soul loveth; and God through him will speak peace unto thee.

Thirdly, There is Expectation in it, which lyes in a direct opposition to all the actings of *unbelief* in this matter, and is the very life and soul of the *duty* under consideration. So the *Psalmist* declares it, *Psal.* 62. 5. *My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is only from him.* The soul will not, cannot in a due manner wait on God, unless it hath Expectations from him; unless, as *James* speaks, he *looks to receive somewhat from him*, *chap.* 1. 7. The soul in this condition regards forgiveness, not only as by its self it is desired, but principally as it is by God promised. Thence they *expect* it. This is expressed in the fourth Proposition before laid down, namely, *that sin-distressed souls wait for God with earnestness, intention of mind, and expectation.* As this ariseth from the redoubling of the Expression; so principally from the nature of the *Comparison* that he makes of himself in his waiting with them *that watch for the morning.* Those that *watch for the morning* do not only desire it, and prepare for it, but they *expect* it, and know assuredly that it will come. Though darkness may for a time be troublesome, and continue longer than they would desire, yet they know that the *morning* hath its appointed time of return, beyond which it will not tarry; and therefore they look out for its Appearance on all occasions: so it is with the soul in this matter.

So

So sayes *David*, Psal. 5. 3. *I will direct my prayer unto thee* וְאֶצְפֶּה *and look up.* So we; the *words* before are defective, בֹּקֶר אֶעֱרֹךְ לָךְ *in the Morning*, or rather every Morning, *I will order unto thee.* We restrain this unto prayer. *I will direct my prayer unto thee.* But this was expressed directly in the words foregoing; *In the morning thou shalt hear my voice*, that is, the voice of my prayer and supplications, as it is often supplied. And although the *Psalmist* doth sometime repeat the same thing in different Expressions, yet here he seemeth not so to do, but rather proceeds to declare the general frame of his spirit in walking with God. I will, saith he, *order all things towards God*, so as that I may wait upon him in the waies of his appoinment; וְאֶצְפֶּה *and will look up.* It seems in our *Translation* to express his *posture in his prayer.* But the Word is of another importance. It is diligently to *look out* after that which is coming towards us, a looking out after the Accomplishment of our Expectation. This is a part of our *waiting for God*; yea, as was said, the life of it, that which is principally intended in it. The *Prophet* calls it *his standing upon his watch tower*, and watching to see what God would speak unto him, *Hab.* 2. 3. namely, in answer unto that prayer which he put up in his trouble. He is now *waiting* in *Expectation* of an answer from God. And this is that which poor, weak, trembling sinners are so encouraged unto, *Isa.* 53. 3, 4. *Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees; say unto them that are of a fearfull heart, Be strong, fear not, behold your God will come.* Weakness and discouragements are the effects of Unbelief. These he would have removed with an Expectation of the *coming of God* unto the soul according to the Promise. And this I say belongs unto the *waiting* of the soul in the condition described. Such a one doth *expect* and *hope* that God will in his season manifest himself and his Love unto him, and give him an experimental sense of a blessed interest in forgiveness. And the accomplishment of this purpose and promise of God, it looks out after continually. It will not despond and be heartless, but stir up and strengthen it self unto a full expectation to have the desires of his soul satisfied in due time: as we find *David* doing in places almost innumerable.

This is the *duty* that in the *first place* is recommended unto

the soul, who is perswaded that there is forgiveness with God, but sees not its own interest therein. Wait on, or for the Lord. And it hath two properties when it is performed in a due manner; namely, *patience* and *perseverance*. By the *one* men are kept to the *length* of Gods time; By the *other* they are preserved in a due *length* of their own duty.

And this is that which was laid down in the *first Proposition* drawn from the words; namely, that continuance in watching, untill God appears unto the soul, is *necessary*, as that without which we cannot attain what we look after, and *prevailing*, as that wherein we shall never fail.

God is not to be *limited*, nor his times preferibed unto him. We know our *way*, and the *end* of our Journey; but our stations of especial rest, we must wait for at his mouth, as the people did in the wilderness. When *David* comes to deal with God in his great distress, he sayes unto him, *O Lord thou art my God, my times are in thine hand*, Psal. 31. 14, 15. His times of trouble, and of peace, of darkness and of light, he acknowledged to be *in* the hand, and at the disposal of God; so that it was his duty to wait his time and season for his share and portion in them.

During this state the soul meets with many Oppositions, difficulties and perplexities, especially if its darkness be of long continuance, as with some it abides many years, with some all the daies of their lives. Their hope being hereby deferred, makes their hearts sick, and their spirit oftentimes to faint; and this *fainting* is a defect in *waiting*, for want of perseverance and continuance which frustrates the End of it. So *David*, *Psal.* 27. 13. *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord.* Had I not received supportment by faith, I had fainted. And wherein doth that consist? what was the *fainting* which he had been overtaken withall without the supportment mentioned? it was a relinquishment of *waiting* on God, as he manifests by the Exhortation which he gives to himself and others, *v.* 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart; wait I say on the Lord.* Wait with courage and resolution that thou *faint* not. And the Apostle puts the blessed Event of Faith and Obedience upon the avoidance of this evil, *Gal.* 6. 9. *We shall reap if we faint not.* Hence we have both encouragements given against it, and promises that in the way of God we shall not be overtaken with it.

it. *Consider the Lord Christ*, saith the Apostle, *the Captain of your salvation, lest you be wearied and faint in your minds*, Heb. 12. 3. Nothing else can cause you to come short of the mark aimed at. And they, saith the Prophet, *who wait on the Lord*, that is in the use of the means by him appointed, *shall not faint*, *Isa.* 40. 11.

This *continuance then in waiting* is to accompany this duty upon the account of both the things mentioned in the Proposition; that it is *indispensably necessary* on our own account, and it is *assuredly prevailing* in the end; it will not fail.

1. It is *necessary*. They that *watch for the morning*, to whose frame and actings, the waiting of the soul for God is compared, give not over untill the light doth appear, or if they do, if they are wearied and faint, and so cease watching, all their former pains will be lost, and they will lye down in disappointments. So will it be with the soul that deserts its watch, and faints in its waiting. If upon the *eruption* of *new* lusts or corruptions; if upon the return of *old temptations*, or the Assaults of new ones; if upon a revived perplexing sense of guilt, or on the tediousness of working and labouring so much and so long in the dark, the soul begins to say in it self, *I have looked for light, and behold darkness*; for peace, and yet trouble cometh; the Summer is past, the Harvest is ended, and I am not relieved; such and such blessed means have been enjoyed, and yet I have not attained rest, and so gives over its waiting in the way and course before preferibed, it will at length *utterly fail* and come short of the Grace aimed at. *Thou hast laboured and hast not fainted*, brings in the reward, *Rev.* 2. 3.

2. Perseverance in waiting is *assuredly prevalent*; and this renders it a necessary part of the duty it self. If we continue to wait for the vision of peace, it will come, it will not tarry, but answer our expectation of it. Never soul miscarried that abode in this duty unto the end. The *joyes of Heaven* may sometimes prevent consolations in this life; God sometimes gives in the full Harvest without sending of the first fruits aforehand, but *Spiritual* or *Eternal peace* and Rest is the infallible End of permanent waiting for God.

This is the *Duty* that the *Psalmist* declares himself to be ingaged in, upon the incouraging discovery which was made unto

to him of *forgiveness in God*. *There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayst be feared; I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope*: And this is that which in the like condition is required of us. This is the great Direction which was given us in the Example and practice of the *Psalmist*, as to our Duty and deportment in the condition described. This was the Way whereby he *rose out of his depths* and escaped out of his entanglements; Is this then the state of any of us? let such take directions from hence.

1. *Encourage your souls unto waiting on God.* Do new fears arise, do old disconsolations continue, say unto your souls, *yet wait on God; why are you cast down O my soul, and why are you disquieted within us, hope in God; for we shall yet praise him, who is the health of our countenance, and our God*, as the Psalmist doth in the like case, *Psal* 43. 5. so he speaks elsewhere, wait on God; and be of good courage, shake off sloth, rouse up your selves from under despondencies, let not fears prevail. This is the only way for success, and it will assuredly be prevalent; Oppose this *Resolution* to every discouragement, and it will give new life to faith and hope; say, *My flesh faileth*, and *my heart faileth, but God is the rock of my heart, and my portion for ever*; as *Psal.* 73. 26. Though thy *perplexed thoughts* have even wearied and worn out the outward man, as in many they do, so that *flesh faileth*; and though thou hast no refreshing evidence from within, from thy self, or thy own Experience, so that thy *heart faileth*; yet resolve to look unto God; there is strength in him, and satisfaction in him, for the whole man; he is a *Rock*, and a *portion*; this will strengthen things which otherwise will be ready to dye. This will keep life in thy course, and stir thee up to plead it with God in an acceptable season when he will be found. *Job* carried up his condition unto a supposition that God might *slay him*; that is add one stroke, one rebuke unto another untill he was consumed; and so take him out of the world in darkness and in sorrow: Yet he resolved to *trust*, to *hope*, to *wait* on him, as knowing that he should not utterly miscarry so doing; this frame the Church expresseth so admirably that nothing can be added thereunto, Lament. 3. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. *Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace, I forgat prosperity, and*

and my hope is perished from the Lord; remembring mine Affliction and my misery, my Wormwood and my Gall; My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind therefore have I hope. It is of the Lords mercy that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God. We have here both the Condition, and the Duty inflicted on, with the method of the souls actings in reference unto the one and the other fully expressed. The Condition is sad and bitter, the soul is in *depths* far from peace and rest, *v.* 14. in this state it is ready utterly to faint and to give all for lost and gone, both *strength* for the present, and *hopes* for the future, *v.* 18. This makes its condition full of sorrow and bitterness, and its own thoughts become unto it like *Wormwood and Gall*, v. 19, 20. But doth he lye down under the burden of all this trouble? doth he despond, and give over? No, saith he, I call to mind, that there is *forgiveness with God*, Grace, Mercy, Goodness, for the relief of distressed souls; such as are in my condition, *v.* 21, 22, 23. Thence the conclusion is, that as all help is to be looked for, all relief expected from him alone; so it is *good that a man should quietly wait, and hope for the salvation of God*. This he stirs up himself unto, as the best, as the most blessed course for his deliverance.

2. Remember, *that diligent use of the means for the end aimed at*, is a necessary concomitant of, and ingredient unto waiting on God. Take in the consideration of this direction also. Do not think to be freed from your entanglements, by restless, heartless desiring that it were otherwise with you: *Means* are to be used that relief may be obtained. What those *means* are, is known unto all. Mortification of sin, prayer, meditation, due attendance upon all Gospel Ordinances; *conferring* in General about spiritual things, *advising* in particular about our own state and condition, with such who having received the tongue of the learned are able to speak a word in season to them that are weary, are required to this purpose. And in all these are *diligence* and *perseverance* to be exercised; or in vain shall men desire a delivery from their entanglements

God

God the proper Object of the souls waiting in its distresses and depths.

God himself is the Object of our waiting.

We have seen what *the duty* is intended in the Proposition; we are nextly to consider the Reason also of it, why this is the great, first, and principal duty of souls; who in their depths have it discovered unto them that there is forgiveness with God; And the reason hereof is; that which is expressed in our second Observation before mentioned, namely,

That the proper object of a sin-distressed souls waiting and expectation, is God himself as revealed in Christ. I have, saith the *Psalmist*, waited for *Jehovah*; It is not this or that mercy, or Grace, this or that help or relief, but it is *Jehovah* himself that I wait for.

Here then we must do two things, first shew in what sense *God himself is the object of the waiting of the soul.* (2.) How it appears from hence *that waiting is so necessary a Duty.*

1. It is the Lord himself, *Jehovah himself*, that the soul waiteth for. It is not Grace, mercy, or relief absolutely considered, but the God of all Grace and help, that is the full adequate object of the souls waiting and Expectation; only herein he is not considered *absolutely* in his own Nature; but as there *is forgiveness with him.* What is required hereunto, hath been at large before declared. It is as he is revealed in and by Jesus Christ; as in him he hath found *a Ransom*, and accepted the Atonement for sinners in his blood; as he is a God in Covenant; so he is himself the *Object* of our waiting. And that,

First, Because all troubles, depths, entanglements, arise from, (1.) The *Absence* of God from the soul; and (2.) From his *displeasure.*

The *Absence of God from the soul*, by his departure, withdrawing, or hiding himself from it, is that which principally casts the soul into its depths. *Woe unto them*, saith the Lord, *when I depart from them*, Hos. 9. 12. And this not, this sorrow doth not attend only an universal, a total departure of God from any; but that also which is *gradual*, or partial, in some things, in some seasons. When God withdraws his enlightning, his refreshing, his comforting *presence*, as to any wayes or means whereby he hath formerly communicated himself unto the souls of any; then *woe unto them*, sorrows will befall them, and they

they will fall into depths and entanglements. Now this condition calls for *waiting*. If God be withdrawn, if he hides himself, what hath the soul to do but to wait for his return? So saith the Prophet, Isa. 8. 17. *I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of* Jacob, *and I will look for him. If God hide himself*, this is the natural and proper duty of the soul to wait and to look for him. Other course of relief it cannot apply it self unto. What that *waiting* is, and wherein it doth consist hath been declared. Patient seeking of God in the wayes of his Appointment is comprized in it, this the Prophet expresseth in that word, *I will look for him*; indeed the same in the Original with that in the *Psalm*, וְקִוֵּיתִי לוֹ; *and I will earnestly look out after him with expectation of his return unto me.*

Secondly, A *sense of Gods displeasure* is another cause of these depths and troubles, and of the continuance of the soul in them, notwithstanding it hath made a blessed discovery by faith that there is with him *forgiveness*; this hath been so fully manifested through the whole preceding discourse, that it need not again be insisted on. All hath respect unto sin, and the reason of the trouble that ariseth from sin, is because of the *displeasure of God* against it. What then is the natural posture and frame of the soul towards God as displeased? shall he contend with him? shall he harden himself against him? shall he despise his wrath and anger, and contemn his threatnings? or shall he hide himself from him, and so avoid the effects of his wrath? who knows not how ruinous and pernitious to the soul such courses would be? and how many are ruined by them every day? patient waiting is the souls only reserve on this accunt also. And

Waiting on God whence so necessary.

Secondly, This duty in the occasion mentioned *is necessary* upon the account of the *Greatness and soveraignty of him* with whom we have to do. *My soul waiteth for Jehovah.* Indeed waiting is a duty that depends on the *distance* that is between the persons concerned in it, namely, he that waiteth, and he that is waited on; so the Psalmist informs us, *Psal.* 123. 2. It is an action like that of *Servants* and *Handmaids* towards their Masters or Rulers. And the greater this *distance* is, the more cogent are the reasons of this duty on all occasions. And because we are practically averse from the due performance of this duty, or at least

quickly

quickly grow *weary of it*, notwithstanding our full conviction of its necessity, I shall a little insist on some such considerations of God and our selves, as may not only evince the necessity of this duty, but also satisfie us of its reasonableness; that by the first we may be engaged into it, and by the latter preserved in it.

Two things we may to this purpose consider in God, in *Jehovah* whom we are to wait for. First, *His Being*, and the absolute and essential properties of his nature. Secondly, Those *Attributes* of his nature which respect *his dealings with us*; both which are suited to beget in us affections, and a frame of spirit compliant with the duty proposed.

Useful motives of God rendring our Waiting on him Reasonable and necessary. His glorious Being.

Useful motives of God rendring our Waiting on him Reasonable and necessary.

1. Let us consider the *infinite glorious Being of Jehovah*, with his absolute incommunicable essential Excellencies; and then try whether it doth not become us in every condition to wait for him, and especially in that under consideration. This course God himself took with *Job* to recover him from his discontents and complaints, to reduce him to quietness and *waiting*. He sets before him his own *Glorious Greatness*, as manifested in the works of his power, that thereby being convinced of his own ignorance, weakness and infinite distance in all things from him, he might humble his soul into the most *submissive dependance* on him, and waiting for him. And this he doth accordingly, chap. 42. 6. *I abhor*, saith he, *my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* His soul now comes to be willing to be at Gods disposal, and there in he found present rest, and a speedy healing of his condition. It is the *high and lofty one that inhabiteth Eternity, whose name is holy*, Isa. 57. 15. with whom we have now to do: He that *sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants of it are as Grasshoppers before him; yea, the Nations are as the drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the ballance; he takes up the Isles as a very little thing; all Nations before him are as nothing, they are counted unto him less than nothing, and vanity*, Isa. 40. 15, 17, 22. To what end doth the Lord set forth and declare his glorious Greatness and Power? It is that all might be brought to trust in him, and to wait for him,

him, as at large is declared in the close of the chapter. For shall Grashoppers, a drop of the bucket, dust of the ballance, things less than nothing, repine against, or wax weary of the Will of the immense, glorious and lofty One? He that *taketh up all Isles as a very little thing*, may surely, if he please, destroy, cast and forsake *one Isle*, *one City* in an Isle, *one Person* in a City; and we are before him but single persons. Serious thoughts of this *Infinite All-Glorious Being*, will either *quiet* our souls, or *overwhelm* them. All our *weariness* of his dispensations towards us, arises from secret imaginations, that he is *such a one as our selves*; one that is to do nothing but what seems *good in our eyes*. But if we cannot comprehend his *Being*, we cannot make *Rules* to Judge of his waies and proceedings. And how *small a portion* is it that we know of God? The neareſt approaches of our *reasons* and *imaginations*, leave us still at an infinite distance from him. And indeed what we speak of his *Greatness*, we know not well what it signifies, we only declare our respect unto that which we believe, admire and adore, but are not able to comprehend. All our thoughts come as short of his *Excellent Greatness*, as our natures do of his; that is infinitely. Behold the Universe, the glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth; how little is it that we know of its beauty, order and disposal; yet was it all the product of the Word of his mouth; and with the same *facility* can he when he pleaseth reduce it to its primitive nothing. And what are we *poor worms of the Earth*, an inconsiderable unknown part of the lower series and order of the works of his hands, few in number, fading in condition, unregarded unto the residue of our fellow-creatures, that we should subduct our selves from under any kind of his dealings with us, or be weary of waiting for his pleasure. This he presseth on us, *Psal.* 46. 10. *Be still and know that I am God.* Let there be no more repinings, no more disputings, continue waiting in silence and patience; consider who I am; *Be still, and know that I am God*,

Further, to help us in this Consideration, let us a little also fix our minds towards some of the *Glorious*, *Essential*, *Incommunicable* properties of his Nature, distinctly; As,

1. His *Eternity*. This *Moses* proposeth to bring the souls of Believers to submission, trust and waiting, *Psal.* 90. 1. *From*

Everlaſting to Everlaſting thou art God. One that hath his *Being* and ſubſiſtence not in a *duration of time*, but in Eternity it ſelf: So doth *Habakkuk* alſo, *chap.* 1. 12. *My Lord, my God, my Holy One, art thou not from Everlaſting?* And hence he draws his concluſion againſt *making* haſt in any condition, and for *tarrying and waiting* for God. The like Conſideration is managed by *David* alſo, *Pſal.* 102. 27. How unconceivable is this *glorious divine Property* unto the thoughts and minds of men? How weak are the waies and terms whereby they go about to expreſs it? One ſayes it is a *nunc ſtans*; another that it is a *perpetual Duration*. He that ſayes moſt, only ſignifies what he knows *of what it is not*. We are of Yeſterday, change every moment, and are leaving our ſtation to morrow. God is *ſtill the ſame*, was ſo before the World was, from *Eternity*. And now I cannot *think what I have ſaid*, but only have intimated what I adore. The whole *Duration* of the world from the beginning unto the end, takes up no ſpace in this Eternity of God. For how long ſoever it hath continued, or may yet continue, it will all amount but to ſo *many thouſand years*, ſo long a *time*; and *time* hath no place in Eternity. And for us who have in this matter to do with God, what is our continuance unto that of the *world?* a moment as it were in compariſon of the whole. When mens lives were of old prolonged beyond the date and *continuance of Empires* or Kingdoms now, yet this was the winding up of all; *ſuch a one lived ſo many years, and then he dyed*, Gen. 5. And what are we poor worms, whoſe lives are meaſured by *inches* in compariſon of their *ſpan?* what are we before the Eternal God? God alwaies *immutably ſubſiſting in his own Infinite Being?* A real Conſideration hereof will ſubdue the ſoul into a condition of *dependence* on him, and of *waiting* for him.

2. The *Immenſity* of his *Eſſence*, and his *Omnipreſence* is of the ſame conſideration. *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth*, ſaith the Lord, *Jer.* 23. 24. *The Heavens, even the Heavens of Heavens*, the ſupreme and moſt comprehenſive created Being *cannot contain* him, ſaith *Solomon*. In his infinitely Glorious Being he is preſent with, and *indiſtant* from all places, things, times, all the works of his hands, and is no leſs gloriouſly ſubſiſting where they are not. God is where Heaven and Earth are not, no

no leſs than where they are; and where they are not is himſelf; where there is no place, no ſpace, real or imaginary, God is, for *place* and *imagination* have nothing to do with *Immenſity*; and he is preſent every where in the Creation, where I am writing, where you are reading; he is preſent with you, indiſtant from you. The thoughts of mens hearts for the moſt part are, that God as to his *Eſſence* is in *Heaven* only; and it is well if ſome think he is there, ſeeing they live and act as if there were neither God nor Devil but themſelves. But on theſe apprehenſions ſuch thoughts are ready ſecretly to ariſe, and effectually to prevail, as are expreſſed, *Job* 22. 13, 14. *How doth God know? Can he judge through the dark? thick clouds are as a covering unto him that he ſeeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of the Heavens.* Apprehenſions of Gods *diſtance* from men, harden them in their waies. But it is utterly otherwiſe; God is *every where*, and a man may on all occaſions ſay with *Jacob*, *God is in this place, and I knew it not.* Let the ſoul then who is thus called to *wait* on God, exerciſe it ſelf with thoughts about this *Immenſity of his Nature* and Being. Comprehend it, fully underſtand it, we can never: But the conſideration of it will give that *awe of his Greatneſs* upon our hearts, as that we ſhall learn to tremble before him, and to be willing to wait for him in all things.

3. Thoughts of the *Holineſs of God*, or infinite *ſelf-purity* of this *Eternal Immenſe Being*, are ſingularly uſefull to the ſame purpoſe. This is that which *Eliphaz* affirms that he received by Viſion, to reply to the complaint and impatience of *Job*, *chap.* 14. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. After he hath declared his viſion, with the manner of it, this he affirms to be the Revelation that by *voice* was made unto him: *Shall mortal man be more juſt than God? ſhall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold he puts no truſt in his Servants, and his Angels he chargeth with folly. How much leſs on them that dwell in houſes of Clay, whoſe foundation is in the duſt, who are cruſhed before the moth?* If the Saints and Angels in Heaven do not anſwer this *infinite Holineſs* of God in their moſt perfect condition, is it meet for *Worms* of the Earth to ſuppoſe that any thing which proceeds from him is not abſolutely *Holy* and perfect, and ſo beſt for them? This is the *fiery property* of the nature of God, whence he

he is called a *Consuming fire*, and *Everlasting burnings*: And the Law whereon he had impressed some representation of it, is called a *fiery Law*, as that which will consume and burn up whatever is perverse and evil. Hence the Prophet who had a representation of *the Glory of God* in a vision, and heard the *Seraphims* proclaiming his Holiness, cryed out, *Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips*, Isa. 6. 5. He thought it impossible that he should bear that near approach of the *Holiness* of God. And with the remembrance hereof doth *Joshuah* still the people with the terrour of the Lord, *chap.* 14. 19. Let such souls then as are under troubles and perplexities on any account, endeavour to exercise their thoughts about this *infinite Purity* and *fiery Holiness* of God. They will quickly find it their wisdom to become as weaned children before him, and content themselves with what he shall guide unto them, which is to wait for him. This fiery Holiness streams from his Throne, *Dan.* 7. 10. and would quickly consume the whole Creation, as now under the curse, and sin, were it not for the interposing of Jesus Christ.

4. His *Glorious Majesty* as the Ruler of all the world. Majesty relates unto Government, and it calls us to such an awe of him as doth render our waiting for him comely and necessary. Gods *Throne* is said to be in Heaven, and there principally do the glorious beams of his terrible *Majesty* shine forth. But he hath also made some *Representation* of it on the Earth, that we might learn to fear before him. Such was the appearance that he gave of his glory in the *giving of the Law*, whereby he will judge the world, and condemn the transgressors of it, who obtain not an acquitment in the blood of Jesus Christ. See the description of it in *Exod.* 19. 16, 18. *So terrible was the sight hereof, that Moses himself said, I exceedingly fear and quake*, Heb. 12. 21. And what effect it had upon all the people is declared, *Exod.* 20. 18, 19. They were not able to bear it, although they had good assurance that it was for their benefit and advantage, that he so drew nigh and manifested his Glory unto them. Are we not satisfied with our condition? cannot we *wait* under his present dispensations? let us think how we may approach unto his presence, or stand before his *Glorious Majesty*. Will not the dread of his *Excellency* fall upon us? will not his terrour make us afraid? shall we not think *his way best*, and *his time best*, and that our duty is to be silent before him; And the like manifestation hath he made of his Glory, as the great Judge of all upon the Throne unto sundry of the Prophets, as unto *Isaiah*, *chap.* 6. 1, 2, 3, 4. to *Ezekiel*, *chap.* 1. to *Daniel*, *chap.* 7. 9, 10. to *John*, *Rev.* 1. Read the places attentively, and learn to tremble before him. These are not things that are *foreign* unto us. This God is our God. The same *Throne* of his Greatness and *Majesty* is still established in the Heaven. Let us then in all our Hastes and heats that our spirits in any condition are prone unto, present our selves before this *Throne of God*, and then consider what will be best for us to say or do; what frame of heart and spirit will become us, and be safest for us. All this *Glory* doth encompass us every moment, although we perceive it not. And it will be but a few daies before all the *veils* and *shades* that are about us, shall be taken away and depart. And then shall all this glory appear unto us unto endless bliss, or everlasting woe. Let us therefore know that nothing in our dealings with him doth better become us than *silently for to wait* for him, and *what* he will speak unto us in our depths and streights.

5. It is good to consider the instances that God hath given of this his *Infinite Greatness*, Power, Majesty and Glory. Such was his mighty work *of creating all things* out of nothing. We dwell on little *Mole-hills* in the Earth, and yet we know the least part of the *excellency* of that spot of ground which is given us for our Habitation here below. But what is it unto the whole *habitable world*, and the fulness thereof? And what an amazing thing is its Greatness, with the *wide and large Sea*, with all sorts of creatures therein! The least of these hath a beauty, a glory, an excellency, that the utmost of our enquiries end in admiration of. And all this is but the *Earth*, the lower depressed part of the world. What shall we say concerning the Heavens over us, and all those creatures of Light that have their habitations in them? who can conceive the beauty, order, state and course of them? The consideration hereof caused the *Psalmist* to cry out, *Lord our Lord, how excellent and glorious art thou!* Psal. 8. 1. And what is the rise, spring, and cause of these things? Are they not all the effect of the *Word of the Power* of this glorious God? And doth he not in them, and by

by them ſpeak us into a Reverence of his Greatneſs? the like alſo may be ſaid concerning his mighty and ſtrange works of *Providence* in the Rule of the World. Is not this he who brought the *Flood* of old upon the world of ungodly men? Is it not he who conſumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* with fire from Heaven, ſetting them forth as Examples unto them that ſhould afterwards live ungodly, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire? Is it not he who deſtroyed *Ægypt* with his plagues, and drowned *Pharaoh* with his Hoſt in the red Sea? Is it not he, one of whoſe ſervants ſlew *an hundred and fourſcore and five thouſand in Senacheribs* Army in one night? that opened the Earth to ſwallow up *Dathan* and *Abiram?* and ſent out fire from the Altar to devour *Nadab* and *Abihu?* and have not all ages been filled with ſuch inſtances of his Greatneſs and Power?

The end why I have inſiſted on theſe things, is to ſhew the *Reaſonableneſs of the Duty* which we are preſſing unto; namely, to wait on God quietly and patiently in every condition of diſtreſs. For what elſe becomes us when we have to do with this great and Holy one? And a due conſideration of theſe things will exceedingly influence our minds thereunto.

Secondly, This *waiting* for God reſpecteth the *whole of the Condition* expreſſed in the *Pſalm*, and this containeth not only *ſpiritual depths* about ſin, which we have at large inſiſted on, but alſo *providential depths*, depths of trouble or affliction; that we may be exerciſed withall in the holy wiſe providence of God. In reference alſo unto theſe, *Waiting* in patience and ſilence is our duty. And there are *two conſiderations* that will aſſiſt us in this duty with reſpect unto ſuch *depths*, that is of Trouble or Affliction. And the *firſt* of theſe is the conſideration of thoſe properties of God, which he exerciſeth in an eſpecial manner in all his dealings with us, and which in all our troubles we are principally to regard. *The ſecond* is the Conſideration of *our ſelves*, what we are, and what we have deſerved.

Let us begin with the former; and there are *four things* in Gods diſpenſations towards us, and dealing with us, that in this matter we ſhould conſider, all ſuited to work in us the end aimed at. The firſt is his *Soveraignty*: this he declares, this we are to acknowledge, and ſubmit unto, in all the great and dreadful diſpenſations of his Providence in all his dealings with our ſouls.

ſouls. May he not do what he will with his own? who ſhall ſay unto him, What doſt thou? or if they do ſo, what ſhall give them countenance in their ſo doing? He made all this world of nothing, and could have made *another*, *more*, or all things quite otherwiſe than they are. It would not ſubſiſt one moment without his *Omnipotent ſupportment*. Nothing would be continued in its place, courſe, uſe, without his effectual influence and countenance. If any thing can *be*, *live*, or *act* a moment without him, we may take free leave to diſpute its diſpoſal with him, and to *haſte* unto the accompliſhment of our deſires: but from the *Angels* in Heaven, to the *Worms* of the Earth, and the *graſs* of the Field, all depend on him and his power continually. Why was this part of the Creation an *Angel*, that a *Worm*, this a *Man*, that a *brute Beaſt?* is it from their own Choice, deſigning or contrivance, or brought about by their own wiſdom? or is it meerly from the Soveraign pleaſure and will of God? And what a madneſs is it, to repine againſt what he doth, ſeeing all things are, as he makes them, and diſpoſeth them; nor can be otherwiſe; Even the Repiner himſelf hath his Being and ſubſiſtence upon his meer pleaſure. This *Soveraignty* of God, *Elihu* pleads in his dealings with *Job*, Chap. 33. 8, 9, 10, 11. He apprehended that *Job* had reaſoned againſt Gods ſevere diſpenſations towards him, and that he did not humble himſelf under his mighty hand wherewith he was exerciſed, nor wait for him in a due manner; and therefore what doth he propoſe unto him to bring him unto this duty? what doth he reply unto his reaſonings and Complaints? *Behold*, ſaith he, *v.* 12. *in this thou art not Juſt, I will anſwer thee*; *God is greater than man*; v. 13. *why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.* Be it that in other things thou art *Juſt* and Innocent, that thou art free from the things wherewith thy *friends* have charged thee; yet in *this matter thou art not Juſt*; it is neither *juſt* nor *equal*, that any man ſhould complain of, or repine againſt any of Gods diſpenſations: Yea, but I ſuppoſe that theſe dealings of God are very *grievous*, very dreadful, ſuch as he hath, it may be, ſcarce exerciſed towards any from the foundation of the world; to be utterly deſtroyed, and *conſumed in a day*, in all Relations, and Enjoyments, and that at a time and ſeaſon, when no ſuch thing was looked for, or provided againſt;

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to have a *sense of sin* revived on the Conscience after pardon obtained, as it is with me; all is one, saith he, if thou complainest, thou *art not just*; And what reason doth he give thereof? *why God is greater than man*; infinitely so, in power, and Soveraign glory; he is so *absolutely* therein, that *he giveth no account of any of his matters*; and what *folly*, what injustice is it to complain of his proceedings. Consider his *absolute dominion* over the works of his hands, over thy self, and all that thou hast; his *infinite distance* from thee, and *Greatness* above thee, and then see whether it be *just* or no to repine against what he doth. And he pursues the same Consideration *Chap.* 34. 18, 19. If when *Kings* and *Princes* rule in Righteousness it is a contempt of their Authority to say unto them *they are wicked and ungodly*, then wilt thou speak against him, contend with him, that accepteth not the *persons of Princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor*; *for they are all the works of his hands?* and v. 29. *when he giveth quietness who can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who can behold him*; *whether it be done against a Nation, or against a man only?* All is one, *whatever* God doth, and towards *whomsoever*, be they many or few, an whole Nation or City, or one single person, be they high or low, rich or poor, good or bad, all are the works of his hands, and he may deal with them, as seems Good unto him. And this man alone, as God afterwards declares, made use of the right and proper *medium* to take off *Job* from Complaining, and to compose his spirit to rest and peace, and to bring him to *wait patiently* for God. For whereas his other friends injuriously charged him with *Hypocrisie*, and that he had in an especial manner above other men deserved those Judgements of God which he was exercised withall; he who was *conscious* unto his own Integrity, was only provoked and exasperated by their arguings, and stirred up to plead his own Innocency and uprightness. But this man allowing him the plea of his *Integrity*, calls him to the consideration of the *Greatness* and *Soveraignty* of God against which there is no rising up. And this God himself afterwards calls him unto.

Deep and serious thoughts of Gods Soveraignty, and absolute Dominion or Authority over all the works of his hands, are an *effectual means* to work the soul unto this duty. Yea, this is that which we are to bring our souls to. Let us consider with whom we have to do; are not we and all our concernments in his hands, as the Clay in the hand of the Potter? and may he not do what he will with his own? Shall we call him unto an account? Is not what he doth, *good* and *holy* because he doth it? do any repining thoughts against the works of God arise in our hearts? are any Complaints ready to break out of our mouths? let us lay our hands on our hearts, and our mouths in the dust, with thoughts of his *Greatness* and absolute Soveraignty, and it will work our whole souls into a better frame.

And this extends it self unto the Manners, Times, and seasons of all things whatever. As in earthly things; If God will bring a dreadfull Judgement of *fire* upon a people, a Nation; ah, why must it be *London?* If on *London*, why so terrible, raging, and unconquerable? Why the City, not the Suburbs? Why my house, not my neighbours? Why had such a one help and I none? All these things are wholly to be referred to Gods Soveraign pleasure. There alone can the soul of Man find rest and peace. It is so in spiritual dispensations also.

Thus *Aaron* upon the suddain death of his *two eldest Sons*, being minded by *Moses* of Gods Soveraignty and *Holiness*, immediately *held his peace*, or quietly humbled himself under his mighty hand, *Levit.* 10. 2, 4. And *David* when things were brought into extream confusion by the *Rebellion* of *Absolom* followed by the Ungodly multitude of the whole Nation, relinquisheth all other Arguments and Pleas, and lets goe complaints in a resignation of himself and all his Concernments unto the absolute pleasure of God, 2 *Sam.* 15. 25, 26. And this in all our extremities must we bring our souls unto, before we can attain any *rest* or *peace*, or the least comfortable perswasion that we may not yet fall under greater severities in the just Indignation of God against us.

2. The *Wisdom* of God is also to be Considered and submitted unto. Job 9. 4. *He is wise in heart, who hath hardened himself against him and prospered?* This the Prophet joyns with his Greatness and Soveraignty, Isa. 40. 12, 13, 14. *There is no searching of his understanding*, v. 28. And the Apostle winds up all his Considerations of the works of God in an holy *Admiration* of his knowledge and *Wisdom*, whence his *Judgment becomes unsearchable, and his ways past finding out*, Rom. 11. 33, 34. He

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feeth and knoweth all things, in all their *Caufes*, *Effects*, confequences and circumftances, in their utmoft reach and tendency in their correfpondencies one unto another, and fubfervients unto his own Glory, and fo alone judgeth aright of all things. The wifeft of men as *David* fpeaks *walk in a fhark*. We fee little, we know little, and that but of a very few things, and in an imperfect manner; and that of their prefent appearances, abftracted from their iffues, Succeffes, Ends, and Relations unto other things. And if we would be further wife in the works of God, we *fhall be found to be like the wild Affes Colt*. What is good for us or the Church of God, what is evil to it or us, we know not at all; but all things are open and naked unto God. The day will come indeed wherein we fhall have fuch a profpect of the works of God, fee one thing fo fet againft another, as to find *Goodnefs*, *Beauty*, and *Order* in them all, that they were all done in number, weight and meafure; that nothing could have been otherwife without an abridgment of his glory and difadvantage of them that believe in him. But for the prefent all our wifdom confifts in referring all unto him. He who doth thefe things is *infinitely* wife, he knows *what* he doth, and *why*, and what will be the end of all. We are apt, it may be, to think, that at fuch feafons all things will go to *wreck* with our felves, with the *Church*, or with the whole world; how can this breach be repaired, this lofs made up, this ruine recovered? peace is gone, trade is gone, our fubftance is gone, the Church is gone, all is gone, confufion and utter defolation lye at the door. But if a man who is unskilled and unexperienced fhould be at Sea, it may be every time the Veffel wherein he is, *feems to decline* on either fide, he would be apt to conceive, they fhould be all caft away, but yet if he be not *childifhly timorous* when the Maifter fhall tell him that there is no danger, bid him truft to his skill and it fhall be well with him, it will yield quietnefs and fatisfaction. We are indeed in a ftorm, the whole earth feems to reel and ftagger like a drunken man; but yet our fouls may reft in the infinite skill and wifdom of the *great Pilot of the whole Creation*, who fteers all things according to the Counfel of his Will. His works are manifold; in *Wifdom* hath he *made all* thefe things, *Pfal.* 104.24. And in the fame wifdom doth he difpofe of them. *All thefe things come forth from the Lord of Hofts, who is wonderfully in*

in counfel, and excellent in working, Ifa. 28. 29. What is good, meet, ufefull for us, for ours, for the Churches, for the City, for the Land of our Nativity he knows, and of Creatures not one. This infinite Wifdom of God alfo are we therefore to reſign and fubmit our felves unto. His hand in all his works is guided by Infinite Wifdom. In thoughts thereof, in humbling our felves thereunto, fhall we find reft and peace, and this in all our preſſures will work us to a waiting for him.

3. The Righteoufnefs of God is alfo to be confidered in this matter. That name in the Scripture is ufed to denote many Excellencies of God, all which are reducible unto the infinite *Rectitude of his Nature*. I intend that at prefent which is called *Juftitia Regiminis*, his Righteoufnefs in Rule or Government. This is remembred by *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18.25. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* And by the Apoftle; *Is God unjuft who taketh vengeance? God forbid.* This our fouls are to *own* in all the works of God. They are all *righteous*; all *his* who *will do no iniquity*, *whofe Throne is eſtabliſhed in Judgement*. However they may be dreadful, grievous, and feem fevere, yet they are all *righteous*: It is true, he will fometimes *rife up and do ſtrange acts*, *ſtrange works*, Ifa. 28. 21. Such as he will not do often nor ordinarily; fuch as fhall fill the world with dread and amazement: He will *unfettle his people in terrible things*; But yet all fhall be in *Righteouſneſs*. And to complain of that which is *righteous*, to repine againft it, is the higheft *unrighteouſneſs* that may be. Faith then fixing the foul on the Righteoufnefs of God, is an effectual means to humble it under his mighty hand: And to help us herein we may conſider,

Conſiderations of Gods Righteouſneſs in his Judgements.

1. That God *judgeth not as man judgeth*. We judge by the *feeing of the Eye*, and hearing of the Ear, according to outward appearances and evidences. But God *fearcheth the heart*. We judge upon what is between man and man, God principally upon what is between himſelf and man. And what do we know or underſtand of theſe things? or what there is in the heart of man; what purpoſes, what contrivances, what deſigns, what corrupt affections, what ſins, what tranſactions have been between God and them; what *warnings* he hath given them, what reproofs, what ingagements they have made, what convictions they have had, what uſe they were putting their *lives*, their *ſubſtance*, their

families unto? Alas! we know nothing of these things, and so are able to make no judgement of the proceedings of God upon them; but this we know, that he is *Righteous* in all his wayes, and holy in all his works; yea the most terrible of them: And when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, ah how glorious will be his *drowning of the old world*, *firing of Sodom*, swallowing up of *Dathan* and *Abiram* in the earth, the utter rejection of the *Jews*, with all other acts of his Providence seeming to be accompanyed with severity? And so will our own Tryals inward or outward appear to be.

2. *God is Judge of all the world*, of all ages, times, places, persons, and disposeth of *all* so as they may tend unto the *good of the whole*, and his own Glory in the Universe. Our *thoughts* are bounded, much more our Observations and Abilities to measure things within a very small compass. Every thing stands *alone* unto us, whereby we see little of its beauty or order; nor do know how it ought justly to be disposed of. That *particular* may seem deformed unto us, which when it is under his eye, who sees all at once, *past*, *present and to come*, with all those joynts and bands of Wisdom and Order, whereby things are related unto one another, is beautifull and glorious; for as nothing is of *its self*, nor *by its self*, nor *to its self*, so nothing *stands alone*; but there is a line of mutual respect that runs through the *Creation*, and every particular of it, and that in all its changes and alterations from the beginning to the end, which gives it its Loveliness, Life and Order. He that can at once see but one part of a *goodly statua* or *Colossus*, might think it a very deformed piece; when he that views it *altogether*, is assured of its due proportion symmetry and loveliness. Now all things, ages and persons, all thus at once are objected unto the sight of God, and he disposeth them with respect unto the *whole*, that every one may fill up its own place, and sustain its part and share in the *common tendency* of all to the same end.

And hence it is that in publick Judgements and Calamities God oftentimes suffers the *Godly* to be involved with the *wicked*, and that not on the account of their *own persons*, but as they are *parts of that body* which he will destroy. This *Job* expresseth somewhat *harshly*, but there is truth in his Assertion, *chap.* 9. 22, 23. *This is one thing, therefore I said it, he destroyeth the righteous with*

with the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly he will laugh at the tryal of the Innocent. God in publick desolations oftentimes takes good and bad together; a sudden scourge involves them all; and this God doth for sundry Reasons: As,

1. That he may manifest *his own Holiness*; which is *such* that he can without the least *Injustice* or *Oppression* even upon the account of their own provocations, take away the houses, possessions, estates, liberties, and lives of the best of his own Saints. For how should *a man*, *any man*, the best of men, be just with God, if he would contend with him? No man *can answer to him one of a thousand*, Job 9. 31. This they will also own and acknowledge; upon the account of *Righteousnes*, none can open his mouth about his Judgments, without the highest impiety and wickedness.

2. He doth so, that *his own people may learn to know his terrour*, and to rejoyce alwaies before him with trembling. Therefore *Job* affirms that in the *time of his prosperity he was not secure*, but still trembled in himself with thoughts of the Judgements of God. Doubtless much wretched *carnal security* would be ready to invade and possess the hearts of Believers, if God should alwaies and constantly *pass them by* in the dispensations of his publick Judgements.

3. That it may be *a stone of offence, and a stumbling block unto wicked men*, who are to be hardened in their sins, and prepared for ruine. When they see that *all things fall alike unto all*, and that those who have made the strictest profession of the Name and Fear of God, fare no better than themselves, they are encouraged to *despise the warnings of God*, and the strokes of his hand; and so to rush on unto the destruction whereunto they are prepared.

4. God doth it to proclaim unto all the world, that *what he doth here is no final Judgement*, and ultimate determination concerning things and persons. For who can see the *wise man dying as the fool*, the *Righteous* and *Holy* perishing in their outward concernments as the *ungodly* and *wicked*, but must conclude, that the Righteous God the Judge of all, hath appointed *another day*, wherein all things must be called over again, and every one then receive his *final Reward*, according as his works shall appear to have been. And thus are we to humble our selves unto the Righteousness wherewith the hand of God is alwaies accompanied.

4. His *Goodness and Grace* is also to be considered in all the works

works of his mighty hands. As there is no weight or fulness in him, so also all that is *good and gracious*. And whatsoever there is in any trouble of *allay* from the *utmost wrath*, is of meer goodness and grace. Thy houses are burned, but perhaps thy goods are saved; is there no grace, no goodness there in? or perhaps thy substance also is consumed, but yet thy *person* is alive, and should a living man complain? but say what thou wilt, this *strife* is not *Hell* which thou hast deserved long ago; yea it may be a means of preventing thy going thither; so that it is accompanyed with infinite goodness, patience and mercy also. And if the considerations hereof will not quiet thy heart, take heed lest a worse thing befall thee.

And these things amongst others are we to consider in God to lead our hearts into an *acquiescing* in his Will, a submission under his mighty hand, and a patient waiting for the issue.

Consider. 2. our own Condition in its distance from Him we have to do with.

2. Consider our *mean and abject condition*, and that infinite distance wherein we stand from *him with whom we have to do*. When *Abraham*, the Father of the faithful, and friend of God, came to treat with him about his Judgments, he doth it with this acknowledgment of his condition, that he was *meer dust and ashes*, Gen. 18. 27. A poor *abject Creature* that God at his pleasure had formed out of the dust of the earth, and which in a few dayes was to be reduced again into the ashes of it. We can forget nothing more perniciously than what we are. *Man is a worm*, saith *Bildad*, and *the Son of man is but a worm*, Job 25. 6. And therefore sayes *Job* himself, *I have said to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister*, chap. 17. 14. His Affinity, his Relation unto them is the nearest imaginable, and he is no otherwise to be accounted of; and there is nothing that God abhors more than an *Elation of mind* in the forgetfulness of our mean frail condition. *Thou sayest*, said he to the proud *Prince of Tyrus*, that *thou art a God, but*, saith he, *wilt thou say thou art a God in the hands of him that slayes thee?* Ezek. 28. 9. That *severe conviction* did God provide for his pride. Thou shalt be a man, and no God in the hand of him that slayes thee. And when *Herod* prided himself in the acclamations of the vain multitude, (*the voyce of God, and not of a man,*) the Angel of the Lord smote *him* that God immediately with

with worms, which slew him and devoured him, *Acts* 12. 23. There is indeed nothing more effectual to abase the pride of the thoughts of men, than a due remembrance that they are so. Hence the *Psalmist* prays, *Psal.* 9. 20. *Put them in fear O Lord, that the Nations may know themselves to be but men*, so and no more. אנוש *Enosh* poor, miserable, frail, mortal man, as the word signifies; what is man? what is his life? what is his strength? said one, the *dream of a shadow*; a meer nothing; or as *David* much better, *Every man living in his best condition is altogether vanity*, Psal. 39. 5. and *James*, *Our life*, which is our best, our all, *is but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*, chap. 4. 14. But enough hath been spoken by many on this subject. And we that have seen so many *thousands* each week in one City carryed away to the grave, have been taught the truth of our *frailty*, even as with *Thorns and Briers*. But I know not how it comes to pass, there is not any thing we are more apt to forget, than what we our selves are. And this puts men on innumerable miscarriages towards God and one another. Thou therefore that art exercised under the hand of God in any severe dispensation, and art ready on all occasions to fill thy mouth with complaints, sit down a little and take a right measure of thy self, and see whether this frame and posture becomes thee. It is the *great God* against whom thou repinest, and thou *art a man*, and that is a name *of a Worm*, a poor, frail, dying worm; and it may be whilst thou art *speaking*, thou art no more. And wilt thou think it meet for such a one as thou art, to magnifie thy self against the great possessor of Heaven and Earth? Poor clay, poor dust and ashes, poor dying worm, know thy state and condition, and fall down quietly under the mighty hand of God. Though thou *wrangle* with men about thy concernments, let God alone. The *potsheards may contend with the potsheards* of the earth; but wo unto him that striveth with his Maker

2. Consider that in this frail condition, we have all *greatly sinned against God*. So did *Job*, chap. 7. 20. *I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?* If this consideration will not *satisfie thy mind*, yet it will assuredly *stop the mouths* of all the Sons of men. Though all the Curses of the Law should be executed upon us, yet every *mouth must be stopped*, because all the world is become guilty before God, *Rom.* 3. 19. *And why should a living*

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ing man complain, saith the Prophet, *Lament.* 3. 39? Why it may be, it is because that his trouble is great and inexpressible, and such as seldom or never befell any before him; but what then, saith he, *shall a man complain against the punishment of his sins?* If this *living man* be a *sinfull man*, as there is none that liveth and sinneth not, whatever his state and condition be, he hath no ground of murmuring or complaint. For a *sinful man to complain*, especially whilest he is yet a *living man*, is most unreasonable. For,

1. Whatever hath befallen us, it is *just* on the account that we are *sinners* before God; and to repine against the *judgments of God* that are rendred evidently righteous upon the account of *sin*, is to anticipate the Condition of the *damned in hell*, a great part of whose misery it is, that they alwayes repine against that sentence and punishment which they know to be most righteous and holy. If this were now a place, if that were now my design to treat of the *sins of all professors*, how easie were it to stop the mouths of all men about their troubles. But that is not my present business, I speak unto particular persons, and that not with an especial design to *convince them of their sins*, but to humble their souls. Another season may be taken to press that consideration, directly and professedly also. At present let us only, when our souls are ready to be *entangled* with the thoughts of any *severe dispensation of God*, and our own particular pressures, troubles, miseries occasioned thereby, turn into our selves and take a view every one of his own *personal provocations*. And when we have done so, see what we have to say to God, what we have to complain of: let *the man* hold his tongue and let *the sinner* speak. Is not God holy, righteous, wise in what he hath done? and if he be, why do we not subscribe unto his wayes, and submit quietly unto his Will?

2. But this is not all, We are not only *such sinners*, as to render these dispensations of God *evidently holy*, these Judgments of his *righteous*, but also to manifest, that they are accompanied with *unspeakable patience*, mercy and Grace. To instance in one particular. Is it the burning of our houses, the spoiling of our Goods, the ruine of our estates alone that our sins have deserved? if God had made the Temporary fire on earth, to have been unto us a way of entrance into the Eternal fire of Hell, we had not had whereof righteously to complain. May we not then see a mixture of

of *unspeakable patience*, grace and mercy in every dispensation? and shall we then repine against it? Is it not better advice, *go and sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee*; for a *sinner out of hell* not to rest in the will of God, not to humble himself under his mighty hand, is to make himself guilty of the especial sin of hell. Other sins deserve it, but repining against God is *principally*, yea *only* committed in it. The Church comes to a blessed quieting resolution in this case, Micah. 7. 9. *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him*; bear it quietly, patiently, and submit under his hand therein.

3. Consider that of our selves we are not able to *make a right judgment of what is good for us*; what evil unto us, or what tends most directly unto our chiefest end, *Psalm* 39. 6. *Surely man walketh in a vain shew*; בְּצֶלֶם in an *Image* full of false representations of things; in the midst of *vain appearances* that he knows not what to choose, or do aright, and therefore spends the most of his time and strength about things that are of no use or purpose unto him; *Surely they are disquieted in vain*. And hereof he gives one especial Instance, *he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather*; which is but *one Example* of the manifold frustrations that men meet withall in the whole course of their lives, as not knowing what is good for them. We all profess to aym at one chief and principal end, namely the enjoyment of God in Christ, as our eternal reward; and in order thereunto to be carryed on in the use of the means of faith and obedience, tending to that end. Now if this be so, the suitableness, or unsuitableness of all other things being good or evil unto us, is to be measured by their tendency unto this end. And what know we hereof? as unto the things of this life, do we know, whether it will be best for us to be *rich* or *poor*, to have houses or to be harbourless, to abound or to want, to leave wealth and Inheritances unto our Children, or to leave them naked unto the providence of God? do we know what state, what condition will most further our *Obedience*, best obviate our *temptations*, or call most on us to mortifie our Corruptions? and if we know nothing at all of these things, as indeed we do not, were it not best for us to leave them quietly unto Gods disposal? I doubt not but it will appear at the last day, that a world of evil in the hearts of men was stifled by the destruction of their outward concernments, more by their inward

inward troubles. That many were delivered from *temptations* by it, who otherwise would have been overtaken to their ruine and scandal of the Gospel; that many a secret *Impediment* hath been lanced and cured by a stroke, for God doth not send Judgements on his *own*, for Judgements sake, for punishment sake; but always to accomplish some blessed design of Grace towards them. And there is no one soul in particular which shall rightly search it self and consider its state and Condition, but will be able to see wisdom, grace and care towards it self in all dispensations of God. And if I would here enter upon the benefits that through the sanctifying hand of God, do redound unto Believers by Afflictions, Calamities, troubles, distresses, temptations and the like Effects of Gods visitations, it would be of use unto the souls of men in this Case. But this subject hath been so often, and so well spoken unto, that I shall not insist upon it. I desire only that we would seriously consider how utterly Ignorant we are of what is *good* for *us*, or *useful* unto us in these outward things, and so leave them quietly unto Gods disposal.

4. We may Consider that all these things about which we are troubled, fall directly within the compass of that *good word of Gods grace*, that he will *make all things work together for the good of them that love him*, Rom. 8. 28. All things that we enjoy, all things that we are deprived of, all that we do, all that we suffer; our losses, troubles, miseries, distresses in which the Apostle instanceth in the following verses, they shall all *work together for good*; together with one another, and all with, and in subordination unto the power, grace and wisdom of God. It may be, we see not how, or by what means it may be Effected: but he is infinitely wise and powerful, who hath undertaken it, and we know little or nothing of his ways. There is nothing that we have or enjoy, or desire, but it hath turned unto some unto their hurt. *Riches* have been kept for men unto their hurt. *Wisdom* and high places have been the ruine of many. *Liberty* and plenty are to most a snare. *Prosperity* slayes the foolish. And we are not of our selves, in any measure able to secure our selves from the hurt and poison that is in any of these things, but that they may be our ruine also, as they have already been, and every day are unto multitudes of the Children of men. It is enough to fill the soul of any man with horrour and amazement, to consider the wayes

ways and ends of most of them that are entrusted with *this worlds goods*. Is it not evident that all their lives they seem industriously to take care that they may perish eternally? Luxury, rior, oppression, Intemperance (and of late especially) blasphemy and Atheism, they wilfully give up themselves unto. And this is the fruit of their abundance and security. What now if God should deprive us of all these things? Can any one certainly say, that he is worsted thereby? might they not have turned unto his everlasting perdition, as well as they do so of thousands as good by nature, and who have had advantages to be as wise as we? and shall we complain of Gods dispensations about them? And what shall we say, when he himself hath undertaken to make all things that he guides unto us to work together for our good? Anxieties of mind, and perplexities of heart about our losses is not that which we are called unto in our troubles; but this is that which is our duty; let us Consider whether we *Love God* or no, whether we *are called according to his purpose*, if so, all things are well in his hand who can order them for our good and advantage. I hope many a poor soul will from hence under all their trouble be able to say with him that was banished from his Countrey, and found better entertainment elsewhere; *My Friends, I had perished, if I had not perished*; had I not been undone by Fire, it may be I had been ruined in Eternal Fire, God hath made all to work for my good.

The end of all these *discourses* is to evince the reasonablenes of the duty of waiting on God, which we are pressing from the *Psalmist*. Ignorance of God and our selves, is the great principle and cause of all our disquietments. And this ariseth mostly, not from want of light and instruction, but for want of Consideration and Application. The notions instilled on concerning God are *obvious* and known unto all; so are these concerning our selves; but by whom almost are they employed and improved as they ought? the frame of our spirits is as though we stood upon equal terms with God, and did think with *Jonah*, that we might do well to be angry with what he doth; did we rightly consider him, did we stand in awe of him as we ought, it had certainly been otherwise with us.

Influence of the Promises into the souls waiting in time of trouble. The nature of them.

Having therefore laid down these Considerations from the second Observation taken from the Words; namely, *That Jehovah himself is the proper object of the souls waiting* in the condition described; I shall only add one direction, how we may be enabled to perform and discharge this duty aright, which we have manifested to have been so necessary, so reasonable, so prevalent for the obtaining of relief, and this ariseth from another of the *Propositions* laid down for the opening of these verses not as yet spoken unto. Namely that

Supportment in trouble from the Word of Promise.

The Word of promise is the souls great supportment in waiting for God. So saith the Psalmist; *In his Word do I hope*, that is *the Word of promise*. As the *Word* in general is the adequate rule of all our Obedience unto God, and Communion with him; so there are especial parts of it that are suited unto these especial actings of our souls towards him. Thus the *Word of promise*, or the Promise in the Word, is that which our faith especially regards, in our *hope*, *trust* and *waiting* on God, and it is suited to answer unto the immediate actings of our souls therein. From this *Word of promise* therefore, that is from these *promises* doth the soul in its distresses take incouragement to continue *waiting on God*, and that on these two accounts.

1. Because they are *declarative* of God, his Mind and his Will: And secondly, because they are *communicative* of grace and strength to the soul; of which *latter* we shall not here treat.

1. The *End* and Use of the *Promise* is to declare, reveal and make known God unto Believers, and that in an especial manner in him, and concerning him, which may give them encouragement to wait for him.

1. The promises are a *declaration of the Nature of God*, especially of his Goodness, Grace and Love. God hath put an impression of all the glorious Excellencies of his nature on his Word, especially as he is in Christ, on the Word of the Gospel. There as in a *Glass do we behold his Glory* in the face of Jesus Christ. As his *Commands* express unto us his *Holiness*, his *Threatnings* his Righteousness and Severity; so do his Promises, his Goodness, Grace, Love and Bounty. And in these things do we

we learn all that we truly and solidly know of God; that is, we know him in and by his Word. The soul therefore that in this condition is *waiting on*, or for God, considers the Representation which he makes of himself, and of his own Nature in and by the promises, and receives supportment and encouragement in its duty. For if God teach us by the promises *what* he is, and what he will be unto us, we have firm ground to expect from him all fruits of Benignity, Kindness and Love. Let the soul frame in it self that *Idea* of God, which is exhibited in the *Promises*, and it will powerfully prevail with it to continue in an Expectation of his gracious returns; they all expressing Goodness, Love, Patience, Forbearance, Long-suffering, Pardoning Mercy, Grace, Bounty, with a full satisfactory reward. This is the *beauty of the Lord* mentioned with admiration by the Prophet; *How great is his goodness! how great is his beauty!* Zeph. 9. 17. Which is the great attractive of the soul to adhere constantly unto him. Whatever difficulties arise, whatever temptations interpose, or wearisomeness grows upon us in our streights, troubles, trials and desertions, let us not entertain such thoughts of God as our own perplexed imaginations may be apt to suggest unto us. This would quickly cast us into a thousand impatiencies, misgivings and miscarriages; but the remembrance of, and meditation on God in his promises as revealed by them, as expressed in them, is suited quite unto other ends and purposes. There appears, yea gloriously shines forth, that Love, that Wisdom, that Goodness, Tenderness and Grace, as cannot but encourage a believing soul to *abide in waiting* for him.

2. The Word of Promise doth not only *express Gods nature* as that wherein he proposeth himself unto the contemplation of faith, but it also *declares his Will* and purpose of acting towards the soul suitable unto his own Goodness and Grace. For *Promises* are the declarations of Gods purpose and will to act towards Believers in Christ Jesus, according to the infinite Goodness of his own nature, and this is done in great variety according to the various conditions and wants of them that do believe. They all proceed from the same spring of Infinite Grace, but are branched into innumerable particular streams according as our necessities do require. To these do waiting souls repair for stay and encouragement. Their perplexities principally arise from their

their misapprehensions of what God is in himself, and of what he will be unto them; and whither though they repair to be undeceived, but unto that faithfull Representation that he hath made of himself and his Will in the Word of his Grace. *For no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John 1. 18. Now the *Gospel* is nothing but the *Word of Promise explained in all the Springs, Causes and Effects of it*; thither must we repair to be instructed in this matter. The Imaginations and reasonings of mens hearts will but deceive them in these things. The informations or instruction of other men may do so; nor have they any truth in them further than they may be resolved into the *Word of Promise*. Here alone they may find rest and refreshment. The soul of whom we speak, is under troubles, perplexities and distresses as to its outward condition; prest with many throughts it may be on every hand; and as to its spiritual estate under various apprehensions of the mind and will of God towards it, as hath before at large been explained; in this condition it is brought in some measure unto an holy submission unto God, and a *patient waiting* for the issue of its tryals. In this estate it hath many temptations *to*, and much working *of* unbelief. The whole of its opposition amounts to this, that it is *neglected of God*, that its way is hid, and his judgment is passed over from him, that it shall not be at *present delivered*, nor hereafter saved. What course can any one advise such a one unto for his relief, and to preserve his soul from fainting or deserting the duty of waiting on God wherein he is engaged, but only this, to search and enquire what *Revelation* God hath made of himself and his Will concerning him in his Word: And this the promise declares. Here he shall find hope, patience, faith, expectation to be all increased, comforted, encouraged. Herein lyes the duty and safety of any in this condition. Men may bear the *first impression* of any trouble with the strength, courage and resolution of their natural spirits; under some *continuance* of them they may support themselves with former experiences, and other usual springs and means of consolation: But if their wounds prove difficult to be cured, if they do not find ordinary remedies, if the affliction be of long continuance, this is that which they must be afraid they shall sink under. They must search into the Word of promise, and learn to measure things not

not according to the present state and apprehensions of their mind, but according unto what God hath declared concerning them. And there are sundry Excellencies in the promises when hoped in, or trusted in, that tend unto the establishment of the soul in this great duty of waiting. As,

1. That *Grace* in them, that is, the Good Will of God in Christ, for help, relief, satisfaction, pardon and salvation, is suited unto all particular conditions and wants of the soul. As *Light* ariseth from the Sun, and is diffused in the *beams* thereof to the especial use of all creatures, enabled by a *visive faculty* to make use of it; so cometh Grace forth from the Eternal Good Will of God in Christ, and is diffused by the promises, with a blessed contemporation unto the conditions and wants of all Believers. There can nothing fall out between God and any soul, but there is grace suited unto it in *one promise* or another, as clearly and evidently, as if it were given unto him particularly and immediately. And this they find by experience who at any time are enabled to mix effectually a *promise* with faith.

2. The Word of promise hath a *wonderfull mysterious especial impression of God* upon it. He doth by it secretly and *ineffably* communicate himself unto Believers. When God appeared in a dream unto *Jacob*, he awaked and said, *God is in this place and I knew it not*. He knew God was *every where*, but an intimation of his especial presence surprized him. So is a soul surprized when God opens himself and his Grace in a *promise* unto him. It cryes out, God is here and I knew it not. Such a near approach of God in his Grace it finds, as is accompanied with a refreshing surprizal.

3. There is an especial Engagement of the *Veracity and Truth* of God in every promise. Grace and Truth are the two ingredients of an Evangelical promise; the matter and form whereof they do consist. I cannot now stay to shew wherein this especial engagement of *Truth* in the promise doth consist. Besides, it is a thing known and confessed. But it hath an *especial influence* to support the soul when hoped in, in its duty of waiting. For that hope can never make ashamed or leave the soul unto disappointments, which staves its self on Divine Veracity under a special engagement.

And this is that *duty* which the *Psalmist* engageth himself in, and

and unto the performance of, as the only way to obtain a comfortable intereſt in that forgiveneſs which is with God, and all the gracious effects thereof. And in the *handling* hereof, as we have declared its nature and neceſſity; ſo we have the Pſalmiſts directions for its practice unto perſons in the like condition with him, for the attaining of the end by him aimed at; ſo that it needs no further Application. That which remains of the *Pſalm* is the *Addreſs* which he makes unto others, with the *encouragement* which he gives them to ſteer the ſame courſe with himſelf; and this he doth in the two laſt verſes, which to compleat the *Expoſition* of the whole *Pſalm*, I ſhall briefly explain and paſs through, as having already diſpatched what I principally aimed at.

Pſal. 130. v. 7, 8.

Verſe 7. *Let Iſrael hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous Redemption.*

8. *And he ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his iniquities.*

Expoſition of Verſ. 7, & 8.

I ſhall proceed in the opening of theſe words, according unto the method already inſiſted on. Firſt, the meaning of the principal *words* ſhall be declared; then the ſenſe and importance of the whole. Thirdly, the *Relation* that they have unto the condition of the ſoul expreſſed in the *Pſalm* muſt be manifeſted; from all which *Obſervations* will ariſe for our Inſtruction and directions in the like caſes, wherein we are or may be concerned.

Let Iſrael hope in the Lord; יַחֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־יְהוָה *Hope Iſrael in Jehovah*. Truſt, or expect; the ſame word with that, *verſ.* 5. In his Word do *I hope*; properly, to *expect*, to *look for*, which includes hope, and adds ſome further degree of the ſouls acting towards God; it is an *earneſt looking* after the thing hoped for; *expelta ad Dominum*; hope in him, and look up to him; *For with the Lord, quia* or *quoniam, becauſe, ſeeing* that with the Lord; חַסְדּ *mercy*; the *Verb Subſtantive*, as uſual, is omitted, which we ſupply, *there is Mercy*, Grace, Bounty, Goodneſs, Good-will. This word is often joyned with another, diſcovering its importance, and that is אֱמֶת Truth. חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת *Goodneſs*, or Mercy *and Truth*. Theſe are, as it were, conſtituent parts of Gods Promiſes. It is of *Goodneſs*, Grace, Bounty, to promiſe any undue mercy. And it is of *Truth* or Faithfulneſs to

to make good what is ſo promiſed. The LXX. commonly render this word by ἔλεος, that is, *pardoning mercy*, as it is every where uſed in the New Teſtament.

And with him is plenteous Redemption; עִמּוֹ *with him*; as before ſpeaking unto God, *v.* 4. עִמָּךְ *with thee* there is; the meaning of which expreſſion hath been opened at large. Redemption פְּדוּת from פָּדָה to *redeem*; the ſame with פְּדְיוֹן λύτρωσις, ἀπολύτρωσις, *Redemption*: This word is often uſed for a proper Redemption, ſuch as is made by the *intervention of a price*, and not a meer Aſſertion unto liberty by power, which is ſometimes alſo called *Redemption*. Thus it is ſaid of the money that the firſt-born of the children of *Iſrael*, which were above the number of the *Levites*, were redeemed with; that *Moſes* took הַכֶּסֶף הַפְּדוּיִם the *Redemption*, that is, the *Redemption money*, the price of their Redemption, *Numb.* 3. 49. And *Pſal.* 49. 8. The Redemption of mens ſouls *is precious*; it coſt a great price. The *Redemption* then that is with God, relates unto a *Price*; Goodneſs or mercy with reſpect unto a price, becomes Redemption, that is actively, the cauſe or means of it. What that price is, ſee *Matth.* 20. 20. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18.

Plenteous Redemption, הַרְבֵּה *multa, copioſa*, much, abundant, plenteous. It is uſed both for *Quantity* and *Quality*; *much* in quantity, or *plenteous*, abundant; and in *Quality*, that is, *precious*, excellent. And it is applyed in a good and bad ſenſe; ſo it is ſaid of our ſins, *Ezek.* 9. 6. our ſins רַבּוּ are *increaſed* or *multiplied*, or are *great*; *many* in number, and *hainous* in their nature or quality. And in the other ſenſe, it is applied unto the mercy of God, whereby they are removed; it is great or plenteous, it is excellent or precious.

V. 8. *And he*, that is, the Lord *Jehovah*; he with whom is plenteous Redemption יִפְדֶּה *ſhall redeem*; or make them partakers of that Redemption that is with him. He *ſhall redeem Iſrael*, that is, thoſe who hope and truſt in him.

From all his iniquities מִכֹּל עֲוֹנֹתָיו; *his iniquities*, that is, of the *Elect Iſrael*, and every individual amongſt them. But the word ſignifies *trouble* as well as *ſin*, eſpecially that trouble or puniſhment that is for ſin. So *Cain* expreſſeth himſelf upon the denunciation of his ſentence; גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנִי מִנְּשֹׂא *my ſin*, that is, the puniſhment thou haſt denounced againſt my ſin, *is too*

great or heavy for men to bear, Gen. 4. 13. There is a near affinity between ſin and troubles; *malum pœna ſequitur*, puniſhment is inſeparable from iniquity. עון then the word here uſed ſignifies either *ſin* with reference unto *trouble* due to it, or *trouble* with reſpect unto *ſin* whence it proceeds. And both may here be well intended. *God ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his ſins, and troubles that have enſued thereon.* And this is the ſignification of the words, which indeed are plain and obvious.

And theſe words cloſe up the Pſalm. He who began with *depths*, his own *depths* of ſin and trouble, out of which, and about which he *prayed* out unto God, is ſo incouraged by that proſpect of grace and forgiveneſs with God, which by faith he had obtained, as to *preach* unto others, and to ſupport them in expectation of deliverance from all their ſin and trouble alſo.

And ſuch for the moſt part are all the exerciſes and trials of the children of God. Their *harveſt* may be a ſtorm, but their cloſe is a calm. Their beginning is oftentimes trouble, but their latter end is peace; peace to themſelves, and advantage to the Church of God. For men in all ages coming out of great trials of their own, have been the moſt inſtrumental for the good of others. For God doth not greatly exerciſe any of his, but with ſome ſpecial end for his own glory.

Secondly. The ſcope and intendment of the Pſalmiſt in theſe words is to be conſidered, and that reſolves it ſelf into three general parts.

1. *An Exhortation or Admonition. Iſrael hope in the Lord, or expect Jehovah.*

2. *A ground of Incouragement* unto the performance of the Duty exhorted unto; *Becauſe with the Lord there is mercy, plenteous abundance, precious Redemption.*

3. *A gracious Promiſe* of a bleſſed time which ſhall be given unto the performance of this duty. *He ſhall redeem Iſrael from all his ſins, and from all his troubles.*

In the Exhortation there occurs,

1. *Who are exhorted*; that is, *Iſrael*: not *Iſrael* according to the fleſh; for they are *not all Iſrael which are of Iſrael*, Rom. 9. 6. But it is the *Iſrael* mentioned, *Pſal.* 73. 1. The whole *Iſrael* of God to whom he is *good*, ſuch as are of a clean heart; that is, all thoſe who are intereſted in the Covenant, and do inherit

inherit the promiſe of their forefathers who was firſt called by that name? All Believers; and the *Pſalmiſt* treats them all in general in this matter.

1. Becauſe there is none of them but have *their trials* and intanglements about ſin, more or leſs. As there is *none that liveth and ſinneth* not; ſo there is *none ſinneth*, and is not intangled and troubled. Perhaps then they are not all of them in the ſame condition with him, in the depths that he was plunged into. Yet more or leſs, all and every one of them is ſo far concerned *in ſin*, as to need his direction. All the *Saints of God* either have been, or are, or may be in theſe depths. It is a good ſaying of *Auſtin* on this place, *Valde ſunt in profundo qui non clamant de profundo. None ſo in the deep as they who do not cry and call out of the deep.* They are in a deep of ſecurity, who are never ſenſible of a deep of ſin.

2. There is none of them, whatever their preſent condition be, but *they may fall into the like depths* with thoſe of the Pſalmiſt. There is nothing abſolutely in the Covenant, nor in any Promiſe, to ſecure them from it. And what befalleth any one Believer, may befall them all. If any *one Believer* may fall totally away, all may do ſo, and not leave one in the world, and ſo an end be put to the *Kingdom* of Chriſt, which is no ſmall evidence that they cannot ſo fall. But they *may fall into depths* of ſin; that ſome of them have done ſo, we have teſtimonies and inſtances beyond exception. It is good then that *all of them* ſhould be prepared for that duty which they may all ſtand in need of, and a right diſcharge of it. Beſides the duty mentioned, is not *abſolutely reſtrained* to the condition before deſcribed: But it is proper and accomodate unto other ſeaſons alſo. Therefore are all *the Iſrael of God* exhorted unto it.

2. The duty it ſelf, is *hoping in Jehovah*, with ſuch an hope or truſt, as hath an *expectation* of relief joyned with it. And there are two things included in this duty.

1. The *Renuntiation* of any hopes in expectation of deliverance either from ſin or trouble, any other way; *hope in Jehovah*; this is frequently expreſſed, where the performance of this duty is mentioned; ſee *Hoſ.* 14. 3. *Jer.* 3. 22, 23. And we have declared the nature of it in the expoſition of the 1, and 2. verſes.

2. *Expectation from him*; and this alſo hath been inſiſted on

in the Obſervations from the verſes immediately preceding, wherein alſo the whole nature of this duty was explained, and directions were given for the due performance of it.

Secondly, The *incouragement tendred* unto this duty, is the next thing in the words; for *with the Lord is plenteous Redemption*; wherein we may obſerve,

1. *What it is* that he profeſſeth as the great encouragement unto the duty mentioned, and that is *Redemption*; the Redemption that is with God; upon the matter the ſame with the *forgiveneſs* before mentioned; *Mercy*, *Pardon*, Benignity, Bounty. He doth not bid them hope in the Lord, becauſe they were the *ſeed of Abraham*, the peculiar people of God, made partakers of priviledges above all the people in the world; much leſs becauſe of their worthineſs, or that good that was in themſelves, but meerly upon the account of *mercy* in God; of his Grace, Goodneſs and Bounty. The Mercy of God and the Redemption that is *with* him, is the only ground unto ſinners for hope and confidence *in him*.

2. There are two great *Concernments* of this Grace, the one expreſſed, the other implied in the words. The firſt is, that it is *much*, *plenteous*, *abundant*. That which principally diſcourageth *diſtreſſed ſouls* from a comfortable waiting on God, is, their fears leſt they ſhould not *obtain mercy from him*, and that becauſe their ſins are *ſo great*, and *ſo many*; or attended with ſuch circumſtances and aggravations, as that it is impoſſible they ſhould find acceptance with God. This ground of deſpondency and unbelief, the *Pſalmiſt* obviates, by repreſenting the *fulneſs*, the *plenty*, the *boundleſs* plenty of the mercy that is with God. It is ſuch as will ſuit the condition of the greateſt ſinners in their greateſt depths; the ſtores of its treaſures are inexhauſtible. And the force of the exhortation doth not lie ſo much in this, that there is *Redemption with God*, as that this Redemption is *plenteous* or *abundant*.

Secondly, Here is an intimation in the *Word it ſelf* of that Relation which the Goodneſs and Grace of God propoſed hath to the *blood of Chriſt*; whence it is called *Redemption*. This, as was ſhewed in the opening of the words, hath reſpect unto a *price*. the price whereby we are bought, that is the blood of Chriſt. This is that whereby way is made for the exerciſe of mercy towards ſinners; *Redemption*, which properly denotes actual deliverance

verance, is ſaid to be with God, or in him, as the effect in the cauſe. The cauſes of it are his *own Grace* and the *blood of Chriſt*. *There* are theſe prepared for the redeeming of Believers from ſin and trouble, unto his own glory. And herein lyeth the *incouragement* that the Pſalmiſt propoſeth unto the performance of the duty exhorted unto; namely, to *wait on God*. It is taken from God himſelf, as *all incouragements* unto ſinners to draw nigh unto him, and to wait for him, muſt be. Nothing but himſelf can give us confidence to go unto him. And it is ſuited unto the ſtate and condition of the ſoul under conſideration. Redemption and Mercy are ſuited to give relief from ſin and miſery.

Thirdly, The *laſt verſe* contains a promiſe of the *iſſue* of the performance of this duty; *He ſhall redeem his people from all their iniquities*. Two things are obſervable in the words.

1. The *Certainty of the Iſſue*; or event of the duty mentioned וְהוּא יִפְדֶּה *and he ſhall*; or, *he will redeem*; he will *aſſuredly* do ſo. Now, although this in the *Pſalmiſt* is given out by *Revelation*, and is a *new promiſe* of God; yet as it relates to the condition of the ſoul here expreſſed, and the *diſcovery* made by faith of forgiveneſs and Redemption with God, the *Certainty* intended in this Aſſertion is built upon the principles before laid down. Whence therefore doth it appear, whence may we infallibly conclude, that *God will redeem his Iſrael from all their iniquities?* I anſwer,

1. The Concluſion is drawn from the *Nature of God*. There is forgiveneſs and Redemption with him, and he will act towards his people ſuitably to his own nature. There is *Redemption* with him, and therefore he will *redeem*; *forgiveneſs* with him, and therefore he will *forgive*. As the Concluſion is certain and infallible, that wicked men, ungodly men, ſhall be *deſtroyed*, becauſe God is Righteous and holy; his Righteouſneſs and Holineſs indiſpenſibly requiring their deſtruction; ſo is the *Redemption* and *Salvation* of all that believe, certain on this account; namely, becauſe there is *forgiveneſs* with him; he is good and gracious, and ready to forgive; his Goodneſs and Grace requires their Salvation.

2. The *Concluſion* is certain upon the account of Gods *Faithfulneſs in his Promiſes*. He hath promiſed, that thoſe who wait on him *ſhall not be aſhamed*; that their expectation ſhall not be *diſappointed*;

disappointed; whence the Conclusion is certain, that in his time and way they shall be redeemed.

2. There is the *Extent* of this deliverance or *Redemption*; shall redeem *Israel from all their Iniquities*. It was shewed in the opening of the verse, that this word denotes either *sin procuring trouble*, or trouble procured by sin; and there is a respect unto both, sin and its punishment. From both, from *all* of both kind, God will redeem his *Israel*. Not this or that evil; this or that sin, but from all evil, all sin. He will take all sins from their souls, and wipe all tears from their Eyes. Now God is said to do this on many accounts.

1. On the account of the *Great Cause* of all actual deliverance and Redemption, the *blood of Christ*. He hath laid an *assured foundation* of the whole work; the price of Redemption is paid, and they shall in due time enjoy the *Effects* and fruits of it.

2. Of the Actual Communication of the Effects of that Redemption unto them. This is sure to all the Elect of God, to his whole *Israel*. They shall all be made partakers of them. And this is the end of all the promises of God, and of the grace and mercy promised in them, namely that they should be means to *exhibit* and give out to Believers that Redemption which is Purchased and prepared for them; and this is done two wayes.

1. *Partially*, *initially* and *gradually* in this life. Here God gives in unto them the *pardon of their sins*; being justified freely by his grace; and in this Sanctification of them through his Spirit, gives them delivery from the *power* and dominion of sin. Many *troubles* also he delivers them from, and from *all* as far as they are *penal*, or have any mixture of the Curse in them.

2. *Compleatly*; Namely, when he shall have freed them from sin and trouble, and from all the effects and consequents of them, by bringing them unto the enjoyment of himself in Glory.

3. The Words being thus opened, we may briefly in the next place consider what they express, concerning the State, Condition, or Actings of the soul, which are represented in this Psalm.

Having himself attained unto the State before described, and being engaged resolvedly into the performance of that duty which would assuredly bring him into an Haven of full rest and peace; the *Psalmist* applyes himself unto the *residue* of the *Israel of God*, to give them incouragement unto this duty with himself, from

from the Experience that he had of a blessed success therein. As if he had said unto them; *Ye are now in Afflictions, and under troubles, and that upon the account of your sins and provocations. A condition I Confess sad and deplorable; but yet there is hope in Israel concerning these things. For consider how it hath been with me, and how the Lord hath dealt with me. I was in depths inexpressible, and saw for a while no way or means of delivery. But God hath been pleased graciously to reveal himself unto me, as God pardoning Iniquity, transgression, and sin; and in the Consolation, and support which I have received thereby; I am waiting for a full participation of the fruits of his Love. Let me therefore prevail with you who are in the like condition to steer the same course with me. Only let your expectations be fixed to mercy and Soveraign Grace, without any regard unto any privilege or worth in your selves. Rest in the plenteous redemption, those stores of Grace which are with Jehovah, and according to his faithfulness in his promises, he will deliver you out of all perplexing troubles.*

Having thus opened the Words, I shall now only name the *doctrinal Observations* that are tendred from them, and so put a close to these Discourses. As,

Obs. 1. *The Lord Jehovah is the only hope for sin-distressed souls; Hope in the Lord:* This hath been sufficiently discovered and confirmed on sundry passages in the Psalm.

Obs. 2. *The Ground of all hope and Expectation of relief in sinners, is meer Grace, Mercy, and Redemption.* Hope in the Lord, for with him there is Redemption. All other grounds of hope are false and deceiving.

Obs. 3. *Inexhaustible stores of Mercy, and Redemption are made for the incouragement of sinners to wait and wait on God.* With him is *plentiful Redemption*. Such is your misery, so pressing are your fears and discomfolations, that nothing less than *infinite* mercy, can relieve or support you: there are treasures of *Truth* and store in God answerable thereunto. With him is *plentiful Redemption*.

Obs. 4. *The Treasury of all the sufficiency of Mercy, Pardon, Grace, and forgiveness which is in God to sinners, is laid in the hands of Christ.* Hence it is here called *Redemption*. Of this also we have spoken at large before.

Obs. 5. *All that wait on God on the account of Mercy and Grace shall*

ſhall have an undoubted Iſſue of peace. He ſhall redeem *Iſrael*; let him, ſaith God, lay hold of my Arm, that he may have peace, and he ſhall have peace, *Iſa.* 27. 3.

Obſ. 6. *Mercy given to them that wait on God ſhall in the cloſe and iſſue, be every way full and ſatisfying.* He ſhall redeem his people from all their Iniquities.

And theſe Propoſitions do ariſe from the words, as *abſolutely* conſidered, and in themſelves. If we mind their Relation unto the peculiar Condition of the ſoul repreſented in this *Pſalm*, they will yet afford us the enſuing *Obſervations.*

Obſ. 1. *They who out of depths have by faith and waiting obtained mercy, or are ſupported in waiting for a ſenſe of believed mercy and forgiveneſs, are fitted, and only they are fitted to Preach and declare Grace and mercy unto others.*

This was the *Caſe* with the *Pſalmiſt*. Upon his emerging out of his own depths and ſtraights, he declares the mercy and redemption whereby he was delivered, unto the whole *Iſrael* of God.

Obſ. 2. *A ſaving participation of Grace and forgiveneſs leaves a deep Impreſſion of its fulneſs and excellency on the ſoul of a ſinner*; So was it here with the *Pſalmiſt*. Having himſelf obtained *Forgiveneſs*, he knows no bounds or meaſure as it were in the extolling of it. There is with God Mercy, Redemption, Plenteous Redemption, redeeming from all Iniquity; I have found it ſo, and ſo will every one do that ſhall believe it.

Now theſe Obſervations might all of them, eſpecially the two laſt, receive an uſeful improvement. But whereas what I principally intended from this *Pſalm*, hath been at large inſiſted on, upon the *firſt verſes* of it, I ſhall not here further draw forth any Meditations upon them, but content my ſelf with the *Expoſition* that hath been given of the deſign of the *Pſalmiſt*, and ſenſe of his words in theſe laſt verſes.

FINIS.

There is now extant *An Expoſition* of the 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Chapters on the *Hebrews*, by *John Owen*, D. D. being a Third Vollume, and a Continuation of the Two former Vollumes. Sold by *N. Ponder* at the Peacock in the *Poultry*.



A Practical EXPOSITION ON THE CXXX^th. Psalm.

WHEREIN

The Nature of the Forgiveneſs of Sin is declared, the Truth and Reality of it aſſerted;

AND

The Caſe of a Soul diſtreſſed with the Guilt of Sin, and relieved by a diſcovery of Forgiveneſs with God, is at large diſcourſed.

By *John Owen*, D. D.

John 5. 39: *Search the Scriptures.*

LONDON,
Printed for *Nathaniel Ponder*, at the Peacock in the *Poultry*, near the Church. 1680.

himſelf, that *deſerves his fear*, that God knows alſo; *he is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things*, 1 John. 3 20. When God ſhall not only ſet in order before the ſinner, the *ſecret ſins*, which he retains ſome remembrance of; but alſo brings to mind and preſents unto him, that world of filth and folly, which either he never took any real *notice* of, or hath utterly *forgotten*, it will trouble him, yea confound him.

Secondly, But may not this Judge be *intreated* to paſs by what he knows, and to deal favourably with the ſinner? May not *an Interceſſor* be obtained to plead in the behalf of the guilty ſoul? *Eli* determines this matter, 1 Sam. 2. 25 *If one man ſin againſt another, the Judge ſhall judge him; but if a man ſin againſt the Lord, who ſhall intreat for him?* There is not, ſaith *Job* between us מוכיח one that might *argue* the caſe, in pleading for me, and ſo make up the matter, *laying his hand upon us both*, Job. 9. 33. We now conſider a ſinner purely under the Adminiſtration of the Law; which knows nothing of a *Mediator*. In that caſe who ſhall take upon him to intercede for the ſinner? Beſides, that *all creatures* in Heaven and Earth are engaged in the quarrel of God againſt ſinners; and beſides the greatneſs and terror of his Majeſty, that will certainly deter all or any of them from undertaking any ſuch work; what is the requeſt that in this caſe muſt be put up unto God? Is it not that he would ceaſe to be *Holy*, leave off from being *Righteous*, relinquiſh his Throne, deny himſelf, and his Soveraignty, that a *Rebell*, a Traytor, his curſed enemy may live and eſcape his Juſtice: Is this requeſt reaſonable? Is he fit to *intercede* for ſinners that make it? Would he not by ſo doing prove himſelf to be the *greateſt* of them? The ſinner cannot then expect any door of eſcape to be opened unto him? All the *world* is againſt him; and the caſe muſt be tryed out nakedly between God and him: but,

Thirdly, It may be the *Rule of the Law* whereby the ſinner is to be tryed, is not ſo *ſtrict*, but that in the caſe of *ſuch ſins* as he is guilty of, it may admit of a favourable *Interpretation*; or that the *good* that he hath done, may be laid in the ballance againſt his *Evil*, and ſo ſome relief be obtained that way. But the matter is quite otherwiſe, There is no *good Action* of a ſinner, though it were perfectly good, that can lye in the *ballance* with, or compenſate the *evil* of the leaſt ſin committed. For all good is due on another account,

account, though no guilt were incurred. And the payment of money that a man *owes*, that he hath borrowed, makes no ſatisfaction for what he hath *ſtole*; no more will our duties compenſate for our ſins. Nor is there any *good* Action of a ſinner, but it hath *evil* and guilt enough attending it, to render it ſelf unacceptable, ſo that men may well ceaſe from thoughts of their *ſupererrogation*. Beſides where there is any *one ſin*, if all the good in the world might be ſuppoſed to be in the ſame perſon, yet in the indiſpenſible order of our dependance on God, nothing of that *good* could come into conſideration, until the *guilt of that ſin* were anſwered for unto the utmoſt. Now the penalty of every ſin, being the *eternal ruine* of the ſinner, all his *ſuppoſed good* can ſtand him in little ſtead. And for the Law it ſelf, it is an iſſue of the Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, and Wiſdom of God; ſo that there is not any evil, ſo great or ſmall, but is forbidden in it, and condemned by it. Hereupon *David* ſo ſtates this whole matter, Pſal. 143. 2. *Enter not into Judgement with thy ſervant, for in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified*. That is, if things are to be tryed out and determined by the *Law*, no ſinner can obtain acquitment; as *Paul* declares the ſenſe of that place to be, *Rom.* 3. 20. *Gal.* 2. 16. but yet,

Fourthly, It may be the *ſentence of the Law* is not ſo *fierce and dreadful*, but that though guilt be found, there may be yet a way of eſcape. But the Law ſpeaks not one word *on this ſide death* to an offendor. There is a greatneſs, and an Eternity of wrath in the ſentence of it; and it is God himſelf who hath undertaken to ſee the vengeance of it executed. So that on all theſe accounts, the *concluſion* mentioned, muſt needs be fixed in the ſoul of a ſinner, that entertains thoughts of drawing nigh to God.

Though what hath been ſpoken, may be of *general uſe* unto ſinners of all ſorts, whether called home to God, or yet ſtrangers to him; yet I ſhall not inſiſt upon any *general improvement* of it, becauſe it is intended only for one ſpecial end or purpoſe. That which is aimed at, is to ſhew what are the *firſt thoughts* that ariſe in the heart of a poor intangled ſoul, when firſt he begins to endeavour a *recovery* in a returnal unto God. The *Law* immediately puts in its *claim* unto him, and againſt him.

God is repreſented unto him, as *angry*, diſpleaſed, provoked; and his *terror* more or leſs beſets him round about. This fills him with *fear*, *ſhame*, and *confuſion* of face; ſo that he knows not what to do. Theſe troubles are greater or leſſer, according as God ſeeth it *beſt* for the poor creatures *preſent humiliation*, and *future* ſafety. What then doth the ſinner? What are his thoughts hereupon? doth he think to *fly from God*, and to give over all endeavours of recovery? Doth he ſay this God is an *holy and terrible God, I cannot ſerve him*, it is to no purpoſe for me to look for any thing but fury and deſtruction from him? and therefore I had as good give over, as preſiſt in my deſign of drawing nigh to him? It cannot be denyed but that in this caſe, *thoughts of this nature* will be ſuggeſted by unbelief: and that ſometimes great perplexities ariſe to the ſoul by them. But this is not the iſſue and final product of this exerciſe of the ſoul; it produceth another effect; it calls for that which is the *firſt particular working* of a gracious ſoul ariſing out of its ſin intanglements. This is, as was declared; *a ſincere ſenſe of ſin, and acknowledgment of it, with ſelf-condemnation in the juſtification of God*: This is the *firſt thing* that a ſoul endeavouring a *recovery* from its *depths* is brought and wrought unto. His general reſolution to make ſeriours and through work, with what he hath in hand, was before unfolded. That which in the next place we are directed unto in theſe words, as the *Reflection* on its ſelf, upon the conſideration of Gods *making iniquity*, now mentioned. This is Faiths *great* and proper *uſe of the Law*; The nature whereof ſhall be farther opened in the next *diſcourſe*.

The firſt particular actings of a ſoul towards a recovery out of the depths of ſin. Senſe of ſin, wherein it conſiſts. How it is wrought. Acknowledgment of ſin; its nature and properties. Self-condemnation.

The ſouls actings towards a Recovery.

What is the *frame of the ſoul in general*, that is excited by grace and reſolves in the ſtrength thereof to attempt a *recovery out of the depths of ſin-entanglements*, hath been declared. We have alſo ſhewed what *entertainments*, in general ſuch a ſoul had need to expect; yea, *ordinarily* ſhall be ſure to meet withall. It may be he goes forth at firſt like *Sampſon* with his *locks* cut, and thinks

he will do as at other times; but he quickly finds, his *peace* loſt, his *wounds* painful, his *Conſcience* reſtleſs, God diſpleaſed, and his whole condition, as the utmoſt of his *own Apprehenſion*, hazardous. This fills him with the thoughts expreſſed in this *third Verſe*, and fixes the concluſion in his mind, diſcourſed of before. He finds now that he hath the Law afreſh to deal withall. Thence ariſeth that ſenſe and acknowledgement of ſin, that *ſelf-condemnation*, in the Juſtification of God, whereof we now ſpeak. He grows not *ſullen*, ſtubborn, diſpleaſed, or for the extenuation of his ſin and guilt; he quarrelleth not with, he repineth not againſt the Holineſs, Severity and Righteouſneſs of the Law of God; but reflects wholly on himſelf, his own unworthineſs, guilt and deſert; and in a ſenſe of them lyes down at the foot of God, in expectation of his word and ſentence.

Senſe of ſin, wherein it conſiſts.

Three things in this condition we aſcribe unto ſuch a Soul. First, *A ſincere ſenſe of ſin*. There is a *twofold ſenſe of ſin*. The one is general and *notional*; whereby a man knows *what ſin is*, that himſelf is a ſinner; that he is guilty of this or that, theſe or thoſe ſins; only his *heart* is not effected proportionably to that diſcovery and knowledge which he hath of theſe things. The other is *active* and *efficacious*. The ſoul being acquainted with the *nature of ſin*, with its *own guilt* in reference unto ſin in general, as alſo to this or that ſin, is *univerſally* influenced by that apprehenſion unto ſuitable Affections and Operations.

Of both theſe we have an inſtance in the ſame perſon. *David* before *Nathans* coming to him, had the *former*, afterwards he had the *latter* alſo. It cannot be imagined but that before the coming of the *Prophet*, he had a *general knowledge* and ſenſe not only abſolutely of the *nature of ſin*; but alſo, that *himſelf was a ſinner*, and guilty of thoſe very ſins which afterwards he was reproved for. To think otherwiſe, is to ſuppoſe, not only that he was *un-ſainted*, but *un-manned* alſo, and turned into a Beaſt. But yet this wrought not in him any *one Affection* ſuitable to his condition. And the like may be ſaid of moſt ſinners in the world. But now when *Nathan* comes to him, and gives him the latter *efficacious ſenſe* whereof we ſpeak, we know what effects it did produce.

It is the *latter* only that is under consideration; and that also is twofold: (1.) *Legal* or *Antecedaneous* unto conversion; (2) *Evangelical*, and previous to the *recovery from depths*, whereof we treat. How these two differ, and how they may be discerned one from the other, being both of them in their kind sincere, is not my business to declare.

Nature and Causes of Gospel convictions of sin.

Now this *last*, which we assign as the *first duty*, work, or acting of a returning soul, *is a deep and practical apprehension wrought in the mind and heart of a believing sinner by the Holy Ghost, of sin and its evils, in reference unto the Law, and Love of God, the Cross, and blood of Christ, the Communion and Consolation of the Spirit, and all the fruits of Love, Mercy, or Grace, that it hath been made partakers of, or on Gospel-ground hoped for.*

First, The *principal efficient cause* of it is the *Holy Ghost*. He it is who *conviuceth of sin*, John 16. 8. He works indeed by *means*. He wrought it in *David* by the Ministry of *Nathan*, and he wrought it in *Peter*, by the look of Christ. But his work it is. No man can work it upon his own soul. It will not spring out of mens rational considerations. Though men may exercise their *thoughts* about such things, as one would think were enough to break the heart of stones, yet if the Holy Ghost put not forth a *peculiar efficacy* of his own, this sence of sin will not be wrought or produced. As the waters at the Pool of *Bethesda* were not *troubled*, but when an Angel descended and moved them, no more will the Heart for sin, without a saving *elapse* of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, It is a *deep Apprehension of sin*, and the evils of it. Slight transient thoughts about them, amount not to the *sense* of which we speak. *My sorrow*, saith *David*, *is continually before me.* Psal. 38. 17. It pressed him alwayes and greatly. Hence he compares this *sense of sin* wrought by the Holy Ghost, to *arrows that stick in the flesh*, v. 2: They pain sorely and are always perplexing. Sin in this *sense* of it, layes hold on the soul, so that the sinner cannot *look up*, Psal. 40. 12. And it abides with him, making *his sore run in the night without ceasing*, Psal. 77. 2. and depriveth the soul of rest, *my soul* saith he *refused to be comforted*. This Apprehension of sin, lyes down, and rises with him in whom it is. *Transient thoughts* attended with infrequent

frequent sighs and ejaculations, little become a returning soul. And.

Thirdly, It is *Practical*. It is not seated only in the *speculative* part of the mind, hovering in general notions; but it *dwells* in the *Practical understanding*, which effectually influenceth the Will and Affections. Such an Apprehension as from which *sorrow and humiliation* are inseparable. The acts of the *practical understanding*, do so necessarily produce, together with them suitable acts of the Will and affections, that some have concluded that those are indeed proper acts of the *Will*, which are usually ascribed to the *Understanding*. It is *so in the mind*, as that the whole soul is cast into the mould and likeness of it, humiliation, sorrow, self-abhorrency, do live and dye with it.

Fourthly, It hath in the *first place*, respect unto the *Law* of God. There can be no due consideration of sin, wherein the *Law* hath not its place. The *Law* calls for the sinner, and he willingly gives up his sin to be judged by it. There he sees it to be *exceeding sinful*, Rom. 7. 17. Though a Believer be *less under the power of the Law* than others, yet he knows more of the *Authority* and nature of it than others. He sees more of its *spirituality* and holiness. And the more a man sees of the *excellency of the Law*, the more he sees of the *vileness of sin*. This is done by a soul in its first endeavour of a *recovery* from the entanglements of sin. He labours throughly to *know his disease*, that he may be cured. It will do him no good, he knows, to be ignorant of his distemper, or his danger. He knows that if his wounds be not searched to the bottom, they will *stink, and be corrupt*. To the Law then he brings himself and his sin. By that, he sees the *vileness* of the one, and the *danger* of the other. Most men lye still in their depths, because they would willingly escape the *first step* of their rising. From the *bottom* of their misery, they would fain at once be at the *top* of their felicity. The soul managed in this work by the Holy Ghost doth not so. He *converseth* with the Law; brings his sin unto it; and fully hears the sentence of it. When the *sin* is throughly condemned, then he farther takes care of the *sinner*. As ever you desire to come to rest, avoid not this entrance of your passion unto it. Weigh it well, and attend unto what the *Law* speaks of your sin, and its desert, or you will never make a due application to God for *forgiveness*. As ever you would

would have your *ſouls*, *juſtified* by Grace, take care to have *your ſins judged by the Law.*

Secondly, There is a reſpect in it to the *Love* of God. And this *breaks the hearts* of the poor returning ſinner. Sorrow from the *Law*, *ſhuts* it ſelf up in the ſoul, and ſtrangleth it. Sorrow from the thoughts of the *Love* of God opens it, and cauſeth it to flow forth. Thoughts of ſinning againſt the *Love of God*, managed by the Holy Ghoſt; what ſhall I ſay? their effects in the heart are not to be expreſſed. This made *Ezra* cry out, *O my God I bluſh, and am aſhamed to lift up my face to thee*, Chap. 9. 6. and v. 10. *What ſhall we ſay after this?* After what? why all the fruits of love and kindneſs they had been made partakers of. Thoughts of *love* and *ſin* laid together, make the ſoul *bluſh*, *mourn*, be aſhamed and confounded in its ſelf. So Ezek. 36. 31. *Then ſhall you remember your own evil wayes, and your doings that were not good*; When ſhall they do ſo; when thoughts and apprehenſions of *love* ſhall be brought home to them; and ſaith he, then *ſhall you loath your ſelves in your own ſight.* The ſoul now calls to mind, what *Love*, what kindneſs, what mercy, what grace, what patience hath been exerciſed towards it, and wherof it hath been made partaker. The thoughts of all theſe now come in upon him as ſtreams of water. Such Mercy, ſuch Communion, ſuch Priviledges, ſuch hopes of Glory; ſuch taſtes of Heaven, ſuch Peace, ſuch Conſolation, ſuch Joy, ſuch Communications of the Spirit, all to a poor, wretched, curſed, loſt, forlorn ſinner; and all this deſpiſed, neglected, the God of them all provoked, forſaken. Ah, ſaith the ſoul, *Whither ſhall I cauſe my ſorrow to go?* This fills him with ſhame and confuſion of face; makes him mourn in ſecret, and ſigh to the breaking of the loyns; and then,

Thirdly, The *blood and Croſs of Chriſt* is alſo brought to remembrance by the Holy Ghoſt. Ah, ſaith the ſoul, have I thus requited the wonderful aſtoniſhing *Love of my Redeemer*? Is this the return, the requital, I have made unto him? Are not Heaven and Earth *aſtoniſhed* at the *deſpiſing* of that Love, at which they are *aſtoniſhed*? This brake *Peters* heart upon the *look* of Chriſt. Such words as theſe from Chriſt, will in this condition, ſound in the ears of the ſoul. *Did I love thee, and leave my glory to become a ſcorn and reproach for thy ſake? Did*

I not think my life, and all that was dear unto me too good for thee, to ſave thee from the wrath to come? Have I been a Wildereneſs unto thee, or a land of darkneſs? What could I have done more for thee; when I had nothing left but my life, blood and ſoul, they went all for thee that thou mighteſt live by my death, be waſhed in my blood, and be ſaved through my ſouls being made an offering for thee? And haſt thou thus requited my love? to prefer a luſt before me, or by meer ſloth and folley to be turned away from me; go unkind and unthankful ſoul, and ſee if thou canſt find another Redeemer: This overwhelms the ſoul, and even drowns it in tears and ſorrow. And then the bitterneſs alſo of the ſufferings of Chriſt, are brought to mind. *They look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn*, Zech. 12. 10. They remember his gall and wormwood; his cry and tears; his agony and ſweat, his deſertion and anguiſh; his blood and death; the ſharpneſs of the Sword that was in his ſoul, and the bitterneſs of the Cup that was put into his hand. Such a ſoul now looks on Chriſt, *bleeding*, *dying*, *wreſtling* with wrath and curſe for him, and ſeeth his ſin in the ſtreams of blood that iſſued from his ſide. And all this increaſeth that ſenſe of ſin whereof we ſpeak. Alſo,

Fourthly, It relates to the *communion and conſolations* of the Holy Ghoſt, with all the priviledges, and fruits of Love we are by him made partakers of. The *Spirit* is given to Believers upon the promiſe of Chriſt to *dwell in them.* He takes up their hearts to be his *dwelling place*; to what ends and purpoſes? that he may *purifie and ſanctifie them*, make them holy, and *dedicate* them to God; to furniſh them with Grace and gifts, to intereſt them in priviledges; to guide, lead, direct, comfort them; to ſeal them unto the day of Redemption. Now this Spirit is *grieved by ſin*, Epheſ. 4. 30. and his *dwelling place defiled thereby*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. and 3. 17. Thoughts hereof greatly ſharpen the ſpiritual ſenſe of ſin in a recovering ſoul. He conſiders, what Light, what Love, what Joy, what Conſolation, what Priviledges it hath by him been made partaker of; what motions, warnings, workings to keep it from ſin, it hath found from him; and ſayes within it ſelf; *What have I done, whom have I grieved, whom have I provoked; what if the Lord ſhould now for my folly and ingratitude utterly take his holy Spirit from me? What if I ſhould have ſo grieved him, that he will dwell in me no more,*

delight

delight in me no more? What dismal darkness and disconsolation; yea, what utter ruine should I be left unto? However, what shame and confusion of face belongs to me for my wretched disingenuity, and ingratitude towards him?

This is the *first thing* that appears in the returning souls actings and frames; a *sincere sence of sin* on the account mentioned, wrought in it by the Holy Ghost. And this a soul in the depths described, must come unto, if ever it expects or look for deliverance, and a recovery. Let not such persons expect to have a *renewed* sence of mercy, without a *revived* sense of sin.

Acknowledgment of sin, the true nature of it.

Secondly, From hence proceedeth an *ingenious*, free, gracious *Acknowledgment of sin.* Men may have a *sense of sin*, and yet suffer it to lye burning as a fire shut up in their bones, to their continual disquietment, and not be able to come off unto a *free soul-opening* acknowledgment. Yea, *confession* may be made in general, and mention therein of that *very sin* wherewith the soul is most intangled, and yet the soul comes short of a due performance of this Duty. Consider how the case stood with *David*, Psal. 32. 3. *When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* How could *David keep silence*, and yet roar all the day long? What is that silence which is consistent with *roaring*? It is a meer negation of that duty, which is expressed, *v.* 5 that is intended. *I acknowledge my sins unto thee, and mine iniquities I have not hid.* It was not a *silence* of submission and waiting on God that he intends. That would not have produced a wasting of his spiritual strength, as he complains this silence did; *My bones waxed old*; nor yet was it a *sullen, stubborn* and contumacious frame that was upon him; but he notes, saith *Calvin*, (and he sayes well,) *affectum qui medius est inter tolerantiam & contumaciam, vitio & virtuti affinis*; *An affection between patience and stubbornes bordering on the one and other.* That is, he had a deep sense of sin; this disquieted and perplexed him all the day long; which he calls his *roaring*; It *weakned* and *wearied* him, making his *bones wax old*, or his strength decay; yet was he not able to bring his heart to that *ingenious* gracious *acknowledgment*, which like the launcing of a festered wound, would have given at least some *ease* to his soul. *Gods children* are oft-times in this matter like *ours*. Thought they

they are convinced of a fault, and are really troubled at it, yet they will hardly acknowledge it. So do they. They will go up and down, sigh and mourn, *roar all the day long*; but an evil and untoward frame of spirit under the power of unbelief and fear, keeps them from this duty.

Now that this *acknowledgement* may be acceptable unto God; it is required, First, that it be *free*, then that it be *full.*

First, It must be *free* and *spiritually* ingenious. *Cain, Pharaoh, Ahab, Judas*, came all to an *acknowledgement* of sin; but it was whether they would or no. It was pressed out of them; it did not flow from them. The *confession* of a person under the convincing terrors of the Law, or dread of eminent Judgements, is like that of Malefactors on the rack; who speak out that, for which themselves and friends must dye. What they say, though it be the truth, is a fruit of force and torture, not of any ingenuity of mind. So is it with meerly convinced persons. They come not to the *acknowledgement* of sin with any more freedom. And the Reason is because all sin hath *shame*; and for men to be *free unto shame*, is naturally impossible, shame being natures *shrinking from its self*, and the posture it would appear in. But now the *returning soul*, hath never more freedom, liberty and *aptitude* of spirit, than when he is in the *acknowledgement* of those things whereof he is most *ashamed.* And this is no small evidence that it proceeds from that spirit which is attended with that liberty, for where *the Spirit of God is, there is liberty*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. When *David* was delivered from his *silence*, he expresseth this frame in the performance of this Duty, Psal. 32. 5. *I acknowledged my sin, and mine iniquities I have not hid; I said I will confess my transgression.* His mouth is now open, and his heart inlarged. And he multiplies one expression upon another, to manifest his enlargement. So doth a soul rising out of its depths, in this beginning of this *address* unto God. Having the *sense of sin*, before described wrought in him by the Holy Ghost, his heart is made free and inlarged unto an *ingenious acknowledgement* of his sin before the Lord. Herein he pours out his soul unto God; and hath not more *freedom* in any thing than in dealing about that, whereof he is most *ashamed.*

Secondly, *Full* also it must be. *Reserves* ruine confession. If the soul have any secret thought of *rolling a sweet morsel under*

its tongue, of a *bow* in the house of *Rimmon*, it is like *part of the price kept back*, which makes the whole robbery, instead of an *offering*. If there be remaining a *bitter root* of favouring any one lust or sin, of any *occasion* of, or *temptation* unto sin, let a man be as open, free and earnest as can be imagined in the acknowledgement of all other sins and evils, the *whole duty* is rendered abominable. Some persons when they are brought into depths and anguish about any sin, and are thereon forced to the acknowledgement of it, at the same time they are little concerned, with their other follies and iniquities, that it may be, are no less provoking unto God, than that is from whence their present trouble doth arise. Let not, as *James* speaks in another case, *such a man think, that he shall receive any thing from God.* It must be *full* and comprehensive, as well as free and ingenious.

And of such *importance* is the right performance of this duty, that the *promise of pardon* is oft-times peculiarly annexed unto it, as that which certainly carries along with it, the other duties which make up a full returnal unto God, *Prov.* 28. 13. 1 *John* 1. 9. and that place in *Job* is remarkable, Chap. 33. 27, 28. *He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.* He shall not only be made partaker of *pardon*, but of *consolation* also, and joy in the light of Gods countenance.

Self-condemnation, wherein it consists.

Thirdly, There yet remains, *self-condemnation with the Justification of God*, which lyes expresly in the word of the *Verse* under consideration, and hereof are two parts.

First, *Self-abhorrency* or dislike. The soul is now *wholy displeased* with it self, and reflects upon it self with all affections of regret and trouble. So the Apostles declare it to have been with the *Corinthians* when their *godly sorrow* was working in them 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. among other things, it wrought in them *indignation and revenge*; or a reflection on themselves with a Indignation of dislike and abhorrency. In the winding up of the Controversie between God and *Job*, this is the point he rests in As he had come in general to a *free, full*, ingenious acknowledgement of sin, *Chap.* 40. 4, 5. So in particular he gives up his whole

whole conceit, in this *abhorrency of himself*, Chap. 42. 6 *I abhor my self and repent in dust and ashes.* What a vile wretched creature have I been, saith the soul; I blush and am ashamed to think of my folly, baseness and ingratitude, is it possible that I should deal thus with the Lord? I abhorr, I loath my self, I would fly any where from my self, I am so vile and loathsome; a thing to be despised of God, Angels and Men; and

Secondly, There is *self-judging* in it also. This the Apostle invites the *Corinthians* unto, 1 Ep. Chap. 11. 31. *If we would judge our selves we should not be judged.* This is a person pronouncing sentence on himself according to the tenor of the Law. The soul brings not only its *sin*, but it *self* also to the Law. It puts it self as to *merit* and desert under the stroke and severity of it. Hence ariseth a full justification of God, in what sentences soever he shall be *pleased* to pronounce in the case before him. And these *three things* which we have passed through, compose the *frame* and first actings of a gracious soul, rising from its *depths*. They are all of them *signally* expressed in that place where we have a signal recovery exemplified, *Hos.* 14. 1,2,3,4. And this makes way for the *exaltation of grace*, the great thing in all this dispensation aimed at by God. *Ephes.* 1. 6. That which he is now doing, is to bring the soul to *glory in him*, 1 Cor. 1. 31. which is all the return he hath from his large and infinitely bountiful expences of Grace and Mercy. Now nothing can render Grace *conspicious* and glorious, until the soul come to this frame. Grace will not seem *high*, until the soul be laid very *low*. And this also suits or prepares the soul for the *receiving of mercy*, in a sense of pardon, the great thing aimed at on the part of the sinner. And it prepares it for *every duty* that is incumbent on him in that condition wherein he is. This brings the soul to *waiting* with deligence and patience. If things presently answer not our expectation, we are ready to think, we have done what we can; if it will be no better we must bear it as we are able; which frame God abhors. The soul in this frame is contented to wait the pleasure of God, as we shall see in the close of the Psalm? Oh said such an one; *if ever I obtain* a sense of Love, if *ever I enjoy* one smile of his countenance more, it is of unspeakable Grace. Let him take his own time, his own season; it is good for me quietly

ly to wait, and to hope for his ſalvation. And it puts the ſoul on prayer; yea a ſoul alwayes in this frame, *prayes alwayes*. And there is nothing more evident, than that want of a through engagement into the performance of theſe duties, is the great cauſe why ſo few come *clear off from their entanglement* all their dayes. Men heal their wounds ſlightly; and therefore after a new painful *feſtring*, they are brought into the ſame condition of reſtleſneſs and trouble, which they were in before.

Grounds of miſcarriages when perſons are convinced of ſin and humbled. Reſting in that ſtate. Reſting on it.

Miſcarriages in perſons convinced of ſin.

The ſoul is not to be *left* in the ſtate before deſcribed. There is other work for it to apply it ſelf unto, if it intend to come unto *Reſt* and peace. It hath obtained an eminent advantage for the *diſcovery of Forgiveneſs*. But to *reſt in that ſtate* wherein it is, or to *reſt upon it*, will not bring it into its harbour. Three things we diſcovered before in the ſouls firſt ſerious addreſs unto God for deliverance; *ſenſe of ſin*, *acknowledgement of it*, and *ſelf-condemnation*. *Two evils* there are which attend men oftentimes, when they are brought into that ſtate. Some *reſt in it*, and preſs no farther; ſome *reſt upon it*, and ſuppoſe that it is all which is required of them: The *Pſalmiſt* avoids both theſe, and notwithſtanding all his *preſſures* reacheth out towards *forgiveneſs*, as we ſhall ſee in the next verſe. I ſhall briefly unfold theſe *two evils*, and ſhew the neceſſity of their avoidance,

Firſt, *By reſting or ſtaying in it*, I mean the ſouls deſponding through diſcouraging thoughts that deliverance is not to obtained. Being made deeply ſenſible of ſin, it is ſo *overwhelmed* with thoughts of its own vileneſs and unworthineſs, as to ſink under the burden; Such a ſoul is *afflicted and toſſed with tempeſts and not comforted*, Iſa. 54. 11. untill it is quite weary. As a Ship in a ſtorm at Sea; when all means of contending are gone, men give up themſelves to be driven and toſſed by the Winds and Seas at their pleaſure. This brought *Iſrael* to that ſtate wherein he cryed out, *My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgement is paſſed over from my God*, Iſa. 40. 27. and *Zion*; *The Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*, Chap. 49.

49. 14: The ſoul begins *ſecretly* to think there is no hope; God regardeth it not; it ſhall one day periſh, relief is far away, and trouble nigh at hand. Theſe thoughts do ſo oppreſs them, that though they *forſake not God utterly* to their deſtruction, yet they draw not nigh unto him *effectually* to their conſolation.

This is the *firſt evil* that the ſoul in this condition is enabled to avoid, We know how God rebukes it in *Sion*. Sion *ſaid the Lord hath forſaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me*, *Iſaiah* 49. 14. But how *fooliſh* is *Sion*, how froward, how unbelieving in this matter; what ground hath ſhe for ſuch ſinful deſpondencies, ſuch diſcouraging concluſions? *Can a woman*, ſaith the Lord, *forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb, yea, they may forget, but I will not forget thee*. The like reproof he gives to *Jacob* upon the like complaint, *Chap.* 40. 28. 29. 30. There is nothing that is more provoking to the Lord, nor more diſadvantagious unto the ſoul, than ſuch ſinful deſpondency. For,

Firſt, It inſenſibly *weakens* the ſoul, and diſenables it, both for *preſent* duties, and *future* endeavours. Hence, *ſome* poor creatures mourn, and even pine away in this condition, never getting one ſtep beyond a perplexing ſenſe of ſin all their days. *Some* have dwelt ſo long upon it, and have ſo intangled themſelves with a *multitude of perplexed thoughts*, that at length their natural faculties have been weakned, and rendred utterly uſeleſs; ſo that they have loſt both ſenſe of ſin and every thing elſe. Againſt ſome, Satan hath taken advantage to caſt in ſo many *intangling objections* into their minds, that their whole time hath be taken up in propoſing doubts and objections againſt themſelves; with theſe they have gone up and down, to one and another, and being never able to come unto *a conſiſtency* in their own thoughts, they have ſpent all their dayes in a fruitleſs, ſapleſs, withering comfortleſs condition. *Some* with whom things come to a better iſſue, are yet for a ſeaſon brought to that *diſcompoſure of Spirit*, or are ſo filled with their own apprehenſions, that when the things which are moſt proper to their condition are ſpoken to them, they take *no impreſſion* in the leaſt upon them. Thus the ſoul is weakned by dwelling too long on theſe conſiderations; until ſome cry with

with those in Ezek. 33. 10. *Our sins are upon us, we pine away in them, and how should we then live?*

Secondly, *This frame*, if it abides, by itself, will insensibly give countenance unto *hard thoughts of God*, and so to repining, and weariness in waiting on him. At first the soul neither apprehends nor fears any such issue. It supposeth that it shall condemn and abhorr it self, and justifie God, and that for ever. But when relief comes not in, this resolution begins to weaken. Secret thoughts arise in the heart, that God is *austere*, inexorable, and not to be dealt withall. This sometimes casts forth such *complaints*, as will bring the soul unto *new complaints*, before it comes to have an issue of its tryals. *Here*, in humiliation antecedaneous to conversion, many a convinced person perisheth. They cannot *wait Gods season*, and perish under their impatience. And what the Saints of God themselves have been *overtaken* withal in their depths and tryals, we have many examples and instances. *Delight* and Expectations are the grounds of our abiding with God. Both these are weakned by a conquering prevailing sense of sin, without some relief from the *discovery of forgiveness*; though at a distance. And therefore *our perplexed soul* stayes not here, but presseth on towards that discovery.

Secondly, There is a *resting on this frame*, that is noxious and hurtful also. Some finding this *sense of sin*, with those other things that attend it wrought in them, in some measure, begin to think that now all is well, this is all that is of them required. They will endeavour to make a *life*, form such arguments of *comfort*, as they can take from their *trouble*. They think this a *ground of peace*, that they have *not place*. Here some take up *before conversion*, and it proves their ruine. Because they are convinced of sin, and troubled about it, and burdened with it, they think it shall be well with them: But were not *Cain*, *Esau* *Saul*, *Ahab*, *Judas*, convinced of sin, and burdened with it; Did this profit them? Did it interest them in the promises? Did not the wrath of God overtake them notwithstanding? So is it with many daily, they think their *Conviction* is *conversion*; and that their *sins are pardoned*, because *they have been troubled.*

This then is that which we reject, which the soul in this condition doth carefully avoid; so to satisfie it self with its *humiliation*, as to make that a ground of *supportment* and consolation, being thereby kept off from exercising Faith for *Forgiveness*, For this is,

First, A fruit of *self righteousness*. For a soul to place the spring of its peace or comfort in any thing of its own, is to fall short of Christ, and to take up in *self*. We must not only be *justified*, but *glory* in him also, *Isa.* 45. 25. Men may make use of the *evidence* of their graces; but only as *medium* to a farther end; not as the *rest* of the soul in the least. And this deprives mens very *humiliations* of all *Gospel humility* True humility consists more in *believing*, than in being sensible of sin. That's the souls great *self-emptying* and abasing; this may consist with an obstinate resolution to *scramble* for something upon the account of self endeavours.

Secondly, Though, *Evangelical sense of sin*, be a Grace, yet it is not the *uniting Grace*, it is not that which *interests* us in Christ, not that which peculiary, and in its own nature *exalts* him There is in this sense of sin, that which is *natural*, and that which is *spiritual*; of the matter of it, and its spirituality. The former consists in *sorrow*, *trouble*, self-abasement, dejection and anxeity of mind, with the like passions. Of these I may say as the Apostle of Afflictions, they are not *joyous* but *grievous*. They are such as are accompanied with the averſation of the object which they are conversant about. In their own nature they are no more but the souls *retreat* into its self, with an abhorrency of the objects of its sorrow and grief. When these Affections *are spiritualized*, their nature is not changed. The soul in and by them, acts according to their nature; and doth by them as such, but *retreat into its self* with a dislike of that they are exercised about. To take up here then, must needs be to sit down short of Christ; whether it be for life, or consolation.

Let there be no mistake. There can be no *Evangelical sense* of sin, and *humiliation*, where there is not *Union* with Christ; *Zech.* 12 10. Only in its self, and in its own nature it is not availing. Now Christ is the only *rest of our souls*: in any thing; for any end or purpose, to take up short of him, is to lose it. It is not enough that we be *prisoners of hope*, but we must *turn to our strong hold*, Zech. 9. 12. not enough that we are *weary and*

and laden, but we *must come to him*, Matth. 11. 27, 28. It will not suffice that we are weak, and know we are weak, but we must take *hold on the strength of God*, Isa. 27. 4, 5.

Thirdly, Indeed pressing after forgiveness, is the very life and power of *Evangelical* humiliation. How shall a man know that his humiliation is *Evangelical*, that his sorrow is according to God? Is it not from hence he may be resolved, that he doth not in it, as *Cain* did, who cryed his *sins were greater then he could bear*, and so departed from the presence of God? nor as *Judas* did, who repented, and hanged himself; nor as *Felix* did, *tremble* for a while, and then return to his lusts, nor as the *Jews* did in the *Prophet*, *pine away under his iniquities*, because of vexation of heart; nor doth he divert his thoughts to other things, thereby to relieve his soul in his trouble; nor fix upon a *Righteousness of his own*; nor *slothfully* lye down under his perplexity; but in the midst of it, he plyes himself to God in Christ for *pardon* and mercy. And it is the souls Application unto God for *forgiveness*, and not its sense of sin, that gives unto God the glory of his Grace.

Thus far then have we accompained the soul *in its depths*; it is now looking out for *forgiveness*; which what it is, and how we come to have an interest in it, the principal matter in this discourse intended, is nextly to be considered.

Verse 4.

The Words explained, and the design or scope of the Psalmist in them discovered.

The fourth Verse opened.

THe state and condition of the *soul* making *Application* unto God in this *Psalm* is recounted, *v.* 1. It was in the *depths*; not only *Providential depths* of Trouble, Affliction, and perplexities thereon; but also *depths of conscience*, distress on the account of sin, as in the opening of those words have been declared.

The *Application* of this soul unto God, with *restless fervency* and earnestness, in that state and condition; its consideration in the first place of the *Law* and the severity of Gods Justice in a procedure thereon; with the inevitable *ruine of all sinners*, if God insist on that way of dealing with them, have also been opened and manifested from the foregoing *Verses*.

Being in this estate, *perplexed* in its self, *lost* in and under the consideration of Gods *marking iniquity according to the tenor of the Law*; that which it fixes on, from whence any relief, stay or supportment might be expected in such a condition, is laid down in this *Verse*.

Verse 4.

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou maist be feared.

I shall first *open* the words as to their *signification* and importance; then shew the *design* of the *Psalmist* in them, with reference to the soul whose condition is here represented; and lastly propose the *general Truths* contained in them, wherein all our concernments do lye.

There is *forgiveness*, ἱλασμὸς say the *LXX.* and *Hierom* accordingly *Propitiatio*; *propitiation*: which is somewhat more than *venia* or *pardon*, as by some it is rendred.

הסליחה *condonatio ipsa*; *forgiveness its self*. It is from סלח to *spare*, to *pardon*, to *forgive*, to be *propitious*: and is opposed to חסל, a word composed of the same letters varied (which is common in that Language) signifying to *cut off*, and *destroy*.

Now it is constantly applyed unto *Sin*, and expresseth every thing that concurrs to its *pardon*, or *forgiveness*. As,

First, It expresseth the *Mind* or *Will* of *pardoning*, or Gods gracious *readiness* to forgive, Psal. 86. 5. *Thou Lord art good* וסלח and *ready to forgive*; χρηστὸς καὶ ἐπιεικὴς; *benign and meek*; or *sparing, propitious*. Of a gracious merciful heart and nature. So *Nehem.* 9. 17. Thou art O God סליחות *propitiationum*, of *propitiations* or pardons; or as we have rendered it, *ready to forgive*; a God of *forgivenesses*; or all plenty of them is in thy gracious heart, *Isa.* 55. 8. So that thou art alwayes ready to make out *pardons* to sinners. The word is used again *Dan.* 9. 9. to the same purpose.

Secondly, It regards the *act of pardoning*; or *actual forgiveness* it self, Psal. 103. 3. הסולח *who forgiveth* all thine iniqui-

ties; actually dischargeth thee of them: which place the Apostle respecting renders the word by χαριζόμενος, Col. 3. 13. *Having freely forgiven you* (for so much the word imports) *all your trespasses.*

And this is the *word* that God useth in the *Covenant*, in that great Promise of Grace and Pardon, *Jer.* 31. 34.

It is *warrantable* for us, yea *necessary* to take the *word* in the utmost extent of its signification and use. It is a word of *favour*, and requires an interpretation tending towards the enlargement of it. We see it may be rendred ἱλασμὸς or *propitiation*; χάρις or *Grace*; and *venia* or *pardon*; and may denote these three things.

First, The *gracious*, tender, merciful *Heart* and Will of God; who is the *God of pardons* and forgiveness; or one ready to forgive, to give out mercy, to *add to pardon.*

Secondly, A respect unto *Jesus Christ*, the only ἱλασμὸς, or *propitiation* for sin, as he is expresly called, *Rom.* 3. 25. 1 *John* 2. 2. And this is that which interposeth between the gracious *heart* of God, and the actual *pardon* of sinners: *All forgiveness is founded on propitiation.*

Thirdly, It denotes *condonation* or *actual forgiveness* it self, as we are made partakers of it; comprizing it both *actively*, as it is an Act of Grace in God, and *passively* as terminated in our souls, with the deliverance that attends it. In this sense as it looks *downwards*, and in its *effects* respects us, it is of meer *Grace*; as it looks *upwards* to its *causes* and respects the Lord Christ, it is from *propitiation* or attonement. And this is that *pardon* which is administred in the Covenant of Grace.

Now as to the *place* which these *words* enjoy in this *Psalm*, and their Relation to the *state* and condition of the soul here mentioned; this seems to be their importance.

O Lord, although this must be granted that if thou shouldst mark iniquities according to the tenor of the Law, every man living must perish, and that for ever; yet there is hope for my soul; that even I who am in the depths of sin-entanglements, may find acceptance with thee; for whilst I am putting my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; I find that there is an attonement, a propitiation made for sin, on the account whereof thou sayest thou hast found a Ransome, and wilt not deal with them that come unto

to thee according to the severity and exigence of thy Justice; but art gracious, loving, tender, ready to forgive and pardon, and dost so accordingly; THERE IS FORGIVENESSE WITH THEE.

The following words, *therefore thou shalt be feared, or that thou mayst be feared*, though in the *Original* free from all Ambiguity, yet are so signally varyed by *Interpreters*, that it may not be amiss to take notice of it in our passage.

The *Targum* hath it, *that thou mayst be seen.* This answers not the *word*, but it doth the *sense* of the place well enough. God in his displeasure is said to *hide himself*, or his face, Isaiah 8. 17. The *Lord hideth his face from the house of Jacob.* By *forgiveness* we obtain again the *light* of his countenance. This dispels the darkness, and clouds that are about him; and gives us a comfortable prospect of his face and favour. *There is forgiveness with him that he may be seen.* Besides, there is but *one letter* different in the *Original* words; and that which is usually changed for the other.

The *LXX.* render them, ἕνεκα τοῦ ὀνόματός σου; *for thy names sake*; or thy *own sake*, that is, freely, without any respect unto any thing in us. This also would admit of a fair and *sound construction*, but that there is more than ordinary evidence of the places being corrupted. For the *Vulgar Latin*, which as to the *Psalms* was *translated* out of the *LXX.* renders these words, *propter legem tuam; for thy Laws sake*; which makes it evident, that that *Translator* reads the words ἕνεκα τῆς νόμου σου, and not ὀνόματος, as now we read. Now though this hath in its self, no proper sence (for *forgiveness* is not bestowed for the *Laws sake*) yet it discovers the original of the whole mistake. תורה The *Law*, differs but in one letter from תירא *that thou mayst be feared*; by a mistake whereof this ἕνεκα τοῦ νόμου, *for thy Laws sake*, crept into the Text. Nor doth this any thing countenance the corrupt figment of the novelty of the *Hebrew Vowels and Accents*; as though this difference might arise from the *LXX.* using a *copy* that had none, that is before their invention, which might occasion mistakes and differences; for this difference is in a *Letter* as well as the *Vowels*; and therefore there can be no colour for this conceit, unless we say also, that they had *Copies* of old with other *Consonants* than those we now enjoy. *Bellarmine* in his *Exposition*

of this place, endeavours to give countenance unto the reading of the *Vulgar Latin*; *for thy Laws sake*; affirming that by the *Law* here, not the *Law of our Obedience*, is intended; but the *Law or Order* of Gods dealing with us; that is his *Mercy* and *Faithfulness*; which is a meer *new Invention* to countenance an old error, which any *tolerable ingenuity* would have confessed, rather than have justified by so sorry a pretence. For neither is that *expression*, or that *word*, ever used in the sence here by him *faigned*, nor can it have any such signification.

Hierom renders these words, *ut sis terribilis*, that thou maist be *dreadful or terrible*, doubtless not according to the intendment of the place. It is for the *relieving* of the soul, and not for the increasing of its *dread* and terror, that this observation is made; *there is forgiveness with thee.*

But the words are *clear*, and their sense is *obvious*; למען תורא *therefore thou shalt be feared*, or *that thou maist be feared.*

By the *Fear of the Lord*, in the Old Testament, the whole *Worship* of God, *moral* and *instituted*, all the Obedience which we owe unto him, both for matter and manner, is intended. Whatever we are to perform unto God, being to be carried on and performed with Reverence and *godly fear*, by a *Metonymy* of the *Adjunct*, that name is given to the whole. *That thou mayst be feared*, then, is that thou maist be *served, worshipped*; that I who am ready to faint and give over on the account of sin, may yet be *encouraged* unto, and yet continue in that *Obedience* which thou requirest at my hands; And this appears to be the sence of the whole Verse; as influenced by, and from those foregoing.

Although O Lord, no man can approach unto thee, stand before thee, or walk with thee, if thou shouldst mark their sins and follies according to the tenor of the Law, nor could they serve so great and holy a God as thou art; yet because I know from thy Revelation of it, that there is also with thee on the account of Jesus Christ the propitiation, pardon and forgiveness; I am encouraged to continue with thee, waiting for thee, worshipping of thee, when without this discovery, I should rather chuse to have Rocks and Mountains fall upon me, to hide me from thy presence.

But there is forgiveness with thee, and therefore thou shalt be feared.

The words being thus opened, we may take a full view in them of the state and condition of the soul *expressed* in this Psalm; and that answering the experiences of all who have had any thing to do with God, in and about the Depths and Entanglements of sin.

Having in, and from his great *depths*, *v.* 1. addressed himself with *fervent* redoubled *cryes*, yea, *outcryes*, to God and to him *alone* for relief, *v.* 1, 2, having also acknowledged his *iniquities*, and considered them according to the *tenor of the Law*, *v.* 3. he confesseth himself to be *lost* and undone for ever on that account, *v.* 3. But he *abides* not in the state of *self-condemnation* and dejection of soul; He sayes not there is no hope, *God is a jealous God*, an holy God, I cannot serve him; his Law is a fiery Law, which I cannot stand before, so that I had as good give over, sit down and perish, as contend any longer! no, but searching by faith into the *discovery* that God makes of himself in Christ through the Covenant of Grace, he finds a stable foundation of encouragement, to continue *waiting* on him, with expectation of *mercy* and *pardon.*

Propositions or Observations from the former Exposition of the words. The first proposed to confirmation. No encouragement for any sinner to approach unto God, without a discovery of forgiveness.

From the *words* unfolded, as they lye in their *contexture*, in the *Psalm*, the ensuing Propositions do arise. Doctrinal Observations from *V.* 4.

1. *Faiths discovery of forgiveness in God, though it have no present sense of its own peculiar interest therein, is the great support ment of a sin-perplexed soul.*

2. *Gospel-Forgiveness, whose discovery is the sole supportment of sin-distressed souls, relates to the gracious heart, or good will of the Father, the God of forgiveness, the propitiation that is made by the blood of the Son, and free condonation or pardon according to the tenor of the Covenant of Grace.*

3. *Faiths*

3. *Faiths diſcovery of Forgiveneſs in God, is the ſole bottom of adherence to him, in acceptable Worſhip and reverential obedience.*

The *firſt* of theſe, is that whoſe confirmation and improvement I principally aim at; and the *other* only ſo far as they have coincidence therewith, or may be uſed in a ſubſerviency to the illuſtration or demonſtration thereof.

In the handling then of this truth, that it may be of the more advantage unto them whoſe good is ſought, and intended in the propoſal and management of it, I ſhall ſteer this courſe, and ſhew,

1. *That there is not the leaſt encouragement to the ſoul of a ſinner to deal with God without this diſcovery.*

2. *That this diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God is a matter great, holy and myſterious; and which very few on Goſpel abiding grounds, do attain unto.*

3. *That yet this is a great, ſacred and certain Truth,* as from the manifold Evidences of it, may be made to appear.

4. *That this is a ſtable ſupportment unto a ſin-diſtreſſed ſoul,* ſhall be manifeſted; and the whole applyed, according to the ſeveral concernments of thoſe who ſhall conſider it.

No approaching unto God, without a diſcovery of forgiveneſs.

First, *There is not the leaſt encouragement for the ſoul of a ſinner, to entertain any thoughts of approaching unto God without this diſcovery.* All the reſt of the world, is covered with a *deluge* of wrath. This is the only *Ark* wherein the ſoul may repair and find reſt. All without it, is darkneſs, curſe and terror.

We have an inſtance and example of it, beyond all exception in *Adam*. When he knew himſelf to be a *ſinner*, and it was impoſſible for him, as we ſhall ſhew afterwards, to make a *diſcovery* of any ſuch thing as *forgiveneſs* with God, he laid aſide all thoughts of treating with him; the beſt of his fooliſh contrivance was for an eſcape; Gen. 3. 10. *I heard thy voyce* (ſaith he to God) *in the Garden, and was AFRAID, becauſe I was naked; and I HID my ſelf.* Nothing, but *thou ſhalt die the death*, founded in his ears. In the *morning* of that day, he was made by the hand of God: a few hours before, he had converſe and communion with him, with boldneſs and peace; why then doth nothing now but FEAR, Flying and HIDING poſſeſs

poſſeſs him? *Adam had ſinned,* the *Promiſe* was not yet given, no Revelation made of *forgiveneſs in God,* and what other courſe, than that vain and fooliſh one, to fix upon, he knew not. No more can any of his *Poſterity* without this Revelation. What elſe any of them hath fixed on in this caſe, hath been no leſs *fooliſh* than his hiding; and in moſt, more *pernicious*. When *Cain* had received his ſentence from God, it is ſaid he went out מלפני יהוה *from the preſence or face of the Lord,* Gen. 4. 16. From his *providential preſence* he could never ſubduct himſelf: So the *Pſalmiſt* informs us at large, *Pſal.* 139. 7,8,9. The very *Heathen* knew by the light of nature, that guilt could never drive men out of the reach of God.

Quo fugis Encelade, quaſcunq; acceſſeris oras
Sub Jove ſemper eris.

They knew that *Dixn* (the vengeance of God) would not ſpare ſinners, nor could be avoided, *Acts* 28. 4. From Gods *Gracious Preſence*, which he never enjoyed, he could not depart. It was then his *Preſence* as to his *Worſhip*; and all outward acts of Communion that he forſook, and departed from. He had no diſcovery by faith, of *forgiveneſs*, and therefore reſolved to have no more to do with God, nor thoſe who cleaved to him; for it reſpects his *courſe*, and not any one *particular* action.

This alſo is ſtated, Iſa. 33. 14. *The ſinners in* Sion *are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurpriſed the Hypocrites; who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? Who amongſt us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* The perſons ſpoken of are *ſinners*, great *ſinners* and Hypocrites; conviction of ſin, and the deſert of it was fallen upon them; a light to diſcern *forgiveneſs* they had not; they apprehend God as *devouring fire* and *everlaſting burnings only*; One that would not ſpare, but aſſuredly inflict puniſhment according to the deſert of ſin; and thence is their *concluſion* couched in their *Interrogation*, that there can be no *entercourſe of peace* between him and them; there is no abiding, no enduring of his preſence. And what condition this conſideration brings the ſouls of ſinners unto, when conviction grows ſtrong upon them the Holy Ghoſt declares, Mich. 6. 6, 7. *Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow my ſelf before the high God?*

God? ſhall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with Calves of a year old? will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams, or with ten thouſand of Rivers of Oyl? ſhall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul? Senſe of ſin preſſeth, forgiveneſs is not diſcovered, (like the *Philiſtins* on *Saul*, *Samuel* not coming to his direction) and how doth the poor creature perplex it ſelf in vain, to find out a way of dealing with God? will a ſedulous and diligent obſervation of his own *Ordinances* and Inſtitutions relieve me; *Shall I come before him with burnt offerings and Calves of a year old?* Alas thou art a *ſinner*, and theſe *Sacrifices* cannot make thee perfect, or acquit thee, *Heb.* 10. 1. Shall I do more than ever he required of any of the Sons of men? *O that I had thouſands of Rams, and ten thouſands of Rivers of Oyl to offer to him?* Alas, if thou hadſt all the *Bulls* and *Goats* in the world, it is not poſſible that their bloud ſhould take away ſins, *v.* 4. But I have heard of them who have ſnatched their own *Children* from their Mothers breaſts, and caſt them into the *fire*, until they were conſumed, ſo to pacifie their conſciences in expiating the guilt of their iniquities; ſhall I take this courſe? will it [illegible] with my *firſt-born* into the fire, ſo I may have deliverance from my *Tranſgreſſions*. Alas this never came into the heart of God to approve, or accept of. And as it was *then*, whilſt that *kind of worſhip* was in force, ſo is it ſtill as to *any duties*, really to be performed, or *imaginarily*. Where there is no diſcovery of *forgiveneſs*; they will yield the ſoul no relief, no ſupportment; God is not to be treated upon ſuch terms.

Greatneſs and rareneſs of the Diſcovery of Forgiveneſs in God. Reaſons of it. Teſtimonies of Conſcience, and Law againſt it, &c.

Forgiveneſs a great Myſterie.

Secondly, *This diſcovery of Forgiveneſs in God is great, holy and Myſterious, and which very few on Goſpel-grounds do attain unto:*

All men indeed *ſay* there is; moſt men are perſwaded that they *think* ſo. Only men in great and deſperate extremities, like *Cain*, or *Spira*, ſeem to call it into queſtion. But their thoughts are empty, groundleſs, yea, for the moſt part wicked, and

and *Atheiſtical*. *Elihu* tells us, that to declare this aright to a ſinful ſoul, it is the work of a *Meſſenger, an Interpreter, one among a thouſand*, Job 33. 23. that is indeed, of Chriſt himſelf. The common thoughts of men about this thing are ſlight and fooliſh; and may be reſolved into thoſe mentioned by the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 50. 21. They think that *God is altogether ſuch a one as themſelves*. That indeed he takes little or no care about theſe things, but paſſeth them over as ſlightly as they do themſelves; That, notwithſtanding all their pretences, the moſt of men never had indeed, any real diſcovery of *forgiveneſs*, ſhall be afterwards undeniably evinced; and I ſhall ſpeedily ſhew the difference that is between their *vain credulity*, and a gracious, Goſpel diſcovery of forgiveneſs in God. For it muſt be obſerved, that by this *Diſcovery*, I intend, both the *Revelation* of it made by God, and our underſtanding, and Reception of that *Revelation* to our own advantage, as ſhall be ſhewed immediately.

Now the grounds of the difficulty intimated, conſiſt *partly* in the *hindrances*, that lie in the way of this diſcovery; and *partly* in the *nature* of the thing it ſelf, that is diſcovered; of both which I ſhall briefly treat.

To [illegible] I proceed ſomewhat muſt be premiſed to ſhew what it is, that I particularly intend by a *diſcovery of forgiveneſs*. It may then be conſidered two ways; *Firſt*, For a *doctrinal, objective* diſcovery of it in its *rule*; 2. An *experimental ſubjective* diſcovery of it in its *power*. In the firſt ſenſe, *forgiveneſs in God*, hath been *diſcovered* ever ſince the giving out of the *firſt Promiſe*: God *revealed* it in a *word of promiſe*, or it could never have been known, as ſhall be afterwards declared. In this ſenſe after many leſſer degrees and advancements of the *light* of it, it was fully and gloriouſly brought forth by the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt* in his own perſon; and is now revealed, and preached in the Goſpel, and by *them* to whom the *Word of Reconciliation* is committed. And to declare this is the principal work of the *Miniſters* of the Goſpel. Herein ly thoſe *unſearchable Treaſures and Riches* of Chriſt, which the *Apoſtle* eſteemed as his chiefeſt Honour and Priviledg that he was intruſted with the declaration and diſpenſation of, *Epheſ.* 3. 8, 9. I know by many it is *deſpiſed*, by many *traduced*, whoſe Ignorance and Blindneſs

as the First Cause, Last End, and Soveraign Lord of all. But the entrance of sin, laying the sinner absolutely under the *Curse* of God, utterly put an end to this *Order* of things. Man was now to have perished immediatly, and an end to be put unto the Law of this Obedience. But here, in the Soveraign Will of God, an *Interposition* was made between sin and the sentence; and man was respited from destruction. All *Worship* following hereon, even that which was before *natural* by the Law of creation, is now resolved into an Arbitrary Act of Gods will.

And unto this end [illegible] designed, namely to *give glory unto God*. For as God hath said, that *I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh unto him*, that is in his worship, *and that therein he will be glorified*, Lev. 10. 3. and *that he that offereth him praise*, that is, performeth any part of his Worship and Service, *Glorifieth him*, Psal 50. 23. So the nature of the thing it self declareth that it can have no other end. By this he hath all his glory even from the *inanimate* Creation.

4. Consider That *God hath not prescribed any Worship of himself, unto the Angels that sinned*. They are indeed under his Power, and he useth them as he pleaseth to serve the ends of his holy providence. Bounds he prescribes unto them by his *Power*, and keeps them in dread of the full execution of his Wrath. But he requires not of them that they should *believe* in him. *They believe* indeed *and Tremble*. They have a natural Apprehension of the *Being*, Power, Providence, Holiness and Righteousness of God, which is inseparable from *their Natures*, and they have an expectation from thence of that punishment, and vengeance which is due unto them, which is inseparable from them *as sinners*. And this is their faith. But to *believe in God*, that is, to put their trust in him, to resign up themselves unto him, God requires it not of them. The same is the case with them also, as to Love, and Fear, and Delight, all *inward Affections* which are the Proper *Worship* of God. These they have not, nor doth God any longer require them in them. They *eternally* cast them off in their first sin. And where these are not, where they are not required, where they cannot be, there *no outward Worship*

Worship can be prescribed or appointed. For *External instituted Worship* is nothing but the way that God assigns, and chooseth to express and exercise the *inward Affections* of our minds towards him. He rules the fallen Angels *per nutum Providentiæ*, not *verbum Præcepti*. Now as God dealt with the *Angels*, so also would he have dealt with *mankind*, had he left them all under the Curse without remedy or hope of relief. As he doth with *them*, he eternally satisfies himself in that *Revenue of Glory* which ariseth unto him in their punishment; so also he would have done with *these*, had there been no *forgiveness* with him for them. He would not have required them to fear, love or obey him, or have appointed unto them any *way of worship*, whereby to express such affections towards him. For to what end should he have done it? What *Righteousness* would admit, that Service, Duty and Obedience should be prescribed unto them, who could not, ought not to have any Expectation or hope of Acceptance or Reward? This is contrary to the very first Notion which God requires in us of his Nature. *For he that cometh unto God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of all them that diligently seek him*, Heb. 11. 6. which would not be so, should he appoint a *voluntary Worship*, and not propose a Reward to the Worshippers. Wherefore,

3. It is evident that God by the prescription *of a Worship unto sinners*, doth fully declare that there is *forgiveness* with him for them. For,

1. He manifests thereby that he is willing to receive a new *Revenue of Glory* from them. This, as we have proved, is the end of Worship. This he would never have done, but with a design of Accepting and Rewarding to his creatures. For do we think that he will be beholding unto them? That he will take and admit of their voluntary reasonable service according to his Will and Command, without giving them a Reward, yea, and such an one as their Obedience holds no proportion unto? no such thing would become his infinite self-sufficiency, Goodness and Bounty. This the Wife of *Manoah* well pleads, Judg. 13. 23. *If saith she, the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a meat-offering, and a burnt-offering, at our hands*. His Acceptance of *Worship* from us, is

an infallible Demonstration, that he will not execute against us the severity of the first Curse. And this is clearly evidenced in the first Record of solemn *instituted Worship* performed by sinners, *Gen.* 4. 4. *God had respect unto* Abel *and his Offering.* Some think that God gave a visible pledge of his acceptance of *Abel* and his Offering; it may be it was by fire from Heaven. For how else should *Cain* so instantly know, that his Brother and his Offering were accepted, but that he and his were refused? However it were, it is evident that what Testimony God gave of the Acceptance of his Offering, the same he gave concerning his Person; and that in the first place he had respect unto *Abel* and then to his *Offering*. And therefore the Apostle saith, that thereby he obtained *witness that he was righteous*, Heb. 11. 4. that is, the Witness or Testimony of God himself. Now this was in the forgiveness of his sins; without which he could neither be Righteous nor accepted, for he was a sinner. This God declared by acceptance of his Worship. And thus we also, if we have any Testimony of Gods acceptance of us in any part of his Worship, should employ it to the same end. Hath God enlarged our hearts in Prayer? hath he given us an Answer unto any of our supplications? hath he refreshed our hearts in the preaching and dispensation of the Word, or any other Ordinance? We are not to rest in the particular, about which our *communion* with him hath been. Our doing so is the cause why we lose our experiences. They lye scattered up and down, separated from their proper root, and so are easily lost. But this is that which we should first improve such particular experiences in the Worship of God unto; namely, that God hath *pardoned our sins*, and accepted our persons thereon; for without that, none of our Worship or Service would please him, or be accepted with him.

2. Hereby God lets us know, *that he deals with us upon new Terms*, so that *notwithstanding sin, we may enjoy his love and favour*. For this we have the engagement of his Truth and Veracity, and he cannot deceive us; but yet by this command of his for his Worship, we should be deceived if there were not forgiveness with him. For it gives us *encouragement* to expect, and *Assurance* of finding *Acceptance* with him, which without

without it cannot be obtained. This then God declares by his Institution of, and Command for his Worship, namely, that there is nothing that shall *indispensably* hinder those who give up themselves unto the Obedience of Gods Commands, from enjoying his love, and favour, and communion with him.

4. For *matter of fact*; it is known and confessed that God hath appointed a *Worship* for sinners to perform. All the Institutions of the Old and New Testament bear witness hereunto. God was the Author of them. And men know not what they do, when either they neglect them, or would be intermixing their own Imaginations with them. What can the mind of man conceive or invent that may have any *influence* into this matter, to secure the souls of Believers of their Acceptance with God? Is there any need of their *Testimony* to the Truth, Faithfulness, and Goodness of God? These things he hath taken upon himself. This then is that which is to be fixed on our Souls, upon our first Invitation unto Religious Worship; namely that God intends a new Revenue of Glory from us; and therefore declares that there is a way for the taking away of our sins, without which we can give no Glory to him by our Obedience, and this is done only by *forgiveness*.

Especial Ordinances evidencing forgiveness.

5. There are *some Ordinances of Worship appointed for this very end and purpose to confirm unto us the forgiveness of sin*. Especially in that Worship which is instituted by the Lord Jesus under the New Testament. I shall instance in one or two.

First, The *Ordinance of Baptism*. This was accompanyed with the dawning of the Gospel, in the Ministry of *John Baptist*. And he expressly declared in his *Sermons* upon it, that it was instituted of God to declare the *Remission of sins*, *Mark* 1. 4.

It is true, the Lord Christ submitted unto *that Ordinance*, (and was baptized by *John*) who had *no sin*. But this belonged unto the Obedience which God required of him, as for *our sakes*, he was made *under the Law*. He was to observe all Ordinances and Institutions of the Worship of God; not for any need he had in his own Person of the especial Ends and *significations* of some of them; yet as he was our *Sponsor*, surety

ty and Mediator, standing in our stead in all that he so did, he was to yield obedience unto them, that so he might *fulfill all Righteousness*, Matth. 3. 13. So was he *circumcised*, so he was *baptized*, both which had respect unto sin, though absolutely free from all sin in his own Person; and that because he was free from no Obedience unto any Command of God.

But as was said, *Baptism* it self as appointed to be an *Ordinance of Worship* for sinners to observe, was a Declaration of that *forgiveness* that is with God. It was so in its first Institution. God calls a man in a marvellous and miraculous manner; gives him *a Ministry from Heaven*; commands him to *Go and Baptize* all those who confessing their sins and professing Repentance of them, should come to him, to have a Testimony of forgiveness. And as to the especial nature of this *Ordinance*, he appoints it to be such, as to represent the certainty and truth of his Grace in pardon, unto their senses by a *visible pledge*. He lets them know that he would *take away their sin*, wherein their spiritual defilement doth consist, even as Water takes away the outward filth of the body; and that hereby they shall be saved, as surely as *Noah* and his Family were *saved in the Ark* swimming upon the waters, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. Now how great a *deceit* must needs in this whole matter have been put upon poor sinners, if it were not infallibly certain, that they might obtain forgiveness with God.

After the Entrance of this *Ordinance* in the *Ministry of John*, the *Lord Christ* takes it into his own hand, and commands the observation of it unto all his Disciples. I dispute not now, who are the proper immediate objects of it; whether they only who actually can make profession of their faith, or Believers with their *infant seed*. For my part, I believe that all whom Christ loves and pardons are to be made partakers of the pledge thereof. And the sole *Reason* which they of old insisted on, why the *Infants* of Believing Parents should not be *baptized*; was because they thought they had *no sin*, and therein we know their mistake. But I treat not now of these things; only this I say is certain, that in the prescription of this Ordinance unto his Church, the great Intention of the Lord Christ was to ascertain unto us the *forgiveness of sins*. And sinners are invited to a participation of this Ordinance for

for that End, that they may receive the pardon of their sins; that is an infallible pledge and Assurance of it, *Acts* 2. 38. And the very *nature* of it declareth this to be its *End*, as was before intimated. This is another engagement of the Truth and Faithfulness and Holiness of God, so that we cannot be deceived in this matter. *There is*, saith God, *forgiveness with me*; saith the soul, how Lord shall I know, how shall I come to be assured of it, for by reason of the perpetual Accusations of Conscience, and the Curse of the Law upon the guilt of my sin, I find it a very hard matter for me to believe: Like *Gideon* I would have a *Token* of it: why behold, saith God, *I will give thee a pledge and a token of it which cannot deceive thee. When the world of old had been overwhelmed with a deluge of waters by reason of their sins, and those who remained, though they had just cause to fear that the same Judgment would again befall them or their posterity, because they saw there was like to be the same cause of it, the thoughts and imaginations of the hearts of men being evil still, and that continually; to secure them against these fears, I told them that I would destroy the Earth no more with water; and I gave them a token of my faithfulness therein, by placing my bow in the cloud. And have I failed them? though the sin and wickedness of the world hath been since that day unspeakably great, yet mankind is not drowned again, nor ever shall be: I will not deceive their expectation from the token I have given them. Wherever then there is a word of promise confirmed with a token, never fear a disappointment. But so is this matter. I have declared that there is forgiveness with me, and to give you assurance thereof, I have ordained this pledge and sign, as a seal of my words, to take away all doubts and suspicion of your being deceived. As the world shall be drowned no more, so neither shall they who believe, come short of forgiveness.*

And this is the *Use* which we ought to make of this Ordinance. It is Gods security of the *pardon of our sins*, which we may safely rest in.

2. The same is the *End* of that other Great Ordinance of the Church, the *Supper of the Lord*. The same thing is therein confirmed unto us by another *Sign*, Pledge, Token, or *Seal*. We have shewed before, what respect *Gospel forgiveness* hath unto the death or blood of Jesus Christ. *That* is the

Means whereby for us it is procured, the *Way* whereby it comes forth from God, unto the glory of his Righteousness and Grace, which afterwards must be more distinctly insisted on. This Ordinance therefore designed and appointed on purpose for the Representation and calling to Remembrance of the *death of Christ*, with the communication of the benefits thereof unto them that believe; doth principally intend our faith and comfort in the Truth under consideration. And therefore in the very *Institution* of it besides the General End before mentioned, which had been sufficient for our security, there is moreover added an especial mention of the *forgiveness of sin*; for so speaks our Saviour in the Institution of it for the use of the Church unto the end of the world, Matth. 26. 28. *This is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the Remission of sins.* As if he had said, The end for which I have appointed the Observance of this Duty and Service unto you, is that I may testifie thereby unto you, that by my *Blood*, the Sacrifice of my self, and the Atonement made thereby, I have purchased for you the Remission of your sins, which you shall assuredly be made partakers of. And more I shall not add unto this consideration, because the death of Christ respected in this Ordinance, will again occurr unto us.

3. What is the end of all *Church Order*, Assemblies, and Worship? What is a *Church?* Is it not a company of *sinners* gathered together according unto Gods appointment, to give glory and praise to him for pardoning Grace, for the *forgiveness* of sins, and to yield him that obedience which he requires from us, on the account of his having so dealt with us? This is the nature, this is the end of a Church. He that understandeth it not, he that useth it not unto that End, doth but abuse that great Institution. And such abuse the world is full of. Some endeavour to make their own secular *Advantages* by the pretence of the Church. Some discharge the duty required in it, with some secret hopes that it shall be their *Righteousness* before God. Some answer only their *Light* and *Convictions* in an empty profession. This alone is the true end, the true Use of it. We assemble our selves to *learn* that there is forgiveness with God through Christ; to pray that we may be made partakers of it. To bless and praise God for our *Interest* in

in it, to engage our selves unto that *Obedience* which he requires upon the account of it. And were this constantly upon our minds, and in our designs, we might be more established in the faith of it, than it may be the most of us are.

Prayer for the Pardon of sin commanded.

4. One particular instance more of this nature shall conclude this Evidence: God hath *commanded us*, the Lord Christ hath *taught us to pray for the pardon of sin*, which gives us unquestionable security that it may be attained, that it is to be found in God; for the clearing whereof observe,

1. That the Lord Christ in the Revelation of the Will of God unto us, as unto the duty that he required at our hands, hath taught and instructed us *to pray for the forgiveness of sin.* It is one of the Petitions which he hath left on record for our use and imitation in that *Summary* of all prayer which he hath given us, Matth. 6. 12. *Forgive us our debts, our trespasses,* our sins: *Some* contend that this is a *form of Prayer* to be used in the *prescript limited words* of it. All grant that it is a *Rule* for prayer, comprizing the heads of all necessary things, that we are to pray for, and obliging us to make supplications for them. So then upon the *Authority* of God revealed unto us by Jesus Christ, we are bound in duty to pray for pardon of sins, or *forgiveness.*

2. On this supposition, it is the highest *Blasphemy* and reproach of God imaginable, to conceive that there is not forgiveness with him for us. Indeed if we should go upon our own heads without his *Warranty* and Authority, to ask any thing at his hand, we might well expect to meet with disappointment. For what should *encourage* us unto any such boldness? But now when God himself shall *command us to come*, and ask any thing from him, so making it thereby our Duty, and that the neglect thereof should be our great sin and *Rebellion* against him; to suppose he hath not the thing in his *Power* to bestow on us, or that his Will is wholly averse from so doing, is to reproach him with want of Truth, Faithfulness and Holiness, and not to be God. For what *sincerity* can be in such proceedings? Is it consistent with any *Divine Excellency?* Could it have any other end, but to deceive poor creatures? either to *delude* them if they do pray according to

to his command, or to *involve* them in further guilt, if they do not? God forbid any ſuch thoughts ſhould enter into our hearts. But,

3. To put this whole matter out of queſtion, God hath *promiſed to hear our prayers*, and in particular thoſe which we make unto him for the *forgiveneſs of ſin*. So our *Saviour* hath aſſured us, that what *we ask in his name, it ſhall be done for us*. And he hath, as we have ſhewed, taught us to ask this very thing of God as our *Heavenly Father*; that is in *his name*. For in and through him alone is he a *Father* unto us. I need not inſiſt on particular Promiſes to this purpoſe, they are as you know multiplyed in the Scriptures.

What hath been ſpoken may ſuffice to eſtabliſh our preſent Argument, namely, that Gods *preſcription of Religious Worſhip unto ſinners*, doth undenyably prove that with him there is forgiveneſs; eſpecially conſidering that the principal parts of the Worſhip ſo preſcribed and appointed by him, are peculiarly deſigned to confirm us in the faith thereof.

And this is the deſign of the words that we do inſiſt upon; *There is forgiveneſs with thee, that thou maiſt be feared*. The *fear* of God as we have ſhewed in the Old Teſtament, doth frequently expreſs not that gracious Affection *of our minds*, which is diſtinctly ſo called; but that *whole Worſhip* of God wherein that and all other Gracious Affections towards God are to be exerciſed. Now the *Pſalmiſt* tells us that the *foundation* of this *fear* or Worſhip, and the only motive and encouragement for ſinners to engage in it, and give up themſelves unto it is this, that there is *forgiveneſs with God*. Without this no ſinner could *fear*, ſerve, or *worſhip* him. This therefore is undeniably proved by the *Inſtitution* of this Worſhip, which was propoſed unto confirmation.

The end of all theſe things, as we ſhall afterwards at large declare, is to encourage poor ſinners to believe, and to evidence how *inexcuſable* they will be left, who notwithſtanding all this, do through the power of their luſts and *unbelief*, refuſe to come to God in Chriſt that they may be pardoned. Yea, the laying open of the *certainty* and fulneſs of the evidence given unto this truth, makes it plain and conſpicuous, whence it is that men periſh in and for their ſins. Is it for *want* of Mercy,

Mercy, Goodneſs, Grace or Patience in God? Is it through any *defect* in the Mediation of the Lord Chriſt? Is it for *want* of the mightieſt encouragements and moſt infallible Aſſurances that with God there is *Forgiveneſs?* Not at all, but meerly on the account of their own obſtinacy, ſtubbornneſs and perverſneſs. They *will not come* unto this Light, yea they *hate* it, becauſe their deeds are evil. They will not come to Chriſt, that they may have life. It is meerly darkneſs, blindneſs, and love of ſin, that brings men to deſtruction. And this is laid open, and all pretences and excuſes are removed, and the ſhame of mens luſts made naked by the full confirmation of this Truth, which God hath furniſhed us withall.

Take heed you that *hear* or *read* theſe things; if they are not *mixed with faith*, they will add greatly to your miſery. Every *Argument* will be your *Torment*. But theſe conſiderations muſt be inſiſted on afterwards.

Moreover, if you will take into your minds what hath been delivered in particular, concerning the *nature* and *end* of the Worſhip of God which you attend unto, you may be inſtructed in the *uſe* and due *obſervation* of it. When you addreſs your ſelves unto it, remember that this is that which God requires of you who *are ſinners*. That this he would not have done, but with thoughts and intention of mercy for *ſinners*. Bleſs him with all your ſouls, that this is laid as the Foundation of all that you have to do with him. You are not utterly caſt off, becauſe you are ſinners. Let this ſupport and warm your hearts, when you go to hear, to pray, or any duty of Worſhip. Conſider what is your principal work in the whole. You are going to deal with God about Forgiveneſs, in the *Being*, *Cauſes*, *Conſequents*, and *Effects* of it. Hearken what he ſpeaks, declares or reveals about it; mix his Revelation and promiſes with Faith. Enquire diligently into all the Obedience and Thankfulneſs, all thoſe duties of Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs, which he juſtly expects from them who are made partakers of it; ſo ſhall you obſerve the Worſhip of God unto *his Glory*, and your *own Advantage*.

The giving and eſtabliſhing of the New Covenant another Evidence of Forgiveneſs with God. The Oath of God engaged in the confirmation thereof.

Forgiveneſs manifeſted in the New Covenant.

VIII. Another *Evidence* hereof may be taken from the making, eſtabliſhing and ratifying of the *New Covenant*. That God would make a *new Covenant* with his people is often promiſed, often declared. See among other places, *Jer.* 31. 31, 32. and that *he hath done ſo* accordingly, the Apoſtle at large doth manifeſt, *Heb.* 8. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Now herein ſundry things unto our preſent purpoſe may be conſidered. For,

1. It is ſuppoſed that God had before made *another Covenant* with mankind. With reference hereunto is this ſaid to be a *new one*. It is oppoſed unto *another* that was before it, and in compariſon whereof that is called *old*, and this ſaid to be *new*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks expreſly in the place before mentioned. Now a *Covenant* between God and man is a thing *Great* and *Marvellous*; whether we conſider the *nature* of it, or the Ends of it; In its own *nature* it is a *Convention*, Compact and Agreement, for ſome certain ends and purpoſes between the holy Creator and his poor creatures. How infinite, how unſpeakable muſt needs the *Grace* and Condeſcenſion of God in this matter be? For what is *poor miſerable man*, that God ſhould ſet his heart upon him, that he ſhould as it were give *bounds to his Sovereignty* over him, and enter into terms of *Agreement* with him? For whereas before, he was a *meer object* of his *Abſolute Dominion*, made at his *Will*, and for his *Pleaſure*, and on the ſame reaſons to be cruſhed at any time into nothing; Now he hath a *bottom*, and *ground* given him to ſtand upon, whereon to expect *good things* from God, upon the account of his Faithfulneſs and Righteouſneſs. God, in a *Covenant*, gives thoſe holy properties of his Nature unto his Creatures; as his hand or *arm* for him to lay hold upon, and by them to plead and *argue* with him. And without this a man could have no foundation for any entercourſe or *Communion* with God, or of any expectation from him, nor any *direction* how to deal with him in any of his concernments. Great and *ſignal* then was the *condeſcenſion* in God, to take his poor Creature *into Covenant* with himſelf. And eſpecially will this be manifeſt, if we conſider the *Ends* of it, and why it is that God thus deals with man. Now theſe are no other than that man might *ſerve him aright*, be bleſſed by him, and be brought unto the everlaſting enjoyment of him, all unto his Glory. Theſe are the *Ends* of every Covenant that God takes us into with himſelf. And theſe are the *whole of man*. No more is required *of us* in a way of *duty*; no more can be required *by us* to make us *bleſſed and happy*, but what is contained in them. That we might *live to God*, be accepted with him, and come to the eternal fruition of him, is the *whole of man*, All that we were made for, or are capable of; and theſe are the *Ends of every Covenant* that God makes with men; being all comprized in that ſolemn word, that *he will be their God, and they ſhall be his people*.

Secondly, This being the *Nature*, this the *End* of a *Covenant*, there muſt be ſome great and important cauſe, to change, alter, and *abrogate a Covenant* once made and eſtabliſhed, to lay aſide *one Covenant*, and to enter into *another*. And yet this the Apoſtle ſayes expreſly that God had done, *Heb.* 8. 13. and proves it, becauſe himſelf calls that which he promiſed, *a New Covenant*, which undeniably confirms two things. *Firſt*, That the other was become *old*; and *Secondly*, That being become *ſo*, it was *changed*, altered and removed. I know the Apoſtle ſpeaks immediately of the *Old Adminiſtration* of the Covenant under the Old Teſtament of *Moſaical* Inſtitutions: but he doth ſo with reference unto that *revival* which in it was given to the *firſt Covenant* made with *Adam*. For in the giving of the *Law*, and the *Curſe* wherewith it was accompanyed which were immixed with that Adminiſtration of the Covenant, there was a ſolemn *revival* and Repreſentation of the *firſt Covenant*, and its *Sanction*, whereby it had life and power given it to keep the people in bondage all their dayes. And the end of the Abolition or taking away of the Legal *Adminiſtration of the Covenant*, was meerly to take out of Gods dealing with his people, all uſe and Remembrance of the *firſt Covenant*. As was ſaid therefore, to take away, *diſannul*, and change a Covenant ſo made, ratified, and eſtabliſhed betwixt God and man, is a matter that muſt be reſolved

ed into some cogent, important, and indispensable cause. And this will the more evidently appear, if we consider,

Nature, Use and End of the first Covenant.

First, In general; *that the first Covenant was Good*, Holy, Righteous and Equal. It was such as *became God* to make, and was every way the *happiness of the Creature* to accept of. We need no other Argument to prove it *holy and good*, than this, that God made it. It was the effect of infinite Holiness, Wisdom, Righteousness, Goodness and Grace. And therefore in it self was it every way perfect; for so are all the works of God. Besides it was such, as *man*, when through his own fault he cannot obtain any good by it, and must perish everlastingly by vertue of the Curse of it; yet cannot but subscribe unto its Righteousness and Holiness. The Law was the Rule of it, therein is the tenor of it contained. Now, saith the Apostle, whatever becomes of the sin, and the sinner, *the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just, and good*, Rom. 7. 12. *Holy* in it self, and its own Nature, as being the Order and Constitution of the most holy God. *Just* and equal with reference unto us; such as we have no reason to complain of, or repine against the Authority of it, and the terms of it are most *righteous*. And not only so, but it is *good* also, that which notwithstanding the appearance of Rigor and severity which it is accompanied withal, had in it an exceeding mixture of Goodness and Grace, both in the Obedience constituted in it, and the Reward annexed unto it; as might be more fully manifested, were that our present work.

Secondly, In particular it was *Good*, *Holy* and *Righteous* in all the *Commands* of it, in the *Obedience* which it required. And two things there were that rendred it exceeding *Righteous*, in reference unto its Precepts or Commands. First, That they were all suited unto the Principles of the Nature of man created by God, and in the regular acting whereof consisted his perfection. God in the first Covenant required nothing of man, prescribed nothing unto him, but what there was a *Principle* for the doing and accomplishing of it ingrafted and implanted on his Nature; which rendred all those commands equal, holy and good. For what need any man complain of that which requires nothing of him, but what he is from his own

own frame and Principles inclined unto? Secondly, All the Commands of it were proportionate unto the *strength and ability of them to whom they were given*. God in that Covenant required nothing of any man, but what he had before *enabled* him to perform: nothing above his strength, or beyond his power: and thence was it also *righteous*. Secondly, It was exceeding *Good* Holy and Righteous upon the account of its *Promises* and Rewards. *Do this*, saith the Covenant; *this which thou art able to do*, which the *Principles of thy Nature are fitted* for, and inclined unto. Well, what shall be the issue thereof? Why *do this and live*; Life is promised unto Obedience, and that such a Life, as both for the present and future condition of the creature, was accompanyed with every thing that was needful to make it blessed and happy. Yea, this *Life* having in it the eternal enjoyment of God, *God himself as a Reward*, was exceedingly above whatever the Obedience of man could require as due, or have any Reason, on any other account, but meerly of the Goodness of God to expect.

Thirdly, There was *provision* in that Covenant for the *Preservation and manifestation of the Glory of God*, whatever was the Event on the part of man. This was provided for in the Wisdom and Righteousness of God. Did man *continue* in his Obedience, and fulfill the terms of the Covenant; all things were laid in subserviency to the Eternal Glory of God in his *Reward*. Herein would he for ever have manifested and exalted the Glory of his *Holiness*, *Power*, Faithfulness, Righteousness and Goodness. As an Almighty Creator, and Preserver, as a faithful God, and Righteous Rewarder would he have been glorified. On supposition on the other side, that man by sin and Rebellion should transgress the terms and tenor of this Covenant, yet God had made provision that no detriment unto his Glory should ensue thereon. For by the constitution of a *punishment* proportionable in his *Justice* unto that sin and demerit, he had provided that the glory of his Holiness Righteousness and *Veracity in his Threatnings* should be exalted, and that to all Eternity. God would have lost no more glory and honour by the sin of man, than by the sin of Angels, which in his infinite Wisdom and Righteousness is become a great *Theatre* of his Eternal Glory. For he is no

less